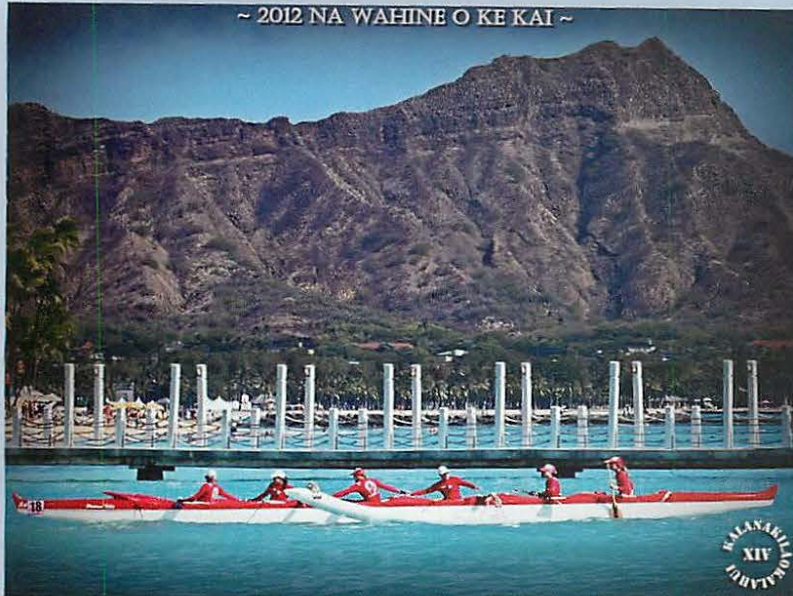


WILD START TO THE 34th ANNUAL NA WAHINE O KE KAI

By Shelley Oates-Wilding, Women's Coach



The Open crew at the finish line

Wow! What a great season of achieving goals in personal growth, technique and camaraderie for the OCC women.

As a first time coach of the OCC program, I did bring some lofty longer term goals to the table which I hope to see continue in the next few years. One of the inspiring things for a coach is to feel the individuals embrace your new ideas and through personal ownership grow and shine in different areas, and that's exactly what I felt with these great women.

This season our women competed as two teams, in the open and 50's division, yet we were one "Winning" team as the men's and women's OCC paddling program.

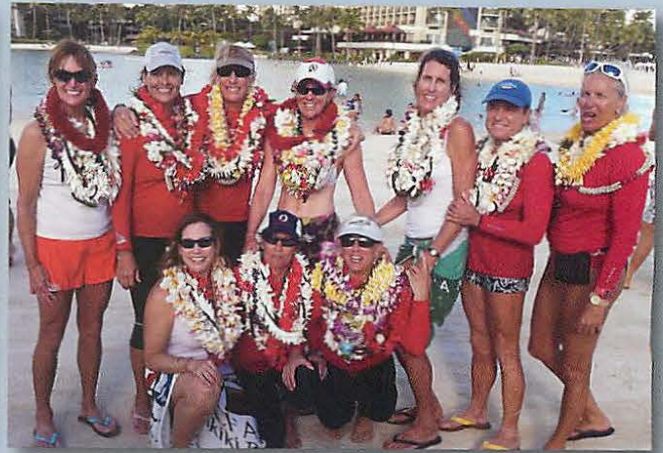
We enjoyed great support and teamwork from the Club staff, the committees, the men's program, our support captains, and each other. One of my goals was to finish the season with a great feeling of achievement, enjoyment by all and future potential; our dinner before and after Molokai confirmed that for me.

This year we saw new ideas in Club policy as well as the technique and training methods. I applaud the ladies for showing open minds and heart to learn and try new things and take what worked well for them; with new and different "techniques", "angles", "video analysis", "training programs", "running the Olympic torch", "cross fit", "pull ups & weight workouts", own training responsibilities and even the accent!

I trust everyone had something to take away and grew more tolerant of change with these experiences.

Our thirst for new things continued throughout our team philosophy with a push for opening the door to younger paddlers, and other members who could still contribute to our paddling program while accommodating for personal schedules. We also provided team building opportunities for paddlers with great fun and learning training trips.

The open team had a fantastic training run to Molokai giving our newer, younger paddlers an opportunity to cross the



Women 50

Row 1: Anna Grune, Marci Nowack, Michele St. John. Row 2: Linda Fernandez, Tana Feely, Lisa Livingston, Kim Darling, Laurie Lawson, Kisi Haine, Liz Perry.

channel while our masters did a great Makapuu run to bring together 12 fantastic ladies in preparation for Molokai.

Another great achievement was Liz Perry being able to pull together 13 amazing ladies, all over 50, all with amazing backgrounds and skills and all with great attitudes to compete in the Na Wahine O Ke Kai for the 34th crossing on September 23 and one of the most challenging starts in history.

Our ladies did a great job in the hands of two extremely competent steersmen with the master Kisi Haine and her apprentice Lindsay Wessberg. Both used their knowledge of the ocean, their crews' capabilities and their confidence and intuition to get us all to the start line and off to a great start in the race!

We enjoyed several times of racing together with all 30 OC members cheering both teams on as we battled it out. These were extremely fulfilling memories of a great day in the Kaiwi channel with the Outrigger Canoe Club.

After both crews and support boats negotiated the start with determination and knowledge they were both in great position as we worked towards La'au point. My position was now to be one of the paddlers with Geoff Graff and Pam Davis doing a fantastic job of coaching across the channel.

Our team came together from a great diversity of experience, age and knowledge. With our first changes we relieved our young steersman for our more experienced channel master in Jacqui Laird. Jacqui came back to paddling distance after a 15 year break and did an amazing job putting the canoe in the best possible positions in challenging tides and swells.

This was evident with the winners, again team Bradley doing a time nearly an hour slower than their previous best time. Our starting paddlers were spearheaded by Jen McTigue who knew all too well the dangers of the surf at the start of this race as she powered us through the "well timed" channel, then set us up with a great rhythm for the challenge ahead.

I followed her in two seat. There was great power and timing coming from three seat in Monica Salter who came

Eight foot waves crashed into Hale O Lono Harbor as canoes were trying to get to the start. The OCC open crew was out early and didn't get caught in the jam. Photo courtesy of Clare Seeger Mawae



back fit and ready to juggle schedules after starting a beautiful family and having her husband in our first men's crew.

Our engine room was lucky to have one of OCC's most experienced paddlers who is always strong, fit and positive, Karin Del Ray, in seat four. Her skills are only surpassed by her positive encouragement and ocean knowledge.

Seat five was Tracy Bradley whose improvement this season has been nothing short of incredible. Her attention to detail and commitment is an inspiration to everyone and this race was the chance for her to show it all off as she did!

We then changed out these paddlers and brought in another younger paddler with amazing improvement and potential in Anela Borges. Melissa Tothrow was a real catch for us and I can only hope there are more just like her out there in the paddling world. Melissa brought amazing experience, maturity, understanding and love to our program as well as a zest to improve as a paddler to add her great steering skills. Mel showed us how we can all continue to be our best and enjoy every moment of it! Another find was Nicole Lamb who brought youth with amazing energy and commitment to OCC. This is exactly what we are wanting to grow and this crossing was to be a great jump up for Nicole as she focused extremely well on everything.

In my opinion this crew had lots of wins this season in personal growth, and improvements but this race had even more for everyone including me. With the trying conditions we all worked well together and showed our improved timing, technique, changes, surfing as well as showing out fitness and positive attitudes the entire journey.

Not sure on ages but we definitely had a younger average age than recent years which is very encouraging for the future of the paddling program and open division for OCC in Na Wahine.

To all the ladies who participated this year I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I hope you achieved your personal goals. I hope this was an opportunity to learn and most importantly I trust you have great memories of smiles and enjoyment for this season.



The Masters women watch as crews try to exit Hale O Lono Harbor for the starting line of the race. They managed to get out safely during a lull. Photo courtesy of Clare Seeger Mawae

34th Annual Na Wahine O Ke Kai 41 Miles, Hale O Lono Harbor to Duke Kahanamoku Beach September 23, 2012

The largest waves in the history of the Na Wahine O Ke Kai blocked the entrance to Hale O Lono Harbor, making it difficult for crews to get to the start of the race. One canoe was damaged, many swamped, several paddlers were injured but the race went on. It will long be remembered by those who paddled in it for the memorable start, and the grueling paddle afterwards resulting in times of an hour or more longer than usual.

OCC Open Crew

17th Overall, 7:06:44

Manu Ula

Anela Borges, Shelley Oates-Wilding, Tracy Bradley, Jacqui Laird, Karin Del Rey, Melissa Tothrow, Monica Salter, Nicole Lamb, Lindsay Wessberg, Jennifer McTigue.

OCC Women 50

Loli'i

25th Overall, 3rd 50s, 7:13:20.

Kim Darling, Linda Fernandez, Laurie Lawson, Michele St. John, Kisi Haine, Anna Grune, Debbie Deshais, Tana Feeley, Ann Marie Mizuno, Anne Perry, Marcie Nowack, Lisa Livingston.