

John Martin is catching BOC leaders

By JOHN VAN DER LINDEN

JOHN MARTIN is still in the race; not only that, he's catching up with the leaders.

The South African in Tuna Marine Voortrekker II told his wife Lynne yesterday that he would repair the broken auto-pilot as soon as the weather improved. Tuna Marine is sailing under reduced sail and in a 20- to 25-knot westerly.

Yesterday there was speculation that the broken auto-pilot might force Martin out of the BOC round-the-world solo yacht race.

Bertie Reed in Stabulo Boss reported by radio yesterday that he too was having auto-pilot problems and had been doing a lot of hand steering. An earlier leakage problem, which had kept him pumping the boat out for a while, was under control, he added.

BOC race headquarters yesterday confirmed that Titouan Lamazou in Ecureuil d'Aquitaine was in the lead and doing a steady 11,5knots.

Jean-Yves Terlain in UAP was in second place followed by Philippe Jeantot's Credit Agricole III, Guy Bernadin's Biscuits Lu and Tuna Marine Voortrekker II, doing 9,27 knots in 5th place.

All boats which had returned were once again heading towards Australia, the spokesman said, though Finland's Pentti Salmi's entry Colt by Rettig also had a broken auto-pilot.

The ill-fated New Zealander, Richard McBride in Neptune's Express, who is heading for Cape Town after having stopped in Brazil for repairs, has broken his fourth spinnaker halyard and is sailing along at eight knots under jib alone.