

# Catamarans strike snags off Durban

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DURBAN — Two people were rescued from their yacht after it overturned during a Durban regatta and another yachtsman narrowly missed serious injury when his boat was sliced in half at the weekend.

Mr John Chalk and his crew member, Dawie Olivier, were racing on Saturday when their catamaran capsized in strong winds. The boat is still out at sea.

"We capsized while we were tacking out to sea and

the boat started shipping water. The mast lifted and we drifted off," Mr Chalk said.

"There was never any danger to us and I fired a flare from the boat. Ten minutes later a rescue boat arrived. They tried to tow the catamaran back to the yacht mall, but the rope snapped twice.

"This is the first time I have been at sea in a cat and I sailed with Dawie because he is experienced. Usually I sail with my wife, but we decided against it with the strong wind."

Rescue officer Martin Barralet received a call

that someone was in trouble at sea.

"We radioed through for another rescue boat but by that time the catamaran had sent up a flare, so we knew exactly where they were," he said.

"The sea was very bad and the boat was half submerged and couldn't be kept upright.

"By the time we reached them, they were the other side of South Pier and the tow-rope snapped twice. It was getting dark by then so we decided to leave the yacht and took the crew back to shore.

"In those kind of waters,

if someone falls overboard there is nothing you can do."

In the other incident, Mr Eugene Vidot had one of the hulls of his catamaran sliced in half by another boat.

Mr Vidot, last year's provisional champion for the Paper Tiger class, said he was around 200 metres from the finish. "The next thing I knew, there was a hull between my legs.

"Obviously the other skippers weren't watching me. I managed to save all the rigging and the mast but the whole bottom of the boat is finished," he said.