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Reed, Martin take the honours

By Graham Lizamore

TORQUAY — Grinaker, the South African entry in the Transatlantic BOC yacht race, sailed across the finish line here just after 6 pm last night to take first place in the 3000-mile event.

Grinaker, co-skippered by Bertie Reed and John Martin and crewed by Jannie Reuvers and Rhett Goldswain, completed the North Atlantic crossing from Newport to Torquay in 16 days, 18 minutes and 27 seconds.

Arriving six hours earlier than expected, they outsailed Australia's Jarkan (Kanga Birtles) and Spain's BBV Expo (Jose de Ugarte) for first place among the BOC solo round the world yachts.

Hunters Child, which finished on Monday, took line honours in 13 days, 10 hours, 57 minutes and 12 seconds.

But as the hi-tech yacht skippered by Warren Luhrs did not compete in the solo round the world race, the organisers decided the first BOC yacht home would win the first prize — a bag of gold sovereigns worth R4 000.

At this stage, New Spirit of Ipswich, skippered by Briton Josh Hall, appears to be sailing to win on handicap.

Reed congratulated Luhrs, saying: "He sailed a great race with a yacht that was lighter and better prepared for a record-breaking race.

"But officially they were not in the race and that's all that mattered to us."

Grinaker was held back for a week when averaging about 4.3 knots a day but Martin quipped that the race was "a summer's holiday the North Atlantic".

Asked whether the race had been worthwhile, Martin, who was forced to abandon his yacht Allied Bank in the Southern Ocean after hitting a small iceberg during the BOC Challenge, said he was eager to start preparing for either a Globe or Whitbread race.

"But I have to find a sponsor within the next two months," he said.