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Pet boerboel savages little boy

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SAVAGED: Mathew Croucamp, aged four, recovering from his wounds in his hospital bed at Cecilia Makiwane. Picture: MICHAEL PINYANA

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By NTANDO MAKHUBU and TIM SALMON

LITTLE Mathew Croucamp was recovering in an East London hospital yesterday after being attacked by the family pet boerboel – his best friend, Bulla

The four-year-old boy was attacked during a game of "fetch" on Monday at his home in Dordrecht.

Bulla, also four years old, mauled him so viciously it nearly cost Mathew his life.

Speaking from Cecilia Makiwane Hospital, Mathew's father Andrew Croucamp said his son sustained serious bite wounds to the neck, head, body and arms.

Croucamp said Mathew told him he and the dog were playing with the ball on Monday afternoon "when Bulla lunged at him and sank his teeth into his (Mathew's) throat".

Croucamp said he could never have imagined Bulla would turn on Mathew as they were brought up together.

"Mathew and Bulla have been constant companions for most of their lives. They were best friends who spent most of their time playing and sleeping together," Croucamp said.

"Bulla would watch over him when he fell asleep in the garden and would growl possessively at anyone who raised his voice at Mathew.

"They were very close – we are baffled by the attack."

Domestic worker Noluvo Maton told yesterday how she ran to Mathew when she heard him screaming: "Kom help my, hy byt my!" (Come and help me, he's biting me).

"I got a glass bottle and broke it on the dog's head," she said, "but he kept on biting Mathew. I tried to pull Mathew into the kitchen but the dog was too strong – he would not let go. The attack lasted for a long time."

Two men working nearby heard the commotion and also rushed to help.

Dirk van Rooyen and Piet van der Merwe managed to get the dog off Mathew.

But the attack did not stop there.

"As we left the house, the dog ran around to the front and tried to re-attack the wounded child that we were carrying in our arms," Van Rooyen said.

Mathew was taken to the Dordrecht Hospital and later transferred to Cecilia Makiwane.

Police shot Bulla an hour after the attack.

Yesterday Mathew was still heavily sedated but in a stable condition.

His little hands were covered in bandages to ensure that he did not pull at the exposed stitches to his neck, head, arms and torso.

Animal behavioural experts yesterday said several cases of boerboels attacking people had been reported in the past.

In one of the most terrifying attacks, a boerboel savagely attacked a young East London girl in 2005.

The dog attacked Marilyn Smit, a St Anne's schoolgirl who was 11 at the time.

It savaged her for 15 minutes, GO! newspaper reported at the time.

The little girl, whose wounds were so severe that she faced plastic surgery, was pounced upon by the nine-year-old dog.

It apparently knocked her over and tried to go for her throat.

Then, as she tried to crawl away, the boerboel continued to bite her, tossing her around like a rag.

Boerboel enthusiasts yesterday blamed "indiscriminate breeding" for creating aggressive dogs.

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