

Castle Swim was Club's Premiere Ocean Swim



Participants in the 1993 Castle Swim.



Todd Duplanty (6) beat out his brother Chris (5) and Ian Emberson in an exciting finish to the 1988 Castle Swim.

By Marilyn Kali

Outrigger members may remember that the Outrigger Canoe Club was a premiere swimming club in its early history with many Olympian swimmers and AAU champions among its members. So it isn't surprising that the oldest competitive event that the Club sponsored and continues to sponsor was in swimming.

The Castle Swim, first held in 1917, was part of a Thanksgiving weekend aquatic carnival that the Club sponsored. There was surfboard competition, canoe races, and various swimming contests.

The Blue Ribbon event of the carnival was the Castle Swim for men, which started at Castle Point (the site of our present day Clubhouse) and ended at the OCC diving stand in front of the old Club on Waikiki Beach. There were swimming races for men, women and children of various distances in addition to the Castle Swim.

(Castle Point was named for Harold P. Castle whose family estate was located at the site. The site would later be sold to the Elks Club, and half of the site leased to the Outrigger Canoe Club.)

Events started on Thanksgiving morning 1917 and continued throughout the weekend, culminating in a Monster Chowder dinner and dance on the Club beach. The events were open to the public and according to the Honolulu newspapers there were many participants and thousands of spectators.

The driving force behind the Castle Swim was George "Dad" Center who served as Outrigger's swimming coach for many, many years. Since most people would have a four-day holiday for Thanksgiving, he thought it a good time to establish some friendly water sports competition.

The first Castle Swim was won by Harold "Stubby" Krueger, a swimmer from Healan Club. Duke Kahanamoku, who competed as a sprinter in the 1912, 1920 and 1924 Olympics, finished third in the long-distance event.

The event is believed to have continued in ensuing years but no records of it were found in the daily newspapers from 1918-1921.

From 1922 to 1935, the Castle Swim was held every Thanksgiving Day. Although it was an open swim, the winners seem to be mostly Outrigger members.

Early winners of the Castle Swim:

1917	Harold "Stubby" Krueger
1922	Chester Sims
1923	Chester Sims
1924	Toots Minvielle
1925	Gay Harris
1926	Buster Crabbe
1927	Buster Crabbe
1928	Buster Crabbe
1929	Toots Minvielle
1930	Kenneth Wood
1931	Jackie May
1932	Toots Minvielle
1933	Toots Minvielle
1934	H. Sakamoto
1935	E. Nakamura

Interest in competitive swimming was waning in the early 1930s at the OCC and the last two years the event was won by swimmers from the University of Hawaii. OCC entered only three swimmers in the 1935 event.

In 1936, the Associated Students of the University of Hawaii decided to hold a swimming race on Thanksgiving Day, replacing the OCC-sponsored race. The venue was changed from Waikiki to the Ala Moana Channel.

In 1952, with Toots Minvielle serving as chair of the OCC Swimming Committee, and Dad Center, as advisor, members began urging the Club to restart the Castle Swim, but it wasn't until 1953 that the swim happened.

On Thanksgiving Day, a variety of races were held in both open and OCC member only categories for boys and girls 12 and under, boys and girls 16 and under, a 1,500-yard women's open, and the Castle Swim (from Castle Point to the Club) for men both open and members only.

Toots Minvielle won the first revival of the Castle Swim, after winning it four times two decades earlier. The Boys 12 and under for members was won by Fred Hemmings, and the Boys 16 and under for members was won by Gil Halpern.

The event was again held in 1955 (John T. Moore, winner)



Olympian and future Flash Gordon and Buck Rogers in the movies, Buster Crabbe won the Castle Swim from 1927-1929.



Ian Emberson won the race six times.

Kristi Torkildson was the youngest winner of the Castle Swim at 13 in 2003.



Castle Swim Winners

1973	Bruce Ames	N.T.
1974	Not held	
1975	Jimmy Dean	:37:05*
1976	Jimmy Dean	:33:58*
1977	Jimmy Dean	:31:28*
1978	Jimmy Dean	:30:40*
1979	Jimmy Dean	:29:17*
1980	Jimmy Dean	:30:37
1981	Jimmy Dean	:29:50
1982	Jimmy Dean	:27:47*
1983	Jimmy Dean	:31:00
1984	Ian Emberson	:28:46
1985	Ian Emberson	:30:18
1986	Ian Emberson	:31:36
1987	Ian Emberson	:33:37
1988	Todd Duplanty	:29:09
1989	Mike Miller	:32:47
1990	Ian Emberson	:30:15
1991	Ian Emberson	:32:16
1992	Chris Moore	:31:35
1993	Chris Moore	:29:50
1994	Chris Moore	:31:02
1995	Chris Moore	:38:07
1996	Chris Moore	:31:14
1997	Chris Moore	:34:26
1998	Chris Moore	:36:43
1999	Alex Jampel	:33:55
2000	Alex Jampel	:35:12
2001	Chris Moore	:35:17
2002	Chris Moore	:31:55
2003	Kristi Torkildson	:36:51
2004	Kristi Torkildson	:35:34
2005	Kristi Torkildson	:34:21
2006	Kristi Torkildson	:36:10
2007	Wil Yamamoto	:39:20
2008	Wil Yamamoto	:39:08
2009	Ryan Saunders	:33:11
2010	Aukai Gilliland	:33:12
2011	Dolan Eversole	:33:03
2012	Alex Jampel	:39:03

*Record

and 1956 (Eagle Rawson, winner).

The Castle Swim was cancelled in 1957 due to lack of interest from swimmers. There was an attempt at a revival in 1960 but it failed.

Another revival attempt was made in 1973 and that was won by Bruce Ames.

In 1975, the OCC Swim Committee chaired by Gerry DeBenedetti with members Cline Mann and Fred Hemmings, put on what they called the "Second Annual Revival of the Castle Swim" on the Sunday after Thanksgiving.

It was a race for members only, with a change of course. Now members would swim from the old Club site in Waikiki, to the present Club site at Diamond Head, a basic reversal of the original course. And instead of different events, the Castle Swim was to be one distance, with prizes to the first place winners in age categories every five years.

Nineteen members entered the Castle Swim in 1975 and it has been held every year since on the Sunday after Thanksgiving. This year's event will be on Sunday, December 1.

The most winning swimmers in the Castle are Jimmy Dean and Chris Moore who each have nine wins. Jimmy won from 1975 to 1983, and also holds the record for the swim of 27 minutes and 47 seconds set in 1982. Chris won from 1992-1998 and 2001-2002. Another frequent winner was Ian Emberson, 1984-1987 and 1990-1991.

Kristi Torkildson is the only female winner and the youngest ever to win. She captured the race from 2003-2006.

If you're a swimmer, join us for the 2013 edition of the Castle Swim. It's a member-only event. Check in is at the Club beach. You'll be bused to the start which is on the beach fronting the Outrigger Hotel (the original Club site). You may have an escort on a surfboard or canoe. The finish is at the stairs to the OCC beach. The OCC Sunday Brunch and awards follow the swim. It's a fun event and a good way to work off your Thanksgiving feast. You can sign up at the Front Desk.