

Any Boat Could Win The Tasman Yacht Race

THE biggest and finest fleet of yachts ever to compete in the Tasman yacht race will start the 1240-mile voyage from Auckland to Sydney on Saturday morning. Nine boats will cross the starting line off the end of Orakei wharf at 10.30 a.m., through a "fan" of official launches moored to keep sightseeing craft clear.

For competition this will be easily the toughest of the seven Tasman races held since 1931. It is also far more open than any of the others. Practically any one of the nine entrants could win, given the right wind conditions and a few "breaks."

Messrs Trygve and Magnus Halvorsen, Sydney boat-builders, will be defending the Trans Tasman Cup, which they won twice in Peer Gynt, with a new light displacement ocean racer called Solveig. Heaviest boat in the fleet is the other Sydney entrant, the 29 ton Southern Maid.

Five boats will represent Auckland. Longest in the fleet is the 59-foot bipod masted cutter Tara, from Stanley Bay. The others are the veteran, Rangī, competing for the third time and three short-end boats all designed by Mr B. S. Woollacott, of Devonport, White Squall, Hope and Ghost.

Tauranga will be represented by the light displacement ocean racer, Leda, and an old-timer, Sea Wolf II, will represent Whangarei.

Depends On Wind

Different conditions suit most of these boats so the result of the race will depend to a large extent on the winds experienced. The issue is further complicated by the fact that only three of the boats Hope, Ghost and Rangī, have raced together.

Tara, Leda, Solveig, White Squall and Hope are all virtually new boats. Rangī and Sea Wolf have both been considerably altered this season.

Conditions under which the boats would probably perform best are:—

TARA strong reaching and running winds and broken water.

SOUTHERN MAID fresh winds aft of abeam.

LEDA winds forward of abeam.

RANGI light reaching winds.

SOLVEIG light or strong winds ahead or behind.

WHITE SQUALL, HOPE, GHOST moderate winds ahead or behind.

SEA WOLF II . . . moderate weather.

Boats are handicapped according to the Royal Ocean Racing Club (England) formula which is a complicated system of measuring length, beam, draught, freeboard, displacement,

sail area, construction, engines and propellers.

They are given a linear rating, bringing all their lengths to a common basis and from this a time corrective factor is worked out. The time taken for each yacht to sail from Auckland to Sydney is multiplied by this factor, which is a decimal figure.

A rough but fairly accurate way to find out what handicap a boat will get is to take the differences between the second figures of the time correction factors and call each unit one hour in every hundred of elapsed time, or one hour in four days.

Time correction factors are:—

Southern Maid	.7941
Leda	.7802
Tara	.7731
Solveig	.7148
Rangī	.7081
White Squall	.6795
Hope	.6791
Ghost	.6473
Sea Wolf II	.6425

Thus Solveig will have to give Rangī roughly one hour in every hundred, or about four hours on an average Tasman crossing of 16 days.

The ratings of Southern Maid, Tara and Solveig are subject to checking.

Generally the faster time the fleet makes in an ocean race the better chance the smaller boats have but, in a race like the Tasman, the odds appear to be largely in favour of the three big boats. Overseas the event would have been divided into two divisions, with Tara, Southern Maid and Leda in the first division and the smaller boats in the second.

Work And Money

People who have not actually had experience of preparing for a long ocean race can have no conception of the amount of work and money which has gone into getting these nine boats ready for the race. The yachts are self-contained units carrying stores and water for crews of from five to 11 for more than a month at sea.

They have their own lighting plants and radios. Southern Maid, Tara, Leda, Rangī and Solveig have their own transmitters. They have a big range of sails to suit all winds—Southern Maid has 18, which is twice as many as most of the New Zealand boats—and their gear must

be strong enough, for the crews drive them at their maximum speed night and day across the Tasman.

Yet there is no prize money for the race, nobody subsidizes the crews and they will virtually be racing for what they like to call the honour and glory of it.

The issue is so open that no boat could be described as favourite, but there certainly does seem to be a good chance that New Zealand will gain its first victory in the event. The race has been won by the Norwegian yacht Teddy, the German yacht Te Rapunga and twice by the Australian yacht Peer Gynt. Two other races were abandoned.

Weather and broadcasting officials are co-operating fully to give special weather reports to all yachts. This week's storm is expected to clear the air, but all competitors are prepared for the worst the Tasman can send them. Lifelines round the yachts are compulsory, jackets, lifebuoys, flares, rockets, fire extinguishers, first aid equipment, sea anchors and dinghys (rubber or wooden), must all be carried and all yachts have been carefully inspected to make sure they are completely seaworthy.