

Three Molokai Channel Races Test One-Man Canoes, Kayak and Sailing Canoes

By Carol Wilcox

Gone are the days when the Molokai Channel was the exclusive preserve of male warriors of Hawaii in six-man outrigger canoes.

This 30-40-mile crossing (depending on your course), has become the testing ground for a variety of crafts and participants.

The thrill of the open ocean often attracts an international field, as Tahitians, Maoris, Australians, Canadians and Californians bend their backs against the men and women of Hawaii.

Three Molokai Channel crossings took place in May.

On May 5, the Canoe Sports Hawaii Kaiwi Challenge team one-man canoe race from the Kaluakoi Hotel to OCC was held for the second time. Seven two-man teams, one two-woman team and one solo completed the course.

The race was very close, with the first four canoes together most of the way. At Koko Head, the winning team of Tom Conner and Kala Judd pulled away. Walter Guild and Mark Rigg battled Steve Cole and Pat Erwin all the way to Black Point when they finally pulled ahead.

The race was held in two classes—open hull and canoe. An open class hull is anything other than the standard one-person canoe hull.

This was a two-man team event, with paddlers changing places on the canoe. In most boats, the paddlers averaged 20 minutes in the boat and 20 minutes off.

Conditions were excellent this year. In 1990 conditions were totally flat and the winning time was 6:20. This year Conner and Judd finished the course in 4:55:40.

Results:

Overall	Name	Time	Place/Division
1.	Tom Conner*/Kala Judd*	4:55:40	1st, Open Hull
2.	Walter Guild*/Mark Rigg*	5:09:30	1st, Canoe
3.	Steve Cole/Pat Erwin	5:14:00	2nd, Open Hull
4.	Todd Bradley*/Bruce Eliashof*	5:18:34	2nd, Canoe
5.	Wyatt Jones*/Todd Payes*	5:32:42	3rd, Canoe
6.	Bill Danford*/Jim Kincaid*	5:48:39	4th, Canoe
7.	John Beaton*/Tim Twigg Smith	5:55:40	5th, Canoe
8.	Billy Balding* (solo)	N.T.	
9.	Two women from California	N.T.	

*OCC members

Then, on May 19, the 15th Bankoh Kayak Challenge, a 32-mile crossing from the Kaluakoi Hotel and ending at Koko Marina pier, was held on a hot, flat, windless day which took out eight of the 47 starters, including the defending champion, Grant Kenny.

The race was won by Guy Leach of Australia in 4:30:56, nearly an hour longer than last year's winning time of 3:44:45.

Outrigger's top finisher was Kala Judd, who finished 10th overall in 4:47:54. OCC's other finishers were:

14. Courtney Seto, 4:53:36
17. Mark Sandvold, 5:04:08
20. James Kincaid, 5:06:51
35. Dale Adams, 6:02:17

Several other Outrigger members started the race but had to drop out along the way. They included defending women's champion Lesline Conner, Geoff Graf and Chris Kincaid.

And finally, to round out the Challenge Triple Crown month, was the Ho'omana'o Challenge on May 26. This is a 75-mile six-man outrigger canoe sailing canoe race from Kaanapali to Waikiki.

Twelve 6-man crews, two from Kauai, three from Maui, one from Molokai and six from Oahu, completed the crossing. The race was held once before in 1989.

The conditions were perfect, with 3 to 4 foot seas and winds of 20-25 knots.

The race was between Island Tan, captained by Mike Muller, and Maui Sailing Canoe Association, captained by former national Hobie-14 champion Cappy Sheely, from the start.

Cappy had the lead until they fell into the lee at Hale O Lono, when Mike's crew paddled ahead. Cappy regained the lead in the windy channel, as Mike was handicapped by a broken steering paddle.

The two boats converged off of Diamond Head, collided right in front of the Club in the surf at Castles, then Muller squeaked ahead with a wave and superior paddling to win by 102 seconds.

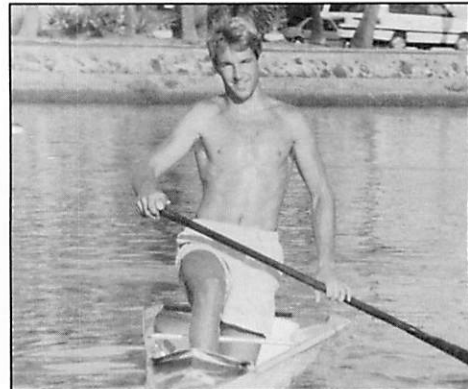
The Island Tan crew included OCC members Bruce Eliashof, Todd Bradley, Todd Payes, Loch Eggers, Hunter Eggers and Muller. Their winning time was 6:27:00. Maui finished in 6:28:42. ☺



Kala Judd



Mark Sandvold



Wyatt Jones

Finishing on the third place Olomana crew were OCC's Heath Hemmings, Dean Maeva, Dawson Jones, Danny Loui, Jake Mizuno and Matt Buckman, in 6:49:44.

Kala Judd, Bruce Eliashof, Todd Bradley, Bruce Eliashof and Todd Payes had the distinction of completing two of the three May crossings. Wyatt Jones, a sailing canoe enthusiast, had to miss that race to head off to the U.S. National Canoe Team trials on the Mainland.

The Kaiwi Channel is a world class course and we can expect to see greater use of it in the international arena. It's a unique challenge. No matter how many times or ways they cross this channel, or how well they do, all the finishers emanate the thrill of crossing the very special Molokai Channel. 🍹



Paddling in the Ho'omana'o Challenge were Mike Muller, Bruce Eliashof, Hunter Eggers, Loch Eggers, Dawson Jones and Todd Payes.

Kayak Clinic

The annual Kayak Clinic for OCC members will be held on Saturday, July 27 at the OCC Beach from 10 a.m. to Noon. The clinic will be run by experienced OCC kayakers and is geared toward beginning and novice paddlers. There will be instruction in basic paddling technique, as well as an opportunity to paddle different kayaks. 🍹

