

Paris sails into second

■ Alan Paris has moved into second in his class as he sails down the coast of Portugal

BY DON BURGESS

AROUND Alone sailor Alan Paris has moved into second place in his class in the second leg of his journey. Paris, who had to put into the Spanish port of Bayona earlier this week because of inclement weather, is sailing down the coast of Portugal in BTC Velocity while Tommy Hilfiger's Freedom America is slightly ahead of him.

Some of the larger Class one boats are half way down the coast of Africa while others are still in port trying to fix their craft.

In an e-mail earlier in the week Paris said: "It really is very difficult to be in port when all you have planned and organized towards is that you should be at sea racing to Cape Town."

He said after reading stories on how the skipper of the Solidarities curled up in a fetal position on the floor because of 75 knot winds, "I believe being in Bayona is the right choice."

Because of the dicey weather, skipper Graham Dalton has suffered a mild back injury.

He felt vindicated in being the first skipper putting into port when the rest of Class 2 followed suit as well as one boat from Class 1.

"Our position in the storm, being slower than the Open 60's, would have meant longer in these strong winds and furious seas as well as potentially dangerous drifting in the event of a broken mast towards the unforgiving shores of Spain and Portugal."

He was able to relax a bit in a hotel, but even in harbour BTC Velocity's forestay hooked around the mast of Ocean Planet.

"When I arrived the boats were untangled and there was no visible damage to either vessel. Upon inspection after climbing the mast this afternoon, it was clear that only paint was scraped and all fittings are solid and



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no evidence of damage to the carbon fibre mast. The safety of being at a marina is quite relative when conditions reach these levels.

He said that while the skippers are having a good time in port and are bonding with each other "we are itching to leave and get on with the race. It is very stressful just sitting here doing small projects on the boats to fill time and trying to get re-focused on what will be 40 days at sea watching this monstrous storm slowly moving off towards northern Europe. As well as spending half the day tying and retying the boats to minimize the damage of being in a marina in a gale."