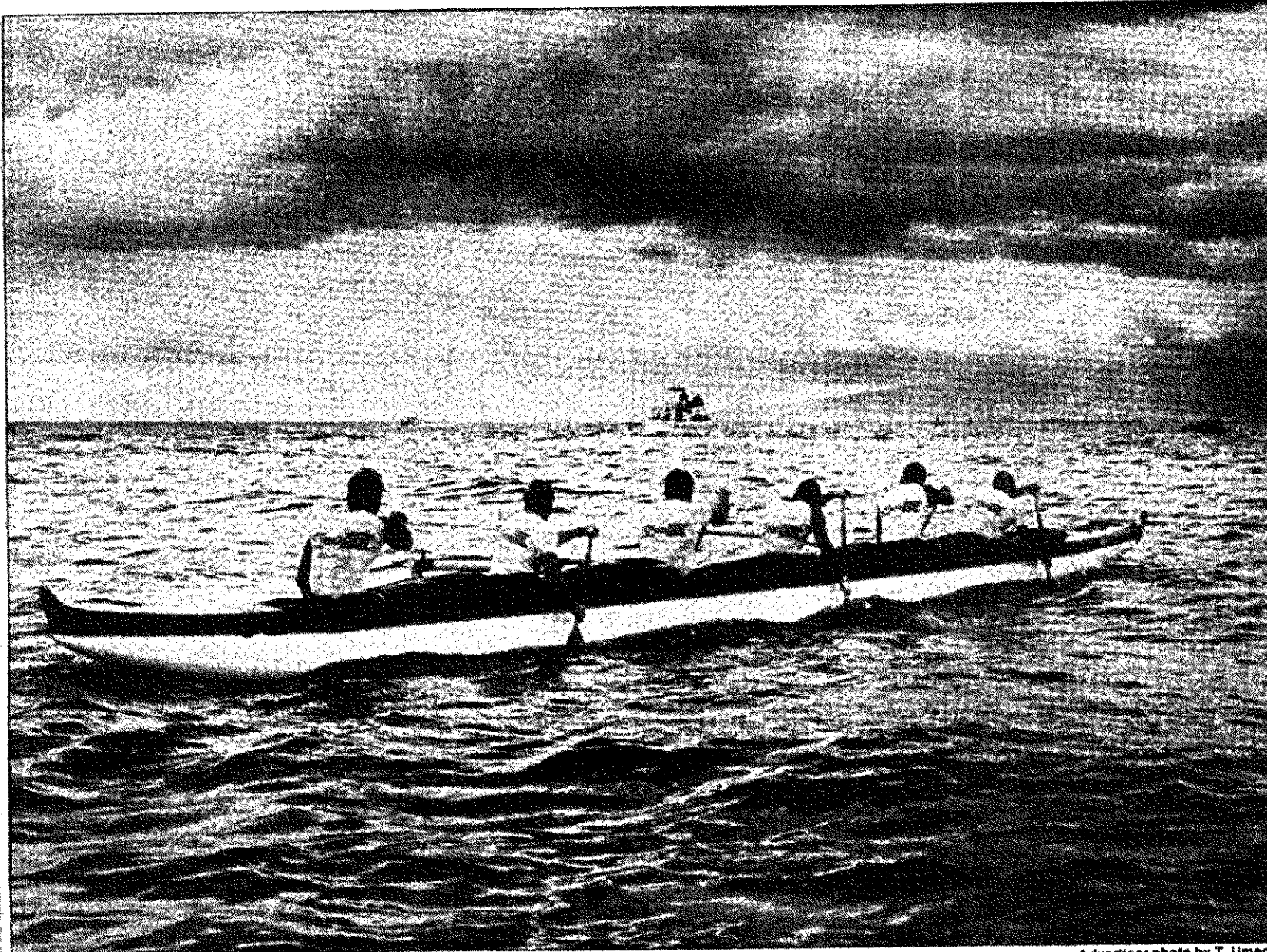


OCT 12 1987

Outrigger wins Molokai Hoe



With Oahu's finish line in sight, Outrigger Canoe Club heads toward home.

Advertiser photo by T. Umeda

Late surge insures successful defense

By Stephen Tsai
Advertiser Staff Writer

The Outrigger Canoe Club, spurred first by a catchy slogan and then by tailgating competition, paddled to victory yesterday in the 36th Bankoh Molokai Hoe, the Molokai to Oahu canoe race for men.

Outrigger, which led for the final two-thirds of the race, completed the 40.8-mile distance from Hale O Lono Harbor to Fort DeRussy Beach in 5 hours, 32 minutes, 46.73 seconds.

Tahiti Nui finished second in 5:37:21.54 and FFPP, also of Tahiti, was third in 5:37:51.77.

Outrigger won for the second year in a row and the eighth time in the last nine years.

"We were favored to win the thing in everybody's eyes but our own," Outrigger's Walter Guild said. "We never look at ourselves as favorites. We have too much respect for the other crews. That's why we were telling ourselves today, 'Run Scared.'"

Said Kainoa Downing: "Run scared — that's it, that was our call. Run as fast as you can, as hard as you can and, hopefully, you don't die on the way."

"We wanted this bad. We felt we had to push all the way."

That was apparent from the start. Forty-nine boats left Hale

O Lono Harbor at 7:47 yesterday morning, but Outrigger, the two Tahitian crews and Hui Nalu quickly formed a lead fleet.

Outrigger's stroke count, however, was too frenetic.

"They were losing me," said Tommy Conner, Outrigger's steersman. "The stroke count got too fast I couldn't keep up. They were taking me out of the race. I had to bring the stroke back down so we could have all six paddlers going."

Said Marc Haine: "Tommy calmed us down a bit. He told us to just stay with him until we got into the (Kaiwi) Channel, then we'll be fine."

Tahiti Nui led by about the length of two boats at Laau Point, the southwestern-most tip of Molokai and the entrance to Kaiwi Channel.

Tahiti Nui and Outrigger jockeyed for the lead in the first part of the channel, before Outrigger went in front for good.

Then Outrigger led the two Tahitian crews on a slightly northerly course toward Koko Head, while Hui Nalu gambled by veering slightly to the south in an unsuccessful effort to pass the other three boats.

Outrigger's plan was this:

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With Diamond Head looming in the background, Outrigger Canoe Club churns to the Fort DeRussy finish line.

Advertiser photos by T. Umeda

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power past the rough current to Portlock, then paddle the rest of the distance close to shore. The strategy was picked up by the Tahitian crews.

"We were all bunched together," Haine said. "It was a dog-fight."

Said Tahiti Nui official Charles Villierme: "We had to wait for Outrigger's move because this is his homeland. We followed Outrigger from the start and watched what he was going to do."

Just outside of Portlock, Outrigger caught a few waves and opened a lead of about an eighth of a mile. "We said, 'Let's surge here,'" Haine said. Tahiti Nui "stayed the same, but we put a little extra into it. We sort of broke them a little."

Villierme, however, said his crew lost ground because it misread a wave and nearly capsized.

"The canoe almost turned to Molokai," Villierme said. "It didn't turn over, but it was just a bad move. Outrigger flew way ahead."

By Aina Haina, Outrigger had a comfortable lead. The advantage was nearly a half-mile by the time Outrigger reached Diamond Head.

"At Diamond Head, we knew we would win if we didn't make any mistakes," Haine said.

Said Keone Downing: "Tahiti followed us the whole day.

They're good paddlers, but we are, too. We weren't going to break or give in. If they wanted to win, they'd have to take it from us."

Nobody did. Outrigger and its fleet of escort boats paraded across the finish line of red buoys nearly five minutes ahead of Tahiti Nui.

Steve Van Ribbink threw his paddle into the air to signal the start of the celebration. Conner, who steered the entire distance, rubbed his arms. "I feel sore," he said later.

And Villierme offered his final observation. "Outrigger is getting stronger and stronger every year."

Molokai results

1. Outrigger (Scott Rolles, Mark Ragg, Keone Downing, Walter Guild, Tom Conner, Marc Haine, Chris Kincaid, Steve Van Ribbink, Kainoa Downing 5:32:46.73.
2. Tahiti Nui 5:37:21.54.
3. FFPP 5:37:51.77.
4. Hui Nalu 5:40:19.12.
5. Imua I 5:55:17.14.
6. Tahiti 6:02:08.22.
7. Offshore 6:02:56.31.
8. Healers 6:01:26.03.
9. Outrigger Masters 6:07:40.81.
10. Kahuia 6:11:54.95.
11. Kaopua 6:13:40.83.
12. Kai Opua Masters 6:14:57.
13. Kamehameha 6:15:10.86.
14. Hui Lanakila 6:15:42.55.
15. Atlantic Division 6:16:44.
16. Outrigger 6:17:02.
17. Fales Creek 6:18:29.
18. Hanalei 6:19:50.
19. Puna 6:20:23.
20. Faas 6:20:47.
21. Healers 6:22:17.
22. Arunama 6:24:20.
23. Kahuia 6:25:19.
24. Lokahi 6:25:46.
25. Hui Nalu 6:27:25.
26. Lahaina 6:27:45.
27. Newport 6:30:54.
28. Imua 6:31:21.
29. Hawaiian 6:41:17.
30. Hanalei 6:42:33.
31. Surfports 6:43:08.
32. Offshore II 6:45:22.
33. Honolulu 6:50:00.
34. Kahuia 6:50:14.
35. Kahuia 6:55:04.
36. Lihewaia Kai 6:56:21.
37. Royal CC 6:56:51.
38. Arkansas 7:07:14.
39. Hawaiian Masters 7:10:12.
40. Waikuae 7:15:26.
41. Hawaiian Warriors 7:15:52.
42. Waianai 7:17:25.
43. Mauna O Ke Kai 7:18:44.
44. Lolaha 7:20:18.
45. Koa Kai 7:36:09.
46. Team Ontario 7:38:09.
47. Mauna O Ke Kai 7:51:02.
48. Haleakala 6:18:02.
- Also, Ka Moa 7:36:41 (bowled)

Arkansas' voyage was a little rocky

By Stephen Tsai
Advertiser Staff Writer

Arkansas Outrigger, a group of white-water paddlers from Little Rock, made a splashing debut yesterday in the 36th Bankoh Molokai Hoe.

"We flipped twice," said Bill Sowell, whose team finished 38th.

The first mishap occurred early in the race, after Arkansas paddled its way into the top third of the 49-crew field.

"It really didn't take us that long to get it back over," Sowell said. "It was just a lot of time getting all of that water bailed out."

Arkansas made up some ground before taking another spin-wash in the middle of the Kaiwi Channel.

"We had passed a few boats, but when we flipped, they passed us again," Sowell said. "I guess we hurt ourselves."

Sowell said his crew had hoped to emulate the performance of Illinois Brigade, which

won its debut race, the 1985 Molokai Hoe.

Arkansas even had a head start, buying a canoe from the Outrigger Canoe Club in April. Arkansas learned its techniques the Jane Fonda way, from numerous videos.

But the videos weren't able to help Arkansas adjust to ocean conditions.

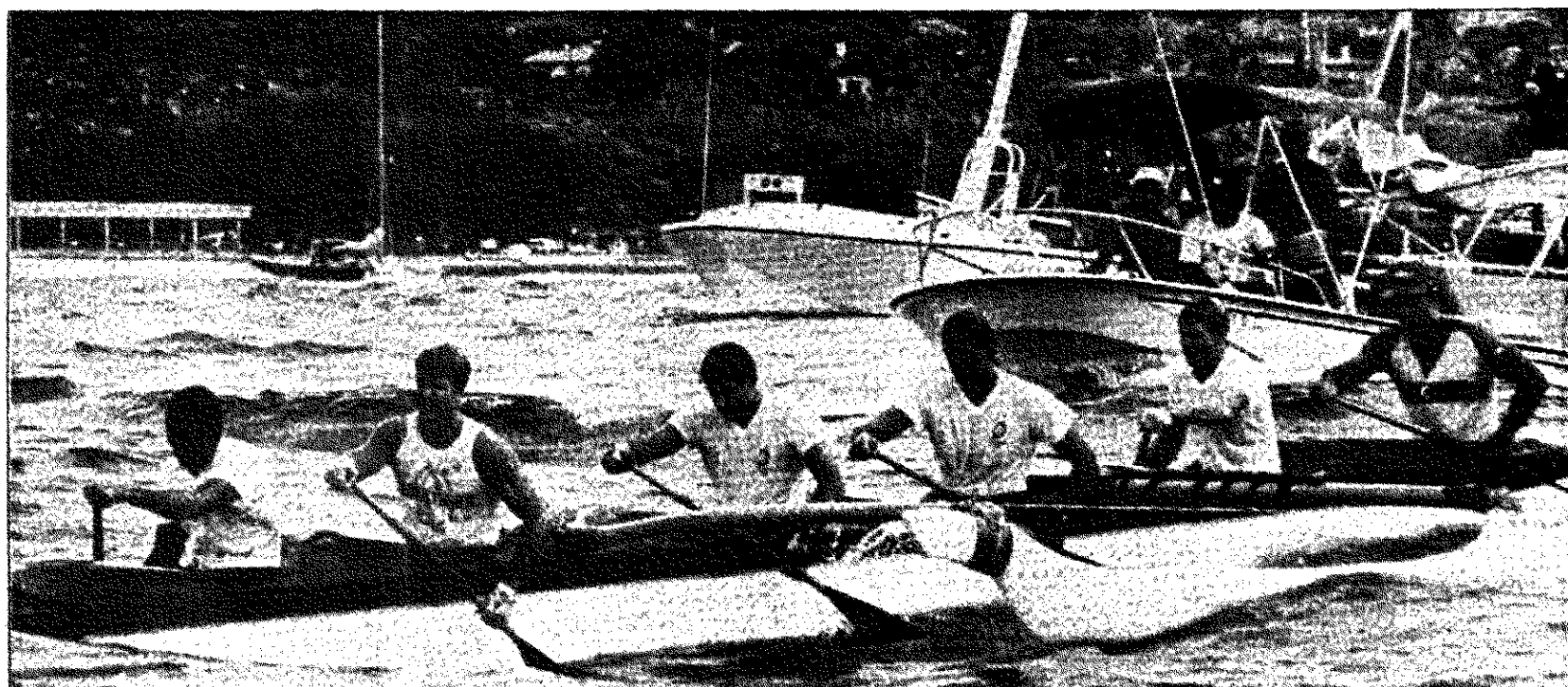
"The next time we come back, we'll know how to prepare ourselves better," Sowell said.

Of the newcomers, the top finish went to Atlantic Division, a team in which eight of its nine members lives on the East Coast.

Despite having but four days of practice, Atlantic Division paddled well enough to place 15th.

"We were moving well, but the current wasn't with us," captain Bob Bennett said. "We were in the slop a lot."

The winner of the koa divi-



OCC's crew of Kainoa Downing, Marc Haine, Chris Kincaid, Steve Van Ribbink, Scott Rolles and Tom Conner powers to the finish.

sion was Kai 'Opua of Kona, with a time of 6:13:40.63. It was a fitting victory, particularly since captain Jerome Kanuha said about "95 percent" of all koa canoes come from Kona.

"It's a proud thing, a good tradition," Kanuha said of koa boats.

Kanua said he hopes his team's high finish — 11th overall — might encourage other crews to use koa boats in the future. All but seven of the boats entered yesterday were made of fiberglass.

"It was the opposite before with fiberglass boats trying to

compete with koa boats," he said. "Now, it's the koas trying to compete with the fiberglass boats. I think everybody's sad to see just seven koa boats in the race."

Ironically, Kai 'Opua borrowed a Kona-made boat from a Tahiti crew.

The Puna Canoe Club paddled the final 1½ hours of its race without a crew change after its escort boat broke down. . . . The ama — the floatation bar on the outrigger — from the Offshore No. 2 became dislodged early in the race. The crew took 20 minutes to repair the damage.