

Reflections on the Kaiwi Channel Solo Race

By Harrison Deisroth



Outrigger Ka Lahui Kai Kaiwi Channel finishers--Harrison Deisroth, Riley Kawanakoa, and Hunter Pflueger.

Editor's Note: Harrison Deisroth, representing Outrigger Ka Lahui Kai, finished in first place in the Junior Division of the Kaiwi Channel Solo on May 5, and was seventeenth overall. Here is his account of the race.

Starting around hour 1.5, I looked left, and saw my close friend and Outrigger Ka Lahui Kai teammate, Riley Kawanakoa, surfing his brains out; killing it. He created a gap ranging between 100-150 yards in length.

At hour 2.5, he was still there. At hour 3.5, he was still there. And at hour four, when we were in line with Hanauma Bay - so very close to the final stretch - he was still there, a painstakingly 100 yards in front of me.

At this moment, something clicked. I surfed my brains out; my heart out. I was attacking, surfing, sprinting. It was the most aggressive I've EVER been in the surf, but it was what I had to do in order to close the gap. I had to do it then and there.

I managed to reduce the gap down to about 35 yards. We rounded the corner of Portlock Point and took the infamous China Wall line, hugging it eerily close to the wall in hopes of catching a wave that would make (or break) our race.

I dropped in to a bomb along the wall, and it brought me up to and past Riley. I couldn't believe it. The thing that every Solo competitor dreams about just happened to me. It was a blessing. After this, things played out and I was again in the right spot at the right time. I connected in to another wave, creating my own gap on Riley. The gap maintained and I crossed the flatwater ahead, crossing the line in front.

Now, I'm not writing this to boast or prove something. I want to share with you the highlight of my channel crossing: battling my teammate, two-time Molokai Hoe crewmate, training buddy, and good friend, Riley Kawanakoa for three hours in the infamous and powerful Kaiwi Channel. We also battled OKLK teammates and best friends Ryland Hart and Hunter Pflueger, throughout the whole race.

We were all paddling our hearts out, racing against each other, trying to beat each other, but it actually brought us closer together as friends, teammates, and brothers. It was humbling, elating, and so exciting. It was racing at its finest... going back and forth for hours, with it coming down to the wire... but it happened with my best friends. Wow.

Special thanks to the Outrigger Ka Lahui Kai for supporting all of the paddlers in the pre-season and now regatta season of 2018.

(See all the results in [For the Record](#)).

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