

Long-distance canoe racing requires fine tuning

by John Patt

The idea is simple, but not always easy. Get from one place to another faster and anyone else. It's a race. People have always raced things. Some race horses, cars, boats. Others race themselves.

In Hawaii, people race canoes. Canoe racing is a Hawaiian tradition. It honors the Hawaiians and other peoples who travelled in open vessels across the ocean. In a sense it honors a basic human value. That value is the ability to get from one place to another as fast as possible. For many people, throughout human history, that ability has meant the difference between food and hunger, escape and death, victory and defeat.

In a sense, canoe racing is a tribute to all forms of life that need to travel quickly to catch food or escape enemies and threatening conditions.

One type of canoe racing, the open-ocean, long distance race, honors the migration of people across the ocean.

On Kauai, the longest open ocean race is the Wai'ohai Classic, an 18-mile paddle against the current from Waimea to Po'ipu. This year, the Koloa Outrigger Canoe Racing Team won the event for the second year in as many events. For the first time, a keiki team (from the Kauai Canoe Club) entered and finished the grueling race.

The Queen Lili'uokalani Races, held Labor Day weekend in Kona, include a 20-mile men's open ocean race, a 14-mile wahine race, and a double-hull run. Teams from all over the Pacific compete in these races. Kauai will be represented by three teams this year, Kaiola, Hanalei, and Koloa.

For some paddlers, the Kona races are a warm-up for the 40.8 mile Moloka'i Channel race in

October. Formerly dominated by O'ahu teams, in the last nine years the event has been won three times by California teams, and once by a Tahitian team. Outrigger Canoe Club of O'ahu has won the race the last two years.

The outrigger canoes that are raced today are usually made from koa or fiberglass. They are about 40 ft. long and weigh around 400 pounds.

For weeks that stretch into months, teams train for the long-distance races that come at the climax of the canoe-paddling season.

The paddlers developed their conditioning during the regular season. Now they only need to maintain their condition. Most of the training is concentrated on fine tuning their strokes. It is getting the extra two percent out of each stroke that makes the difference between a winner and an also-ran in a long distance race. Last year's 18-mile Wai'ohai Classic was decided by less than 100 yards.

But success in the race doesn't happen because six individual paddlers are well trained. It depends on how well they work together, on the "mana" between each other, between them and the canoe, between them and the ocean.

On the morning of one recent race, the sun is bright over the horizon; the wind still calm. Canoes are lined up like tiny scratches on the ocean's smooth surface. Muscles flex, then tense, minds focus on the blue water ahead. A large yellow flag waves from the official boat.

"Paddles up," the steersman tells the crew. Seconds later, the yellow flag drops. At the same time, a big green flag is raised fluttering high overhead. Instantly the steersman yells, "pull" and the crews dig their paddles into the

Liliuokalani Long-Distance



—WHT photos by BOB FEWELL

OUTRIGGER MEN, Saturday's overall winners: Bob Riley, Bill Bright, Ed Pickering, Marc Haine, Mike Fox, Henry Ayau, John Finney, Aka Hemmings



OUTRIGGER WOMEN, overall winners Saturday: Leslie Conner, Muffer Scully, Tiare Finney, Traci Phyllips, Mary Franco, Katie Boyne, Norma Santiago, Jeannie Jenkins, Sandra Stanley

Wa'a Kaulua

RESULTS OF THE QUEEN LILIUOKALANI LONG-DISTANCE CANOE RACE HELD YESTERDAY IN WATERS OFF KONA (DOUBLE-HULL — WA'A KAULUA

Women		Men	
1. Outrigger	50:40	1. Hanalei No. 1	40:35
2. Lahaina	51:00	2. Kailua-Molokai	40:45
3. Kahana	51:12	3. Outrigger	41:34
4. Hanalei	51:47	4. Hanalei No. 2	44:29
5. Kailua	53:05	5. Lanakila	45:47
6. Lokahi-KoaKoi	54:13	6. Newport	45:58:01
7. Hui Hanalike	54:45	7. Keoua	45:58:09
8. Kaleponi-Lanakila	55:43	8. Lahaina	46:44
9. Puna	55:23	9. Puna	46:54
10. Keoua	57:53	10. Koloa	47:47
11. Nahoa	58:40	11. Napili-Kahana	48:05
12. Waikiki B.B.	59:05	12. Nahoa	48:12
13. Off Shore	59:20	13. Chop Suey (Mixed)	49:19



—WHT photo by BOB FEWELL

Hanalei no ka 'oi

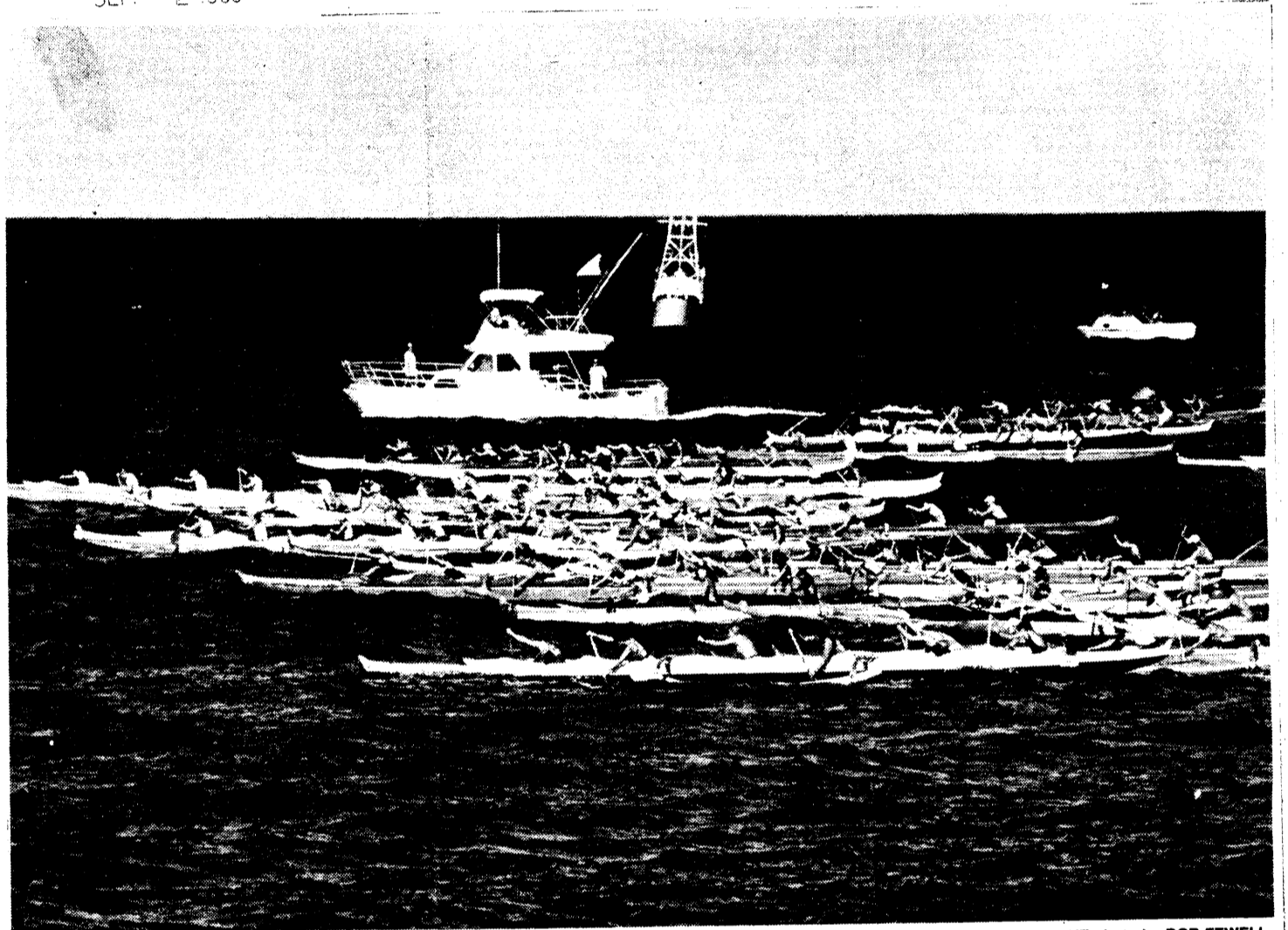
THE HANALEI MEN'S TEAM NO. 1 takes a breather after winning the double-hull event in the Liliuokalani Long-Distance Canoe Race held over the weekend in waters off Kailua. The win by Hanalei prevented Outrigger Canoe Club of O'ahu from sweeping all top spots in the race.



A PAIR of outrigger canoe teams challenge each other in Kauai waters.

ocean.

For the 150-200 minutes, it is mind and body over matter, over the ocean, with the sea. Twenty miles later the crews celebrate.



SINGLE-HULL paddlers start Saturday at Keauhou.

—WHT photo by BOB FEWELL

Hanalei stops Outrigger sweep

KAILUA — Hanalei Canoe Club of Kauai yesterday kept Outrigger of O'ahu from sweeping all first-place spots in the two-day Queen Liliuokalani Long Distance Canoe Race held in waters off Kona.

The Hanalei men's crew No. 1 took the double-hull portion of the race — Wa'a Kaulua — from Keauhou Bay to Kailua in 40 minutes and 35 seconds, edging a mixed crew of Kailua and Molokai by 10 seconds. Outrigger finished third at 41:34.

Earlier in the day, the Outrigger women won the women's division of the double-hull races, from Kailua Bay to

Keauhou, taking the event in 50:40. Lahaina was second at 51:00. Both the men's and women's events were 5½ miles long.

Rounding out the top five squads for the men, Hanalei No. 2 was fourth at 44:29, and Lanakila fifth at 45:47. For the women, Kahana of O'ahu was third at 51:12, Hanalei was fourth at 51:47 and Kailua of O'ahu fifth at 53:05.

The first men's crew from the Big Island to finish was Keoua, in seventh place at 45:58.09. They were edged out of sixth by eighth-tenths of a second by Newport of California. For the women Puna was the first Hawaii Island crew, ninth overall at 56:23. Keoua followed at

57:53. Puna also finished ninth in the men's portion at 46:54.

Saturday, Outrigger swept both fiberglass and koa divisions in the single-hull canoe race — Wa'a Kaukahi — with the men finishing first in fiberglass and second in koa, and the wahines finishing first in koa and second in fiberglass.

The race was sponsored by Kai Opua, with many of the Moku O Hawaii clubs donating the use of their canoes to Mainland and Neighbor Island crews.

For complete results of yesterday's race, and pictures of Saturday's winners, see page 14.

Queen Liliuokalani Distance Canoe Race

by John Patt

The Hanalei men's crew took first place in the double hull division of Sunday's Queen Lili'uokalani long distance races, held at Kona on the Big Island.

Hanalei's 12 man crew completed the six-mile course from Keauhou to Kona in slightly over 40 minutes. Kauai's other representative to the "World Championship" races, Koloa, finished seven minutes later in tenth place. There were 15 teams in the event.

O'ahu's Outrigger Canoe Club dominated the event, returning to Kona after several years absence.

In Saturday's races, Outrigger crews took first and second place in the 14-mile wahine race from Keauhou to Honaunau, as their koa canoe completed the course in 1:42:50. Outrigger's fiberglass canoe was only 2 minutes behind at

1:44:49. Hanalei woman's crew placed fifth overall in a koa canoe with a finishing time of 1:46:35. A total of thirty-five teams were entered.

First place in the ironwoman division went to Molokai, with a time was 1:48:21. The Koloa wahines raced ironwoman and finished at 2:03:22.

The 20-mile men's race was run Saturday afternoon from Honaunau back to Kona. Outrigger again took both first and second place with winning times of 2:02:00 in a fiberglass canoe, and 2:03:34 in the koa division.

Hanalei entered three canoes in a field of 44. Their entries finished fourth (2:05:27), fifth (2:07:31), and 28th (2:22:52). Koloa's men's crew finished 26th at 2:22:09.

Outrigger also won the woman's double hull races on Sunday. Hanalei finished fourth.