

Flat out for Rio as Martin chases Guy

Yachting Reporter

SOUTH Africa's John Martin in Tuna Marine Voortrekker II is thankful to be back in warm waters after leaving the Roaring Forties.

Martin is trying to catch fourth-placed Guy Bernadin in Biscuits Lu on the third leg of the BOC Challenge round-the-world yacht race.

Frenchman Philippe Jeantot won the leg in record time yesterday.

Martin is sailing at eight knots in flat seas in the warm Brazilian Current after leaving the cold Falkland Current and the strong winds below 40 deg south.



"I hope to beat Guy and be in Rio within a week," Martin said in a radio-telephone conversation yesterday.

"I'm racing flat out for Rio. Regrettably, I made a tactical error which has given Guy a bit of an edge. He has

moved about 40 miles ahead of me."

Martin had a narrow escape in heavy mist off the Falkland Islands.

"My satellite navigation system has been on the blink and I wasn't able to plot my position. Thankfully I have a radar system. I switched it on and found I was five miles from the island.

"A British frigate picked up my radar signal and came to investigate. They gave me my position, which helped me to get back on course."

Meanwhile, Martin's back-up man, Rob Sharp, who helped to prepare the yacht for the first two legs of the race, is kicking his heels in Cape Town trying to organise sponsorship to get to Brazil to prepare the boat for the last stage.

Sharp, who put in long hours in Newport and Cape Town preparing the yacht, could not get a visa to Australia at the end of the second leg.

Anyone willing to help can notify Martin's manager, Mr Tony McKeever (☎ 24-4217).