

# Montgomery ditched

Team NZ stopped veteran TV broadcaster from joining the Louis Vuitton commentary team, saying it's time for some new blood. **Jane Phare and Nicola Shephard report.**



GRANT DALTON

**T**eam New Zealand boss Grant Dalton blocked veteran yachting broadcaster Peter Montgomery from covering the Louis Vuitton Pacific series. During discussions with TVNZ over coverage of the regatta, Dalton said he stipulated Team NZ would have a say in who covered the regatta.

"The arrangement that I made personally with TVNZ was that we would be involved in the selection of the commentators. My preference was then, and still is, Martin Tasker and Peter Lester."

He told the *Herald on Sunday* last night he had requested that Montgomery was not asked to commentate on the series. "I think it's time to move on."

Neither Montgomery nor TVNZ returned calls last night.

But Dalton, fresh from a Team NZ win over BMW Oracle yesterday, said it was time to "reblood" everything about the sport, including broadcasting coverage. "This regatta is an opportunity to start to move on and change."

He hoped the new event would help revitalise the sport. "It has got a bit dead and a bit predictable." Team NZ was

also introducing fresh blood and Dalton said he thought Tasker, Lester and John McBeth were doing a great job for TVNZ.

The whole approach to the regatta commentary was new, including live coverage on radio station FM103.

Using one camera on North Head and Virtual Eye, the regatta could be covered relatively cheaply "in recessionary times".

Dalton denied any bad blood between him and Montgomery and said he held him no grudge. But sources close to Team NZ say the team think Montgomery is too closely aligned to Alinghi and Brad Butterworth. During the last America's Cup in Valencia, rivalry between the teams ran deep as Alinghi tried to take control of the cup to a new dimension, including press coverage.

Last night Dalton said he was "delighted" with the way the regatta, organised by Team NZ, Louis Vuitton and the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron, was progressing. It was good to see Oracle boss Larry Ellison back in New Zealand and sailing with his syndicate yesterday, he said.

With the future of the America's Cup bogged down by expensive court battles between Oracle and Ernesto

Bertarelli's Alinghi, Dalton hoped the Louis Vuitton Pacific series would help boost the all-important support of the New Zealand public.

While he couldn't influence the outcome of the court case, he hoped the regatta would make those participating want to get back out on the water.



PETER MONTGOMERY

## BRIEFS

### Police shot at

Boy racers shot at a Christchurch police officer with an air rifle and surrounded him last night. Police say the situation in the city is getting out of control. Boy racers in Canterbury received almost half of all tickets handed out nationally by police for noisy vehicles last year. In the latest incident, Christchurch police had bottles thrown at their cars and one was shot at when they attended two incidents where cars were doing burnouts. "It's only a matter of time before someone's seriously injured or killed, and that could quite possibly be a police officer," Sergeant Nigel Armstrong said.

### Motive unclear

Police were yesterday still hunting a gunman who shot a Hamilton man inside his home. The 51-year-old victim is in a stable condition after undergoing surgery at Waikato Hospital to remove a bullet from his shoulder. Police said the shot was fired from outside the man's Duke St, Frankton, home but they could not say if it was a drive-by shooting. Police interviewed the man at his hospital bedside, but said they still did not have a motive for the shooting and appealed for the public's help.

### Correction

We reported last week that former Associate Corrections Minister Tariana Turia wrote to department officials on ministerial letterhead paper in 2001, asking that an adoptive son, Mark Turia, be shifted to a prison closer to his family. In fact the person referred to in Mrs Turia's correspondence was not Mark Turia but a state ward of the Turia family. The *Herald on Sunday* apologises for the error.

# Billionaire's gloomy big day out



LOOKING ON: Larry Ellison, right.

ROBERT TRUHEN

SILICON VALLEY billionaire Larry Ellison slipped off his 56m Boating palace Zenji to earn his keep racing against Team New Zealand on BMW Oracle in the Louis Vuitton regatta yesterday.

But his presence was not enough to inspire his syndicate to victory, with Emirates Team NZ winning the Louis Vuitton Pacific Series match-up by 28 seconds. Spectators took advantage of the fine weather watching the day's four races in which around

100 boats took part.

"It was a fantastic day," said former Team NZ chief executive Ross Blackman, who was commenting on the races for BSPORT sailing radio.

"The wind was close to perfect — it was a very steady southeaster of 15-20 knots. The wind was shifty which, in other words, means it was moving from left to right and that makes for very interesting racing."

Blackman said some of the boats got "incredibly

close to the action" when the race yachts sailed into the spectator fleet.

In yesterday's three other races, Greek Challenge beat Shosholova by 56 seconds, Damiani Italia beat Team China by 77 seconds and Alinghi beat Luna Rossa by 40 seconds.

Auckland Coastguard reported a steady day on the water but said boats were well-behaved.

**1** Louis Vuitton Pacific Series, p66-67