

# JJ beats the world's seas

SOUTH African solo yachtsman Jean-Jacques Provoyeur completed his first circumnavigation of the globe this week to take fifth place in Class 1 of the BOC single-handed challenge.

It is a remarkable feat for any yachtsman but more so when the sailor's previous solo experience before entering was a 200 mile cruise from Cape Town to Dassen island and back.

After more than 27 000 miles since the global marathon began and finished at Charleston USA, Provoyeur 44, proved he had not only the skill but also the mettle to achieve against impossible odds. His total time of 133 days eclipsed by a week the legendary Bertie Reed's record in the same yacht four years ago.

But the 1980 South African Yachtsman of the Year's race has to be seen against a backdrop of a mind-boggling last-minute campaign to race an outclassed, antiquated yacht against the world's finest racing machines backed by multi-million rand campaigns.

He finished some 10 days behind the winner, Frenchman Cris-

---

## Graham Lizamore

---

tophe Auguin, who sailed his state-of-the-art Sceta Calberson into the record books to capture his second Class 1 victory and pocket the \$100 000 (about R362 000) purse. His record circumnavigation of 121 days eclipsed his 1991 winning time by a staggering 19 days.

Hocked to the eyeballs, Provoyeur's campaign was in danger of collapsing when he got to Cape Town. "The intensity of knowing that both my wife and I had put everything we owned into this campaign was frightening. Unless a sponsor came we would be broke," he said.

A computer networking company stepped in just before the start of the second leg and the yacht, which Provoyeur built for Bertie Reed's 1990/91 BOC Challenge, was renamed Novell South Africa and nine months later he enjoyed the distinction of being the first to carry the new South

African flag around the world.

He was one of 12 to finish — 20 started, two yachts were lost at sea and one yachtsman disappeared, presumed drowned.

Near tragedy came a week after the start. On a dark, thunderous night JJ lost control of the 60 footer. The mainsheet whipped around his throat. The yacht jibed, hurling him by the neck across the deck, smashing his face into a winch.

"I was bruised, cut and a little concussed and very scared," said the former paratrooper.

Later Provoyeur thrust a knife through the palm of his hand while slicing a cucumber. He strapped it up with surgical clips and sailed one-handed for almost a week, losing valuable time.

With the race over JJ is determined to enter again but this time in a winning yacht. "A competitive fifth generation yacht, capable of beating the French, must be built. We have, as was proved with the radical Allied Bank in the 1990/91 race, the designers and yachtsmen capable of winning the BOC."