



TRAGIC SIGHT: The empty Kurrawa under 18 surfboat presents a tragic sight after losing its crew. One of the crew is believed to have drowned.

# TRAGIC TITLES

## Lifesaver missing in huge seas

**A TEENAGE surf lifesaver was missing presumed drowned last night amid controversy over treacherous conditions in the three-day Australian surf lifesaving championships at Kurrawa.**

Surf lifesaving helicopters and IRB craft searched into the night for missing 15-year-old Kurrawa surfboat member Robert Gatenby, believed to have been knocked unconscious in a collision between two surfboats in the under 18 final.

Parents of the missing boy, Jeff and Vicki Gatenby, of Mudgeeraba, were on the beach to watch their son race when the accident happened.

Six boats were overturned by huge seas during the race.

Tugun ironman Steven King said he saw the accident happen.

"I knew someone would get worked. The

by STEVE HUNT and BERNADETTE CONDREN

other boat didn't hit the side of the boat, it actually went in it," he said.

Surf Life Saving Australia, organiser of the event, has promised a full inquiry into the accident, which they fear will be confirmed today as the first death to occur in a national championships.

Last night champion ironwoman Reen Corbett condemned the decision to continue the titles despite dangerous conditions, saying it was against the association's basic principles.

Corbett, who undergoes tests today for a suspected punctured kidney, following injuries she received at the titles, said: "We are there to protect lives, not to put them in danger," said Corbett.

Concerns about the safety of the event were first raised by competitors on Friday.

Continued Page 4  
Viewpoint, Page 8  
Sport, Pages 45, 46,



FATHER'S GRIEF: Grieving father Jeff Gatenby is comforted on Kurrawa Beach

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