

Protest could rob Africa Glass of victory

YACHTING

AFRICA Glass's crew must survive a protest by Maxtec's squad if they wish to lift this year's Lipton Cup Challenge regatta in Table Bay.

The Hermanus Yacht Club entry, which finished fifth and fourth in yesterday's two stages in windy conditions, was accused of nudging Jan Reuvers' Hout Bay-based vessel at the leeward mark on the first triangle in the day's earlier stage.

A ruling on the protest was expected late last night.

"The matter will be discussed at a protest meeting, so I don't want to say much at the moment," said Maxtec crewman Tony Strutt.

Africa Glass's skipper Geoff Meek, meanwhile, said his crew was sure that their vessel did not make contact with Maxtec and

had been adamant that they would not have to sail a two-circle penalty before continuing in the race.

"When we were so close to Maxtec, I wanted to perform a 720 degree penalty, because I was unsure as to whether we had touched their vessel or not," said Meek afterwards.

"My crew told me to continue with the race without performing the penalty since they were sure that Africa Glass had not made contact with Maxtec."

While many may believe that Africa Glass could have performed the two-circle penalty - since they were so far ahead on the overall points tally - Meek said that it boiled down to a difference between right and wrong.

"My crew made me realise that we must stick to our task and principles, he added.

"Goodness knows what version of the

allegation Maxtec will come up with."

The earlier stage yesterday was won by Ford Falcon of KwaZulu-Natal's Point Yacht Club with Maxtec and Maverick of the Port Owen Yacht Club finishing second and third.

The later stage was won by Dalys Insurance, skippered by six-times Lipton Cup winners Chris King and Rick Nankin, with Theewaterskloof Yacht Club entry Home Choice and defending champions MBS Challenger of the Royal Cape Yacht Club ending second and third.

Africa Glass will win the Lipton Cup if the protest is unsuccessful, but will drop to fourth position if they lose.

They have 113 points while Dalys Insurance is on 110,25.

MBS Challenger is third with 107,5, Ford Falcon fourth on 103 and Maxtec fifth with 95,25. SAPA

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