



Master yachtsman BERTIE REED is hoping to make it third time lucky when he sets off on the BOC single-handed round-the-world race.

Biltong Bertie's ready for his last major race

By SAMANTHA BARTLETT

THE countdown is on for the start of Bertie Reed's third BOC single-handed round-the-world race.

Biltong Bertie — actually Stanley John Reed — stands on his yacht in Newport, Rhode Island, and surveys the sleek lines of the craft.

The weathered face settles into a smile and the old sea dog looks satisfied.

For the third time, Bertie will tackle the 43 200km battle against the elements in one of the most gruelling tests of survival a man can undertake.

He is happy to take up the challenge once again and confident that this time he will take the honours from Philippe Jeantot, the Frenchman who beat him to the finish line both times.

After all, it's third time lucky, especially since this is the last major yacht race Bertie will undertake.

"After this I'm going to be a land-lubber and tend to my various business interests in Cape Town," he said.

Until the next time, anyway.

Bertie is no stranger to Port Elizabeth. He grew up in the area and attended a high school in the city.

Then he joined the navy to see the world, but got to see a lot of sea instead.

Stanley, as he was then known, was born in Port Elizabeth and spent the first few years of his life on Granny Reed's farm

near Uitenhage with his parents and three brothers.

It was up early in the morning for young Stanley, who had to catch a train to Innes School in Uitenhage, then back again by bus in the afternoon.

Bertie then moved to Steytler Township, near PE's Kensington, with his family and attended Lawson Brown High School until the age of 16.

"I left school in Standard 8, much against the wishes of my parents and teachers.

"I actually intended to join the Rhodesian Army to see a bit of the world, but my parents wouldn't let me," he said.

"So I joined the railways, but after a year as a clerk in Durban I resigned to join the navy."

And the rest, they say, is history.

Bertie went from strength to strength in the sailing world.

Apart from his BOC successes — in the 1982-83 race he came second and in the 1986-87 race ninth — he has won several major competitions.

Among them are a first place in the 1973 Cape to Rio race, first in the Round Britain and Ireland race in 1982 when he broke the record and also a record-breaker in the 1987 Bermuda One-Two.

Bertie has sailed in PE many times through the years, including taking 4½ hours off the PE to East London race on the legendary Voortrekker.