



See what I mean? Marcel Roux pitching Albert Lombard into the surf.

Photographs: ROB-RONALD REVOT

Long Distance Saltwater Rodeo

By ANNA TANNEBERGER

THE largest entry ever for an inflatable race lined up on Strandfontein beach for the start of the first national championship longhaul event, the Boland Bank Challenge, on Friday, September 28. After four last-minute scratchings, the entry stood at 73. The previous record was 49.

The course was to take them from Strandfontein to Elands Bay on Friday with a checkpoint at Doringbaai and a stopover at Lamberts Bay on Friday.

Saturday's racing was to have been from Elands Bay to Saldanha harbour, with a checkpoint at Dwarskersbos and stopover at Laaiplek. When weather conditions deteriorated organisers shortened course, with the last leg being a round trip from Laaiplek to a checkpoint at Britannia Bay and back.

Despite the shortened course the last leg on Saturday took its toll and only 58 made it to the finish.

The P2-class (up to 750cc) was won by Marcel Roux / Albert Lombard in the Peanut Power Gemini Sprint (Yamaha), followed by Johan Smit / Blackie Swart in the Shoprite Robbiduck (Yamaha) and Peter and Craig Bacon in the Viking Fisheries Robbiduck (Yamaha).

The P3-class (up to 550cc) was won by Brett Pagel / Glen McGillivray in the Neptune & Banzai Neptune (Tohatsu), followed by Martin Lotz / Ian Renecke in the AWH Motors Robbiduck (Suzuki) and Steven Tripney / Geoff Snelling in the FT Building & Basil Stark Robbiduck (Suzuki).

The winners of the P3 class had been Ian Wessels / Wilfred Chivel who weren't considered very fast, but were ultra-consistent.



P3 frontrunners Ian Wessels and Wilfred Chivell - transom 9cm too far back.

Experienced in longhauls, they regularly do 40-45 km runs.

However, they were disqualified after a protest was upheld when it was found that their boat's transom was 9 cm further back than the manufacturer's specification.

According to race convener Greg Williams it was the first time ever a boat had been measured.

"We've opened a can of worms and measuring will now be done regularly."

It was bad luck for Wessels / Chivel, because they had bought the boat in good faith, but Williams believes the public will

benefit in that manufacturers will now be forced to build to specifications.

An appeal has been lodged and a ruling is expected at the next SAPBA meeting.

The Le Mans start on Friday morning was hectic, frightening for the competitors maybe, but fun for spectators. Expected to be the most dangerous part of the race, it went off remarkably smoothly, considering that nerves had been stretched close to breaking point by delays as the organisers waited for the helicopter to arrive.

Competitors reported later that some boats, turning back on a wave, landed on top of them, leaving prop marks on their helmets. Amazingly, no casualties. The only serious injury happened right at the start when George Godfrey of Umtata flipped.

They seemed to take for ever to right the boat. Then Godfrey hobbled out in excruciating pain, with a broken ankle. No-one quite knows how, but one theory held that his foot was caught in the footstrap as they flipped. The SA Police paramedic crew was on the scene immediately and he was airlifted to the nearest hospital.

Judging by spectator reaction and personal preference, the best part of the race was the beaching and re-launching at checkpoints along the way. Crews were required to jump out, run round a mark shouting their number to the officials and get back in the boat to re-launch.

Each to his own method, of course. Roux / Lombard had it down to a fine art: a well-timed and co-ordinated beaching, diving out / propelled out by his momentum at the sudden stop, rolling onto his feet like a cat and up to the mark. Less athletic, but more entertaining, were those who took it as it came: ill-timed, crew caught off balance and simply pitched out every which way.

Soon the mark became hidden by people who had no business on the beach, but heightened other spectators' enjoyment as

BOLAND BANK CHALLENGE

Final Results

- P2**
- 1 M Roux / A Lombard
 - 2 J Smit / G Swart
 - 3 P Bacon / C Bacon
 - 4 M Watermeyer / S Weedon
 - 5 D Trueb / P Livesey
 - 6 C Leslie / J Hartenburg
 - 7 W Hennig / W Gibson
 - 8 R Roebert / W Gibson
 - 9 M Edwards / R du Preez
 - 10 D McGregor / A Wright

- P3**
- 1 B Pagel / G McGillivray
 - 2 M Lotz / I Renecke
 - 3 S Tripney / G Snelling
 - 4 S Fourie / F du Preez
 - 5 M Visser / D de Villiers
 - 6 C Daly / B Cuthbertson
 - 7 G Ferguson / R Fellows
 - 8 M de Pinto / L Farrella
 - 9 E Schonknecht / Z Schonknecht
 - 10 M Marais / W Kotze

These P3 results are provisional and subject to the outcome of I Wessels and W Chivell's appeal to SAIBA against their disqualification.