

Steersmen Win Races at Macfarlane Regatta on 4th of July

Outrigger steersman in the 2003 Macfarlane Regatta were Karel Tresnak Jr., Todd Bradley, Zach Payne, Jimmy Austin, Jim Beaton and Walter Guild.

From 1958 to 1992 Fred Hemmings Jr. steered Macfarlane races.

Bruce Ames steered his Boys 13 crew to victory in 1955 and got his last gold as steersman in 2001 in the Masters Men 55. He won nine Macfarlane races.

Marc and Kisi Haine have steered OCC to 41 Macfarlane victories.

By Marilyn Kali

Each year at the Walter J. Macfarlane Regatta on the 4th of July competing clubs select their most skilled and knowledgeable steersmen to guide their outrigger canoes in races ranging from one-quarter mile to two miles through the surf at Waikiki Beach.

Only one canoe can win, and often depending on the waves, the difference in winning and finishing second through seventh, is a few hundredths of a second. Catching a wave doesn't assure that you'll win the race. Other canoes may be on the same wave and you must finish in the correct lane and have six paddlers in the boat when you do.

Races are lost each 4th of July because the steersman found a "bump" on the course but couldn't get back to his/her assigned lane by the time the canoe crossed the finish line. Of course, many more are won because of the skill of the steersman in getting the bump.

The steersman seat is an open seat on the 4th of July so the event's usual steersman may find another seat or sit out the race.

For the younger crews, an experienced steersman is needed for safety to carefully navigate the waves in the lone wave race of the Oahu Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association regatta season.

Swamped boats and huli are common, especially if the surf is large.

Skilled steersmen were especially important when clubs used their prized koa canoes in the Macfarlane Regatta. Today the precious and expensive koa canoes sit on the beach and have been replaced with fiberglass canoes in the Waikiki classic. So many canoes sustained structural damage during

races that the rule to allow glass boats in the Macfarlane Regatta was changed by OH CRA in the 1990s.

Outrigger Canoe Club steersmen dominated the Macfarlane Regatta for many years, it was said, because Waikiki was the Club's backyard, where members grew up surfing and paddling and learning to read the ocean and catch a wave. Steersmen who practiced in placid waters were often out of luck when the waves hit at Waikiki.

While the OCC has had great success at the Macfarlane, winning 33 of the 62 previous Macfarlane Regattas, plus one tie for first, steersmen from other clubs have been earning their way into this elite club of ocean men and women. With the advent and popularity of the one-man canoe and the surfski, more paddlers have had the experience of catching and steering in waves, and more are leading their clubs to victory on the 4th of July.

The top 10 all-time winning steersmen at the Macfarlane Regatta are:

1. (tie) Fred Hemmings Jr. (paddling for OCC and Hui Nalu) and Jim Foti (Lanikai), 46 wins each.
3. Walter Guild (OCC), 39.
4. John Foti (Lanikai), 35.
5. Marc Haine (OCC), 34.
6. Kala Kukea (Hui Nalu), 33.
7. (tie) Todd Bradley (OCC) and Nappy Napoleon (Waikiki Surf Club, Hawaiian Warriors and Anuenue), tied with 30.
9. Kamoa Kalama (Kailua), 26;
10. Brant Ackerman (OCC and Hui Nalu), 25 wins.

In the early years of the Macfarlane Regatta, men steered the women's races.

It wasn't until 1952 that a woman steersman won a Macfarlane event. That woman was Keanuenue Rochlen, then Keanuenue Kekai, who won in both 1952 and 1953 as a member of Waikiki Surf Club. Keanuenue, a member of the Winged "O" is still paddling and steering, now for OCC's Masters women.

The most prolific woman steersman is OCC's Kisi Haine, who has won Macfarlane races seven times, starting in 1985.

The top five women steersmen at the Macfarlane are:

1. Kisi Haine (OCC), 7 wins.
2. (tie) Denise Darval (Hui Nalu), 4.
Luana Froiseth (Waikiki Surf Club), 4.
4. (tie) Ethel Kukea (Waikiki Surf Club), 3.
Keanuenue Rochlen (Waikiki Surf Club), 3.

A number of younger steersmen have been making their mark in the Macfarlane during the past five years putting themselves on course to surpass their predecessors due to their youth and the increasing number of events in the Macfarlane Regatta.

Particularly impressive is Jimmy Austin, who has won 10 Macfarlane races in the past six years.

When the first Macfarlane was held in 1943, there were 13 events. Today there are 39 with the introduction this year of new men's and women's events for those 60 years of age or older.

The famed Duke Kahanamoku steered three crews to victory in the 1943 Macfarlane – the Senior Men, Officer 6 and Enlisted 6. He went on to win one event in 1944 (Senior Men) and two in 1945 (Senior Men and Enlisted 6).

"The steersman is the captain of the boat," says one veteran paddler. "His/her job is to be alert and help the crew reach its potential by giving them whatever advantage is possible to catch a wave and win the race. But the bottom line is for everyone to have a fun and safe race."

"The Macfarlane Regatta is special. Catching a wave is a thrill, and positioning the canoe to do that safely is what we do. Winning isn't everything, but it sure feels good on the 4th of July. We all want to come back to the Club after the race is over knowing that we did our best to bring home the winning trophy."

The following OCC steersmen/women have earned victories in the Macfarlane Regattas as follows. Note: results from the 1956, 1963, 1964, 1966, 1971, 1974, 1975 and 1981 regattas were never published and wins in those years could not be credited. If members won races while paddling for other clubs, those wins are not included in the OCC totals.

Steersman	Wins	Winning Years	Steersman	Wins	Winning Years	Steersman	Wins	Winning Years
Walter Guild	40	1985-2005	Bill Cook	2	1945-1946	Kehau Kea	1	1962
Marc Haine	34	1983-2004	Ian Forrester	2	2002	Colleen Kelley	1	1980
Fred Hemmings Jr.	31	1958-1992	Scott Hendricks	2	2000-2004	S Lacy	1	1955
Todd Bradley	30	1985-2004	Wyatt Jones	2	1997-2001	Billy Lawson	1	2003
Brant Ackerman	22	1968-1999	Toots Minvielle	2	1947-1948	Bruce Ledford	1	1961
Tom Conner	16	1980-2003	H Rocklen	2	1967-1968	Donny Mailer	1	1982
Billy Balding	11	1991-2001	C Ackerman	1	1969	T Makinney	1	1962
Jimmy Austin	10	1999-2005	S Ackerman	1	1968	George McPheeters	1	1967
Keone Downing	10	1973-1989	Charley Amalu	1	1945	Ken Morrow	1	1977
Mike Holmes	10	1961-1986	L Ames	1	1960	Rod Muller	1	1991
Mike Lemes	10	1961-1990	Grady Bintliff	1	1987	Gerry Ober	1	1967
Bruce Ames	9	1955-2001	Matt Buckman	1	1990	P Oliver	1	1961
Kisi Haine	7	1985-2004	Doug Carr	1	1957	Mark Osmun	1	1967
Aka Hemmings	7	1968-2000	George Cook	1	1944	Liz Perry	1	1990
Tom Kiakona	7	1945-1950	Monte Costa	1	1972	Jim Pflueger	1	1950
Heath Hemmings	6	1988-1997	M Driscoll	1	1967	Billy Philpotts	1	1994
Duke Kahanamoku	6	1943-1945	Billy Eggers	1	1980	D Pickering	1	1962
Allen Turkey Love	6	1943-1953	C Fax	1	1960	M Rigg	1	1970
Jim Beaton	5	1996-2005	? Fischbeck	1	1955	Adrian Rosehill	1	1969
Alan Rosehill	5	1977-1983	Mary Franco-Lemes	1	1988	? Russell	1	1950
Chuck Schrader	5	1949-1957	Paul Frieze	1	1993	J Smith	1	1967
J Cross	4	1950-1953	Butch Hemmings	1	1958	S Souza	1	1961
Bob Fischer	4	1943-1945	Cynthia Hemmings	1	1958	Sage Spalding	1	1999
Charles Martin	4	1950-1987	Heidi Hemmings	1	1967	Richard Sylva	1	1965
Steve Scott	4	1962-1980	Maria Hemmings	1	1962	Jennifer Thayer	1	1997
Kainoa Downing	3	1980-1987	Karl Heyer IV	1	1987	K Townsend	1	1958
Johnny Hollinger	3	1948	Anne Hogan	1	1970	M Wilson	1	1972
Keoni Kino	3	1987-2001	Hargon Holland	1	1990	N Wysard	1	1949
Harry Robello	3	1943-1948	Kala Judd	1	1989	Bruce Yap	1	1962
Buster Chapman	2	1961-1972	Sam Kaaua	1	1952-1985			