

Athlete of the Month: Pat Dolan

By Amy Lawson Woodward



Pat Dolan

When an Athlete of the Month feature was first proposed for inclusion in the OCC Magazine, member Pat Dolan had not yet torn apart the local OC-1 circuit and been crowned the 2017 State Champion, Kaiwi Channel Relay Champion, and Kaiwi Channel Solo Champion.

However, by the time the column would become a reality, Dolan had accomplished all of the above, setting a new record of 3:31:06 for the 32-mile Kaiwi Channel Solo race and virtually guaranteeing his selection as the first athlete to be featured in this new monthly installment.

More impressive than the record-setting time of Dolan's is perhaps the fashion in which he won the 2017 solo. For nearly the entire last hour of the race, Dolan was at (what a normal human would consider) an all-out sprint, meeting Tahitian superstar Kevin Jerusalem at Portlock Point after crossing the entire Kaiwi Channel.

With only 30-40 yards separating the two competitors, Dolan got on a small wave at the point with Jerusalem on the wave just behind. The two continued to battle as Dolan, sprinting like he had just started a race, put a few hundred yards on Jerusalem and caught another small wave in the bay.

But the drama was not over. Spectators started to realize that Dolan would be close to beating the previous course record of 3:31:54 set by OCC member Jimmy Austin in 2012. Screams from the escort boats ensued, "Go for the record!" while Dolan continued to pound forward like a freight train.

Then, while in full stride heading under the bridge to the finish line, two fishing lines caught Dolan and his canoe. Undeterred, he quickly untangled himself and exploded through the last 150 yards to the finish, trolling a lure from his canoe's rudder as he set the new record.

I asked Dolan, who has a background in USA Olympic kayaking and who raced with the OCC Open Men's program during the 2016 Regatta season, what enabled him to finally achieve his boyhood dream of winning the solo.

He credited his years of training and racing, his top-notch training partners (Travis Grant and Zsolt Szadovszki), "very understanding boss" Bret Chuckovich, and his supportive wife Angie.

Dolan also said he was inspired by the New England Patriots' comeback victory in the Super Bowl this year: "Tom Brady is my hero, and I think he will play into his 50s while adding a few more rings to his record-breaking collection." Alright, Pat!