

Although South Africa's world champion rowers, James Thompson and John Smith, 'gave as good as they got' in the Henley Regatta's Double Sculls Challenge Cup final, they had to settle for the second place.

Britain's John Collins and Jonathan Walton beat the South Africans by slightly more than two boat lengths.

"Of course we are disappointed to have lost the final, but we are satisfied that we were able to put together a good race. Unfortunately the conditions were not in our favour. Rowing into a headwind is a definite handicap for a lightweight crew that competes against the heavyweights," said Thompson (Tuks/HPC).

"However, I don't want it to sound as if John and I are looking for excuses. The British were the faster crew on the day. We can at least be satisfied that we were able to put together a great race. We were just not fast enough in the end."

Smith describes their performance in the final as a tough day at the office.

"Rowing into a headwind naturally meant that we would be under pressure. We came hard at them but sadly we were not good enough in the end.

"It is encouraging that we were able to row at a fast speed once we have found our rhythm in the boat," said Smith (Tuks/HPC).

According to Thompson and Smith they have put this setback behind them and are looking forward to competing at the World Cup Regatta in Lucerne, Switzerland, this weekend.

"It will be interesting to see what speed we will achieve in the boat. Hopefully we will be able to qualify for the lightweight-final," Thompson said.

The other two Tuks/HPC crews were both beaten in their respective semi-finals.

In the Stewards Challenge Cup semi-final the SA men's fours (Lawrence Brittain, Jonty Smith, Sizwe Ndlovu and Vincent Breet) lost to Britain's Leander Club and University of London crew.

Brittain described it as a tough learning experience.

"It was our first race together as fours and it was important for us to gain some experience in the boat and go through the 'tough stuff' as a crew.

"We had a really strong start to our race. Unfortunately, we struggled to find our rhythm during the middle part of the race. We only got into a nice rhythm again towards the end of the second half, but by then it was too late because the Brits were already in the lead.

"As they say, you live and you learn. At this weekend's World Cup we will definitely have to take our performance up a notch. At least we now know what needs to be done to get the boat to move faster," Brittain said.

Shaun Keeling and David Hunt were beaten in the semi-finals of the Silver Goblets&Nickall's Challenge Cup by Britain's Ollie Cook and Stewart Innes.