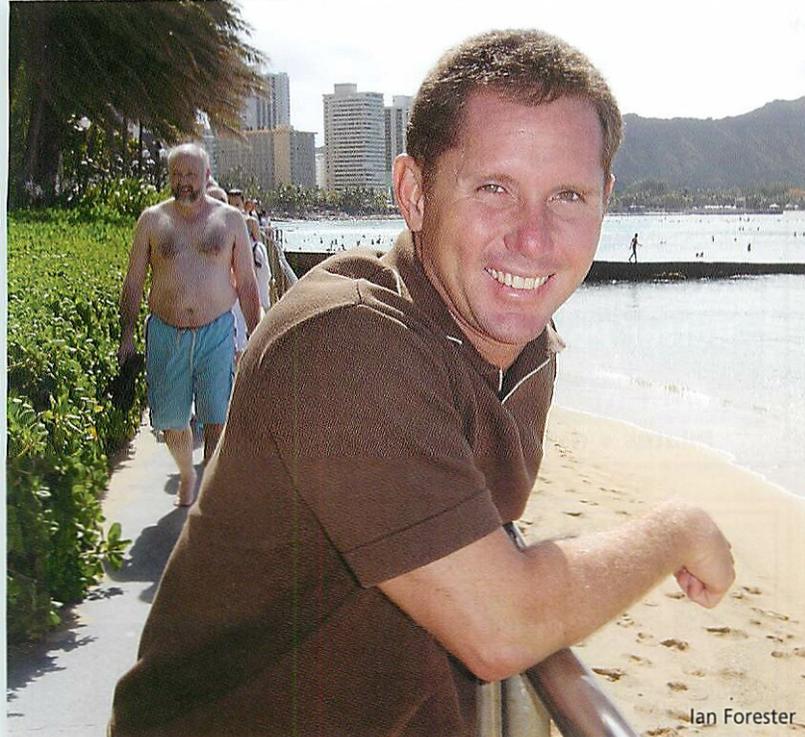


## Forester Takes Over as Women's Head Coach

by Genie Kincaid, Photo by Catherine Toth



Ian Forester

The prospect of coaching the women of Outrigger was offered to Ian Forester a couple of years ago, and though he didn't take the job, he promised himself that if it was ever offered again, he would do it in a heartbeat.

After former head coach John Puakea invested two years of effort and yielded consecutive runner up places in the 2003 and 2004 Molokai championships, the opportunity to coach at Outrigger was renewed and this time, Forester gladly accepted.

It's been 13 years since the women last captured the Na Wahine O Ke Kai championship, and Forester honestly believes his women are ready to win it again. He will argue that physically the Outrigger women are the fastest crew in the state, but that they must have confidence.

Forester is a big believer in the strength of the mind and being tough mentally. "Whether (defending champion) Australia comes back or not, every female team has bumped up their ability and Outrigger's got targets on their backs. I'm trying to bump ourselves up as well to go with the trend, by strengthening the bodies through the workouts we're doing and by strengthening the minds."

"I want to win this just as much as the girls. Second place means we're right there. We just need to have the confidence going into the race that we're the one to beat and that we're there to stay."

Quite a bit of pluck for a young man from Laie. But Forester takes coaching very seriously, even reading books on the subject and staying up late at night figuring out schedules and seat assignments. He has developed a habit of putting pressure on himself to take himself to the next level whether professionally or competitively.

His innate love of the ocean turned into a career as a City & County ocean safety officer where he serves on the rescue team, monitoring the south shore of Oahu. It also channeled his energy toward competitive paddleboarding, canoe racing, and kayaking.

Forester spent years as an assistant coach for the Hawaii Canoe & Kayak Team, several years as head coach of the Waikiki Beach Boys' women's program, and two years as head coach for Lokahi Canoe Club's women's program.

Like so many at the Outrigger Canoe Club, Forester has crossed the Kaiwi Channel dozens of times on kayak, one-man canoe, and sailing canoe.

Besides the goal to get to first place in the Molokai race, Forester has a larger goal. He wants to build a program. "I want to get all previous novice and junior paddlers who once paddled for the Club, and give them a place to paddle," said Forester.

Unlike other canoe clubs, Outrigger requires Club membership and does not allow pulling in talent from non-members. Forester wants to find women who dominated in the Girls 16s and 18s crews five to eight years ago, who have finished college, who have come back to the islands and need a sport.

"We're losing a lot of girls because there isn't a spot for them. Maybe if there was a spot just for them, this could spark that fire to paddle for Outrigger and they wouldn't have to go to another club to paddle. This is a long term goal."

To that end, Forester wants to see three crews in the Na Wahine race this September, including any novices and junior paddlers who have not departed the islands for college. He has made it clear to returning paddlers that all seats are up for grabs. He has challenged the women to "act as if" they are champions, doing what it takes to get themselves to the next level.

And if they get there, Forester was confident they could do it all along.

### Distance Season Begins

Outrigger's upper division and masters men and women will begin the long-distance canoe racing season on August 14 with the Kaena Challenge.

The Club will host the Dad Center long distance race for women on August 28. The race begins in Kailua and finishes at the Club beach around noon. Please come down and cheer our crews in.

See the Athletic Calendar on page 25 for a list of all the distance races.

The distance races culminate with the Na Wahine O Ke Kai on September 25 and the Molokai Hoe on October 9.

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