

SPORT

Crash girl vows to keep racing

POWERBOATS

By **Simon Carter** ♦

THE SOUTHAMPTON powerboat driver who cheated death this week has vowed to carry on competing even though it will cost her an extra £20,000 to do so!

Shelley Jory, 33, and co-driver Gavin Brown, from Locks Heath, were involved in a spectacular crash while competing at over 70mph in the V24 series off Cowes on Sunday.

The pair flipped 20 foot in the air after hitting a wash and sunk about 30 feet, the first powerboat racers to ever completely flip over while competing on the Solent.

Shelley and Gavin were only saved due to their safety harnesses, breathing equipment and the fact they were in a glass cockpit.

But their boat, which cost £36,000 and which was only completed in June, was a near write-off.

The engine and hull have been saved but it will cost £20,000 to restore the boat to its former condition.

"I must have been under the water for about two minutes, but it seemed an eternity," said Shelley.

"I was trying to find my door release handle but couldn't, and I was starting to panic until I realised it had been blown off!

"What saved us was the cockpit; if we had been racing in an open canopy boat we might not be here now."

Agonisingly, Shelly and Gavin were leading the V24 national series at the time of their accident and face a race against time to be back on the water in time for the final race of the series off Portsmouth next month.

After that, Shelley is determined to compete in the world championships being held off Florida in November.

"It's heartbreaking," said



FIGHTING ON: Southampton powerboat driver Shelley Jory.

Shelley, who runs the Brides of Southampton shop on Portswood Road.

"Paying for the boat in the first place absolutely drained everything I've got. My parents had sponsored me, my business had sponsored me and I still hadn't fully paid it all off.

"Now I have to find £20,000 from somewhere. It might be that I have to get a loan to cover the cost, compete in the championships, and then sell the boat to pay off the loan.

"At the moment I am undaunted, I will fight on. But I need to get back in a boat soon to make sure I haven't lost my nerve."

Shelley continued: "It's an expensive sport, you don't do it for financial reasons, you do it because you love powerboating. It's all about the speed, the adrenaline - it's like racing go-karts on water.

"There's very little money in it. If you win a race, you get about £400, if you come second it's about £200. If you win the V24 series you get around £5,000 and I'm very close to winning that, but if I can't get the boat mended I won't!

"The boat was running like a dream before the accident, it was a fantastic boat. £36,000 sounds a lot but that's an affordable price. It's cheaper than a lot of the other classes.

"You have the power, the speed, and we've proved that these boats are also safe. That's a credit to Mark Pascoe who built it."

Southampton-based Pascoe watched Shelley and Gavin's accident, and Shelley said: "Mark said it was the worst accident he'd ever seen, he was quite terrified."

Anyone wishing to help Shelley get her boat repaired can contact her on 07778 277521.