

OCC Masters Win Molokai Championship

By John Finney & Bill Danford

Outrigger's reputation for fielding the world's finest masters canoe team remains in tact. OCC's veteran masters crew led by steersman Brant Ackerman fought off local and international competition to regain the Bankoh Molokai Hoe crown on October 11.

After a devastating second place finish in this 40.8 mile race last year, Outrigger's masters men regrouped late in the season to win both the Kona race (non-koa) and the Molokai Hoe in the highly competitive Masters Division (age 35 years and older) in 5:57:54.

The members of the crew included Mark Buck, Bill Danford, Bill Bright, Brant Ackerman, Jim Kincaid, Tom McTigue, Mike Batungbacal, John Finney and Mike Schwinn.

At the start of the race, as our Masters crew approached Laau Point, a dramatic change in weather

conditions greeted us. No one expected three to four foot northerly swells and steady northerly winds.

The swells and winds made it extremely difficult for even a seasoned steersman to hold a straight line.

A decision had to be made early as to whether we would run with the swell pushing south and possibly pay the price going back to Oahu with a rising tide, or run north of our line (a straight line from Laau Point to Diamond Head) which would put us about two miles off of Koko Head.

Brant Ackerman, Geoff Graf and

Kala Judd decided to take the second option. Hopefully, we would benefit from our approach at about the four hour mark.

Four hours into the crossing, we were physically paying for running North but at that point we knew our position was pretty much secure. The course that had been decided on was now working to our advantage.

Jackie Maguire reported that we were 13th overall and the first masters crew when we reached Kahala.

At the end, the crew was exhausted but happy, finishing 13th overall and as masters champions.

No other masters crew challenged the OCC crew after Portlock, due to the torrid pace our team maintained.

Without exception, this year's masters crew showed how deep a crew can go. Brant steered an extremely difficult crossing, never losing his ability to get everyone to give 100% of themselves.

Our escort team of Kala Judd and Geoff Graf, Tiare and Thomas Finney and Randy Weir and his son, never let us get down or lose our intensity.

Without the support of the entire Board of Directors, the OCC management and staff, and membership, our success could not have been a reality.

Our special thanks to Mike Clifford, Henry Ayau, Tim Guard, Randy Shibuya, Tom Conner, Bob Riley and Steve Zak for holding the program together. Mahalo from all of us. 🙏



Photos by Bonnie Judd



The winning OCC Masters crew is, front, Brant Ackerman, Jimmy Kincaid, Mike Batungbacal and Bill Bright. Standing, Mike Schwinn, John Finney, Bill Danford, Mark Buck and Tom McTigue.

Senior Masters Finish 4th

By Kawika Grant

The 1992 OCC Senior Masters crew consisting of Bruce Ames, Jody D'Enbeau, Norman Dunmire, Kent Giles, Kawika Grant, Norman Ho, Tay Perry, George Prey and Michael Town, supported by Greg Moss and Poki'i Vaughan and paddling the Holomalie, crossed the finish line of the 41st Molokai Hoe fourth out of a field of seven entries in their division.

Of the nine Senior Masters crew members, six were Molokai Hoe veterans with a combined total of 42 Kaiwi Channel crossings. The three others--Norm Dunmire, Kawika Grant and George Prey--were first time rookies.

The quinquagenarians--average age 52--had a finishing time of 6:49:53. 🏊



The Senior Masters are Bruce Ames, Kawika Grant, Kent Giles, Norm Ho, George Prey, Tay Perry, Mike Town, Jody D'enbeau and Norm Dunmire.

Photo by Barbara Giles

Open Crew Finishes 4th in Molokai Race

By Steve Scott

For the Outrigger Canoe Club, this year's Molokai to Oahu Canoe Race could best be described as a beginning, rather than the last race of the year.

During the long distance season, the men's crew had struggled to find its identity, trying to mesh experience with new blood.

Going into the Bankoh Molokai Hoe on October 11, the Outrigger had not won a single distance race all season. We had finished second in the Lanikai, Kona and Skippy races, and third in Catalina.

While this would be respectable for most crews, it was foreign to OCC which is used to dominating the distance season. With each race we had shown progress, though, and by Molokai I thought we were ready to compete with the best.

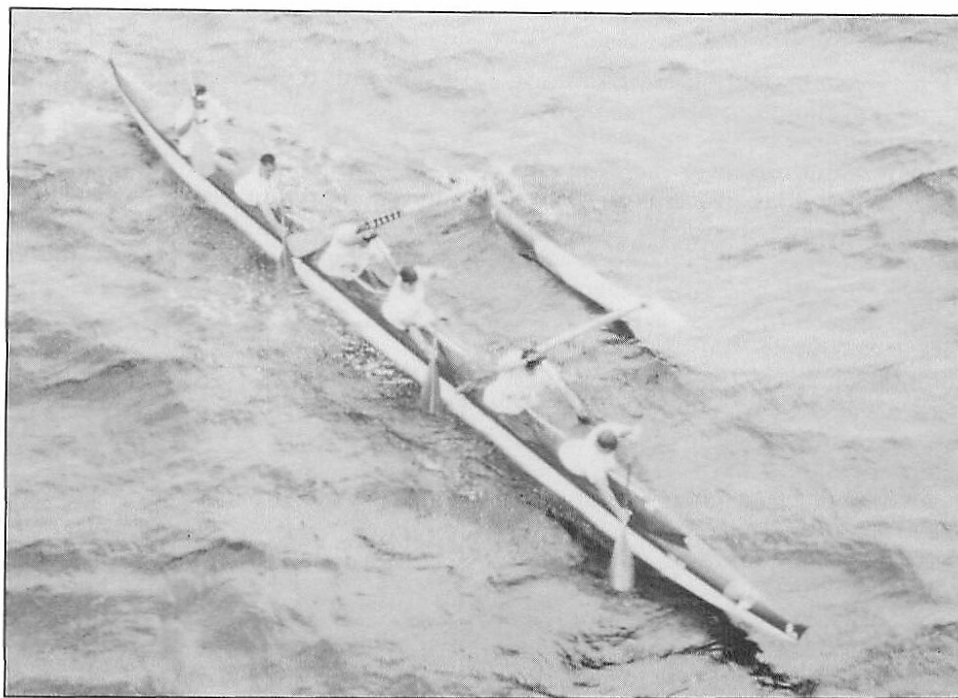
The competition in the men's Molokai race has been very intense the past few years, with no crew dominating from beginning to end. A handful of crews were capable of winning each year, and 1992 would be no different.

This year there would be only one open crew from Outrigger, so the competition to make that crew was intense. Credit is due the 11 paddlers who competed for those nine seats, because without their efforts the Outrigger would not have had as good a crew as we did.

There were three veterans on the crew this year, that go back to the 1986 winning crew--Tom Conner, Walter Guild and Chris Kincaid. Their experience was key in this year's effort. Mark Sandvold and Courtney Seto were on the 1990 winning crew, and Wyatt Jones was back from 1991.

The remaining three paddlers, Tom Harrer, Todd Harrison and Todd Payes, were on Outrigger's first crew for the first time. Two other paddlers with this crew from the beginning of the season that were not in the final nine, were Tommy Damon and Dean Maeva.

For the 1992 Molokai race, the Outrigger would be racing the fiberglass racing canoe Iwalani. After rigging the canoe on Saturday, the crew spent the rest of the day relaxing and mentally preparing for



Helicopter photo by Irwin Malzman

The open crew takes on the Molokai channel.

what they knew would be a demanding race the next day.

Race morning was met with the usual level of anxiety, anticipation and some confusion, but the crew was ready for the start of the race. This year there would only be 47 crews, the lowest number in many years.

We knew, however, that the competition at the front of the race would not be any less intense. We were counting on the two Australian teams, Outrigger Australia and Panamuna, to be the ones to beat, and Lanikai Canoe Club to be up there with them. Our challenge would be to beat these crews and any others that might compete for the lead.

The race officials started the race in their usual fashion: the starting line bowed in the middle by a boat and a half, a distinct advantage if you were in the middle, and five minutes early (have you ever seen a major race in any sport start early?).

The Outrigger did not have the type of start we would have liked, but at Laau Point, we were in sixth place for the first change. This is definitely the most dangerous part of the race: the first change. It's

only time before a paddler is injured in the mayhem at Laau Point with 125 assorted canoes, escort and official boats, spectators and helicopters converging at a single point in the ocean.

One hour into the race, there were four crews vying for the lead: Outrigger Australia to the south, Panamuna and Hawaii Canoe and Kayak (HCKT) to the north, and Outrigger in the middle.

For the next two hours, it didn't seem that either of these crews could gain the advantage. At about 3 1/2 hours into the race, Panamuna and HCKT made a strong surge, crossing in front of Outrigger and heading for Diamond Head.

HCKT didn't follow Panamuna, but instead, broke off and went for the inside line from Koko Head to Diamond Head, banking on the incoming current and swells to help their momentum. This was the same course the Outrigger was taking, about a 1/4 mile behind HCKT.

As Outrigger neared Diamond Head, the current was with us but the swells we counted on to ride were not. Outrigger Australia, which had committed to Diamond Head very early, snuck in front of

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