

Voortrekker in trouble

TUNA Marine Voortrekker, the South African entry in the double-handed Transatlantic Yacht Race, had a close call with a container ship as she battled through stormy weather in the early stages.

Voortrekker's crew of captain John Martin and Robert Sharp — both of Cape Town — who had problems with the yacht's steering gears, had to take evasive action after coming within 40m of the container ship.

A spokeswoman for Race Headquarters in Plymouth said Voortrekker spent six hours "going round in circles" while Martin and Sharp repaired the steering.

The fleet of 49 that started out from Plymouth on Sunday has been battered by bad weather and two of the four Class Three yachts (13,72-15,24m) have been forced to retire.

The Race finish is at Newport, Rhode Island.