

Martin vows to sail solo again

SPRINGBOK yachtsman John Martin, back in Cape Town after his BOC ordeal, has said he 'will go round the world single-handed again, in whatever shape or form'.

He arrived at D F Malan Airport exactly a month after his high-tech yacht, Allied Bank, had collided with a 'growler' — a semi-submerged chunk of an iceberg — in the treacherous Southern Ocean.

Martin was leading the field in the single-handed round-the-world BOC Challenge when disaster struck.

He tried to keep Allied Bank afloat and sailing, but was forced to scuttle the R1,5-million yacht three days later in a dramatic rescue operation by fellow Springbok Bertie Reed.

Sipping a drink at the Royal Cape Yacht Club, Martin admitted his confidence had taken 'a bit of a knock'.

The BOC, he said, was not 'the be-all and end-all of yachting, but I will go round the world single-handed again, in whatever shape or form'.

'I am too young to stop this game now,' the 36-year-old sailor declared.

Even before the next BOC he wanted to do 'quite a few races'.

Asked about the chances of an Allied Bank II seeing the light, he said he had already met the management of the Allied, who had sponsored the ill-fated first yacht.

They 'reiterated in principle' that another Allied Bank would be built, said

Martin.

A new Allied would not be a carbon-copy of the first. Although Allied Bank had been 'a very good all-round boat, more than capable of winning the BOC', there were some 'grey areas'. The old Allied had not been very fast on a 90 degree reach for example, he said.

Changing rules in the four-yearly BOC could also have an effect on a new design.

On his Southern Ocean ordeal, from which he escaped with a flag, his ship's bell, sailing kit, 'and me', he said his main emotion at the time had been 'survival'.

'I have sympathy for those who support me and those who are close to me, sometimes they take more strain than I do on the ocean.'