



Race graphics by Andrea Filacchioni of AFTER

### Race 1 29 July. Royal Yacht Squadron Trophy. 27.1 mile Solent Course.

A miserable, grey and rainy Solent day which was a far cry from the glorious evening reception on the Royal Yacht Squadron lawn which formally opened the series, and a day made worse by the loss of the Irish one tonner, *Jameson 1* (ex *Fram X1*). A lop-sided beat favoured those boats which started on the right hand end of the line, who were virtually able to lay the first mark, a buoy on the Island shore between Gurnard and Hampstead Ledges.

On the run back west, *Jameson 1* clobbered Gurnard Ledge. Skipper Harold Cudmore talked about a "glancing blow" but others saw *Jameson's* bow dip sharply. Killian Bushe, a longtime Cudmore associate and builder of repute, looked below and said "Beach!". *Jameson* headed inshore fast, sinking 50 yards off Gurnard with her keel missing.

There were no injuries beyond dented reputations. The crew was packed with Solent intimates, so familiar with passages past the ledge they scarcely gave it thought. More concerning was that when the Cookson-built boat was hauled out it was obvious that the keel had pulled out of the hull which, in place of solid laminate, had Nomex honeycomb floors.

This made many question the ABS Scantling Rule which allows such practice. The point was made forcibly when five other one tonners clipped the same ledge on the second beat. *GBE International* knocked her wooden keel shoe clean off. *Pinta* did the same, and split her rudder tip, and yet neither caused serious damage to the hull/keel joint.

Willi Illbruck, who has competed in three decades of Admiral's Cups, was outraged at the course (even though the 50s and two tonners managed to avoid grounding.) He was all set to pull *Pinta* out of the event. Only through the night repairs and effective pleas from *Container's* skipper, Jens Christensen, averted Herr Illbruck's withdrawal.

"I've been racing here for 25 years and they set a course over the rocks; it's crazy!" said Herr Illbruck. His blood boiling, he added: "The race committee sit around green-

covered tables and don't race themselves." Other sailors had the same message, if expressed more colourfully.

RORC race director, Alan Green, tried hard to set a good course but faced constraints. He was obliged to use the big inflatable sponsors' buoy. This had two effects: in the fresh 20 knots they could only be anchored successfully in shallow water; and he was denied use of the fixed Solent racing marks out in deeper water. Also a prohibition on anchoring in the central Solent area made it difficult to lay the course short of the troublesome ledge.

Australia came out on top with *Ragamuffin* taking Britain's *Indulgence* at the top of the second beat to claim line honours, backed up by a 4th from *Great News 11* who headed right from the start to gain an advantage she clung on to.

The controversy was a shame for all the ingredients for a great Solent race were there: strong tidal influence, nose to tail spinnaker run past Cowes Green and short tacking just off the beach. Only miserable weather and the dubious placing of the start and weather mark turned into a grizzly affair.

### Race 2 30 July. RORC Channel Race. 206 miles

By contrast, sparkling weather which turned the Solent silver made the Channel Race start quite special. A short beat west from the Squadron line to East Lepe set the fleet up for a long spinnaker run to the Nab, reach south the EC2 buoy, a beat to Poole Fairway, a long run south-east to EC2, a reach north to Rustington Buoy off Littlehampton and a beat back into the Solent via the Owers and Nab.

It was a two tonner benefit, with Germany's 50ft *Container* the best of the rest in 7th place, while top honours went to Italy's double Two Ton Cup winner *Larouge*.

France, joint-favourites with Italy, displayed impressive self-destruct qualities, no more so than their 50ft *Corum Saphir* which tried to barge underneath *Container* and *Jameson*. Being low of the lay line and squeezing hard for buoy room might work in the 50ft class, but not in the Solent with the tide running hard past a large red steel Admiralty buoy.

It was one of those fascinating, frustrating Solent

moments which has variously annoyed and captivated crews over the years. Misjudgment by helmsman Pierre Mas saw the big *Corum* wrapped around the buoy. Neither the mainsheet nor the backstay snagged the structure and *Corum Saphir* wriggled free. To complete the entertainment, tactician Bertrand Pace, looked at the buoy and then Mas, and threw the palm of his hand against his forehead in disgust.

Processional it may have been, as the beats were not quite true enough to force the boats to tack but the race was not without excitement. Approaching the Nab Tower, *Great news 11* pounced into a gap left by Japan's *Swing*. Aussie skipper Colin Beashel said he was waiting for *Swing* to bear away in the lee of the tower, but *Swing's* crew were amazed there was not a serious crash between both yachts and the huge war time tower. Certainly those sitting on the side deck with their legs over the side had to move them quickly. *Swing's* tactician, American Ed Baird, reckoned "it was the scariest moment I've ever known, and I've sailed a lot of miles. A lot." The jury dismissed *Swing's* protest.

While it was a dismal race for the home country, Italy moved into the series lead with *Larouge* 1st in fleet, *Brava* 9th and *Mandrake* 13th, outscoring the German by 0.38pt. The race carried a x1.5 points factor. Britain was second lowest scorer, remaining 7th on the leader board. In what was a big boat race, Britain discarded *Indulgence's* score in favour of *GBE's* 17th place.

### Race 3. 2 August. Corum Trophy. 27 mile windward-leeward.

When the breeze picked up from 15 to 25 knots the race's complexion changed with it. For a while, it seemed as if a decent British result was on the cards, for half way through the seemingly interminable three and a half hour, four and a half lap race, *Provezza Source* and *GBE International* were second behind Japan's *Swing* and *Nippon* in the two and one ton divisions with *Indulgence* 4th among the 50s.

The short, whipped-up seas, off the shoaling water near Selsey Bill, made the 50s hard to handle on the run. The smaller boats seemed to fit the wave pattern better but the third run saw spectacular wipe-outs for the 50s. Japan's *Champosa V11* finished the leg under jib because all her heavy kits were shredded. *Indulgence*, whose principal trimmer Jerry Richards was hampered by a ricked back, made one huge broach because Richards simply could not pull in the armfuls of sheet at the critical time.

Minutes later, *Indulgence's* pole end failed to open after a gybe leading to another broach and five minutes bare-





headed sailing as a snatch block was fitted to the pole. But Paul Cayard, *Brava Q8's* skipper will be the one most wanting to forget the race. The start was delayed because as Cayard sailed down the line to assess it, he misjudged the tide. *Brava* tangled with the pin end buoy and was anchored firmly to it. Steve Erickson went over the side, but could not free the boat. The buoy was cut from its ground tackle and when *Brava* fired up her engine, more ropes fouled the prop. Paulo Massarini and Lorenzo Mazza were also sent over the side and *Brava* eventually started two minutes late. Despite this, and a rudder cut up badly by the buoy's chain and slowly filling with water, Cayard fought back to second.

Then, 100 yards upwind from the final leeward mark, the mast crumpled over the side. Rod Davis, surveying the mess, said: "We've got the spreaders and we've got the rigging and neither is broken." Why the mast failed is not clear. A one ton crew close by, reckoned the runner was not put on in time, which would be remarkable if true, given the calibre of the crew.

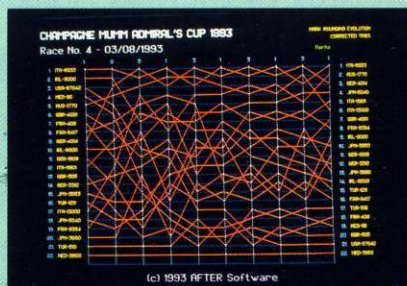
As it was, *Brava's* trials and tribulations counted for naught. It was another big boat day, with *Mandrake* winning. *Larouge* was 8th but dropped 6 places for a finish line incident with Ireland's *Jameson 2*, making Australia top team on the day, with Germany 2nd. Italy's series lead was cut to 0.5pt.

## Race 4. 3 August

### Champagne Mumm Race. 28 mile windward/leeward.

A similar course to race three with the addition of two reaching legs between the first and second beats. Italy stretched their lead to three and a half points as *Mandrake* took her second successive win, with *Great News 11* and *Pinta*, winning the smaller classes.

"We were able to establish a lead as Peter Gilmour in *Ragamuffin* had to fight back from being fourth at the first mark," said *Mandrake's* tall, polite helmsman Francesco de Angelis. *Indulgence* was in the wars again, with the replacement pole end playing up. "We had the pace to be 2nd but had three major errors," said navigator Peter Morton. First, a jib sheet broke minutes off the start line. Then, helmsman Chris Law hit his head on the boom



Corrected times at mark rounding Race 4

three-quarters of the way up the first beat, felling him to the cockpit floor. And then as he was trying to sort out the pole end, bowman Tim Haynes was launched into the sea as the kite snapped full of breeze. He hung on, and was hauled back aboard but not before a £3,000 kite was lost over the side.

Place changes were modest, and the confidence of the Italian effort was shown by a superb one man gybe aboard *Mandrake*. In a 20 knot breeze and with a useful lead, a conservative two man gybe could have been attempted. But no, *Mandrake's* bowman tripped the pole himself as he walked forward, picked up the lazy guy and snapped it into the pole end as it swung in from behind him.

There was one dent to the Italian effort, when *Brava* ripped her replacement mast. The damage occurred in the same place as the previous break, seven feet above the deck, but this time the spar stayed standing.

## Races 5 & 6. 5 August.

### Kenwood Trophy race. Two 12 mile windward/leeward.

Even the worst crash in Admiral's Cup history could not dislodge Italy from the leader board. Inevitably *Mandrake's* collision with *Pro-motion* overshadowed the double windward/leeward races, which with short two mile legs, demonstrated just how futile the previous long inshore courses had been.

The tight boat-to-boat action, and seconds-apart finishes,

which have made the 50ft and One Ton circuit regattas so enthralling, had at last come to the series which really ought to be racing's premier showcase.

Britain, finally, put up the sort of performance expected of their boats and crews. In the first race *Provezza Source* and *GBE International* won their divisions with *Indulgence* 5th among the 50s. The two-race day belonged to *Ragamuffin*, counting a 1st and 2nd in the fleet with *Larouge* 3rd and 4th though Germany were the day's heaviest scorers to close right behind Australia and Italy with just the Fastnet to come.

## Race 7. 7 August.

### RORC Fastnet Race. 605 miles Cowes-Fastnet-Plymouth.

With a breeze promised and the Fastnet not just shaping up to be a big boat race, but the forecast freshening wind likely to strike the smaller boats on the slog out to the Rock, Italy knew they had to make *Brava's* score count. Amazing for one so prominent in the sport, this was skipper Paul Cayard's first Fastnet. Francesco de Angelis, from the bowed-out *Mandrake*, joined Cayard, Rod Davis and Flavio Favini as *Brava's* fourth helmsman knowing full well they'd have to drive the heart out of the boat to keep Italy in with a sniff of a chance.

Syd Fischer's *Ragamuffin* made the running for much of the race, though at Land's End on the way out the Rock, France was looking strong with the 50ft *Corum Saphir* up with *Rags* and the two tonner *Corum Rubis* well placed. On the lumpy beat out across the Celtic Sea, *Indulgence* assumed the lead. *Rags* led round the Rock, only to be overtaken by *Indulgence* between the *Bishop Rock* on the Scillies and the Lizard.

The dramas were in her wake: *Great News 11's* dismasting as the spar snapped without warning at deck level; *Jameson 3's* retirement when her boom broke at the mainsheet attachment and the Japanese one tonner *Nippon*, heading back to Plymouth, her crew chastened by a man-overboard incident.

It occurred at 2300 on the second night at sea. A 20 knot wind, fog and lumpy made classic ingredients for tragedy as a large wave swept bowman Kazuhiko Sofukyu over the side. He had no harness but did have a torch. This, and the man-overboard panic button on the GPS satellite navigation system, allowed *Nippon's* crew, headed by Manchester born Kiwi John Cutler, to retrace their steps under power. Just as *Nippon* approached Sofukyo, his torch went out.

A tight grid search was begun and mainsheet trimmer Chris Mason fired off red flares to alert other yachts and provide some illumination. 10 minutes with no sign of Sofukyo, prompted Cutler and navigator Andrew Hurst to extend the search and just as the fourth parachute flare was about to burn out, the crew man was sighted.

Cold, shaken but with the presence of mind to have shed his heavy and sodden thermals and oilies, which is how he dropped his torch, Sofukyo managed to stay afloat for nearly 20 minutes. Faced with a 180 mile beat to the Fastnet or the chance to get his crewman warm and ashore, Cutler made the sensible choice of returning to Plymouth.

Calculations as the leaders approached the Lizard still had the Australians poised for victory. On finishing at 2108 on the fourth night, *Ragamuffin's* Peter Gilmour wisely declined to celebrate prematurely. "Wake me up when it's certain," he said before heading for some sleep. It was just as well he waited, for by breakfast, the Germans had stolen the series.

TEAM	BOAT	HELMSMAN/OWNER	TYPE	POINTS	RACE BY RACE	PLACE
1. GERMANY (279.13 pts)	<i>Pinta</i>	Diesch/Illbruck	1-Ton	63.50	19,10,19,3,18,13,7	16
	<i>Rubin XII</i>	Jungblut/Schuemann	2-Ton	75.13	17,3,7,12,8,1,10	13
	<i>Container</i>	Schutz/Schutz	50-Foot	140.50	8,7,4,11,8,7,4	2
2. AUSTRALIA (278.88 pts)	<i>Ninja</i>	Kurts/Kurts	1-Ton	31.00	20,20,16,13,12,16,14	19
	<i>Great News II</i>	Calvert-Jones/C-Jones	2-Ton	99.50	4,2,6,2,13,11,DF	9
	<i>Ragamuffin</i>	Gilmour/Fischer	50-Foot	148.38	1,16,3,7,1,2,3	1
3. FRANCE (247.50 pts)	<i>Corum Diamant</i>	Gellusseau/Corum Sailing	1-Ton	27.00	14,14,14,18,11,15,15	21
	<i>Corum Rubis</i>	Kermarec/Corum Sailing	2-Ton	123.50	11,4,10,16,6,15,6	4
	<i>Corum Saphir</i>	Has/Corum Sailing	50-Foot	97.00	12,12,12,18,15,19,2	11
4. ITALY (242.88 pts)	<i>Brava Q8</i>	Landolfi/Landolfi	1-Ton	68.00	15,9,DF,6,17,5,11	15
	<i>Larouge</i>	Bortolotti/De Gennaro	2-Ton	107.38	9,1,13,5,5,3,DF	7
	<i>Mandrake</i>	De Angelis/Carriero	50-Foot	67.50	3,13,1,1,DF,DC,DC	14
5. JAPAN (242.00 pts)	<i>Nippon</i>	Cutler/Yamasaki	1-Ton	31.00	13,21,DF,4,DC,DC,DF	19
	<i>Swing</i>	Fry/Suzuki	2-Ton	107.50	18,6,2,10,10,9,12	6
	<i>Champosa</i>	Morita/Morita	50-Foot	103.50	5,18,13,21,2,12,5	8
6. UK (238.38 pts)	<i>GBE International</i>	Charles/Morton	1-Ton	40.00	16,17,17,17,9,14,13	18
	<i>Provezza Source</i>	Childerley/Woods	2-Ton	108.25	DQ,8,4,15,3,8,9	5
	<i>Indulgence</i>	Warden-Owen/Walker	50-Foot	90.13	2,19,18,20,14,4,1	12
7. IRELAND (193.00 pts)	<i>Jameson 1</i>	Cudmore/Storey	1-Ton	2.00	DF,DC,DC,DC,DC,DC,DC	23
	<i>Jameson 2</i>	Maguire/Storey	2-Ton	128.00	7,5,9,14,7,6,8	3
	<i>Jameson 3</i>	English/Storey	50-Foot	63.00	10,15,15,9,16,DQ,DF	17
8. NETHERLANDS (119.38 pts)	<i>Ace</i>	De Lange/De Lange	1-Ton	21.00	DS,22,20,22,DC,DC,16	22
	<i>Promotion VII</i>	Dolk/Dolk	50-Foot	98.38	6,11,11,19,YP,YP,YP	10