

HAMPSHIRE: Powerboat champion in second accident

This crash may end my career

By Tara Russell

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HAMPSHIRE powerboat champion Shelley Jory-Leigh has miraculously escaped a dramatic accident – the second in just one month.

Now the 40-year-old sports-woman's dream of winning the world title, in which she was ranked second, is shattered.

She has even revealed the ordeal could mark the end of her career.

"I'm not sure I have even got the confidence to carry on," she said.

Shelley's boat suddenly dipped into the water at 83 miles per hour causing it to slam to a halt during a race in Sardinia.

Shelley and her 53-year-old co-driver Patrick Huybrechts were



INJURED: Powerboat champion Shelly Jory-Leigh pictured before the accident.

“There was blood everywhere – I could taste it

thrown against the boat so hard their faces felt like they were smashed into a brick wall.

Her horrific injuries include a broken nose and two black eyes, but she still managed to radio for help as well as lift Patrick who was slumped unconscious over the dash.

It happened while practising for the next leg of the Powerboat GPS World Championship after the pair had plucked up the courage to get back on the water.

In the previous race – just three weeks earlier – they escaped from a 90mph spin-out while racing in Malta.

Speaking about the latest ordeal at her Southampton home yesterday the only woman

pilot in the championship said: "It is unbelievable. I have raced for 15 years and I have had three accidents but two have been in a month. It's just unheard of. I am devastated."

Her voice shaking, Shelley added: "The front of the boat dipped and just exploded on impact like an aeroplane crashing into the sea. That made us come to a very abrupt stop – a bit like driving a car at 83mph into a brick wall. That is what happened to our faces."

"I was shouting at Patrick trying to get a response. It was déjà vu."

"There was blood everywhere. I could feel it on my face and taste it in my mouth."

"When the safety crews got there, I remember crying a lot, then I remember feeling quite hysterical."

"I don't want to do this anymore, I don't want to do this. I

want to go home' – I kept saying that.

"My crash helmet probably broke my nose but if I didn't have it on, I would be dead."

Patrick is in Italy getting treatment for broken ribs, a dislocated shoulder and chest problems. Shelley is at home and will have surgery on her nose next week.

She said she owes her life to her personal trainer James Feilo, of Catalyst Training: "I should be broken. My body is shaken but it is as solid as a rock and it is because of him. He has probably just saved my life."

Doctors said she will not be able to get in a boat for three months but she said her husband Trevor does not want her to powerboat for the rest of the year.

The racer has indicated the accident could mean she will never get in a powerboat again.

She said: "I never say never but I think it is time now not to push it."

"In some ways I am slightly superstitious I have had two near misses and the third might not be so lucky. I believe there is someone upstairs saying maybe this is the time to stop now."

An investigation has been launched into what caused the accident.

Police authority asked to limit expenses

MEMBERS of Hampshire's Police Authority are being urged to limit their expenses as part of an ongoing cost-cutting drive.

Already members of the authority that oversees the county's police force have agreed not to take an increase in their allowances that they receive until later this year.

This year the basic allowance will go up from £10,333 to £10,600 while the chairman of the authority Jacqui Rayment is entitled to claim an additional £24,930 for her role, up from £24,303 last year.

Vice-chairman Adrian Collett can claim £18,696, up from £18,226 last year.

Chairmen of the various committees will be entitled to claim £15,580 up from £15,118.

In a report to the authority members are invited to approve the new scheme of allowances which equate to a rise of 2.53 per cent, in line with an increase in the cost of living allowances set by the Police Staff Council.

The report, which is due to be discussed at next Tuesday's meeting of the authority, reminds members to ensure that they keep travel expenses to a minimum and says that they will be closely monitored to ensure the expenses budget is not being exceeded.



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