



Outrigger Canoe Club's No. 1 crew has a swell time in Kaiwi Channel.

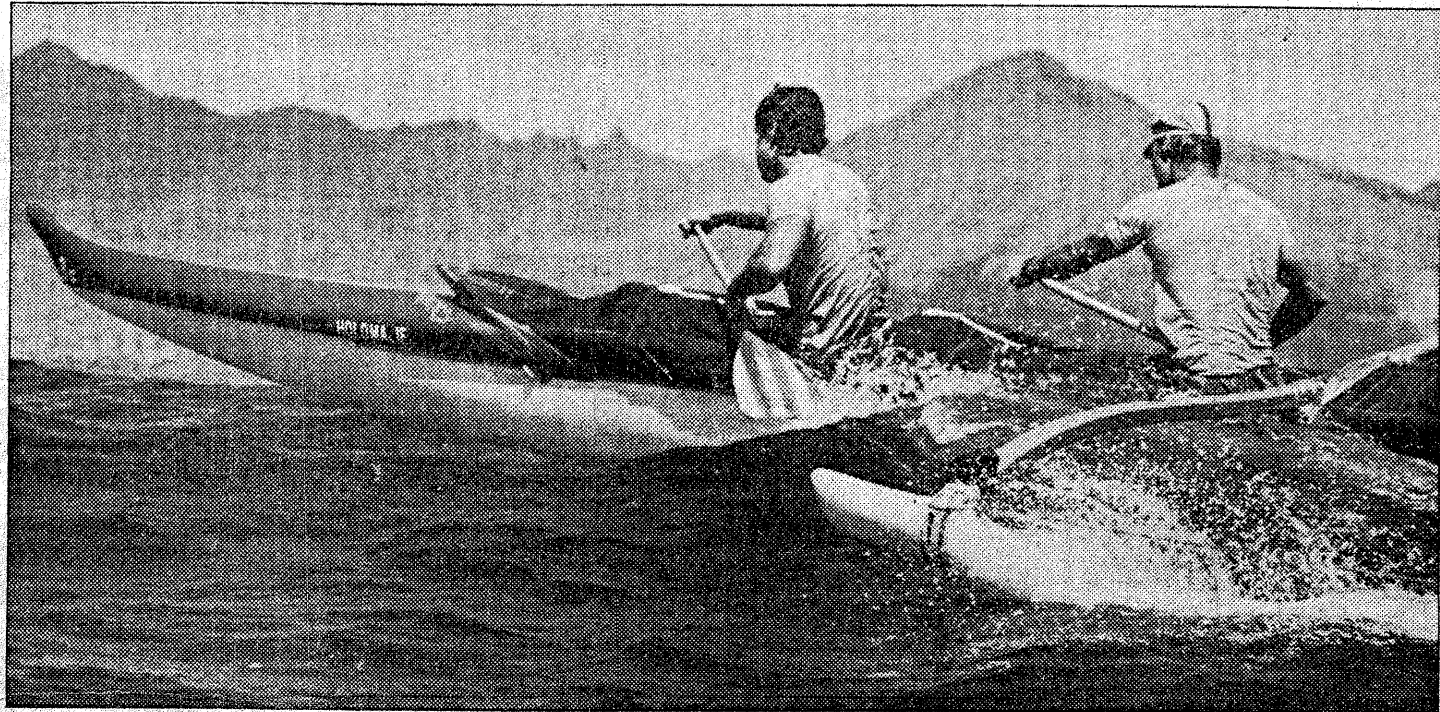
Warren Bolster photo



The canoe capital of the world, at least for a day: the finish line at Fort DeRussy Beach.

Advertiser photo by Gregory Yamamoto

Illinois paddlers a surprise



Warren Bolster photo

Bow up, the Illinois Brigade surges through the chop.



Warren Bolster photo

A textbook crew change: one man jumps in (middle) while another jumps out (right).



Advertiser photo by Gregory Yamamoto

The Brigade's Kurt Doberstein (left) and Mike Fries (right) wear the look of winners.

Finish first in Molokai Hoe race

By Andy Yamaguchi
Advertiser Staff Writer

Confusion sidled up next to the sunglasses and Betamovies crammed on Fort DeRussy Beach yesterday for the finish of the men's Molokai-to-Oahu canoe race.

"Who was in the lead? Someone said Illinois."

"Illinois?? Right. . . . On the horizon, sunlight flashed off paddle blades.

A few minutes later, a red-and-white fiberglass canoe was first to pass under the finish-line banner; it ground to a halt on the sand.

"Wait a minute," announcer Lord Tallyho Blears bleated over the loudspeakers. "It could be Outrigger Canoe Club, we don't know. . . ."

"Illinois!" Mike Fries, one of the drenched paddlers in the canoe, yelled in reply. He punched the sky with his right fist. "Illinois!"

Paddling blinked. In the most remarkable occurrence in the 34-year history of the Molokai canoe race, the Illinois Brigade, a nine-man team of world-class canoe paddlers from around the Midwest, won the Bankoh Molokai Hoe yesterday.

They did it despite not assembling as a team, or sitting in an outrigger canoe, or seeing salt water 'n' surf all year until they got here eight days ago.

They were the first team not from Hawaii, Tahiti or California to win the race.

A team from Tahiti, sponsored by that nation's government, led for three-quarters of the 40.8-mile race across Kaiwi Channel. But the Illinois Brigade, drawing on superior conditioning, caught the Tahitians outside the Kahala Hilton.

The lead changed hands four times before the Midwesterners, who had borrowed one of Outrigger's best fiberglass canoes, pulled away to win in 5 hours, 33 minutes, 5.0 seconds. Tahiti was second in 5:35:21.8 and Off Shore of Newport Beach, Calif., was third in 5:35:49.9.

Outrigger Canoe Club of Honolulu, the pre-race favorite with virtually the same crew that set last year's course record of 5:18:19, finished a surprising seventh. OCC was not even the first Hawaii finisher; Kailua, Kai Opua of Kona and Hanalei were fourth, fifth and sixth, respectively.

All 48 crews that started at Hale O Lono Harbor completed the race.

It was difficult to say which was the bigger stunner: the Illinois Brigade victory or Outrigger's failure to win. Indeed, word was going around before the race that OCC, which had won six of the previous 10

next year there'll be five Midwestern teams. Promote the sport, get the Germans back here. Maybe even the Russians will come here."

Molokai Hoe results
1. Illinois Brigade 5:33:05.0, 2. Federation, Fran-

caise de la Pirogue Polynésienne (Tahiti) 5:35:21.8, 3. Off Shore (Calif.) (koa) 5:35:49.9, 4. Kailua I 5:39:23.8, 5. Kai Opua 5:40:46.1, 6. Hanalei I 5:41:03.4, 7. Outrigger I (koa) 5:42:22.2, 8. Outrigger II 5:42:27.4, 9. Imua (Calif.) (koa) 5:42:43.5, 10. Pamatali COP (Tahiti) 5:45:25.4, 11. Molokai I 5:52:47.0, 12. Hui Lanakila (koa) 5:53:38.5, 13. Lokahi I 5:53:52.8, 14. Kamehameha I (Hilo) (koa) 5:53:58.9, 15. FFPP II (koa) 5:54:14.0, 16. Surf Sports 5:55:33.6, 17. Hanalei II masters 5:57:56.6,

18. Papi COP (koa) 5:58:38.3, 19. Hanohano (Calif.) 5:58:41.5, 20. Kailua II masters 5:59:04.8, 21. Outrigger III masters 6:01:01.4, 22. Koa Kai I 6:01:09.9, 23. Hui Nalu (koa) 6:04:26.3, 24. Illinois Brigade II masters 6:05:12.3, 25. Kona I 6:05:16.7, 26. Canada 6:06:22.0, 27. Anuenue (koa) 6:06:27.8, 28. Waikiki Beach Boys I 6:10:44.7, 29. Leeward Kai 6:12:33.5, 30. Lanakila Outrigger (Calif.) (koa) 6:12:34.3, 31. Kaneohe 6:13:40.6, 32. Ka Mo'i 6:14:01.0, 33. Hawaiian Warriors I 6:14:55.7, 34. Na

Kai Ewalo 6:15:16.9, 35. Waikiki Surf Club (koa) 6:15:40.9, 36. Kilauea II 6:21:47.8, 37. Heialani 6:23:02.5, 38. Kilauea 6:25:19.7, 39. Lahaina (koa) 6:27:18.5, 40. Kamehameha II (Hilo) (koa) 6:28:21.6, 41. Lokahi II 6:28:49.4, 42. Kulani 6:31:10.0, 43. Lanikai 6:33:04.5, 44. Koa Kai II 6:34:34.9, 45. Molokai II masters 6:41:13.7, 46. Hawaiian Warriors II 6:42:42.4, 47. Waikiki Beach Boys II masters 6:45:30.7, 48. Australia 6:57:31.5.

Illinois paddlers a surprising first

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Molokai races, had the best two crews in the field.

"We thought we'd be going for one-two," OCC's Chris Kincaid said, "not seven-eight."

No calamities, no broken equipment or swappings plagued Outrigger; on this day, they were simply beaten by better paddlers who perhaps took better headings.

"I'm more depressed than anything else," said Outrigger's Henry Ayau, a veteran of 20 Molokai crossings. And surprised? "Tahiti, no. Illinois, yeah."

"Illinois, yeah, ain't that a kick in the pants. Until you read their resumes."

All nine of them are prominent marathon canoeists, which means they paddle in races ranging from two hours to three days, including portage. Between them, they have won 42 national championships in U.S. Canoe Association competition. One of them, Bruce Barton of Homer, Mich., made the U.S. Olympic team in 1976 and '80 in flat-water kayaks, reaching the semifinals in '76.

In marathon canoeing, they paddle in two-man, 18½-foot craft. "It's very similar (to Hawaiian canoes)," Joe Johnson said. "Same body rotation. . . ."

They call themselves the Illinois Brigade, but one might more aptly call them Serge's Great Lakes All-Stars. Only one of them is from Illinois. The rest are sprinkled from Rochester, N.Y., to Marinette, Wis., to Missoula, Mont. They got to know one another at races around the Midwest. Five years ago, one of them said, "There's this race in Hawaii. . . ."

Serge is Serge Corbin, a French-Canadian boat builder from Shawinigan, Quebec. Corbin, called one of the best marathon canoeists in the world by his teammates, was in this race for only the second time yesterday but steered Illinois masterfully through the 2- to 3-foot chop.

"We're not practiced in big waves," he said, "but we learn fast."

Said Fries, "He wasn't born here, but he's the next best thing."

Illinois Brigade crew members are Corbin, Fries, Barton, Johnson, Al Rudquist, Everett Crozier, Kurt Doberstein, Tim Triebold and Jay Mitman.

Their best finish in four previous Molokai races was 10th.

"I think it's a great thing for the sport," OCC's Karl Heyer said. "Maybe they'll take a canoe back with them. Maybe

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Moloka'i Hoe

RESULTS OF THE MOLOKA'I-TO-OAHU CANOE RACE HELD YESTERDAY (G-Fiberless; K-Koa; M-Masters)

1. Illinois Brigade (G) 5:33:05
2. FFPP No. 2 Tahiti (G) 5:35:21
3. Offshore (K) 5:35:49
4. Kailua (G) 5:39:23
5. Kai Opua (G) 5:40:46
6. Hanalei No. 1 (G) 5:41:03
7. Outrigger No. 1 (K) 5:42:22
8. Outrigger No. 2 (G) 5:42:27
9. Imua (K) 5:42:43
10. Pamatali (G) 5:45:25
11. Molokai No. 1 (G) 5:52:47
12. Hui Lanakila (K) 5:53:38
13. Lokahi No. 1 (G) 5:53:52
14. Kamehameha No. 1 (ZIK) 5:53:58
15. FFPP No. 1 (K) 5:54:13
16. Surf Sports (G) 5:55:33
17. Hanalei No. 2 (G) 5:57:56
18. Maitre Nui (G) 5:58:25
19. Honohano (G) 5:58:41
20. Kailua (MG) 5:59:04
21. Outrigger (MG) 6:01:01
22. Koa Kai No. 1 (G) 6:01:09
23. Hui Nalu (K) 6:04:26
24. Illinois No. 2 (MG) 6:05:12
25. Waikiki (K) 6:05:16
26. Canada (G) 6:06:22
27. Anuenue (K) 6:06:27
28. Waikiki B.B. (G) 6:10:44
29. Leeward Kai (G) 6:12:33
30. Lanakila-Cal (G) 6:12:34
31. Kaneohe (G) 6:13:40
32. Ka Mo'i (G) 6:14:01
33. Hawaiian Warriors No. 1 (G) 6:14:55
34. Nihoa Ewalo (G) 6:15:16
35. Waikiki Surf Club (K) 6:15:40
36. Kilauea No. 2 (G) 6:21:47
37. Heialani (G) 6:23:02
38. Kilauea (K) 6:25:19
39. Lahaina (K) 6:28:21
40. Kamehameha-Hilo 6:27:18
41. Lokahi No. 2 (G) 6:28:49
42. Kulani (G) 6:31:09
43. Lanikai (G) 6:33:04
44. Koa Kai No. 2 (G) 6:34:34
45. Molokai No. 2 (MG) 6:41:13
46. Hawaiian Warriors No. 2 (G) 6:42:42
47. Waikiki B.B. (MG) 6:45:30
48. Australia (G) 6:57:31