

DURBAN — Legendary single-handed yachtsman Bertie Reed intends sailing in his fourth BOC Round-the-World Challenge next year — but Cape Town is under threat of losing the race as a stop-over to Durban and South Africa could lose the race altogether.

“Biltong Bertie”, 50, who almost lost his right leg after a car accident two years ago, said he made his decision two weeks ago when the plaster cast came off, and in six months his sailing legs would be “back to full strength”.

The veteran “sea dog” rose to world yachting fame in the first BOC race in 1976 when he sailed the ageing 15-year-old yacht Voortrek-

Biltong Bertie to sail in his 4th BOC yacht race

ker 1 to second place. In his third race in 1991 he received numerous accolades for bravery following his rescue of compatriot John Martin in the Southern Ocean.

“I’ve still got the use of Grinaker (his 1991 BOC yacht). All she needs is a new keel, sails and a carbon-fibre mast and I’ll be aiming to finish in the first five,” Reed said, adding that a successful race would see him equal the single-handed record of

four circumnavigations held by Frenchman Philippe Jeantot.

“For the first time there is no South African yacht in the race and we’ve got to be seen going around the world,” Reed said.

Storm clouds were brewing yesterday, however, when the Royal Cape Yacht Club Commodore, Mr John Levin, said the race organisers had refused to meet the club’s request of R60,000 to host the stop over.

Reed was critical of moves afoot for Durban or Mauritius to host the stopover. “Everybody enjoys Cape Town but it’s unfair to ask Royal Cape to come up with the money. If Cape Town can’t afford R60 000 how can we bid for the Olympic Games?”

“You cannot send single-handed yachtsmen 1 000 miles up the coast to Durban,” Reed added. “The shipping lanes are too dangerous and the huge seas on the continental shelf have broken tankers in half.”

Mr Levin said the club planned to berth the yachts in the yacht club instead of Duncan Dock, but needed the R60 000 for security and the erection of bridges, fences and offices. — DDC