

# Repaired autopilot a boost for J J's morale

By DALE GRANGER

J J PROVOYEUR, South Africa's sole remaining BOC Challenge participant left with the object of sailing the country's new flag around-the-world solo, boosted his morale in the Southern Ocean yesterday when he repaired his broken autopilot.

The Capetonian, lying fourth in Class One on Novell South Africa astern of American Steve Pettengill (Hunters Child), French sailing-legend Jean Luc Van den Heede (Vendee Entreprises) and race leader Christophe Auguin (Sceta Calberson), said he had been in radio contact

with technical experts in Cape Town for advice to repair the autohelm.

He had been "very worried" that his last autopilot would fail too, as that would have left him with a thankless and exhausting task of having to nurse his yacht over the remaining 4 000 miles of the second leg to Sydney in Australia.

At 49 11 South and 58 02 East, Provoyeur, who is about 260 miles astern of Auguin, said he was closer to Antartica than South Africa and doing nine knots, but he was "missing home. It's quite lonely and bleak out here, and it's been freezing.

"I think my morale is quite good, but you

live on tenterhooks as you never know what could happen," he added in reference to the cruel Southern Ocean.

He said that the cabin temperature was down to seven degrees, and that he was wearing a fibre-pile jersey and top as well as a Farmer John top. He was sleeping in two sleeping bags, but it was "still cold".

He said that his left hand, badly injured when a knife he was using to cut a gem squash on Friday slipped and pierced the palm, was healing slowly. Every time he opened his hand, the wound split open.

"I'm looking forward to get to Sydney. It will be far different from this," he said.