

Outrigger Has the Magic, Wins Bankoh Molokai Hoe

MOLOKAI

By Kala Judd, Men's Coach

On October 18, Outrigger Canoe Club won the 48th annual Bankoh Molokai Hoe canoe race from Hale O Lono Harbor, Molokai to Fort DeRussy Beach in Waikiki.

They completed the 41-mile race in an elapsed time of 5:03:02, capturing the world championship of men's canoe racing.

Back to back victories in 1998 and 1999 brings Outrigger to a record 16 wins in this event. Experience and tenacity were the cornerstone of this year's effort. Despite an early lead by Big Island crew Kai Opuia and formidable competition from Team New Zealand and Lanikai Canoe Club, this year's team retained composure and emerged victorious.

Confidence came just after the third hour. Outrigger took the intensity to a higher level. As the leaders converged off of Koko Head, Outrigger closed the gap on leader Kai Opuia. Blending and endurance enabled the Red and White crew to hold off the attack of Team New Zealand and a head-to-head battle ensued with Kai Opuia down the entire length of Maunaloa Bay.

Dueling side by side, Outrigger and Kai Opuia exchanged the lead numerous times scratching for each swell to try and gain an advantage, but Outrigger would not be denied. At Black Point, Outrigger acquired a window of opportunity, a few canoe lengths of separation; adrenaline took over.

The Outrigger crew extended the lead as they passed the Outrigger Clubhouse, fueled by the

cheers of the membership lining the Hau Terrace. At the finish line, Outrigger sealed the victory with Team New Zealand two minutes back at an elapsed time of 5:04:47, and Kai Opuia in third place in an elapsed time of 5:05:23.

(Because of a 10 minute penalty at the start of the race, Outrigger's official winning time was 5:13:02. Team New Zealand was second in 5:14:47 and Kai Opuia was third in 5:15:23.)

This year's success can be attributed to the depth of the program. Throughout regatta season and on into the ling distance racing season, the dedication and contributions of each team member afforded us our ultimate victory. Evidence of this is the outstanding performance of Outrigger's other open crew.

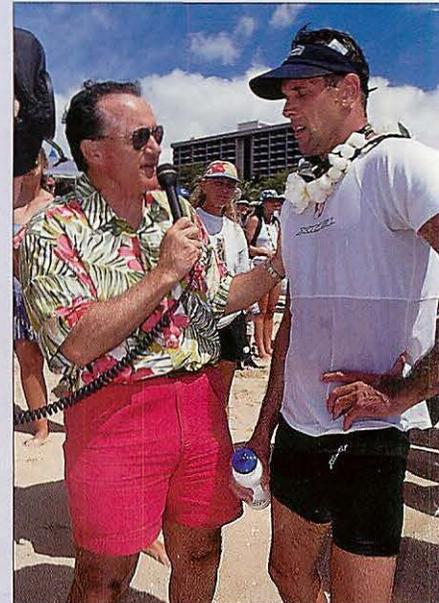
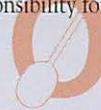
Crew members were Chris Eldridge, Eric Levora, Karl Heyer IV, Bill Pratt, Sage Spalding, Scott Stevenson, David Stackhouse, and Brett Chuckovich. They paddled to



Paddlers with the Bankoh Molokai Hoe first-place trophy.

a 15th place finish in 5:49:46.

Thanks to the OCC Board of Directors, management, staff, canoe racing committee, paddlers, coaches, race day support and membership. As a Club we can all take pride and responsibility for this achievement.



Fred Hemmings Jr. interviews Mark Rigg.

Steersman Billy Balding is interviewed by Channel 2.



Paddling hard near the Diamond Head Lookout.



Outrigger Repeats as Bankoh Molokai Hoe Champion

Photos by Joss, Nora Meijide, Tiare Finney

By David Horner, Head Coach

It was a normal Molokai Hoe Friday rigging day at Hale O Lono on Molokai. As the day went on and the wind picked up, my excitement increased. I knew that we at the Outrigger Canoe Club were prepared to surf that canoe and show why we were the defending Molokai Hoe Champions. If it was flat water out there, I would not have been as excited because there were other teams in the race that were very capable of going faster than us in the flat water.

Night fell and we relaxed, watched movies and ate steak prepared the Tom and Jen McTigue way.

The next day, more relaxing but best of all, having Randy Shibuya align everyone's backs to get ready for race day. Matt Rigg and I had stiff backs from last Sunday's practice and Randy's help was awesome. Once more, we dined at the McTigue's restaurant in room 2173 of the Kaluakoi resort, this time with the further assistance of Tiare Finney. Then came the team meetings under the direction of coach Kala Judd and then time for bed.

The sun was not quite up yet and then things started to happen at such a fast pace that life seems a blur in my memory. I remember eating a bowl of cereal and a banana and then getting my gear and getting on to the bus. It was time to get this thing started.

Billy Balding was ailing from a rib cage injury that no one knew the exact severity of, but Billy felt that he was ready to go. In fact, we all felt that we were ready to go and the next thing that we knew, we were in our canoes, ready to do our best out there. Little did we know that our escort boats did not have any juice for us to drink yet. We all lined up and waited for the start, but two canoes were over the line and we all hopelessly drifted over the line together because those two would not or could not back up. This cost both of our crews, along with all but eight of the 102 teams, a ten minute penalty. At last we did get off to a fair start and that ten minute penalty would not affect the outcome of the race.

By the time we reached Laau point, New Zealand had a 10 boat length lead over Lanikai, the Waikiki Beach Boys and us. For a minute there, the Moloolaba Masters pulled slightly ahead of us. It was only at the party that one of them had told me that he thought that it looked like we were not going to win this year. At that time, I will admit that it did not look very good. Our second crew was also in reach of the leaders at that time, just a few places back.

Then things got a little bumpy and we closed in on New Zealand and Lanikai to form almost a three way tie. Little did I know that Kai

Opua was about a quarter of a mile south and slowly working its way into the lead. I didn't see them until I got out of the canoe and into the escort boat.

For about three hours of the race, it went just like that with Kai Opua slowly working its way forward and then with about two hours of racing to go, things really started to happen. Kai Opua came from the south and decided to get in line two minutes straight ahead of us figuring on continuing to paddle out ahead of us and cover our every move.

At this point, New Zealand made a push and broke a tie with us and Lanikai and got about 30 seconds ahead but on a southerly course. That still left us tied for third place with Lanikai and then, unbeknownst to us at the time, Lanikai unfortunately broke a zipper on their canvas and that left them out of the hunt for the championship as they were only able to hang on to fourth place about ten minutes behind us.

We continued on with coach Kala Judd's plan and Billy Balding steered the canoe flawlessly as Courtney Seto and Andrew Glatzel took turns stroking; and Walter Guild, Matt Rigg, Mark Rigg, Ikaika Kincaid, Marc Haine and David Horner paddled into swell after swell on our way to catching up with Kai Opua.

Once again, the magic of being in our water in Maunaloa Bay and approaching the Club as we passed around Diamond Head was a big help. We finally took the lead for good outside of the Kahala Mandarin Hotel, after a 15 minute struggle with Kai Opua.

We spent the rest of the way running for our lives as New Zealand was over taking Kai Opua at Black Point and it became clear that with the two of them pushing back there that this race was not going to be over until the finish line. Once again, the cheering at the Club was awesome and we were able to hold on to cross the finish line in first place.

Meanwhile, fighting off dehydration, seasickness and other competitors our second crew still managed to finish in a respectable 15th place. There was a problem getting the juice coolers to the escort boats and so the second crew had to paddle without juice or water for an hour and a half while the escort boat found Scott Rolles and the jackpot of coolers.

I believe that Janna Arakaki was there to help load Mike Mason, Tom McTigue and the crew of Bill Pratt, Byron Ho, Eric Levora, David Stackhouse, Brett Chuckovich, Scott Stevenson, Sage Spalding, Chris Eldridge and steersman Karl Heyer IV with fluids and send them on their way. All that made for an extra hard race, but our guys came through it all to earn their finishing position. Gregg Moss and Randy Shibuya followed along in between both crews all day to ensure that we had a back up escort boat in case anything happened to either crew during the race. I can not emphasize enough how much all the non racing support contributed to this strong showing by the paddlers of the Outrigger Canoe Club.



The winning men's crew was front, Billy Balding, Mark Haine, Andrew Glatzel and Walter Guild. Standing, Coach Kala Judd, Ikaika Kincaid, Mark Rigg, David Horner, Matt Rigg and Courtney Seto.



Outrigger's second crew was Coach Kala Judd, Eric Levora, Sage Spalding, Byron Ho, Scott Stevenson, Chris Eldridge, Karl Heyer IV, David Stackhouse, Bret Chuckovich and Bill Pratt.



The Senior Masters crew finished 6th in 6:15:34. The crew included Tom Amott, John Finney, Juvie Coito, Chris Crabb, Henry Ayau, John Mounts, Tay Perry, Brant Ackerman and Jeff Metzger.