

Cape yacht swamped by rogue wave

DURBAN. — One of the most fancied boats in the Crystic Beachcomber Crossing, the Cape Town-based 15-metre Thunderchild was swamped by a massive rogue wave and her crew almost washed overboard while sailing for Mauritius this week.

The giant wave shorted the boat's entire electrical system — including all navigation equipment — and she was forced to sail into Port Elizabeth for emergency repairs on Monday.

The racing sloop — said to be one of the fastest boats competing in the race between Mauritius and Durban next month — was being skippered by experienced delivery skipper, Dave Elcock, to the island on behalf of Vince Goldswain, owner of the boat when the near tragedy occurred.

Speaking from Cape Town, Goldswain's son Glenn said yesterday that the boat had been surfing

“fantastically” and doing about 17 knots in strong winds when the wave hit them.

“The wind was a steady 40-knot south-westerly but the seas weren't particularly rough. In fact some of the guys weren't even wearing foul weather gear.

“Suddenly at about midnight on Sunday this massive wave came out of nowhere and pooped the

boat from behind. Most of the crew were flung forward out of the cockpit, but fortunately everyone was wearing lifelines and so no-one went overboard. If someone had, it would have been pretty hairy trying to find them in the dark.”

The damaged electronics including a sophisticated weatherfax were flown to Cape Town to be repaired, and Thunderchild resumed her voyage to Mauritius on Wednesday. — Sapa.