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Outrigger Canoe grabs OHCRA Regatta title

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It was just like old times for the Outrigger Canoe Club yesterday.

Not just back to winning, but back to dominating.

Outrigger, the state's most decorated canoe club, added another major title to its collection, winning the O'ahu Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association Championship Regatta yesterday at Ke'ehi Lagoon.

"It's starting to feel like we're building a lot of energy," said Outrigger head coach Kehau Kali. "People in the club are excited, realizing we're doing really well. And this is the time to do it, as we're heading to (the state championships)."

Outrigger won 10 of 36 races, and finished with 83 points. Lanikai was a distant second with 61, followed closely by Hui Lanakila (60), Hui Nalu (59) and Kailua (55).

The A division for smaller clubs finished in a three-way tie for first, with Healani, Keahiakahoe and Waikiki Surf Club scoring 20 points each.

"It's important to try and be consistent all day, and not just concentrate in one area," Kali said. "And we're fortunate enough to be doing well all around."



The Hui Nalu men's sophomore team paddles to victory at the O'ahu Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association Championship Regatta at Ke'ehi Lagoon.

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Outrigger's race victories were spread throughout the regatta with four wins coming from the youth crews (boys 14, girls 15, boys 15, boys 18), two by the novice crews (men's novice B, men's novice A), one by the open men (freshman), one by the open women (senior), and two by the masters (women's 55-over, women's 35-over).

"They have so much depth," said Hui Lanakila head coach Leighton Look. "It seems like they've been pulling paddlers from out of the closet the last couple of weeks. We don't have that kind of history, so we're happy to get third by one point behind Lanikai."

Outrigger won its first regatta of the season last week. Like yesterday, that victory also came by a convincing margin of more than 20 points.

"It's hard to explain because I feel like we've been doing really well this whole season," Kali said. "Even when we weren't winning the regattas in the beginning of the year, we were coming really close. I think we've been building toward this."

### **Club's 13th title in 17 years**

It was Outrigger's 13th OHCRA championship in the past 17 years.

Yesterday, Outrigger took control from the start and never relented. In particular, the youth crews accounted for 29 points, virtually neutralizing Lanikai's traditionally-strong youths. At the end of the 13 youth races, Lanikai led Outrigger, 31-29.

Leading the charge for Outrigger was its girls 15 crew, which capped an undefeated season with an eight-second victory.

"They had a tough race today," said Katy Bourne, coach of the girls 15 crew. "But they've worked really well together all season, even though we've switched a lot of them around."

By the time Outrigger won the prestigious women's senior race (the 25th race of the day), the only drama remaining was the tight chase for the second-place trophy between Lanikai, Hui Lanakila, Hui Nalu and Kailua.

The Outrigger women's senior crew consisted of Mary Smolenski, Paula Crabb, Donna Kahakui, Karin Hansen, Traci Phillips and Kisi Haine. Several of them were with other clubs in recent years, but returned to Outrigger this season.

"There was a lot of experience in that boat," said Haine, who steered the crew. "But we haven't used this combination all year. We just seemed to blend together and make it work."

## **Team standings**

<b>AA Division</b>	
1, Outrigger	83
2, Lanikai	61
3, Hui Lanakila	60
4, Hui Nalu	59
5, Kailua	55
6, Waimānalo	3
<b>A Division</b>	
1, Healani	20
tie, Keahiakahoe	20
tie, Waikīkī Surf	20
4, Leeward Kai	7
5, Anuenue	5
6, Mākaha	2
7, Pu'uloa	1
8, Kai Oni, Honolulu	0

Hui Nalu, which traded victories with Outrigger in the women's senior race all season, placed second by 10 seconds.

Later in the day, Smolenski, Crabb, Kahakui, Phillips and Haine joined Kaili Chun to win the women's masters (35-and-older) race.

"We're all over 35, so we're just really happy that we can still compete in the senior race," Haine said.

In the much-anticipated men's senior race, Lanikai barely reasserted its winning ways. The crew of Gio Camuso, John Foti, Kai Bartlett, Kalani Irvine, Jim Foti and Karel Tresnak Jr. edged Hui Nalu by four-tenths of a second in the 1 1/2-mile race to avenge back-to-back losses during the regular season.

A key move before the race led to a key move during it. For the first time in over a decade, Jim Foti did not steer the men's senior crew. Instead, Tresnak steered and Foti paddled in the No. 5 seat.

"Jim is a little stronger than I am in sprint races, so we had a feeling it might work," Tresnak said.

It paid off when Tresnak navigated the canoe into a pinpoint turn around the second of three buoys. Entering the turn, Lanikai trailed Hui Nalu by about 15 feet. After the turn, Lanikai led by a few feet, a distance it held the rest of the way.

"I wanted (the turn) to be tight, but even I didn't expect to get it that close," Tresnak said. "I was praying that there was no wind, or we might have buried the buoy."

Overall, Lanikai won six races, while Hui Nalu took five and Hui Lanakila four.

Three other crews completed undefeated seasons: Waikiki Surf Club's girls 16, Kailua's men 55-and-older and Hui Lanakila's men 45-and-older.

Yesterday's regatta was the last chance for crews to qualify for the Aug. 4 state championship regatta at Hanalei Bay, Kaua'i. The top four OHCRA crews in each division earned spots in the state regatta.

"It would be great to do this again on Kaua'i, but I doubt it," Kali said. "We won this week, but you can never count any of the others out. The competition is just too good."



The Hui Nalu women's sophomore team won its event to help guide the club to a fourth-place finish at the O'ahu Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association Championship Regatta at Ke'ehi Lagoon yesterday.

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