

Boat sinks in race; 14 people rescued

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SANTA CRUZ — Fourteen people got an unexpected dunking in Monterey Bay when their sailboat sank during the United Way's annual fund-raising regatta.

The 44-foot sailboat, "Eclipse," owned by Archie Marez broached Sunday during the third annual Day on the Monterey Bay Regatta and water rushed through a broken front hatch of the boat.

The 14 crew members clung to the sinking boat and were rescued by other racers. The sailboat sank in about 10 minutes.

The boat was skippered by Marez' son, Eddie.

None of the sailors were injured, just "wet and angry," Marez said. He was at home, napping after flying in from Barcelona, Spain, when he got the telephone call.

"I didn't know there was a swim involved until my daughter called," Marez said. "She said, 'Dad, I've got some bad news for you — we sank your boat.'"

Marez said the mishap caused minor damage to the hull of "Eclipse," but salt water wreaked havoc on the instrumentation. He estimates repair costs will be less than \$20,000.

Marez said the swift response of fellow sailors was remarkable.

"Les Long came along with his boat, 'So Long Darling' and picked up the women," Marez said. "He's no dummy. He also put out a buoy to mark the location of the boat."

Ken Bernap, captain of "Rollercoaster," said he picked up some of the other crew members just as the deck was disappearing into 90 feet of water about one mile off the coast.

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"When we got there, the boat was awash," Bernap said. "There were four or five people still sitting on the edge of the boat and we picked them up."

Marez said the "Eclipse" crew was flying a spinnaker before the boat accidentally jibed and broached, tipping over in the water. When the boat went over, water rushed in through the broken hatch and the boat sank within 10 minutes. Marez said normally when this type of incident happens, it takes the boat about three minutes to right itself.

"Actually, this is a good lesson to local sailors," Marez said. "Lots of times you'll get a little sloppy — this should make sailors a little more careful."

Frank Ribeiro located the "Eclipse" and towed it back to the harbor with his boat "Gayler" Monday afternoon. Instruments on board, coupled with the marker laid down by Long, made the salvage easier, Marez said.

More than 114 boats competed in the race Sunday, the kickoff event for the United Way's 1986 fund-raising campaign. More than 1,000 sailors made donations of \$30 each to compete in the race. Melinda Silverstein, executive director of the United Way of Santa Cruz County, said there are two kinds of sailors who participate in the regatta.

"We get rank beginners and novices who just want to go out on the bay and have a good time," Silverstein said. "Then, we get serious racers who are real competitors — we tell the beginners to stay clear of the racers."

The \$30 donation to join in the fun included entry to the race, lunch, dinner and a pair of Bucci sunglasses, Silverstein said. The day of sailing was followed by a steak barbecue and more activities.