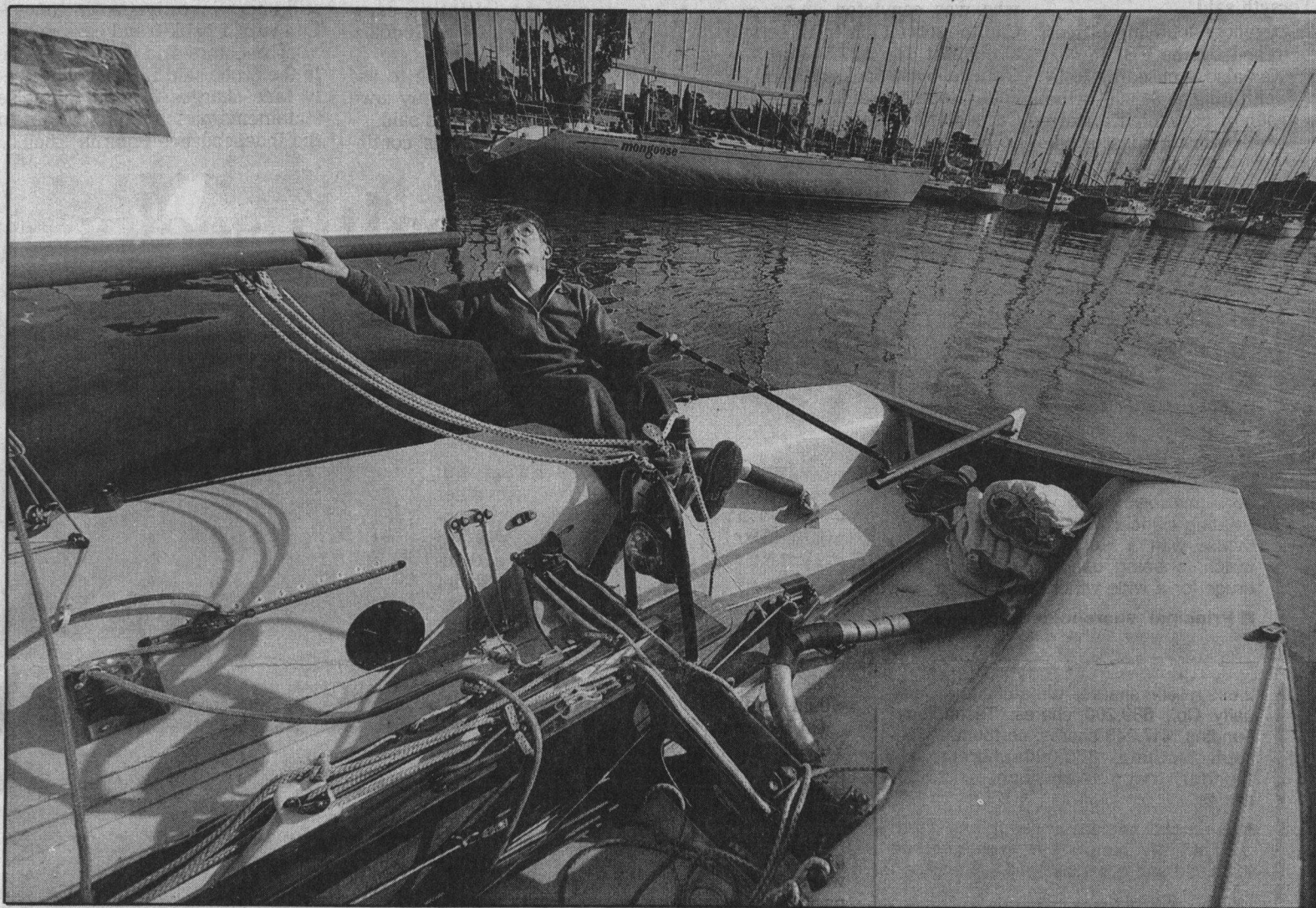


# Light as a 280-lb. feather

BOATS & BOATING



Paul Tara, a Ben Lomond sailor, performs a sail check, above. Tara finished 25th in the last major international race

held in Monterey Bay in 1971. The 505s weigh only 280 pounds and easily can be lifted out of the water, below.

Rick E. Martin — Mercury News

## World-class yacht racing returns to Monterey Bay

By Paul Rogers  
Mercury News Staff Writer

An estimated 100 racing yachts, many from Europe and Australia, will come to Santa Cruz next August to compete in a weeklong world championship regatta that local sailors are describing as the largest international sailing event held in Monterey Bay in 20 years.

The race, held last year in Sweden, will feature a class of small, lightweight sailboats that travel nearly twice as fast as the yachts in the America's Cup race.

The Santa Cruz Yacht Club will host the race — known as the 1992 International 505 World Championships — from Aug. 8 to Aug. 23.

The event is named for the size of the boats, which are 16 feet or 5.05 meters long.

In interviews Monday, organizers said the event will include few of the stereotypes most people think of when they hear "yacht rac-

ing."

Unlike the famous America's Cup race, for example, which will occur in San Diego next May, 505 boats are not sailed by teams of millionaire professionals, but by two-person crews of amateur enthusiasts who pay their own travel expenses and receive no prize money.

"The boats in the America's Cup cost \$60 million," said Barbara Brown, a spokeswoman for the Santa Cruz club. "505s cost \$14,000. Hopefully, this will show people that boating doesn't have to be a rich man's sport."

The smaller boats actually have more in common with oversize sailboards or Hobie catamarans than with the massive yachts that frequent many races.

They are rigged with three large sails, weigh only 280 pounds and must be kept from

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## Yacht racing returns to Monterey Bay

### YACHT

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capsizing in stiff winds by a sailor, strapped into a harness or "trapeze," who leans over the side.

"This is about the smallest class of boat you can consistently race in the ocean," said Paul Tara, a Ben Lomond sailor who will attempt to qualify in the event.

Tara, 44, finished 25th in the last major international race held in Monterey Bay, the 1971 505 world championships.

He describes larger yacht races, such as the America's Cup, as floating parades in which the lead rarely changes hands.

In the America's Cup, boats travel about 12 knots, or 14 mph. In 505 racing, they can eclipse 20 knots, or 23 mph.

As a result, 505 races are comparable to aquatic motorcycle races, Tara said, with leaders pushing their boats so hard they often can capsize attempting to round buoys.

### Wind to determine course

The course for next summer's regatta will depend on wind conditions. It probably will start near the mouth of the Santa Cruz Yacht Harbor, at the one-mile buoy, and complete a 12-mile loop.

Landing the race was a coup for the Santa Cruz Yacht Club, but the group's 450 members now are scrambling to make sure it goes off successfully.

They are filling volunteer rosters for timers, scorers, parking attendants and host families to provide lodging to the estimated 300 sailors and their families who will descend on Santa Cruz from 15 countries.

### Big crowds expected

Thousands of spectators are expected to line the beaches, and, if the weather cooperates, the event is certain to put Santa Cruz on the yacht racing map.

Brown said she's happy to help with the organizing, but won't get near the speedy 505 yachts.

"Racing one is like standing in a cold shower with all your clothes on," she joked. "And that's on a good day."

### IF YOU'RE INTERESTED

For more information about the 505 world championships, contact the Santa Cruz Yacht Club at (408) 425-0690.