

The Outrigger

OUTRIGGER CANOE CLUB

OUTRIGGER BEACH AT DIAMOND HEAD, HONOLULU, HAWAII

NOVEMBER, 1979

A Day that Will Live in Glory For Outrigger's Wahine Paddlers!

By Coach Tom Conner

SATURDAY-OCT. 13-KAUNAKAKAI

It is now two weeks after the Men's Molokai-Oahu race, and unbelievably I am back on Molokai for another canoe race. This time the Outrigger Women are paddling the same distance that we did 14 days ago, and the only difference is that they have never done it before. Perhaps this is a blessing because the women believe everything that I tell them and so far everything has gone according to plan. Nothing has been overlooked in preparation and I am confident our women will win. Many hours have gone into their training, most of them at daybreak when it is just light enough to see. Every day I have to dream up some new form of torture to keep the women in peak condition. I feel that what our team lacks in experience they will make up for in conditioning and grit.

HALE O LONO, SUNDAY-OCTOBER 14

The race starts shortly after 7:00 a.m. and O.C.C. jumps to a quick two-

length lead over arch-rival Hui Nalu. To our chagrin we also notice that Balboa Bay's girls are matching us stroke to stroke. Apparently Balboa managed to corral every Amazon on the West Coast and gave them a crash course in canoe paddling. Short on style but long on bicep, the Balboa girls stay right with us past Laau Point and into the channel. As we start to make crew changes, Balboa's inexperience becomes evident as their canoe comes to a grinding halt when relief paddlers are brought in.

Meanwhile our crew churns along a 50 strokes per minute as our two steersmen, Anne Hogan and Tracy Phillips, draw a bead on Diamond Head. Kimo Austin and I are in the Boston Whaler handling the crew changes and we mostly chat about the weather and how smoothly our girls are paddling. I muse to myself how the girls have a certain rhythm, style and grace to their movements which set them apart from the male paddlers. I can afford to daydream

because we have now built up a half-mile lead over Balboa and they do not appear to be getting any closer.

As Oahu looms up on the horizon, our canoe is joined by an increasing armada of spectator boats. Friends and relatives cheer and snap pictures of the girls as we get closer and closer to Diamond Head. I decide to have all of the crew put on their team shirts so that the pictures will look nice. I joke to myself that perhaps the girls should stop and put on some makeup before they hit the beach.

We make one last crew change in front of the Outrigger Club and the girls head for DeRussy Beach and their well deserved victory celebration. Amid all of the confusion of official boats, Coast Guard boats, and spectators, we have a hard time locating the proper flag to turn at. Fortunately, Balboa is well astern and we eventually locate the proper mark.

On the beach, at last, the girls are surrounded by reporters, cameras, and an abundance of leis. Amid all of the commotion, I manage to catch Outrigger's winning time; 6 hours 35 minutes. I reflect back to ten years ago, 1969, when Waikiki Surf Club won the men's Molokai Race over the same course. The time-6 hours 38 minutes. I know; because I was in the second place canoe. Is there a message there somewhere?

Members of Outrigger's team were: Anita Minter, Kaiulu Downing, Sue Odt, Tiare Richards, Diana Smart, Anne Hogan, Connie Maguire, Sharon Bintliff, Suzy Johnston, Monte Costa, Michele St. John and Tracy Phillips.



Victorious Women's Crew crossing finish line. Crew members (l/r): Connie Maguire, "Doc" Bintliff, Susie Johnston, Monte Costa, Michele St. John, Tracy Phillips. Advertiser photo