

OCC Shines On In 1998 Na Wahine O Ke Kai

By Genie Kincaid

At the end of the 1997 racing season, Outrigger's women had finished third, eighth and 15th overall in the annual Molokai crossing. The eighth place crew also won the Masters Division. Those were the days when there were more bodies than seats in Outrigger's armada of canoes, and competition was almost contentious to get one of those seats. Fast forward to the 1998 distance season. All the strokes and 2 seats from "first" crew were gone. So was the coach. So was the depth. This year there would only be the crew, a highly distracted coach and a fractured program. Change is good?

Coach Tom McTigue (whose every experience in canoe racing stems from his upbringing in Iowa) took responsibility for the women's program literally on his way to the Snack Shop. With a second child due to arrive at the end of September, McTigue had no intention whatsoever of participating in any way, shape or form in Outrigger's canoe racing season but got the women's coaching job while ordering a veggie burger.

And in the end, he managed to balance a few tough minded novices without a clue as to what they were capable of doing with a core of experience paddlers who understood what it would take to be competitive. Surrounding himself with an erudite support crew, he exhorted the crew to fifth overall in the 20th annual crossing of the Na Wahine O Ke Kai. Ah! Change is not so bad!

The race had 67 crews participate from all over the world. At the start, Outrigger blasted out clean with the leaders. Steersman



Photo by Joss Outrigger's women race to the finish line.

Kisi Haine quickly used the tradewind swells to her advantage. Physically, this was a small crew; its real strength lay in its endurance. The race strategy was to keep the number of open ocean changes to a minimum, so for some rotations, paddlers sucked it up for as long as 70 minutes and paddled on. As usual Kisi never got out of the canoe for a rest. The strategy paid off as the crew claimed 5th place overall.

Kisi's fellow crew mates included Brooke Barrington, Nalani Hunt and Sasha McNaughton, who were novices by experience, not in heart or attitude, and a core of experience, Sara Ackerman, Pam Clifford, Paula Crabb, Starr Dawson, Genie Kincaid, and Tracy Selling.

Special thanks must go to Jim Beaton, our invaluable escort boat driver and peerless course clerk; to Tiare Finney, the absolute best cooler coordinator any racing crew could hope for, and to Walter Guild, who while covering the race for television, tossed all journalistic neutrality over the side, and cheered lustily as the crew raced on. Walter was key in ensuring the equipment and the rig for the women's crew was perfect. Finally, mahalo to the Outrigger ohana for its continued support. This was a crew proud to race as the Outrigger Canoe Club.

Change is good after all.

Editor's Note: The race was won by Australia's Panamuna Riggeroos in 5:54:26. Outrigger's crew raced in the Iwalani and finished fifth overall in a time of 6:14:40.



Finishing fifth overall were OCC'S crew of Coach Tom McTigue, Sara Ackerman, Tracy Selling, Pam Clifford, Genie Kincaid, Paula Crabb, Kisi Haine, Brooke Barrington, Nalani Hunt, Sasha McNaughton, Starr Dawson.

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Ano Ano, The Seed by Kristin Zambucka