

Stormy seas torture BOC sailors

Sunday Times Reporter **VETERAN** Springbok yachtsman Bertie Reed — dogged by bad luck in the second leg of the BOC around-the-world-alone race — was forced to put into the Australian port of Albany yesterday suffering from diesel fuel poisoning.

In another setback, the nuggety sailor had to carry out emergency repairs to his yacht after it was battered during the stormy crossing from Cape Town to Australia.

The Southern Indian Ocean — one of the world's most treacherous stretches of water — has taken its toll on the lone yachtsmen.

So dangerous has the crossing been, with howling gales of up to 65 knots, that 11 of the 19 yachts have been reported by race headquarters to have either capsized or rolled through a full 360 degrees in wild and stormy seas.

Gales

At least three boats have been seriously damaged. Race headquarters confirmed that virtually every single boat in the fleet had been "knocked down" at least once in six days by shrieking gales.

The skipper of a Finnish boat, Harry Harkimo, reported to race HQ that he had rolled through 360 degrees twice in one night last weekend.

At virtually the same time South Africa's other solo yachtsman in the race, John Martin, in Tuna Marine Voortrekker II — who won the first leg from Newport to Cape Town — was "knocked down" twice in a screaming 65-knot gale.

Another of the yachtsmen, Jacques de Roux — who survived a sinking in the 1982-83 race — capsized twice in the same gale last weekend and lost his steering wheel overboard.

Mountainous

In two narrow brushes with death, Reed's yacht, Stabulo Boss, was knocked down in mountainous seas two weeks ago.

Last week he was almost washed overboard when a rogue wave hit his boat as he was working on deck without a lifeline.

According to BOC race headquarters in Sydney, Reed cut his hand early this week and the wound had become infected with diesel.

His wife, Pat, said he had a similiar infection during the last BOC "and his glands started swelling".

She said: "Bertie called me from the small port of Albany to say he was safe, but that he had to do a lot of repairs to his yacht.

"One of his winches had to be replaced after it was ripped out of its brackets and washed overboard.

"Several other parts, including his generator, had to be repaired, and he said his rudder was hanging on like a door without hinges."