

Men Win Catalina and Henry Ayau Races

By Genie Kincaid

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the Steinlager
Henry Ayau
Men's International
Canoe Race*

After an exasperating Duke Kahanamoku Race, the Outrigger men regained their focus for the Kona iron race over the Labor Day weekend. Using the 18 mile race from Honaunau to Kona as a conditioning run, the men spread their strength around three crews and finished second and seventh overall in the open glass division, and 4th in the open koa division.

The following weekend the men were in Catalina where ideal conditions made for an ideal result. Outrigger dueled with Tuitonga, an all star crew made up of paddlers from several Hawaii canoe clubs, and Hui Nalu otherwise known as Outrigger East due to the number of paddlers who are also Club members.

Outrigger won in a time of 3:52:26, just missing the record by 20 seconds. Tuitonga was second in 3:57:22, while Hui Nalu was third in 4:02:22.

Before the men left for California, Director Jaren Hancock had asked them to send the Club's aloha to John Rader, the Club's former general manager who has been battling illness and is awaiting a liver transplant. But the men went a step further.

Upon receipt of their first place award, Coach Kala Judd thanked the host racing association and sponsors, and then announced to the crowd that the team had unanimously decided to dedicate their race to Mr. Rader. He was asked to join the Outrigger men on stage, and one of the crew members, Kevin Allen, presented Mr. Rader with his crew trophy. As you could imagine, Mr. Rader was greatly moved by the gesture.

The classy Catalina crew included Kevin Allen, Tom Allen, Jimmy Austin, Brett Chuckovich, Scott Hendricks, Byron Ho, Tim Twigg-Smith, Karel Tresnak Jr., and John Wacker.

The crew received much appreciated help from Charlie Banfield of Benecia Canoe Club, who loaned them a Mirage canoe for the race; Mike Martinez of Hui Waa California, who provided an escort boat, and Billy Whitford who handled all the logistics.

On September 19, Outrigger's men carried their winning ways over to the Steinlager Henry Ayau Men's International Canoe Race, a 32-mile race from Maunaloa Bay to the Ko Olina Resort. Outrigger won in the canoe named for the man who was loved by so many at the Club. Henry passed away in 2002.

This was the last race before the men's Moloka'i Hoe, the championship of men's outrigger canoe racing, which was held on October 10. As Judd said, "I'm not sure if this race says anything about Moloka'i, because that's something entirely different. But this is a very hard race and it is great preparation for Moloka'i."

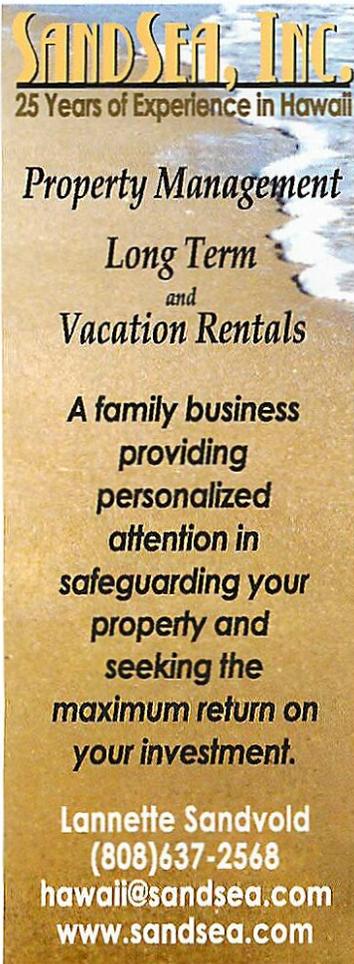
Forty-eight crews were entered in the Henry race but it quickly became a three way race between Outrigger, Team New Zealand/Hawai'i, and Lanikai. The lead changed frequently until the three hour mark when Outrigger outpaddled the competition through the tough water created by a strong current that pushed against the racers.

The men finished with a time of 3:36:29, with Lanikai second in 3:38:13, and Team NZ/HI, the two-time defending champion of the Henry race, third in 3:42:03.

Winning in crew Outrigger 1 were Kevin Allen, Tom Allen, Jimmy Austin, Bret Chuckovich, Scott Hendricks, Byron Ho, Mike Kane, Karel Tresnak Jr., and Tim Twigg-Smith.

The Outrigger 2 crew also did well against the competition placing 11th overall in a time of 4:01:18. The crew included Jim Beaton, Kapon Brown, John Eveleth, Ben Komer, Mike Nakano, Zak Payne, Evan Rhodes, Robi Solmssen and John Wacker.

All the hard work and training are paying off, and the men are putting all the pieces together on race day. Both crews were well prepared for the 53rd running of the Molokai Hoe Outrigger Canoe Championship in October. Watch for the results next month.



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