

BATTERED AND SHATTERED

Boating round the shores of beautiful Britain is always subject to the slings and arrows of our outrageous weather, but the Peter Stuyvesant British Offshore Championship series has been so far subjected to more than its fair share of inclement muck.

The first round at Poole was rough and blustery enough to make racing more of a torment than a pleasure, but the second leg at Fowey, scheduled for Saturday, May 24, had to be postponed 24 hours because the conditions were impossible.

In fact, they were so bad that many pundits thought Sunday would be out of the question, but they had reckoned without our lads' fighting spirit and when the weather eased off a fraction they were out there like a shot, come hell or high water — and they had both.

This was all the more of a shame because so much effort and enthusiasm had gone into the organisation of an event which, if the weather had been anywhere near reasonable, could have developed into something approaching the carnival atmosphere of the Cowes-Torquay-Cowes.

Schools ran a competition for the best picture of a powerboat, the championship leg was advertised for at least a 20-mile area, local television had been organised and the race was the main subject of conversation for the Cornish residents throughout the weekend. Overall there was nothing more either Peter Stuyvesant or UKOBA could have done to make the affair a success.

Forty seven boats came under starter's orders and a spectacular sight they made. The first leg was downwind, when the seas were not too bad, but they had their first real taste of things to come when turning the first buoy and being confronted by the awesome waters that are a speciality of the Cornish coastline.

An indication of how rough it was come from Aeon Splashdown, a Cruiser Class A boat, who managed to lead the entire fleet to the first buoy. The Class III's meanwhile seemed to be progressing more on the horizontal than the vertical and soon after the start Steve Pile found himself swamped, sinking and almost run down by another competitor. Splashdown stopped to lend assistance, but it was not needed, for the prompt action by a police launch and their divers soon had the hapless crew safe and sound and the craft was recovered.

Crews soon realised that this was definitely not the case for full throttle. Discretion rather than valour was the order of the day.

In their element

Of course, rough weather boats were in their element and the Class III London and Manchester had a field day. Bruce Nash, fresh from his round-Britain marathon, saw this as a great chance again to demonstrate the superiority of his Phantom 25 in adverse conditions and promptly raced clear of the fleet, not to be seen again until the safety of Fowey harbour.

In fact, seventeen and a half minutes elapsed before his nearest rival, Avia Watches, driven by Ian Bernie, battled over the finishing line. Then came Peter and Jan Armstrong in Aphrodisiac followed by the Toleman twins in Fayanagin. It is interesting to note that all finishers so far were Class III's, and even fifth overall was the Cruiser Class B Virgo, with Peter Hewitt at the helm.

It was only after Phanta C 11 had crossed the line in sixth place that we found the first Class II rig to come home in Gus It, a Cougar cat built by Wright Marine and driven by Paul Sinclair.

All the drivers expressed themselves battered and shattered and the general

opinion was that to finish was an achievement in itself. For the record, there were four non-starters and sixteen retirements.

One might think that an experience such as this might have dampened enthusiasm, but not a bit of it. If anything drivers are even more determined to make their mark in the Stuyvesant series and prove that even the British weather will never get the better of them.

Class II: 1. Gus It (P.Sinclair/R.Culpan) — 1.35.07 (time) — 28.79 (average speed); 2. Aquaglide (R.Cook/J.Donohoo) — 1.50.11 — 24.85.

Class III: 1. London & Manchester (B.Nash/A.Gordon) — 1.13.05 — 34.47; 2. Avia Watches (I.Birnie/A.Baldwin) — 1.29.12 — 30.07; 3. Aphrodisiac (P.Armstrong/J.Armstrong) — 1.31.49 — 29.83; 4. Fayanagin (G.Toleman/M.Toleman) — 1.32.01 — 29.76; 5. Phanta C II (H.Wretham/J.Hedges) — 1.34.25 — 29.00; 6. (L.Walling/M.Jones) — 1.36.28 — 28.39; 7. Miss Toyota (M.Pannell/G.Stuart) — 1.45.39 — 25.92; 8. Panache Two (B.Jones/B.Wilcockson) — 1.51.34 — 24.55; 9. Amacryl (W.Matcham/T.Hedges) 2.04.40 — 21.97
Cruiser Class: Class B — 1. Vergo (P.Hewitt/C.Blight) — 1.32.56 — 24.34; Class A — 1. Pent Up Fury (M.Lloyd/C.Duffy) — 1.40.57 — 22.40; Class A — 2. Aeon Splashdown (D.Graham-Smith/P.Rutherford) — 1.50.04 — 20.55; Day 1 — Mardigras (C.Stewart/J.Vaughan) — 1.57.33 — 19.24

Class IVE: No Starters

Class IVD (Curtailed after 2 laps): D9 — 1. Red Ruff V1 (K.Huntley/P.Langley)

Class IVC (Curtailed after 2 laps): C12 — 1. Yo Yo (A.Fisher)

Class IVB (Curtailed after 1 lap): B5 — 1. (D.Mortimore/K.Mortimore); B44 — 2. TK2 (R.Holloway/A.Holloway)

Class IVA (Curtailed after 1 lap): A8 — 1. TK3 — (I.Smith/T.Barnard)



Steve Pile's navigator on the overturned hull. After a late start, the boat hit a wave and turned over like a cat. 'The reason I'm not on the boat is that my navigator kept pushing me off!' said Steve

