



It's a breeze . . . Hexe (left) chases the Dutch yacht Reckless on the way to two wins yesterday Picture: KOS PHOTOS

Green light for German Reds

A PAIR of wins for Thomas Jungblut's *Sequana* and Norbert Plambeck's *Hexe* gave Germany's Red team maximum points from two of their three yachts to confirm their lead of the Rolex Commodores' Cup on the Solent yesterday. However, with both the Dutch teams close behind on points, German superiority cannot be taken for granted.

The third German Red boat, Harold Bruning's *Topas*, faced a protest last night from Keert Jansen's *Swan 43*, *Cisne*, in the Dutch Green team, over an incident in the second of yesterday's windward/leeward races.

Britain's two teams fared less well. In fresh conditions made to order for Tony Cox's *Prospect of Whitby* from England's Red team, too many seconds were wasted with late spinnaker hoists and early drops. "We know we are conservative but we are getting better,"

By Tim Jeffery

was Cox's honest assessment. *Prospect* also lost time towards the end of the first race by heading for the wrong mark, to place fifth out of nine boats in a race she might have won.

Tony de Mulder matched *Prospect's* fifth in the big class, though again the fresh spinnaker legs were *Victrie V's* undoing. Having got ahead of her Farr 40 rivals upwind, *Victrie* lost the advantage with a wipe-out, the recovery of which spun the boat into an opposite Chinese gybe.

In England Green's line-up, David Murrin's *Cetawayo* picked up a lobster pot five minutes after the first race's start. "With so many white caps, we just didn't see the little white pot markers," said Murrin.

He knew from *Cetawayo's* speed that she was dragging something and

that it did not drop off when the boat was tacked. Murrin planned to stop the boat at the end of beat but then found he could not bear away — the pot buoy had jammed between the rudder and propeller shaft of his long-keeled 1957 Laurent Giles-designed yacht. *Cetawayo* anchored at Osborne Bay and crewman David Sawdon went over the side to free the rudder.

England Red's woes continued when a split mainsail meant that Robert Goddard's *Tripp 40*, *Auto Desk*, sailed the course with her storm trisail.

The Germans faced no such problems. Jungblut is confident in *Sequana's* speed, having beaten a works Beneteau 40.7 sister ship at Kiel three weeks ago. The only boat he fears in the middle class is Peter Rutter's *Quokka* (England Red), which managed two thirds, yet threatens better.

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Hosts are forced to play second fiddle

By Tim Jeffery

THE host country's best day in the Rolex Commodores' Cup at Cowes, with Peter Rutter's *Quokka* and Tony Cox's *Prospect of Whitby* scoring a pair of seconds for the England Red team, served as little more than a footnote to the victory by Germany Red, who extended their margin in a series they had already won.

Rutter, England Red's captain, said: "The Germans deserve their success. We were beaten by those more used to IMS racing than we are in Britain and whose teams were better prepared."

Britain hardly went into the nine-race series from a position of strength, holding their first team meeting just 10 days before the start. Two boats for each of the Red and Green teams were last-minute affairs as well: Tony de Mulder arranged the charter of the Farr 40 *Victric V* a few weeks before the series while David Murrin's 1957 Laurent Giles-designed *Cetawayo* was stood down by the selectors after trials and then recalled at one week's notice, leaving an almighty scramble to rearrange leaves of absence.

In classic Solent conditions of fresh westerly winds, an east-flowing flood tide and showers trading places with sunshine, the nine teams were subjected to a final test with not every boat getting high pass marks. Several boats fluffed their starts in the strong tide while ragged crew work and

conditions accounted for Belgium's *Dune* and *General Tapioca*.

The competitors enjoyed a well-run series with good course setting, but one wonders at what level this series will be pitched at in two years' time. The event encompassed the high-calibre German line-ups and a Spanish team coming to Cowes to celebrate their club's centenary.

Having raced against each other in Junior Offshore Group races over the years, Rutter and team-mate Cox (*Prospect of Whitby*) agreed that international team competition was something to aspire to. "For all of us, sailing for England is a big thing," said Rutter, "but we must come into this better prepared. That means selecting teams as early as Easter and much more back-up from the Royal Yachting Association for crew training and recruitment."

The Commodores' Cup is pitched at Corinthian owners and crews, with only three professionals allowed per team, two in the big-boat class and one in the mid-size fleet. Spotting the full-time sailmaker or recently returned Whitbread crew who have slipped past the organiser's scrutiny has been a side-show at the regatta. "We all like the idea of this being a Corinthian event, but the rules must be well-defined and rigorously applied or thrown out. Anything in between is a hornets' nest," said Rutter.