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# OHCRA championship an Outrigger showcase

By Jack Wyatt  
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Outrigger Canoe Club began yesterday's 33-event Oahu Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association Championship at Keehi Lagoon like it finished it some eight hours later - by winning a race.

In between, the 250-paddler OHCRA powerhouse poured it on, placing first in 12 other events and finishing second or third in eight more races.

By the time the Keehi slaughter had ended, Outrigger had amassed 91 points, outscoring its closest rival, Kailua Canoe Club by a comfortable 23 points.

Hui Nalu finished third with 67 points. Lanikai, the winner of four OHCRA regattas this season, was fourth with 64.

Keahiakahoe Canoe Club of Kahaluu topped OHCRA's small club A Division scoring with nine.

Approximately 2,000 paddlers from 15 OHCRA clubs turned out.

"Sure we would have liked to have won today," said Lanikai's top-steersman Jim Foti. "But the club's main focus was to qualify crews for the state championship in two weeks. The states become a whole new ball game where anything can happen."

Qualifying crews for the HCRA State Championship Aug. 3 at Keehi Lagoon was indeed the focus of most coaches and paddlers.

"There was a lot of crew qualification strategy going on by clubs today," said Joan Malama, OHCRA's president.

Hawaii has approximately 7,000 paddlers statewide and almost all would like to compete in the state meet.

"Qualification procedures are necessary," Malama said, "Our course couldn't begin to handle in one day all those crews that would like to take part. Our qualification process is fair. It's my belief we've selected the best."

OHCRA crews qualified yesterday one of two ways - by finishing first in a race, or by having placed consistently well over OHCRA's six, point-scoring regattas this season.

"As well as Outrigger performed today - and our paddlers really came through - our club still missed qualifying several crews (for the state meet)," said Outrigger coach Kalani Schrader.

Schrader has little reason to worry, however. Outrigger has won the state title 11 of the past 12 years. And it has the paddling talent and the coaching prowess to win it once again.

In a season that begin June 2, Outrigger waited until last week's John Kaupiko Regatta to come together and post its first win.

"Club pride. Camaraderie. Call it what you may," Schrader said. "We had some veteran club paddlers turn out recently who hadn't raced all season."

Diane Stowell, a member of Outrigger's winning women's golden masters crew yesterday, delayed her flight to Atlanta and the Olympic Games until she paddled.

Kailua, with strong performances from its youth paddlers, led yesterday's championship for the first dozen or more races.

Then Outrigger's adults took command, never to be headed.

After 15 of 32 events, Outrigger led the meet with 38 points, followed by Kailua with 37, Hui Nalu, with 32, and Lanikai, with 21.

"It was any club's regatta at that point," said Schrader.

Outrigger won yesterday with a lot of help from its adults, winners of nine of the final 14 races.

"Win or lose at the state championship, I'm retiring as head coach," Schrader said. "Two years of this pressure is enough."