

Canoe Racing Season Gets Underway

By Marilyn Kali

When regatta season begins this month, many of us will take for granted that when it's our turn to race, the Kaoloa and Leilani will be on the beach and ready for us to jump in and paddle to the starting line.

For those hard-working members of the Canoe Racing Committee and the coaches, regatta day has begun before dawn when they gathered at the Club to load up the canoes, tent and equipment to bring to the regatta site.

And for those who haven't been at the beach when the canoes arrive, or at the beach at the end of the day when the canoes are loaded on the trailers to head for home, you may be surprised to find out that the canoes don't come ready to race.

The canoes are expertly rigged for each race by a handful of Outrigger members who have mastered the art from years of practice.

The purpose of rigging is to tie together the three main parts of the canoe--the hull (the main part of the canoe), the iako (the two wooden booms that connect the hull and the ama) and the ama (the wooden float that lies parallel to the hull and floats in the water).

"We use cotton cord string to tie everything together," says Walter Guild, Board member, paddler, former Head Coach and longtime member of the Canoe Racing Committee who spent many years in charge of the racing equipment.

"We use cotton because when it gets wet, it shrinks and binds everything together tightly."

All cord used for rigging is pre-stretched around a fixed object before it's used to rig a canoe.

It takes about 50-feet of cord to tie each ama to the iako, and about 60-feet of cord to tie each iako to the hull.

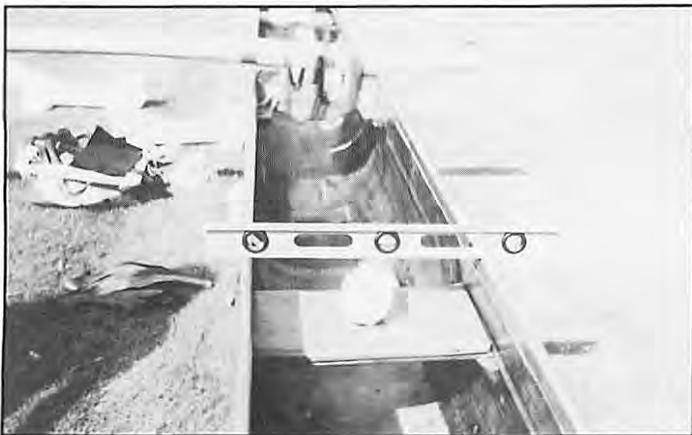
Rigging a canoe takes at least two people.

Leveling the Hull

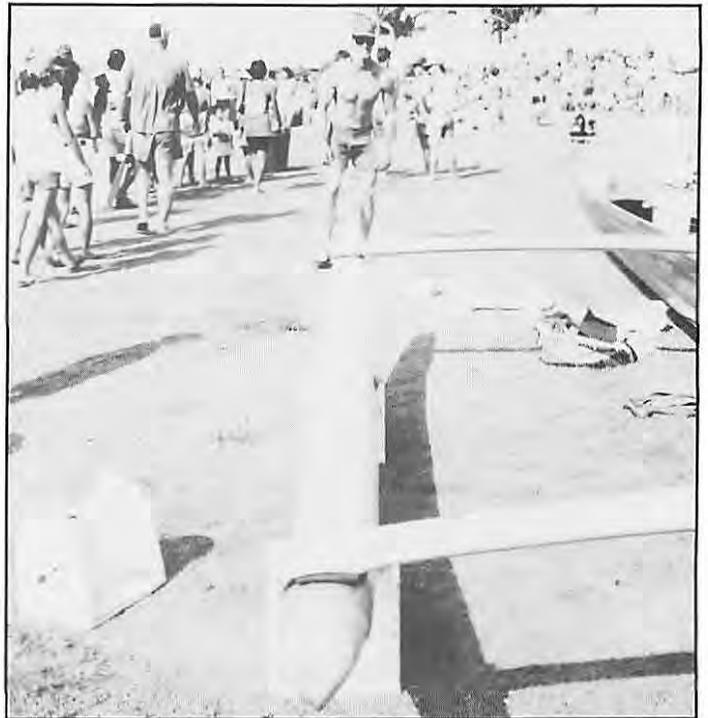
The first step in rigging a canoe is to level the hull. The crew places a carpenter's level across the hull to make sure it's level.

This is necessary so that the canoe will float properly when it's in the water.

The next step is to tie the iakos to the boat with rubber strips to hold them in place.



The hull is leveled.



The ama is sited for alignment.

Then, the ama is placed in the cradles and given a visual check to make sure it is properly aligned.

First the Ama

One person holds the ama, while the other begins the tying process. The cord is wrapped around the peg on the iako in a figure eight. It crosses either in front of the peg or in back of it.

Everytime it crosses, it locks the cord under it in place. Should a string break, it can't unravel because it's locked in by the cord on top.

The cord is pulled as tightly as possible.

The cord is then wrapped around the previous lashing between the iako and ama to cinch it in place and then is tied off.

A string is tied from one iako to the other to keep them from moving. The newer ama have holes in them so that a string isn't necessary.

The ama is always tied the same way.

Ama Placement

Once the ama is tied, the distance between the hull and ama is adjusted depending on the water conditions and the size of the crew using the boat.

The distance between the hull and the ama varies from 66 to 70 inches from the outside gunnel of the canoe to the center of the ama.

"The farther out the ama is, the more stable the canoe is," Guild said. "It has a catamaran effect. The closer in the ama is, it acts as a single hull sort of boat. It's less stable, but gives a higher performance."

"The rigging really depends on the water and wind conditions. We usually make allowances for the crew in how we wedge the hull. We usually rig the Leilani light for the kids, and the Kaoloa heavier for the open crews." ❧

Iako to the Hull

It takes two people to tie the iako to the hull.

The process starts by finding the mid point in the cord and looping it around the wae (the wooden block inside the hull which spreads the gunnels apart and on which the iako sits).

There are different sets of holes in the gunnel so that the wae can be moved forward or back depending on the ama that is used.

"Once we find the best place for the iako, we usually leave it there," Guild said.

Each person then takes one piece of the cord and begins lashing the iako to the hull, always pulling the

cord as tightly as possible. (See photos on page 4.)

The cord is wrapped through the gunnels and around the iako and wae, in a figure eight pattern. The wrap is finished by again securing the cord to the wae, and then all of the cords are cinched together and tied off.

Once the rigging is complete, water is poured on the cord so that the tightening process can begin.

It takes 30-45 minutes to rig each canoe on race day.

Instruction in rigging is offered by the Canoe Racing Committee at various times during the racing season, so check the bulletin board in the tunnel if you'd like to learn. 📌



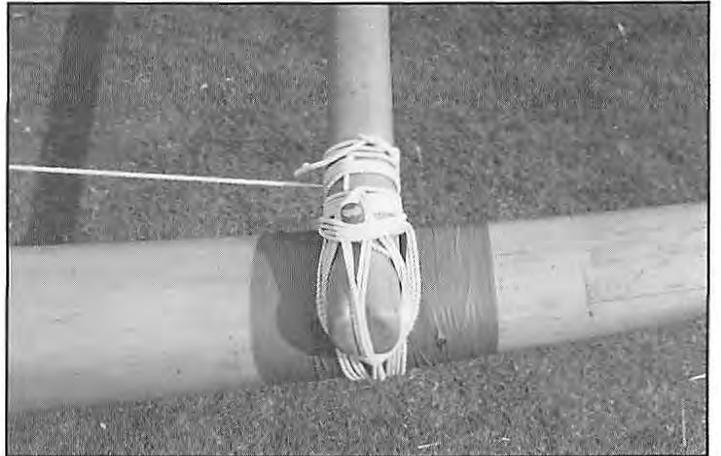
Lashing of the iako to the ama begins.



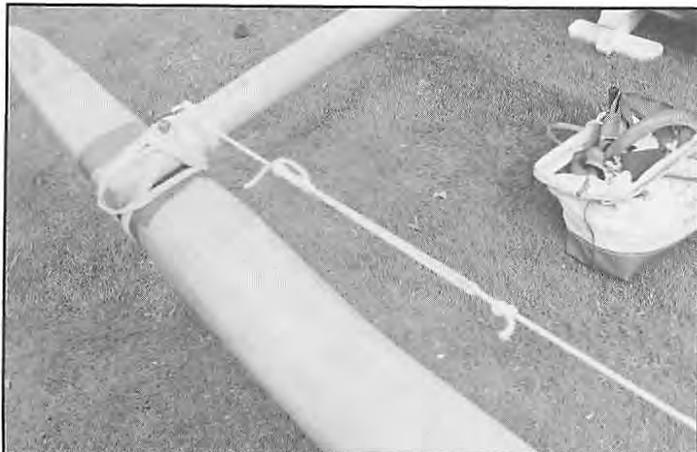
A figure eight pattern is followed.



The lashing is cinched.



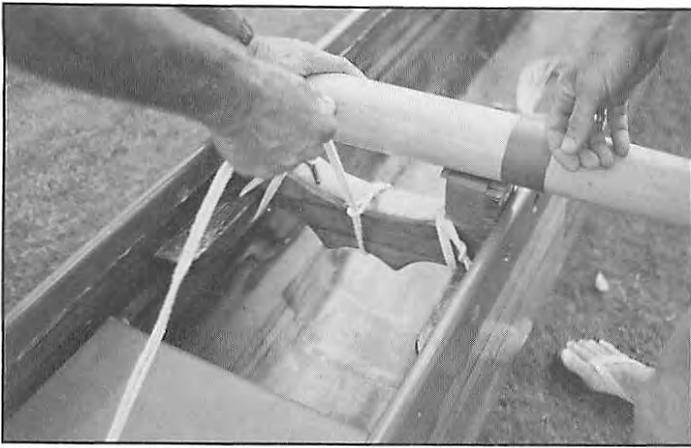
Top view of the final rigging.



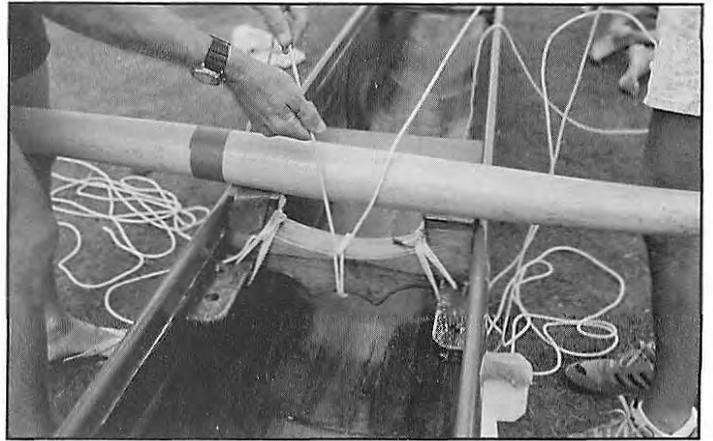
A cord ties the iakus together.



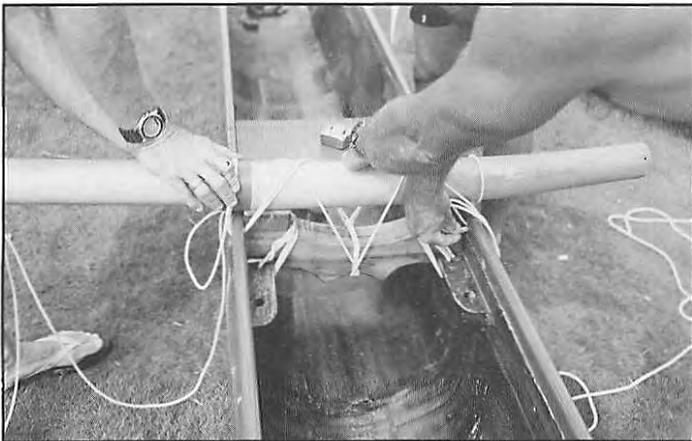
The distance between the hull and ama is measured.



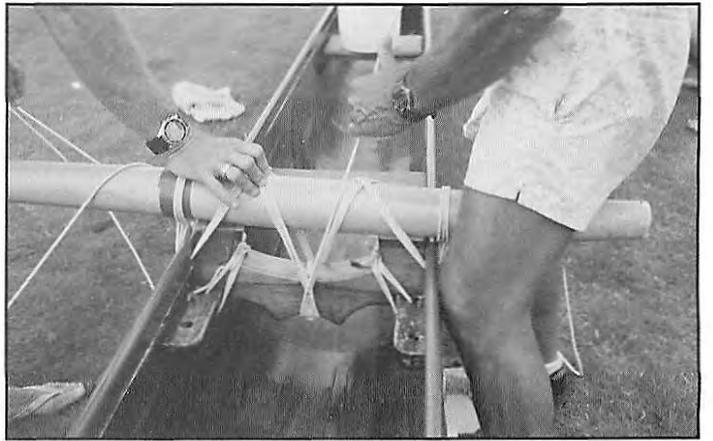
The cord is looped around the wae.



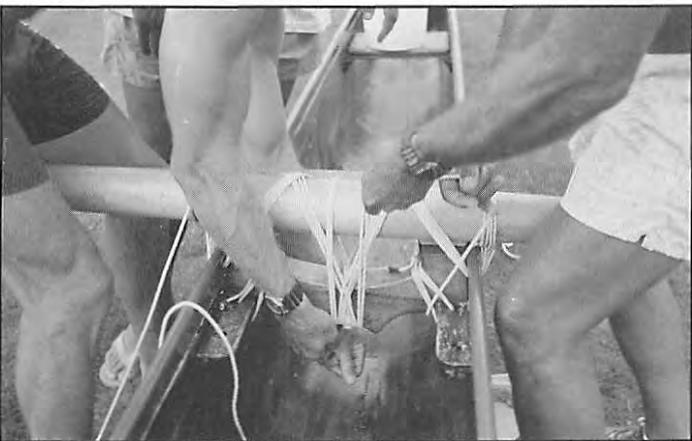
Riggers begin tying iaku to hull.



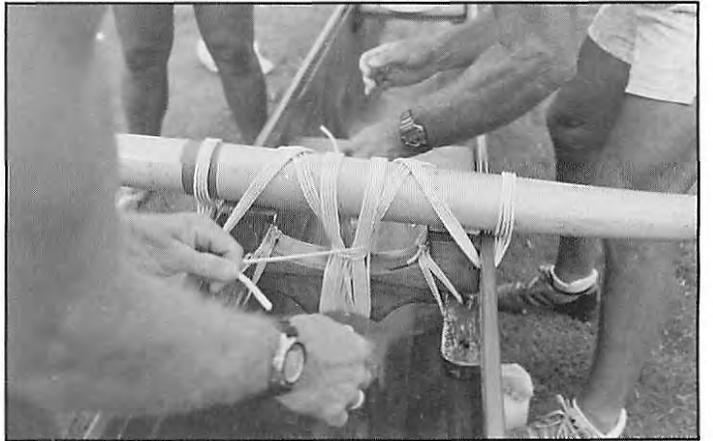
A figure eight pattern is used.



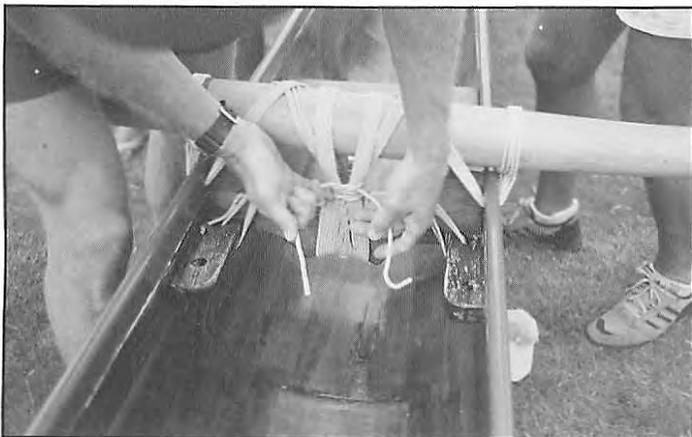
Cord is pulled tight.



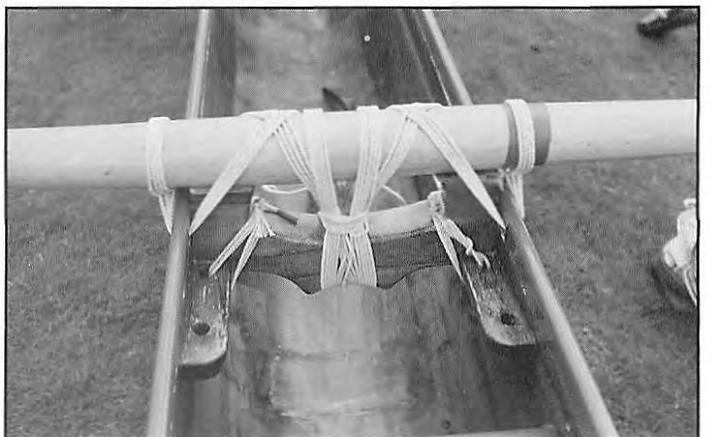
Final wrap around the wae.



Cinching all ties together.



Tying off the cord.



The final rigging.