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CHICHESTER SETS EXAMPLE



This picture shows Sir Francis Chichester's Gypsy Moth IV as it approached Sydney to complete the first half of a 28,500-mile voyage around the world. Potential South African Chichesters are eager to attempt next year's single-handed yacht race across the North Atlantic. A potential "Waterbok" is John Goodwin, of Hout Bay, who has captained the famous Stellenbosch-built ocean racer, Stormvogel.

Bruce Dalling keen to tackle the Atlantic

By BRIAN LELLO
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CAPE TOWN, Saturday.

SEVERAL South Africans of the same adventurous character as Sir Francis Chichester have made it known that they would like to attempt next year's single-handed yacht race across the North Atlantic.

A couple in Durban have written to the national committee in Cape Town. There is a man in East London promoting his own single-handed campaign and another in Hout Bay, Cape.

Several "possibles" are known to the committee.

The main rule of the race states that every man who comes to the starting line must have done at least one voyage alone of 500 sea miles or more. Potential "Waterboks" of this sort are on stand-by in South Africa.

One is 29-year-old Bruce Dalling, of Durban. He went off adventuring in distant parts at an early age, but last year he turned up in Durban after sailing alone from Hong Kong.

He had just "pitchpoled" his 25-ft. sailing sloop in a fearful storm 60 miles from Lourenco Marques. A freak wave had taken his little ship and thrown it bodily end-over-end.

But he was undaunted, and is prepared to race across the wild North Atlantic in just about anything, but preferably the exciting super-lightweight 50-footer that will be built by next New Year's Day.

This man, with the body of a middleweight wrestler, holds a Merchant Marine Master's ticket. He has a degree in agriculture, and is preparing for another in economics. He has been skippering a trawler lately in a tricky operation off the Natal Coast.

Adventurer

Another potential "Waterbok" is John Goodwin, of Hout Bay. After thousands of deep sea miles, he sailed single-handed from Gibraltar to Barbados in 1956.

In the book, "Atlantic Adventurers," Humphrey Barton tells that on his 26-day voyage in the four-ton Speedwell of Hong Kong, Goodwin would turn in and sleep at night after cramming on sail until he was carrying 650 square feet. His ship's working sail area was only 320 sq. ft.

Yet he knew that he would be awake and instantly on deck the moment anything went wrong and his ship faltered across the ocean swells in the dark.

He also skippered the famous Stellenbosch-built ocean racer, Stormvogel, during her second year of campaigning. He has voyaged time and time again up and down the South African coast in everything from his little Speedwell, to 25-knot tunny boats and sailing trimarans.

In the late 'fifties, Gordon Webb, of Pinelands, Natal, sailed the 36-ft. Jenny Wren from England through the Red Sea with the girl who was to become his wife.

He has also skippered Stormvogel 20,000 miles right round Africa.

Redoubtable

Another redoubtable single-hander in Durban is Henry Vink. He has not applied yet, but he is also just the sort of man to tackle the North Atlantic alone.

He has done long single-handed voyages to Cape Town and all over the Indian Ocean in his little sloop Aldabaran.

He is an expert on self-steering devices — contraptions essential in the race alone across the Atlantic in which a vane, rather similar to that on a typical Highveld windmill, controls the rudder and keeps the yacht on course while the skipper is down below or trims the sails.

In the Eastern Cape there is a yachtsman, Bunny Curran, whose racing Royal Cape weighs less than two tons. He is keen to take on the North Atlantic adventure, and to show his mettle sailed his tiny Spray from East London to Durban and back for the national regatta in January.

His ship's planking is only three-eighths of an inch thick, yet he tackled one of the wildest stretches of sailing water in the world.

"Lofting"

This week, in Lakeside, Cape Town, the "lofting" of the ocean racer for the Springbok sailor will be completed.

In other words, the ship will actually be drawn full size on a huge drawing board 60-ft. long.

After that a start will be made on the moulds — the shape the boat will be built to, in timber patterns. From this will finally appear, gleaming rakishly, the varnished hull that will do battle against the wild west winds of the North Atlantic.

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