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Special to the Star-Bulletin

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If strength and conditioning alone could win the seventh annual Na Wahine O Ke Kai, then the Canadians would be rated tops. "Our kayak paddlers have raced all summer in Europe and in Canada," Hodgkinson said, "and our canoeists have just finished their national circuit. Fitness-wise we're ready."

Unfortunately for the visitors, there's more to cross-channel paddling and wave riding than just bulging muscles. "We have waves," said steersman Ruth Madsen of Vancouver Island, "but nothing like you have here."

Defending champ and current record-holder Outrigger Canoe Club is heavily favored to win its fourth Na Wahine O Ke Kai in six tries. "Outrigger's women have trained hard for this race and they're out to win," OCC's Marilyn Kali noted.

OCC'S WOMEN SET the course record last year when they turned the 40.8 miles in six hours, 12 minutes and 11 seconds. The race begins at Molo-kai's Hale O Lono Harbor at 7 a.m. and ends at Waikiki's Fort DeRussy Beach. The first-finisher is expected after 1 p.m.

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While Outrigger, and other local crews, pray for moderate to big surfing seas, the Canadians hope for small waves.

**CANADIAN CLUB**—Members of the White Raven Canoe Club of British Columbia are, front to back: Kathy Gallager, Lee-Ann Hodgkinson, Sheila Taylor, Joanne Draganiuk, Kathy Nixon and Ruth Madsen.—Star-Bulletin Photo by Craig Kojima.

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# Canadians in Paddling Challenge

By Jack Wyatt

Special to the Star-Bulletin

If Waikiki beach boy Rabbit Kekai looks a little more haggard than usual, you can blame it on a crew of Canadian women paddlers to whom he's teaching the art of Hawaiian outrigger canoe paddling.

In a cram course off Waikiki this week, Kekai has been trying to keep 11 White Raven (British Columbia) Canoe Club women paddlers on course for Sunday's 21-team Na Wahine O Ke Kai Molokai-Oahu Race. He admits the task hasn't been an easy one. "Great bunch of ladies and very competitive," Kekai said, "but they have a lot to learn and very little time to learn it in."

JUST TO GRASP proper Hawaiian outrigger paddling techniques in protected waters requires months to years of practice. But to handle a 40-foot, 400-pound outrigger across an often tempestuous Kaiwi Channel between Molokai and Oahu is a challenge that even the most accomplished paddler thinks twice about.

"We're all competitive kayak or canoe (not outrigger) paddlers in Canada," team organizer and stroker Lee-Ann Hodgkinson said, "but none of us had ever been in a Hawaiian outrigger before."

But Hodgkinson noted that if anyone can teach outrigger paddling to kayakers and canoeists, Kekai can. "He's a wonderful coach," she noted.

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September 26, 1985



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