



STAFF PHOTO BY GORDON E. CALDWELL

**SMOOTH SAILING** — Heading out on the first leg of the initial race Friday are these Beetle Cats from clubs on the south side of the Cape in the first Yacht Club Invitational, hosted by the Hyannis Yacht Club. More Beetle Cats participated in the day-long event.

## Cup preparations under way

Western Australia is an area of the world that not very many people know anything about. That probably won't change over the next two years, but some groups that are learning all they can, as fast as they can, are the various America's Cup syndicates. By January 1987, the eyes of the sailing world will be focused directly on Perth, Fremantle, and the waters of the Indian Ocean.

One thing that will differentiate the Newport Cup Races from those coming up in Australia is the weather. The key word that seems applicable to the weather conditions near Perth is predictability. Unlike the situation at Newport, a win will not come out of any local knowledge.

In the summer along the coast near Perth, the wind appears in late morning every day. Within minutes, the seabreeze builds to 15 to 20 knots and stays at full strength until 6 or 7 p.m. The people of Perth who, of course, are familiar with its dependability, call the breeze the "Fremantle Doctor," because it brings daily relief from the midday heat.

Wind shifts will not be a factor in victory or defeat. Once the air gets up to full strength, it ceases to back. There is, of course, no land for thousands of miles to windward, so geographic shifts will not be a part of the game.

As far as currents and wave patterns are concerned, everything is again very predictable. The water in the racing area is pretty much a uniform depth, so the northbound current does not influence racing strategy. Rarely are the weather systems strong enough to create much in the way of waves or swells.

The sun shines every day, with air temperature in the 80s. Water temperature is always in the 70s, and perfect for an afternoon sail. Weather records for the racing area show that over the past 14 years, southwest winds between 15 and 25 knots were present during 92 percent of the afternoons.

Of course that part of Australia is already bustling as the locals get ready for their first defense of the Cup. Most of the accommodations that are presently there are sold out, and new construction is already be-

### Dock Lines By Joe Hoffman

hind schedule. As far as the defenders are concerned, things are moving along quickly now, too.

Alan Bond, who brought Australia II to Newport, is busy constructing his new Australia III. Bond announced this spring that he will campaign both the II and III in the defense trials, giving him two candidates of his own. He may have three if he goes on to build Australia IV, but that decision has not been made yet.

Sir James Hardy has his 12-meter, South Australia, in the water and has been training against the '83 Cup winner. South Australia seemed to be faster than the old boat in trials off Fremantle, but later, across the continent and in lighter air, it was Australia II that won, six races to one.

Kevin Parry's Taskforce '87 syndicate has had a boat in the water since last February. Her name is Kookaburra, but she has been shut out by the Hardy and Bond groups and to date has had no one to race against. Frustrated, Parry offered to bet Bond \$50,000 that he could beat Australia II but to no avail. Even so, he still has plans to go ahead with the construction of another 12-meter. She would carry the name K II.

How are the Americans doing? Well there are a lot of people in the fray. The America II Challenge out of the New York Yacht Club has two boats in the water, with a third scheduled for April '86. They have already raised 75 percent of their \$12 million budget. Their first boat is nicknamed "Lego." She is a full-scale working model for trying different keels, rudders, and rig positions.

Dennis Conner and the San Diego Yacht Club expect their first boat out of the boat yard yet this month. They of course have the '83 defender, Liberty, at their service, and both boats will be shipped very shortly to Australia. Sources say that Conner has raised about half of the same amount of money.

The Yale Corinthian Yacht Club in

Branford Connecticut has put a new winged keel on the 1974 Courageous and she is being called Courageous III. She has spent this summer working out in Boston Harbor and in September will be on her way to the land down under, where she will compete in the 12 Meter Worlds this spring.

The Eagle Syndicate out of Newport Beach, California, will build one boat. She is scheduled for launching in December or January. In the meantime, skipper Rod Davis and his leftover crew from Defender are working out in Magic. And in case you hadn't guessed, Magic carries a new Aussie type winged keel.

The St. Francis Yacht Club from San Francisco and skipper Tom Blackaller seem to be still interested. Their first boat should be in the water this month. This group takes pride in the fact that this is the first boat to be built on the West Coast.

The Chicago Yacht Club and one of America's best tacticians, Gary Jobson, are still alive. They have been fighting all kinds of legal battles to stay in the hunt, so far with some success. The Heart of America is the name of the syndicate, and their boat is expected to be ready about the first of the year. They have some money — so far, about a third of what they expect a serious challenge will take.

As far as the rest of the American syndicates are concerned, they all seem to be having their troubles. Some have had problems meeting various requirements set down by the Royal Perth Yacht Club; others just don't have the money.

The New Zealanders apparently will be there. Two boats are planned on a budget of \$4 million dollars. The first should be ready around the first of next year and will compete in the Worlds. The British still plan to compete, but their boat is not expected until April of '86, and some say that will be too late.

Two boats coming from the French, and a couple from Italy, look as if they will make it. The strongest has to be the Azzurra Challenge.

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