

OCT 11 1985

Napoleon's challenge: 28th channel crossing

By Andy Yamaguchi
Advertiser Staff Writer

Paddling threw itself quite a shindig the other night, a shrimp-and-gau-gee reception at the Waikiki Aquarium to hype Sunday's Molokai-to-Oahu men's canoe race.

Joseph Kekua Napoleon, known to all as Nappy, was there, dispensing smiles and howzits to old friends.

They gave Nappy a plumeria lei and a koa bowl because he has made the 40.8-mile crossing of fickle Kaiwi Channel more times — 27 — than any active paddler.

Napoleon, a wiry 44-year-old from Palolo, goes for No. 28 Sunday. He has paddled in every Molokai race since 1958.

1958. Dwight D. Eisenhower was President. The National Football League had 12 teams.

And on Molokai, on the eve of the biggest race of the year, the paddlers would party.

"My kids will never see those days," Napoleon said above the cocktail chatter.

Most everybody stays in hotels these days. Back then, the paddlers slept on the beach on Molokai, at Kawakiu or Hale O Lono.

The crews would put on a talent show or a song contest. They would go diving for lobster, and the locals would organize a pot-luck.

"At night there would be an old lady chanting," Napoleon said. "I miss all that — I'm Hawaiian all the way."

Guys were more macho back then, too. Despite staying up most of the night, some crews would try to do the race "iron man" — that is, six men paddling the entire distance, in-

"I got movies of that. We'd be paddling and look up and a wave would nail us. The escort boat was rocking so much you could see the whole engine."

— Nappy Napoleon,
of the 1966 crossing



stead of nine men taking turns in the canoe's six seats.

In Napoleon's first race, his Waikiki Surf Club crew decided to go for an iron man.

"It's still my most memorable race," said Napoleon, closing in on Richard "Babe" Bell's record of 30 crossings. "You know, after you've done it, you know how to pace yourself. But that first time . . ."

They hung in there for more than half the race, until fatigue set in and relief paddlers, following in an escort boat, were called in. Waikiki Surf Club won in the first of an unprecedented string of six victories.

The hairiest crossing was in 1966, when 12- to 15-foot waves flipped Surf Club three times en route to its victory.

"I got movies of that," Napoleon said. "We'd be paddling and look up and a wave would nail us. The escort boat was rocking so much you could see the whole engine."

Kaiwi Channel was howling at 18 to 20 feet at midweek. "The Coast Guard called and said, 'Are you going to have

the race?'" race director Mary Serrao said.

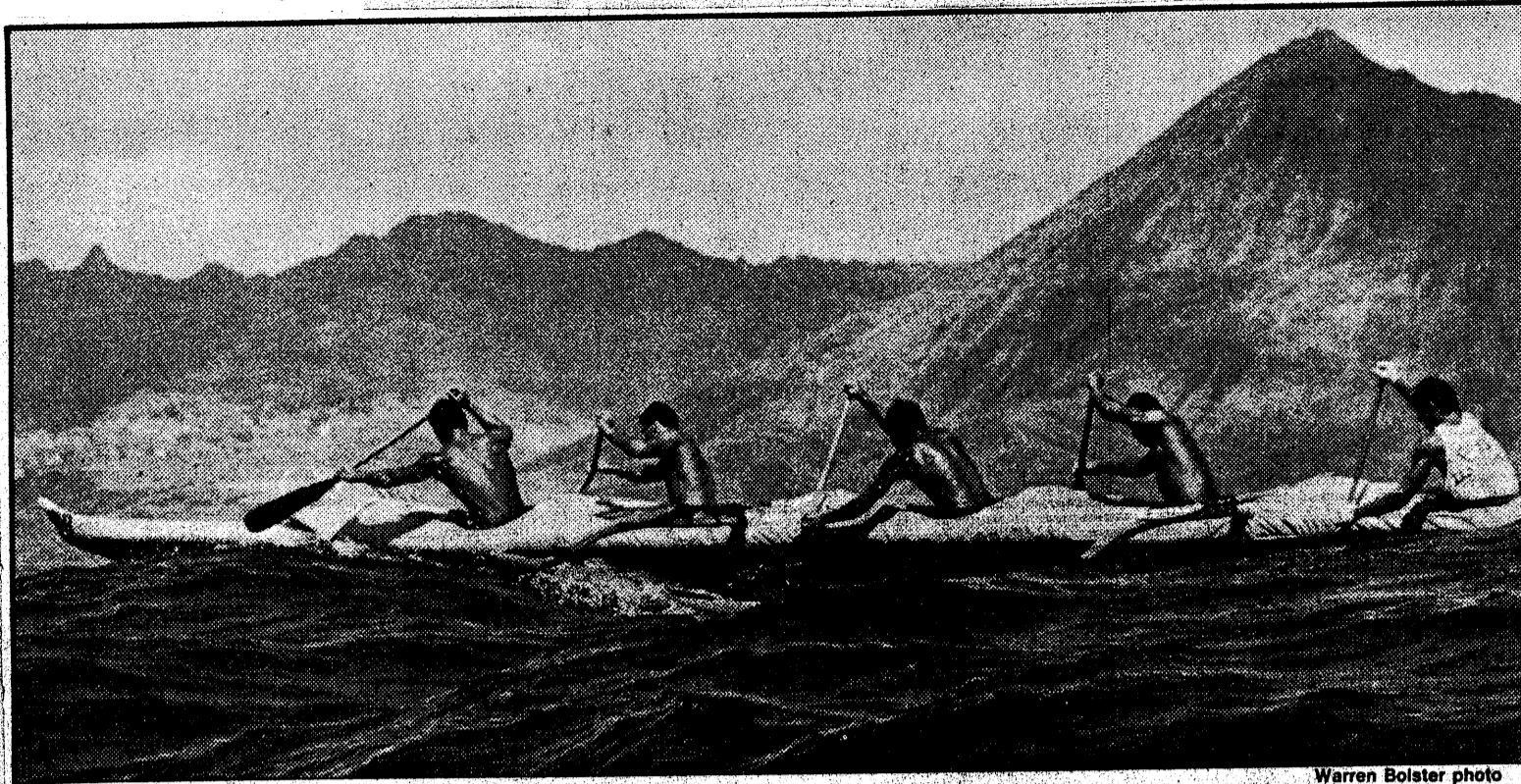
Serrao expects the channel to calm down by Sunday. Not too much, local paddlers hope. Popular wisdom has it that the rougher the channel, the better for Hawaii crews because they can surf swells better than outsiders.

"It's definitely for real," said Billy Whitford of California's Off Shore, Molokai champ in 1981 and '82. "There's no way you can simulate this. In Hawaii, you don't care who's on the horizon 'cause Mother Nature can throw you for a loop."

CANOE NOTES: This is the 34th staging of this event, officially called Molokai Hoe. . . . Outrigger Canoe Club of Honolulu won last year in a record time of 5:18:19, and is the favorite again. . . . Twelve of the 47 entries are from outside Hawaii. Tahiti and California are each represented by four crews. The most exotic entry is the Illinois Brigade, a collection of kayakers and canoers from the Midwest here for their fifth crossing.

American Samoa was expected to field crews, but did not. However, it recently purchased four fiberglass canoes from the Fiberglass Shop in Barber's Point and might be here next year.

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Warren Bolster photo

Mainland team wins canoe race

"Foreigners" stole the spotlight at yesterday's 34th Molokai-to-Oahu canoe race, a 40.8-mile paddle across Kaiwi Channel. Above, the government-sponsored team from Tahiti displays the unison that kept it in the lead for three-quarters of the race. But the Tahitians were passed in the stretch by the Illinois Brigade, a group of fresh-water canoeists who rejoiced (left) at being the first to reach the Fort DeRussy finish line. The first Hawaii finisher was Kailua, in fourth. Story on Page D-1.



Advertiser photo by Gregory Yamamoto

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First Annual Christmas Boat Parade Announced

For a novel way to escape the Christmas blues and blahs, join in the first annual Christmas Boat Parade, planned for Saturday, December 21st, leaving the Ala Wai Yacht Harbor at 7 pm for a

leisurely cruise along the Waikiki coastline to the Outrigger Canoe Club and back to the harbor, where Christmas parties have been arranged at both the Waikiki and Hawaii Yacht Clubs.



Sponsored by the owners of Vida Mia, Alan C. Beall, Jim Romig and Rick Ralston, the parade promises to be a spectacular event both for the participant and the watcher. Preliminary categories are calling for entries from yacht club members, general public, military, commercial and outrigger canoes.

Participants are encouraged to let their imaginations run wild, to be lavish and opulent, traditional or outrageously trendy with their decorations. Trophies and prizes will be awarded for best decorated boat, best lights, best Christmas music and most appropriate crew costumes.

"We want people to really get into the spirit of this event," said Beall. "and think of organizing bell ringers, practicing Christmas carols, encouraging children to participate and making it a family affair. This has the potential of becoming an instant tradition. Just imagine the sight of this string of boats slowly cruising up and down the coast of Waikiki, brightly lit and festively decorated with Christmas carols wafting through the air and being carried to shore."

For more information, please call Rike Weiss at 526-3911 or Tad Fullaway at 946-4363.

GARDEN ISLE
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SPORTSLINE

KAUAI

HONOLULU - The two Hanalei Canoe Clubs of Kauai fared well in Sunday's Men's Molokai-to-Oahu Canoe Race, which came to an exciting climax at Fort DeRussy Beach. The Hanalei I team finished an impressive sixth with a time of 5:41:06.4, and the Hanalei II Masters team finished with a time of 5:57:56.6, good for 17th place. The winner of the race was the surprising Illinois Brigade squad, which finished with a time of 5:33:06.0.

The Outrigger I Canoe Club of Honolulu, the pre-race favorite and pretty-much the same crew that set last year's course record of 5:18:19, finished a surprising seventh (behind Hanalei I) with a time of 5:42:02.2, using a koa wood model. The first Hawaii finisher was the Kailua I Canoe Club with the time of 5:39:23.8.

The Waimea High Menehunes, after their nail-biting 13-12 victory over the Kapa's High Warriors last Friday, are now ranked sixth in the state with a total of 51 points, in this week's Honolulu Advertiser State High School Football Poll. The Menehunes, who improved their record to 3-0, were ranked eighth last week.

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Outrigger Canoe Club's crew raised their paddles high after crossing the ti-leaf finish line first last year.

Advertiser file photo

Canoe paddlers face rough channel ride

By Andy Yamaguchi
Advertiser Staff Writer

The channel is falling, but not by too much.

Paddlers in tomorrow's 34th Molokai-to-Oahu canoe race can expect 6- to 8-foot swells on Kaiwi Channel — half that of midweek but big enough for a wet, wild ride.

The bigger the better, old hands say.

"We want holocaust conditions," veteran paddler Fred Hemmings said.

Roy Matsuda, a forecaster at the National Weather Service, yesterday said a decrease in this week's strong trade winds will mean 6- to 8-foot swells and 15- to 25-knot winds by Sunday on Kaiwi Channel, between Molokai and Oahu.

The calming trend all but eliminates the possibility that the race would have to be canceled. Race officials are prepared to call it off if the channel is too rough.

"We won't make a decision until Sunday morning," race director Mary Serrao said.

The strong trades were caused by a northeastern Pacific

molokai hoe

high-pressure cell that reached its peak 48 hours ago, Matsuda said. A small-craft advisory (25-35 knots, the lowest official warning status) is on.

Outrigger Canoe Club of Honolulu, which has won six of the last 10 races and last year covered the 40.8 miles in its record time (5:18:19), is the favorite. Forty-seven crews are entered from Hawaii, Tahiti, Australia, California and Canada.

The race starts at 7:30 a.m. at Hale O Lono Harbor and ends at Fort DeRussy Beach adjacent to Waikiki.

Spectators on Oahu probably will be able to see the first canoes round Koko Head about 11:30 a.m. and off Diamond Head about 12:15. The winner probably will hit Fort DeRussy between 12:30 and 1:30.

The Waikiki Surf Club has the most victories (12) in the 33-year history of the race, including six in a row from 1955 to '63. Outrigger, winner of the last two races, has 10 victories overall.

Illinois crew wins canoe race

HONOLULU (UPI) — The Illinois Brigade Canoe Club outdueled a Tahitian crew yesterday to win the 34th Molokai-to-Oahu canoe race.

The Illinois club made a late charge as the two canoes neared Diamond Head and caught the FFPP Canoe Club of Tahiti just outside of the Kahala Hilton. The two crews then exchanged leads until Illinois took the lead for good off Waikiki.

Illinois Brigade's winning time was 5:33:4. FFPP, which had led the race from the start, finished with a time of 5:35:21.

The winning time was short of the record 5:18:20 set last year by Outrigger Canoe Club.

The Tahitian crew edged the Off Shore Canoe Club of New Port, Calif., by 28 seconds for second place honors. Coming in fourth was the Kailua Canoe Club.

Rounding out the top 10 finishers were Kai O Pua of Kailua-Kona, Hanalei of Kauai, two Outrigger Canoe Club teams, Imua of California, and Pamatai of Tahiti.

Offshore was the first koa canoe to finish the race.

Race conditions were nearly perfect for the 40.8-mile race. According to reports, paddlers faced 6- to 8-foot swells and winds of 15 to 20 knots.

The race began at 7:28 yesterday morning at Hale O Lono Harbor on Molokai and finished at Fort DeRussy Beach.