



Norwegian freighter saves Irish yachtsman

Staff Reporter

A 63-YEAR-OLD Irish sailor trying to circumnavigate the world said yesterday that he owed his life to the crew of a Norwegian freighter who rescued him after his yacht was damaged in heavy seas.

Mr Patrick Lawless battled for ten days without a rudder in the South Atlantic to reach the African coast before he was rescued by the ship about 1 900km from Cape Town. Mr Lawless said strong winds and "boisterous seas" damaged his rudder on August 31.

"I was heading for the South African coast under selfsteering but the broken rudder blade interfered.

At this stage the 7,6m-long yacht was taking in water and Mr Lawless said he doubted whether he would have reached the coast.

"On September 9 about 12.30pm I saw the lights of a ship in the distance and contacted them on radio," Mr Lawless said.

The crew helped him on board in very rough seas.

The yacht was left behind and Mr Lawless said he thought it must have sunk. He arrived in Cape Town from Saldanha Bay yesterday morning.

IRISH LUCK . . . Mr Patrick Lawless at the Royal Cape Yacht Club yesterday after his rescue in the South Atlantic by the crew of a Norwegian ship at the weekend. Mr Lawless said he doubts whether he would attempt the journey again: "My wife said I had a lust for the oceans but that is well satisfied now".

Picture: MARIUS BOSCH