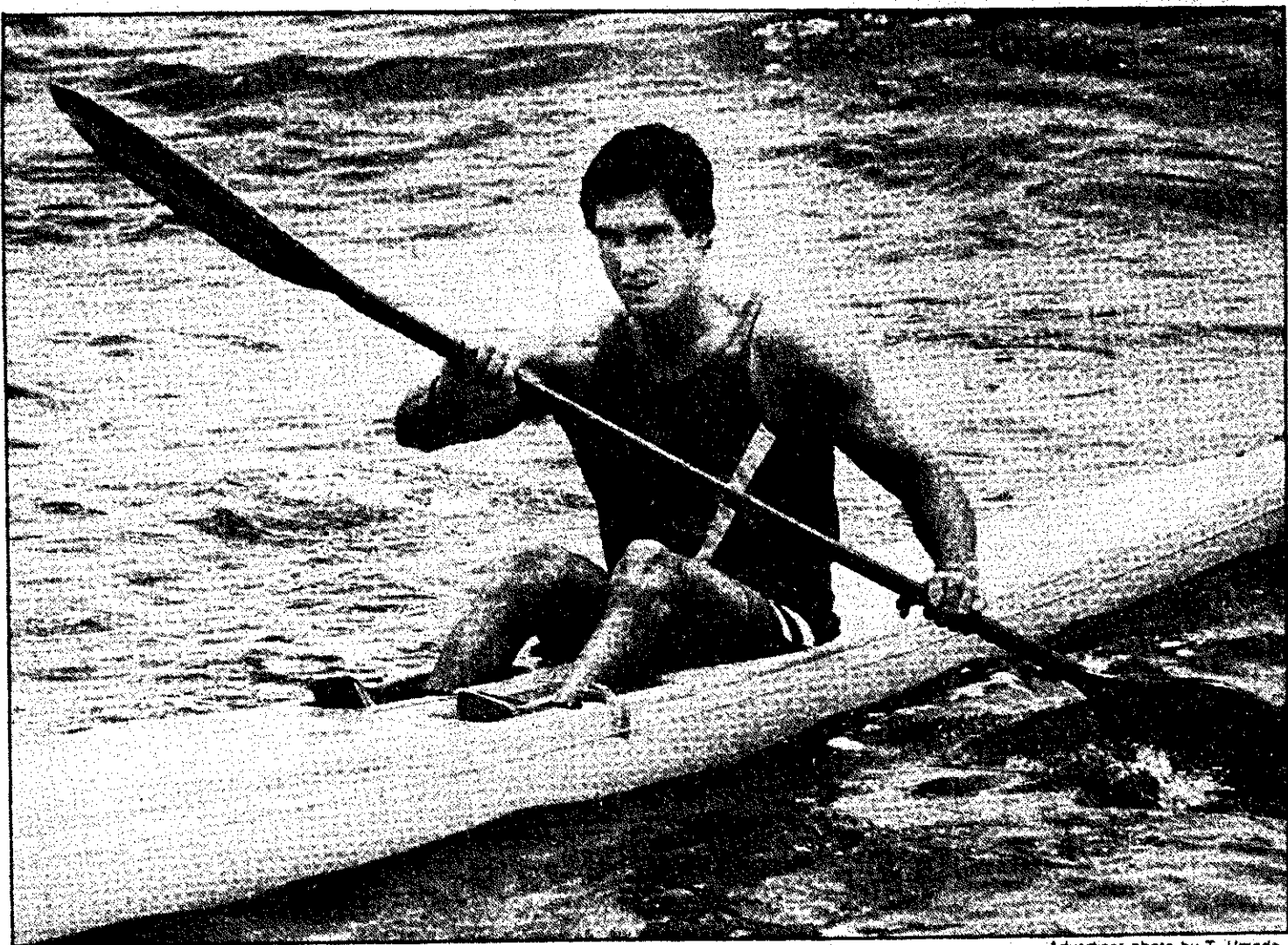


MAY 18 1989



Advertiser photo by T. Umeda

A veteran of three Molokai-to-Oahu canoe races, Olympian Greg Barton will cross the Kaiwi Channel in a surf ski.

Barton will test new waters

Olympian to take on Kaiwi in surf ski

By Stephen Tsai
Advertiser Staff Writer

Greg Barton has conquered more than his share of upstream challenges. He has displayed grit in overcoming a physical disability, and icy poise in dealing with the pressures of Olympic competition.

Now — just for the fun of it — Barton, 29, will try to race his 19-foot surf ski across the Kaiwi Channel — one of the most unforgiving waters in the Pacific — when he competes in the Molokai-to-Oahu Bankoh Kayak Challenge Sunday.

"I thought it would be fun to come over and do this race," Barton said. "It's totally different from anything I've ever done before."

This will be the first time Barton will be competing in a rough-water event — and in a surf ski. (With a surf ski, a paddler rides on top of the board; with a kayak, the paddler's legs are tucked into the hollowed vessel.)

It also will be his longest distance as a solo paddler. He was a crew member in three Molokai-to-Oahu canoe races.

"I might as well start out with the big one," Barton said. Barton began cramming for this race three weeks ago, with the purchase of his new surf ski. He broke in the vessel with daily workouts off Newport Beach, Calif. This week he has been talking to local paddlers, trying to gain tips on technique and strategy.

His surf ski was designed by Tom Conner, a member of the Outrigger Canoe Club.

"If I lose, I won't be able to blame it on the boat," Barton said. "This boat seems to ride well — not with me in it, but I've seen other people do well in it."

Barton will have to make several adjustments. In the shorter flatwater kayak races, which Barton is familiar with, there is a heavy emphasis placed on sprinter's speed. Sunday's race will rely equally on technique and the luck of

the waves.

"I think that's going to be my main problem, just riding the waves," Barton said. "As for strategy, I'll probably follow everyone else and try to catch as many waves as I can."

"I have a lot of concerns. Will I have problems catching waves? Will I be able to hang with the top racers?"

Based on his track record, Barton shouldn't disappoint.

Barton was born with club feet, a condition that worsened following surgery when he was a youngster. "The surgery ended up making it a lot worse," he said, noting that he must wear orthopedic shoes.

But that condition hardly discouraged him from competing in sports. "I did pretty much everything that everybody else did," he said.

In some cases — such as kayaking — he excelled. He qualified for the 1980 Olympics, then watched in disappointment as the United States boycotted

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the event.

"I said, 'This is a bunch of b.s.," he said. "The Olympics are supposed to be non-political and now we've got a bunch of politicians telling us we can't compete."

"I remember in 1980, we sat down with a bunch of Russian athletes and their coach. The coach said, 'Look at this. We get along fine. Why can't our countries get along as well as we do.'"

He won the bronze medal in the 1,000-meter race at the 1984 Olympics, the best any American had done in that event.

Then, last year in Seoul he became the first U.S. kayaker ever to win an Olympic gold medal. He was awarded the gold in the 1,000 meters after a check of the photo finish reversed the order that was originally announced.

He then teamed with Norman Bellingham to win the 1,000-meter doubles, by a margin of .29 of a second.

And that, suddenly, was the end of the storybook tale. In a sport synonymous with anonymity, Barton received few endorsement offers. There was little demand for a kayak paddler, even the best the U.S. had to offer, to appear on cereal boxes.

"As far as the big money goes, it's not there," he said. "But the reason I'm in kayaking is because I enjoy it."

Still, Barton said he felt an emotional letdown after the Olympics. "It was like, now I've done it, what do I do?" he said.

He returned to his job as a mechanical engineer in Newport, spending his free time working on his sport. He said he has no plans to retire from kayaking, although he is unsure whether he will try out for the 1992 Games.

"I think there will be a time when the competitive urge will have to take a backseat," he said. "There will be a time when I'm going to say, 'Hey, I'm tired of being broke.' I'm going to start having to earn money."

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HONOLULU STAR BULLETIN

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Canoeing more than a day at the races

□ Students learn strokes of Hawaiian history and community

"A strong crew without proper timing, even if they are made up of the strongest on the island, will be beaten by a small crew with good timing and a good feel for the canoe."

— The Hui Nalu Canoe Club Handbook

By Alan Matsuoka
Star-Bulletin

A ponytailed girl who's pushing 4½ feet turns to her companion and confides, "I hate paddling when it's like this." It's 3:30 one afternoon this week and a group of kids are waiting at Maunaloa Bay park for canoe practice to begin, but dark clouds over Hawaii Kai threaten rain. The wind carries a bite, the ocean is silver and choppy.

The coach, Reney Ching, arrives and the gaggle turns cohesive, a unit. "One, two, three," and canoes are in the water.

"Boys, boys, come on, quickly everybody," Ching commands. Bad weather and a sewage spill delayed the start of the practice season for two weeks last month and the first race is June 4.

Ching, 33, shouts at a crew about 100 yards offshore. "Paddles up . . . dig! Now pick it up, pick it up. Mandy, get Erin to give a deeper blade. Mandy!" The canoe moves out.

"We try to get these kids ready for races but we don't only focus on that," she says. "You work with the kids, trying to get them to work with each other and trust each other, because in the canoe they have to realize it takes six of them to make a canoe move, not just one. Attitude's 50 percent of our program."

The program comes from Hui Nalu, the 81-year-old canoe club with a reputation as strongly competitive but whose members talk about a tradition of putting family and culture first. On Monday Hui Nalu — "The Club of the Waves" — will hold its second annual Family Day fund-raiser at Koko Head District Park, and the kids are invited.

"We normally, or most canoe clubs normally, have done beer busts," fund-raiser coordinator Sandy Combs ex-

plained. "In those days, people looked forward to that. But today, with the liability and all the kinds of negatives in a beer bust, we decided it wasn't a really good idea."

She added: "Society's really changed, Hawaii's a real rat race, people are on the go, I think a lot of families don't spend enough time together. They don't."

"They're so involved with this and that, with meetings, this is just one day out of their time, to come together and enjoy."

Last year the club's better idea drew an estimated 400 people. This year's fund-raiser — from noon until 5:30 p.m. — includes a petting zoo, Hawaiian entertainment (Kaleo O Kalani, Taro Bran, the Nu'uano Brothers, among others), canoe and kayak displays, and "make and take" booths where people can learn lei-making skills in the haku, ti leaf, wili and Micronesian styles.

The activities fit in with Combs' description of Hui Nalu as an "educating club," a way of passing on aspects of Hawaiian culture with the club's rich heritage as its qualification.

Old newspaper stories say it was formed in 1908 to take on the then new, and still archrival, Outrigger club. (Combs, with a trace of envy, calls Outrigger "a Beverly Hills club" with lockers and showers, but notes Hui Nalu will have the same when it affiliates itself with a Hawaii Kai yacht club in a few years.)

At first Hui Nalu concentrated on swimming, a reasonable idea when a founding father is Duke Kahanamoku, but soon it was conquering canoe races. Its roster eventually carried names that sound like part of the index to a Hawaiian history text: Dole, Castle, Wilcox.

RECENTLY, though, Outrigger has had the edge.

The club's current president is Myron "Pinky" Thompson, the Bishop Estate trustee. Thompson recalls hanging out with Kahanamoku at the Moana Hotel and says the family emphasis goes back to the fact that co-founders were the Olympic swimmer's cousins.

He sees canoeing as more than sport. "It's an opportunity to learn another skill about something that is uniquely Hawaiian," said Thompson (who, incidentally, got his nickname after his

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Besides helping Hawaii, windsurfing is clean fun

I am standing just outside the shorebreak, booms in hand, board pointed out to sea. I test the wind strength by raising my sail slightly. A gust rips it out of my hands and the whole rig starts drifting downwind.

I start over with a sigh. This is the third time in a row I've lost it. The wind is on today, but I am off.

This time I'm more careful. I raise the sail just a little, testing, testing. Take a step, get ready . . . then . . . UP! I leap onto the board and I'm flying.

The board skims along the water as I get settled in my harness and foot straps. Look out — there's a sea turtle. I give it a wide berth, but it doesn't pay much attention.

I speed along, enjoying the sun on the pali and the good feeling that comes with the mastering of a difficult sport.

Good exercise, the pali, warm water, strong winds, sea turtles. Is this heaven?

It's Kailua Bay on a great windsurfing day.

The sport of sailing surfboards has been around in Hawaii for a long time. In 1935, Thomas Blake, a surfing friend of Duke Kahanamoku, rigged a sail onto a paddleboard at the Outrigger Canoe Club.

But it wasn't until the 1960s that windsurfing took off in Southern California, and in the last 15 years it has become popular throughout the world.

People who love to windsurf crave strong winds, warm water and, in a perfect world, good scenery. So guess which state is windsurf heaven? Hawaii is to windsurfers what Aspen is to skiers.

Not everyone here sees this as a plus. Some people view the sport as a nuisance that clutters up the beaches and scares swimmers. The unfortunate result of this has been squabbling over territory, particularly in Kailua Beach Park.

The rules do not allow windsurfers inside the buoyed swimming area of the park. That leaves the boat ramp area south of the buoys and a small area north of the buoys.

Both these places pose problems for windsurfers. The boat ramp space, while roomy, is upwind of the swimming area. This means that beginners drift into the no-no space.

Starting at the other end prevents this, but the area is too small for the numbers involved. The place is so packed with sailboards and people that they overflow onto the narrow beach in front of houses, a sore point to some waterfront homeowners.

The Council passed Councilman



OCEAN WATCH
By Susan Scott

David Kahanu's Bill 132 to ban commercial windsurfing lessons in Kailua Beach Park on holidays and during most weekend hours, but the mayor vetoed it.

And just in time for the long Memorial Day weekend the Council overrode the mayor's veto, putting the ban into immediate effect.

In a letter to the Hawaii Amateur Windsurfing Association International Inc., Mayor Fasi said that "if conflicts arise and additional measures must be imposed, we feel that the rules and regulations can be amended as the proper vehicle rather than resorting to Draconian measures and enacting an ordinance as was proposed in Bill 132."

Well put. A law that says no lessons on holidays and weekends is not the answer. This only hurts people who live here and work regular hours.

What will help, says HAWAII spokesman John Twelker, is making the windsurfing space a little bigger and the swimming space a little smaller. Move the downwind swimming buoys a few hundred feet toward Lanikai. This gives windsurfers space to set up, launch and park the boards.

Windsurfing is an asset to Hawaii. It lets people enjoy the ocean without killing anything and without polluting. If we love our ocean, we should wish more people would take it up.

This sport is good exercise, challenging and fun — all things that make people feel good.

Yes, the boards sometimes reach high speeds and beginners can't always go where they want to go. But the same goes for skiing, and we don't see states discouraging skiers.

This sport is something different, a change from what many people are used to seeing on the windward sides of our islands. But times change. Windsurfers will not go away, nor should we want them to. Let's encourage those who come here to enjoy our water and make room for this great sport.

Susan Scott is a marine science writer and author of Oceanwatcher, a guide to Hawaii's marine animals. Her Oceanwatch column appears Monday in the Star-Bulletin.



By Ken Sakamoto, Star-Bulletin

Sandy Combs, foreground, coordinator for the Hui Nalu Canoe Club's Family Day, said the entertainment event came about as a way for the community to come together for a day of music, relaxation and learning about Hawaiian culture. Last year the event drew 400 people.

mother had two sons and, predicting he would be a girl, bought a pink layette).

"It builds their capacity for a group process and the whole business of doing something well, assisting a group to achieve a goal of, to put it in a kind of mushy way, to achieve excellence in whatever they do," he said.

Coach Ching, otherwise a Punahou cook and paddling and track coach, has seen that happen.

"I had a 12-and-under crew three years ago that was in last place. I'm talking about eighth place, they didn't even place," she said. "Last year they came in second, and that's the same crew, they all came back. So this year,

we're hoping that we can get it." At the park Combs is watching Thompson's son, Nainoa, the Hokulea navigator, rig-up Hui Nalu's newest addition, a 45-foot-long sailing canoe colored in club black-and-gold for a test race this weekend.

The \$7,200 canoe rests on carpet remnants, some with pictures of Chuck E. Cheese on them. Standing by are Mike Harbold, Billy Robello and Kevin Olds, who are talked about as kayakers in the next Olympics.

The younger Thompson, 36, is still learning. The question is about canoe sailing. "It's like canoe paddling but

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HAWAII TRIBUNE HERALD

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Slam players qualify for nationals

Koolau Lager, a men's Masters Division team made up of players from Hilo, Puako, Honolulu, Chicago, Tacoma, Wash.; Berkeley, Calif., and Oxford, Miss., will represent the Aloha region in the 57th USVBA Nationals by the River in Toledo, Ohio from June 4 to 10. Koolau Lager and Outrigger Canoe Club, the defending national masters champion, will be Hawaii's entries in the week-long tournament.

Also participating from Hawaii will be Team Molten in the 3rd Women's Club Nationals and Outrigger Canoe Club in the 9th Golden Masters Nationals.

Big Isle players include Ed Kalima, Jr., Richard Lau and assistant coach Linzy Hotz, from Hilo; and Alex Bell of Puako.

HUI NALU: Savoring tradition and Hawaiian community

Continued from Page B-1

there are 10 times more things going on, 50 times faster," he says, as nine lines dangle from the mast.

"The club also bought another 60a canoe recently. Money from the fund-raiser mostly pays for equipment."

Combs talks about passing on skills like canoeing and rigging. "I think it's very important because this is Hawaii," she says.

"If there's nothing left, the know-hows and know-abouts, then this wouldn't be Hawaii, you know? This is a chance to really learn and you don't have to go to Bishop Museum and look into the books."

By now it's 4:30 p.m., the last kids are paddling back, and Thompson finally gets the sail up.

The rush hour is building on Kalanianaʻole Highway (named after another club member), and from a short distance away the group seems oblivious to the noise, standing around the canoe.

AT A GLANCE

Family Day: Hui Nalu fund-raiser featuring entertainment, petting zoo, Hawaiian crafts and displays.

Date and time: Noon to 5:30 p.m. Monday.

Place: Koko Head District Park, 423 Kaumokani St.

Donation: \$10, \$3 ages 7 to 14, free for children under 6.

"If we don't learn from the oldtimers, who knows?" Combs had asked.

The sail flutters in the wind and through the clouds, briefly, the setting sun breaks through.