

Reed in last-ditch bid to stay in race

CAPE TOWN — Bertie Reed is involved in a last-ditch effort to try to stay in the Globe Challenge round-the-world solo yacht race.

In a radio telephone interview from Grinaker last night, Reed said he was still trying to re-align the rudders, which he said was "quite an uncomfortable business as the boat is bouncing around all the while".

He said the last solo, non-stop round-the-world race took place 21 years ago "and I must really try to finish this one. If they wait another 21 years to organise such a race, I may not be able to take part".

Reed, who last night was about 620 nautical miles from Port Elizabeth and sailing in a north-westerly wind of 26 knots, said that there seemed to be a small chance of him continuing.

He will make his final decision today.

He had notified race headquarters in Paris of his, withdrawal because, once they had spotted his course change on the Argos satellite, they would have become worried.

"I am sailing in a north-easterly direction so that, if I am able by some chance to continue, I am still more or less on course. On the other hand, if I decide finally to withdraw, I am also in a position to go to Cape Town."

Earlier, Reed told the Daily Dis-

patch Cape Town correspondent that he had decided to retire from the race "because I do not want to put other people's lives at risk".

Frenchman Philippe Poupon, whose yacht Fleury Michon capsized in the Roaring Forties nearly two weeks ago, praised Reed for his "very wise decision".

"Sailing hard down-wind with following seas in the tough conditions of the Southern Ocean with faulty steering could have been disastrous for Bertie," Poupon said.

Reed, the only South African competitor in the race round the world, said he was having to cope with an accumulation of technical and other problems, primarily related to malfunctioning of Grinaker's auto-pilots, "which are not coping with the boat's steering systems".

He would not, alone and at sea, be able to correct these problems.

"I decided I did not want to be responsible for any search and rescue operations that could put other people's lives in jeopardy and put single-handed sailing as such in the dock."

● Another race yacht, the UAP, skippered by the 45-year-old Jean-Yves Terlain, has retired and is limping towards Cape Town after her mast broke in three places at about 1 am yesterday. — Sapa