

Illinois Brigade wins Moloka'i Hoe

By TONI ROMP-FRIESEN
Special to WHT

HONOLULU — The Polynesian paddling community was stunned once more when the winners of the 34th annual Bankoh-Moloka'i Hoe canoe race hailed from — would you believe — Chicago, Ill. The Illinois Brigade, who dubbed themselves the "Mississippi River Crew," finished the 40.8-mile Moloka'i to O'ahu course in five hours 33 minutes and four seconds in the biggest upset since Blazing Paddles from Southern California triumphed in 1978. Heavily favored Outrigger Canoe Club,

who entered three crews, finished a surprising seventh, eighth and 21st. Tahiti's FFPP, who had led the race until Diamond Head, finished second in 5:35:21. The first koa boat was Offshore Canoe Club of California, who was third overall in 5:35:49.

Kailua Canoe Club, the first crew from Hawai'i, came in fourth, at 5:39:23, and Kona's Kai Opua finished a strong fifth at 5:40:56.

Kailua also won the master's division in just under six hours. Seas were calm with three- to four-foot swells and light winds, but a strong current kept crews

from breaking the course record of 5:18:19.

The Illinois Brigade made their debut to Outrigger paddling when they came in eighth in last year's Moloka'i Hoe, and two-thirds of the crew are national marathon canoe champs.

"The planets just weren't lined up for us to win," said one member of Outrigger. "I guess once in a while we need to get our butts kicked." A teammate added: "I think (Illinois winning) is good for the sport. They'll go back and tell everyone about outrigger canoeing and next year there will be five teams from the mid-

west." Australia, who many figured to be a strong contender, finished a disappointing last after flipping twice. "We spent an hour and a half in the water just trying to right the boat," said one member.

This year a record 48 boats entered the Moloka'i Hoe race, which is organized by the O'ahu Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association (OHCRA), and was dedicated to Nappy Napoleon, a paddler with Anuenue Club, who has paddled in every Moloka'i race since 1958.

Complete results of the race are in **For The Record** in this sports section.

Illinois Surprises Molokai Race Field

Edges Tahiti by Two Minutes

Mike Gordon
Star-Bulletin Writer

An unheralded team from Illinois — yes, you read that correctly — came from behind to outpaddle a gritty Tahitian crew and win the 34th Bankoh Moloka'i Hoe yesterday.

Say what? Illinois? You mean a crew from the heartland beat a crew that Hawai'i paddlers affectionately note "were born in canoes"? Correct.

ILLINOIS BRIGADE 1, a team of marathon river-canoe racers that had not paddled together this year until they arrived in the Islands, finished the 40.8-mile channel crossing in five hours, 33 minutes, four seconds.

Members of the winning crew are: Serge Corbin, Joe Jonsson, Jay Mittman, Bruce Barton, Al Rudquist, Kurt Doberstein, Ed Crozier, Tim Triebold and Mike Fries. Only one member of the crew is from Illinois. The rest hail from Wisconsin, Michigan, New York, Montana and Quebec. The Illinois crew paddled swell-for-swallow with FFPP 1, the top crew from Tahiti's *Federation Francaise Pirogue Polynésienne*, for more than eight miles before taking the lead for good as both crews rounded Diamond Head. At times they were paddling within four feet of each other.

FFPP 1 finished second in 5:35:21. Off Shore Canoe Club, a pre-race favorite along with de-

fending champ Outrigger Canoe Club of Honolulu, was third in 5:35:49. It also was the first koa boat to finish.

KAILUA CANOE CLUB, fourth overall with a time of 5:39:23, was the first Hawaii club to cross the finish line.

OCC 1 was seventh overall; OCC 2 eighth.

Weather conditions yesterday were far tamer than the 18-foot seas and 30-knot winds that had blasted the channel for much of last week. Instead, gusting winds turned the sea into non-surfable chop by the time a small armada of 48 canoes nosed up to the starting line outside of Molokai's Hale O' Lono Harbor.

Ironically, Illinois Brigade 1 used one of OCC's sleek fiberglass "rocket" boats. Last year, six members of the winning Illinois crew paddled a slower boat to a 10th-place finish.

"We surprised ourselves," said Illinois' paddler Everett Crozier, 42. "We don't do well on the changes and the rough water didn't help us any. But once we hit flat water, we take off."

TO DO THAT, however, Illinois Brigade 1 had to first chase down the speedy Tahitians.

Paddling a blistering 80 strokes per minute, FFPP 1 fairly flew off the starting line. Their churning, all-arm stroke pushed them to a ¼-mile lead by mid-channel.

Turn to Page C-6, Col. 1



STROKE FOLK—Tahiti's FFPP 1 team is partially hidden by a swell during yesterday's Moloka'i Hoe. The Tahitians led most of the 40.8-mile race before finishing second to Illinois Brigade 1.—Star-Bulletin Photo by Mike Tsukamoto.

Illinois Wins Molokai Race

Continued from Page C-1

Without a local club in sight, the race appeared to be for second place.

That's when the Illinois crew began to move on the Tahitians.

"We're used to racing four to five hours," said Al Rudquist, at 26 the youngest member of the Illinois Brigade 1 crew. "We just ran them down. It's always easier when you're catching someone."

WITH 10 MILES to go, the gap was down to about 200 yards, a distance that fluctuated with each crew change. The Tahitians nearly always brought their boat to a complete stop when spelling tired paddlers.

If it were not for a better FFPP 1 steersman—a man who milked every swell for its forward motion—Illinois might have caught the Tahitians well before Niu Valley. The Illinois Brigade 1 steersman seemed to be having a hard time with fish-tailing.

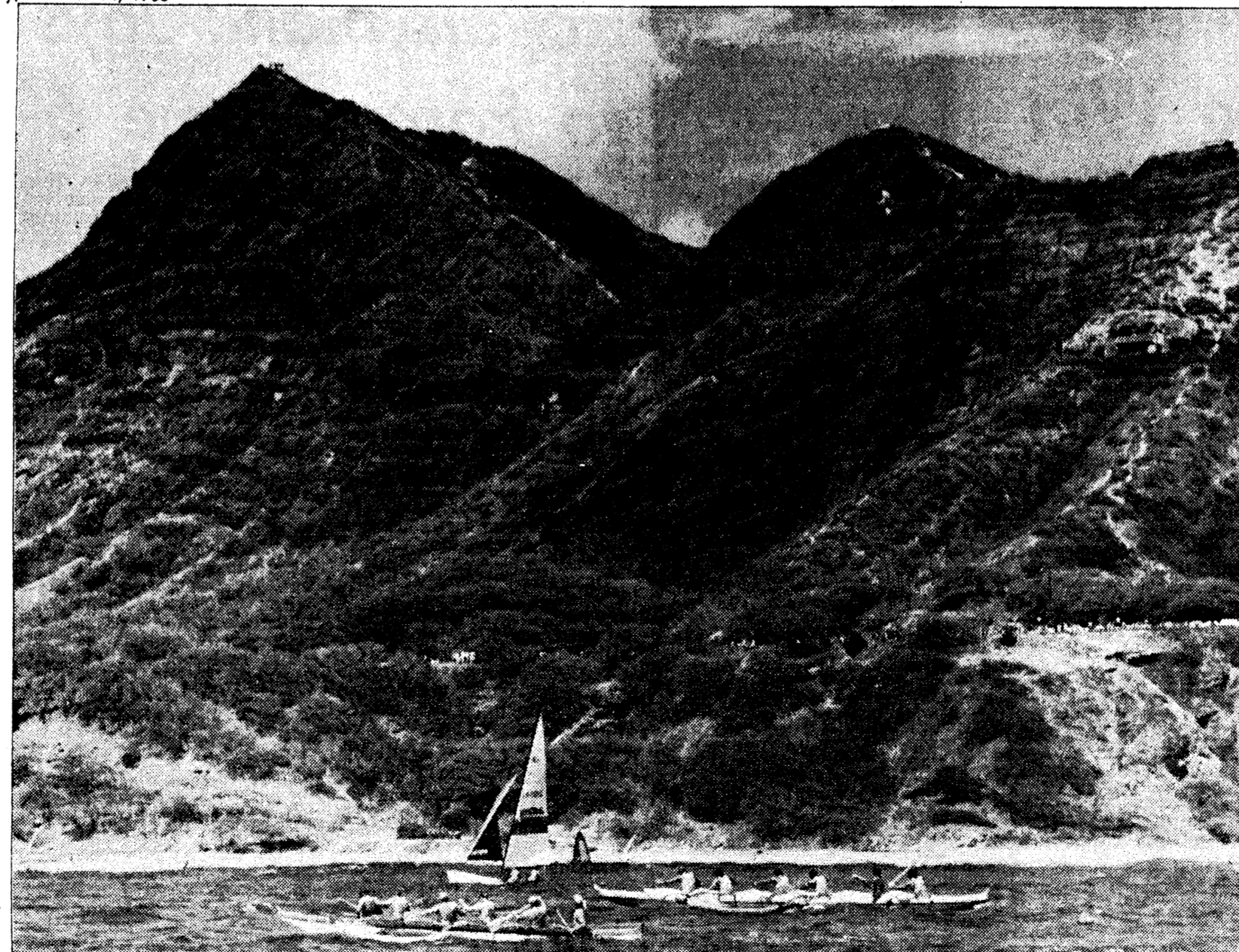
"We have a lot of paddlers in marathon river paddling," said Crozier. "They're strong people. We thought if we could stay with them (FFPP 1) in the big water we could run them down."

Chris Kincaid, a member of OCC's second crew—nicknamed "The Brand X Crew"—said OCC never even considered Illinois a potential threat. "Maybe Tahiti," he said. "Maybe Off Shore, maybe Imua. But Illinois? They must be damn good paddlers. We'll have to do something different next year. Maybe throw both crews together."

OCC DISTANCE coach Walter Guild said his crew simply got "outpaddled, right from the start."

The field, he said, was one of the most competitive he's seen. A record 48 crews entered and finished the race—43 of them within an hour of the winner.

"It was a super race," Guild said. "I feel like I was involved



PADDLE BATTLE—Illinois Brigade 1 (left) and Tahiti's FFPP 1 battle for first place off Diamond Head yesterday. Illinois won the 40.8-mile Moloka'i Hoe men's canoe race in a non-record five hours, 33 minutes, four seconds.

in a really super event." Channel swells, Guild added, were too close together for his liking. "We had a hard time keeping our boat at the kind of hull speed we need to have to be competitive. It wasn't a surfing day for anyone."

Guild also said he was surprised by Kailua's strong finish. Both clubs have raced in several

distance races, with OCC beating Kailua on every occasion. "You guys were solid. You guys were solid all year long," Guild told Kailua paddler and steersman Kamao Kalama.

"EVERYBODY FOLLOWED the Tahitians south," Kalama said. "But OCC and us, we stayed north. They never got

away from us. We were fighting back and forth and then we cut in at Portlock—we got into our kayak run."

Most of Kailua's paddlers, including both steersmen, race kayaks; hence they were familiar with the currents off of Portlock, Kahala Beach and Diamond Head.

Kailua's Masters crew also was

a surprise winner over OCC's Masters. Kailua finished 20th overall in a time of 5:59:04.

"We worked hard. We always thought we could beat Outrigger," said Kailua's Bob Cates Jr. "But it was a struggle to keep the crew together. From race to race we were always in danger of breaking up."

Star-Bulletin Photos
by Mike Tsukamoto

Moloka'i Hoe Race Results

OVERALL

- 40.8 Miles
(k-koa-g-fiberglass)
1. Illinois Brigade No. 1 (Chicago-g) (Serge Corbin, Joe Jonsson, Jay Mittman, Bruce Barton, Al Rudquist, Kurt Doberstein, Ed Crozier, Tim Triebold, Mike Fries), 5 hours, 33 minutes, 4 seconds.
 2. FFPP No. 1 (Tahiti-g), 5:35:21. 3. Offshore (Calif-k), 5:35:49. 4. Kailua No. 1 (Oahu-g), 5:39:23. 5. Kai Opua (Big Island-g), 5:40:56. 6. Hanalei No. 1 (Kauai-g), 5:41:06. 7. Outrigger No. 1 (Oahu-k), 5:42:02. 8. Outrigger No. 2 (Oahu-g), 5:42:27. 9. Imua (Calif-k), 5:42:43. 10. Pamatai-CCP (Tahiti-g), 5:45:25.
 11. Molokai No. 1 (Molokai-g), 5:52:47.
 12. Hui Lanakila (Oahu-k), 5:53:38. 13. Lokahi No. 1 (Oahu-g), 5:53:57. 14. Kamehameha No. 1 (Big Island-k), 5:53:58. 15. FFPP No. 2 (Tahiti-k), 5:54:13.
 16. Surf Sports (Oahu-g), 5:55:32. 17. Hanalei No. 2 (Kauai-g), 5:57:56. 18. Pirae-CCP (Tahiti-g), 5:58:38. 19. Hanohano (Calif-g), 5:58:41. 20. Kailua No. 2 (Oahu-g), 5:59:04.
 21. Outrigger No. 3 (Oahu-g), 6:01:01.
 22. Koa Kai No. 1 (Oahu-g), 6:01:09. 23. Hui Nalu (Oahu-k), 6:04:26. 24. Illinois Brigade No. 2 (Chicago-g), 6:05:12. 25. Kihai No. 1 (Maui-g), 6:05:16. 26. Canada (Toronto-g), 6:06:22. 27. Anuenue (Oahu-k), 6:06:27. 28. Waikiki Beach Boys No. 1 (Oahu-g), 6:10:44. 29. Ilseward Kai (Oahu-g), 6:12:33. 30. Lanakila-Outrigger (Calif-g), 6:12:34.
 31. Kaneone (Oahu-g), 6:14:40. 32. Ka Mo'i (Oahu-g), 6:14:01. 33. Hawaiian Warriors No. 1 (Oahu-g), 6:14:55. 34. Na Kai Ewala (Maui-g), 6:15:18. 35. Waikiki Surf (Oahu-k), 6:15:40. 36. Kihai No. 2 (Maui-g), 6:21:47. 37. Healani (Oahu-k), 6:23:02. 38. Kila Kila (Oahu-g), 6:25:19. 39. Lahaina (Maui-k), 6:26:18. 40. Lokahi No. 2 (Oahu-g), 6:28:49.
 41. Kamehameha No. 2 (Big Island-k), 6:28:21. 42. Kulani (Oahu-g), 6:31:09. 43. Lanikai (Oahu-g), 6:33:04. 44. Koa Kai No. 2 (Oahu-g), 6:34:45. 45. Molokai No. 2 (Molokai-g), 6:41:13. 46. Hawaiian Warriors No. 2 (Oahu-g), 6:42:42. 47. Waikiki Beach Boys No. 2 (Oahu-g), 6:45:30. 48. Australia (Hamilton Beach Island-g), 6:57:31.

KOA

1. Offshore. 2. Outrigger No. 1. 3. Imua. 4. Hui Lanakila. 5. Kamehameha No. 1. 6. FFPP No. 2.

FIBERGLASS

- (Non-Koa)
1. Illinois Brigade No. 1. 2. FFPP No. 1. 3. Kailua No. 1. 4. Kai Opua. 5. Hanalei No. 1. 6. Outrigger No. 2.

MASTERS

- (Over 35)
1. Kailua No. 2. 2. Outrigger No. 3. 3. Illinois Brigade No. 2. 4. Molokai No. 2. 5. Waikiki Beach Boys No. 2.