

# Yachties' dreams of Olympic gold may get scuppered

TWO Durban Olympic yachtsmen are virtually destitute in Europe after being robbed in Italy and France — and it is only their grim determination to make Barcelona next month that has kept them going.

The men, Gordon Lamprecht and Alec Lanham-Love, are considered one of the hottest teams sailing the 470 class dinghies in the Olympic squad. But they have been dogged by bad luck since leaving Durban two months ago to get experience on the intensely competitive European circuit.

Problem No 1 was when they arrived in Anzio, Italy, too late for the start of the 470 regatta. But this did not prevent their being charged R1 500 for the hire of "an absolute dog" of a boat resulting in their being placed low down in the field. Their Olympic boat is still not ready.

## Graham Spence

Problem No 2 was in Rome when thieves broke into a minibus and stole their rucksacks with all their possessions.

Problem No 3 was in Marseilles when pickpockets told them their car tyre was flat, and while distracted, promptly relieved them of their wallets and credit cards.

Problem No 4 was in Hyres, France, where they had to hire another "dog", the only boat left, and again could not compete with the highly tuned dinghies up front.

Problem No 5 was when their funds all but dried up, and they are now travelling from regatta to regatta on a shoestring, living rough in the back of their car.

But finally fortune smiled on them. They were befriended by two Australian sailors, John Dransfield and John Jagger, who lent them a decent boat and in Palma, Spain, they finished in the top 10 in all six races against some of Europe's top skippers — giving them a needed confidence boost.

This week the duo leave for America to represent South Africa in the Fireball world championships. However, if they cannot get financial backing, they may have to withdraw and abandon their Olympic hopes.

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