

# OCC Bikers in Mauna Kea 200

By Mark Sandvold

Welcome race fans to yet another bone crushing, hair-raising Mauna Kea 200 Enduro Race. This year's race over Memorial Day weekend proved to all those who participated that this event is truly a nationally recognized enduro with top competitors from all over the country giving it their best shot.

Outrigger, in keeping its tradition alive, fielded two teams to take on the challenge.

Team A consisted of veterans Walter Guild, Brant Ackerman and Matt Kresser who have met the challenge in years past and have kept Outrigger's winning tradition alive.

Team B, also known at the "Young Lions" consisted of veteran Keola Sheehan and rookies Alan Pflueger and Mark Sandvold, who were more than willing to dive into this event head on.

Of course, we must mention our support crew, because without them, it would be sheer misery, trust me.

The support crew this year consisted of life-saving, always there with a towel and a smile, "Mama-Moto" Tiare Finney. Our fearless mechanical genius was John Beaumont, and our cheering squad, Sydney Fernandes, Eleni Michaelidis and Anne Love.

We give our thanks to others like Mark Kennedy, Al Serafin and all the rest of the gang who supported us in one way or another.

This is a race which pits man and motorcycle against the clock and the most treacherous, ever-changing terrain of the Big Island. Starting at sea level in Hilo, the course winds its way circuitously up to the top of Mauna Kea and back down again. Riders are faced with a wide diversity of environments.

The lower regions of the course are primarily dense low-lying rain forests with extremely saturated jeep and mule trails. They provide the rider with a wide variety of obstacles like gaping mud-water crossings, log jumps, rut traverses, limb duckings and the infamous Koi Pond.

After the steamy endless depths of the jungle, speeds increase over a section called Planter's Road. This high speed roller coaster like section can be very scary as it takes the rider at full speed over moss covered shale and stone.

However, nothing is as scary as the next section. After Planter's Road, the rider finds himself approaching what at first appears to be another planet, and is in reality a fresh lava flow with huge jagged-like structures. One false move in this section and it's curtains.

Past the lava and into the foggy elevations, the course climbs up to the crater where vegetation thins out until there is nothing but barren, wind and snow swept cinder cones, speckled with the fallout of moon-like stones over volcanic spews.

At this point, the rider is faced with freezing temperatures which makes staying warm and breathing very difficult. Ironically, this is the best part of the race. The majesty of the mountain and the



Team B at the starting line--Keola Sheehan, Mark Sandvold and Alan Pflueger.

crater give the rider an experience which makes the race for a short time seem insignificant.

Day one ended with Keola, Mark and Brenton Block each under 20 points and in contention to place well in their divisions. Walter and Matt actually went too fast and blew by a check and therefore were penalized. Alan and Brant both finished the day in good standing.

On the second day, the anticipation was felt in the cool drive up from Hilo as we all knew that today would separate the men from the gups. The wet foggy weather proved treacherous at times as it hindered the vision of the lava that lay ahead.

The hardest part of the day was negotiating giant log structures stacked at times three or four high, with ugly deep water crossings on either side.

Just finishing this day was an accomplishment in itself. As it turned out, over half the field broke down physically as well as mechanically.

The day ended with Brenton and Keola taking top honors with 42 and 44 points respectively, good enough for a fifth and sixth in their class.

Mark ended up with 60 points and 20th in his class. Walter and Matt, because of their costly mistake, ended up with 78 and 81 points each. As for Alan and Brant, unfortunately the mountain got the best of them as they both ran into difficulties and were unable to finish.

The race is an amazing experience. Look for Team OCC to get stronger next year and take on the challenge once again.



Team A--Walter Guild, Brant Ackerman and Matt Kresser, with "Mama-Moto" Tiare Finney.

Photos by Tiare Finney