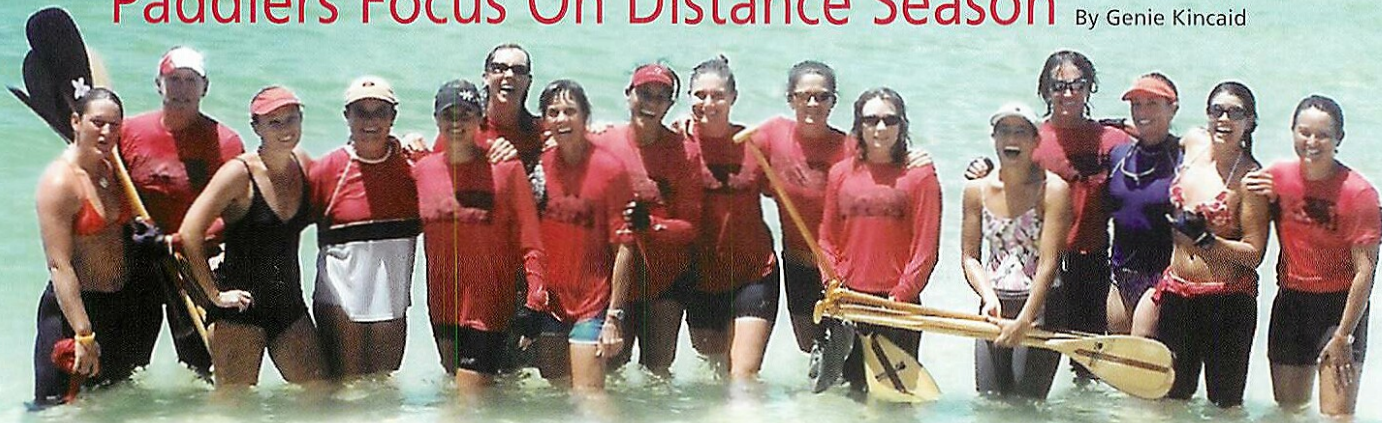


CANOE RACING

Paddlers Focus On Distance Season

By Genie Kincaid



Outrigger entered three crews in the Dad Center Race.

The long distance racing season is condensed into the months of August and September for the paddlers of Outrigger. Women's coach, John Puakea, and men's coach, Kala Judd, have already determined which races will best prepare their paddlers for the Molokai championships in which the women finished second and the men finished fourth in 2003.

On August 15, the men opened their distance season with the Kaena Challenge, a race quickly gaining in popularity for its relatively fast course from Sunset Beach to Makaha Beach. Two crews of nine men each finished second and fourth overall with the first crew beating the record time previously held by Team New Zealand.

In the first crew were Jimmy Austin, Jim Beaton, Kapono Brown, Bret Chuckovich, Scott Hendricks, Byron Ho, Robi Solmssen, Karel Tresnak Jr., and Tim Twigg-Smith. The second crew included John Eveleth, Mike Kane, Chris Kincaid, Ben Komer, Sean Monahan, Mike Nakano, Zak Paine, Evan Rhodes, and John Wacker.

The following week was set for the Duke Kahanamoku Race, a 24-mile race course from Kailua Beach to Duke Kahanamoku Beach in Waikiki. It turned out to be an eventful day marked by confusion for the men.

Around Makapu'u Point, their canoe was hit by another crew's escort boat, but Outrigger recovered, regained the lead, and kept it until Diamond Head, where the head official boat directed OCC to round the buoy. No other crews were so directed, and Outrigger fought back to catch Lanikai which had kept an inside line to the finish.

Although Outrigger crossed the line first, it was disqualified, along with second place finisher, Lanikai, for failing to turn on a buoy in the channel before heading to the finish line. The confusion was no buoy had been set in the water for the crews to turn on.

So to ensure a race result could be as thoroughly confusing as the running of the race, Outrigger was DQ'd officially, but handed unofficial first place honors by Team New Zealand/Hawaii which was deemed the ultimate winner.

The general consensus among the top crews was that Outrigger had won regardless of the officials' ruling. Despite the confusion of the day, it was clear the OCC men are contenders for the Molokai Hoe championship. Members of the Duke crew were Kevin Allen, Jimmy Austin, Kapono Brown, Bret Chuckovich, Scott

Hendricks, Byron Ho, Karel Tresnak Jr., Tim Twigg-Smith, and John Wacker.

The second crew officially finished seventh overall, and included Tom Allen, Jim Beaton, John Eveleth, Mike Kane, Ben Komer, Sean Monahan, Mike Nakano, Evan Rhodes, and Robi Solmssen.

The women opened their distance racing season with a very exciting and close finish of the Dad Center Race on August 29. The top three teams raced 24 miles from Kailua to OCC, and finished within eight seconds of each other.

Hui Lanakila Canoe Club won with a time of 3:20:4.59. It was the first time the Hui Lanakila women ever won a long-distance race.

Hawaiian Canoe Club, a crew of elite paddlers from four different islands, edged Outrigger out of second place in a time of 3:20:04.95. Outrigger was third in 3:20:12. Outrigger's second crew did a repeat of 2003, and finished 5th in 3:27:49. The third crew finished respectably 13th overall in 3:45:36.

Paddling as the Outrigger Red crew were Kisi Haine, Mahea Batlik, Traci Phillips, Malia Kamisugi, Megan Clark, Jenni Horner, Jen Thayer, Linda Fernandez, Diana Clifford and Liz Perry.

The White crew was Missy Mowat, Paula Crabb, Mary Smolenski, Jen Raams, Jane Stevens, Laurie Seto, Genie Kincaid, Pam Jenkins, Jen Bossert and Lisa Livingston.

Paddling as the Blue crew were Kristin Lee, Annie Rosa, Sara Rosa, Lisa Reinke, Katy Bourne, Marina Ho, Vaima Philpotts, Keala Kilcoyne, Koko Jennings and Paahana Kincaid.

Outrigger and Hui Lanakila stayed close to each other throughout the race. Hawaiian nearly pulled off a win finishing strong with a push from a wave. Conditions were generally calm and hot, much like last year's Molokai race.

Though it would have been nice to win their Club's race, the women know the big prize is the Na Wahine O Ke Kai on September 26.

On Labor Day weekend, the OCC paddlers entered the 18 mile iron Queen Liliuokalani Race in Kona. Then the men traveled in September to California to compete in the Catalina Race, while the women stayed home for the E Lau Hoe race to Pokai Bay. On September 19, Outrigger Canoe Club sponsored the Henry Ayau International Canoe Race.