

Smooth going for Reed in spite of collision

By ROGER WILLIAMS

SPRINGBOK sailor Bertie Reed reported by radio late yesterday that the performance of his new ocean racing maxi Grinaker, had not been affected by damage caused when the boat was accidentally rammed from astern by a French yacht in the Bay of Biscay on Sunday night.

He said he would steer Grinaker by hand until repairs could be carried out once the weather had abated.

The collision occurred soon after the start — from the French fishing town of Les Sables d'Olonne — of the single-handed 1989/90 Globe Challenge non-stop race around the world.

Race headquarters reported that Reed and the crack French single-hander Philippe Jeantot, sailing his new maxi Credit Agricole, were both "somewhat shaken" after the incident but that damage to their vessels was apparently minor.

Battling winds of 35 knots and sailing at more than 14 knots, Jeantot and Reed — single-handed racing rivals

but close friends — had been racing alongside one another, about 100 metres apart. Race headquarters said Credit Agricole was on autopilot when it began to wander towards Grinaker. Reed tried desperately but unsuccessfully to alert Jeantot, who was below at the time.

Reed almost managed to steer Grinaker clear of the French boat, and the prompt avoiding action he took helped keep collision damage to a minimum.

He reported by radio that part of his Predica safety unit was slightly damaged, as was the metal bracket protecting Grinaker's antennae.

● Latest position reports show Credit Agricole in second place and Grinaker in fifth position as the Globe Challenge fleet of 13 yachts heads southward from the French coast. American Mike Plant in Duracell is leading the fleet, with Titouan Lamazou in Ecureuil d'Aquitaine in third place and Loick Peyron in Lada Poch lying fourth.