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Practice pays off for Outrigger Club

By Dayton Morinaga
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A familiar course led to a familiar finish for the Outrigger Canoe Club women.

Relying on a fast "Hawai'i Kai run" — its normal practice route from Hawai'i Kai to Waikiki — Outrigger won the Dad Center Women's Long Distance Canoe Race yesterday for the second consecutive year.

Outrigger completed the 24-mile course from Kailua Beach to the Outrigger Canoe Club in 3 hours, 16 minutes, 25 seconds. Hui Nalu came in a distant second at 3:20:49. Hawaiian was third at 3:21:04.

"It was nothing spectacular," said Kisi Haine, who steered the Outrigger canoe. "We just kept going hard and slowly inched away from everybody else. It was actually a little surprising at the end there to see how far back the other (canoes) were."

The paddlers in the winning crew were Haine, Traci Phillips, Paula Crabb, Donna Kahakui, Jen Horner, Mary Smolenski, Diana Allen, Mahealani Batlik, Malia Kamisugi and Megan Jones.

Each team was allowed to use a crew of 10 paddlers, although only six could paddle at any given time.

"We actually had a bad start and Hui Nalu got way ahead of us," said John Puakea, the Outrigger women's coach. "But then we got it together and had a really good race the rest of the way. No real big mistakes."

Once Outrigger cleared the choppy section off Makapu'u, the Hawai'i Kai run provided enough swells for a surf to the finish.

"It wasn't big, but we had some really good rides, some fun ones," Haine said.

Puakea added: "I kept wondering when the other teams were going to sneak up on us, but fortunately, nobody did. Once we got to the good surf, (Haine) got us going."

Still, it was unfamiliarity that was on the minds of the Outrigger paddlers after yesterday's victory.

Yesterday's race is considered one of the "warm ups" for the Sept. 28 Hawaii Modular Space Na Wahine O Ke Kai.

"We know there are going to be stronger teams here for Moloka'i," Puakea said. "In our minds, we're not comfortable. It's a good win, but we know it doesn't mean that much when you're talking about Moloka'i."

Haine added: "Locally, sure we can be looked at as one of the top teams. But nationally and internationally, we know there are a lot of strong teams that we haven't seen yet."

Puakea said Outrigger's "first string" hasn't even been established yet. Outrigger's second crew didn't make things easier for him by placing fifth overall yesterday.

"Most teams are still trying to figure out what's going to happen, including us," he said.

Kailua placed an impressive ninth overall in 3:30:12 to win the masters 35 division. Lanikai won the masters 45 division in 4:12:37.

Thirty-nine crews completed the race, which is held in honor of George "Dad" Center, a successful swimming coach and waterman in Hawai'i during the 1920s and '30s.

- Iron win for Lanikai: Lanikai won the Kailua Bay Iron Challenge men's race Saturday.

The crew of Kekoa Bruhn, Ka'ai Bruhn, Dave Daniels, Mike Judd, Kai Bartlett and John Foti completed the 9 1/2-mile course in 1 hour, 13 minutes, 42 seconds.

A Lanikai masters 35 crew placed second overall in 1:17:23.

All crews had to race "iron," meaning there were no relief changes for the six paddlers in the canoe.

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Dad Center Women's Long Distance Canoe Race

Kailua Beach to Outrigger Canoe Club (24 miles)

Open: 1, Outrigger Red (Kisi Haine, Traci Phillips, Paula Crabb, Donna Kahakui, Jen Horner, Mary Smolenski, Diana Allen, Mahealani Batlik, Malia Kamisugi, Megan Jones), 3:16:25. 2, Hui Nalu-1, 3:20:49. 3, Hawaiian, 3:21:04. 4, Hui Lanakila-1, 3:24:20. 5, Outrigger White, 3:24:56. 6, Kailua-1, 3:26:14. 7, Waikiki Beach Boys-1, 3:27:05. 8, Lokahi-1, 3:28:32. 9, Kai'ola, 3:30:59. 10, Lae'ula O Kai, 3:31:58.

Masters 35: 1, Kailua (Tara Goodman, Jane McKee, Cindy Razga, Sheri Board, Kalei Javellana, Carleen Ornellas, Viv Griffin, Dani Gay, Noha Pacewitz, Donna Meyer), 3:30:12. 2, Lanikai, 4:05:22.

Masters 45: 1, Lanikai (Connie Sizemore, Lany Twomey, Lynn Woehrle, Elise Jadrniek, Paula Harris, Joy Schoenecker, Judy Allen, Dee Sawyer, Roberta Daly, Suzy Mechter), 4:12:37.

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