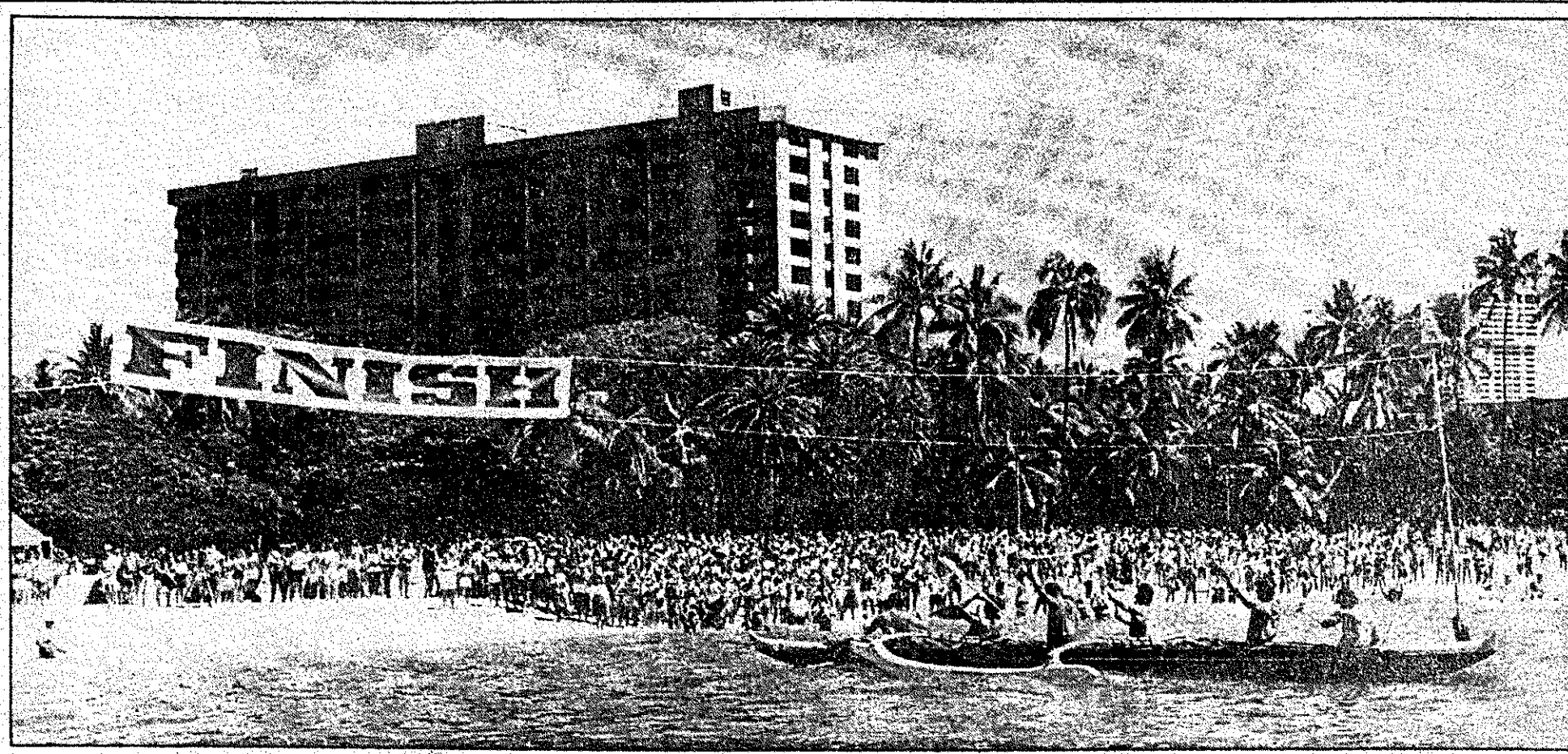


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Advertiser photo by Greg Yamamoto

The triumphant Offshore Canoe Club nears the finish line after completing a record crossing in the 38th annual men's Molokai-to-Oahu canoe race.

## Offshore tops Molokai race record

By Robert Collias  
Advertiser Staff Writer

Billy Whitford knew his Offshore Canoe Club crew from Newport Beach, Calif. had what it needed to win the 38th annual Bankoh Molokai Hoe, the 40.8-mile men's Molokai-to-Oahu outrigger canoe race.

He just wasn't convinced they could do it until they crossed the finish line at Ft. DeRussy Beach in Waikiki yesterday with a record-breaking time of 5 hours, 6 minutes and 25 seconds. That time broke the record of 5:08.11, set by Outrigger Canoe Club last year.

All 53 crews that began the race crossed the finish line. The crews came from Hawaii, California, Tahiti, Canada, Australia and England. The limit for each crew was nine men with six in the canoe at any one time.

Offshore was loaded with talent. Olympians Greg Barton and Terry Kent headed the list, but the other seven paddlers on Offshore's boat could almost be considered a sort of crew all-star team. Willie Reichenstein is the U.S. women's national team coach. Serge Corbin is a North American marathon kayak champion.

Hui Nalu of Oahu finished second overall in 5:11.38 and first in the Koa (wooden canoe) division. Two Tahitian clubs — Ihilani and Punaaru — were third and fourth, respectively. Three-time defending champion Outrigger finished seventh in 5:22.16.

Whitford, who founded Offshore with Bud Hohl in 1979, assembled his crew for yesterday's race carefully. But it wasn't all smooth sailing.

As of two days ago Offshore hadn't practiced in the boat it would use for the race, but the resourceful Whitford didn't worry. He knew his old friend Kala Kukea, the coach and steersman for Hui Nalu, wouldn't let him down.

Kukea set up Offshore with a boat from Hui Nalu, the California crew rigged it Saturday, practiced in it for about an hour yesterday morning and then set out into waters off Hale O Lono Harbor in Molokai.

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## Phillips has nothing to lose and everything to gain

□ She's trading her kayak for a sled

By Jack Wyatt  
Special to the Star-Bulletin

Traci Phillips, Hawaii's only female kayak paddler to take part in the Seoul Olympics last year, is trying to learn a new sport.

But in attempting to master the luge (a racing sled used in the winter Olympics) the 1979 Hawaii School for Girls graduate may face the most dangerous challenge of her life.

"My first taste of competition came at last year's nationals at Lake Placid (N.Y.). I crashed. It was an experience I'll never forget," Phillips said.

Short on practice but long on heart, Phillips entered the national championship with fervor.

"My start went well but after flying through a few turns I got behind (on my timing)," she said. "I began attacking each curve all wrong. Suddenly I was airborne. I had flipped."

The Hawaii-born Phillips recalls sliding along the steep course on her stomach with 55 pounds of sled on top.

"To score points, I had to finish with sled in hand. That gave me the incentive to keep going," she said.

Using all her strength gained from years of surfing and paddling, the muscular 5-foot-4½ Phillips flipped her sled back upright.

"Before climbing aboard, I slid down the course further, this time on my backside. That hurt," she said.

The spunky Phillips finished her first competitive luge run with sled in hand and scoring points.

"By comparison, my second run was fast and flawless," she said.

A one-person luge over an icy 800-meter woman's course can attain speeds of 60 miles-an-hour.

"When you crash your body gets hammered. But what excitement flying around curves upright at G-force speeds," she said.

Phillips leaves soon for Lake Placid and her first full season of luge training under Olympic team coaches.

"My goal is to make the U.S. B team and to gain experience. What happens after that I don't know," she said.

Phillips is realistic about her slim-to-none chance of competing in both the luge in Winter and the kayak in Summer Games in 1992.



By Craig T. Kojima, Star-Bulletin

Traci Phillips has hopes of becoming a double Olympic threat. Already a given in kayaking, her dream now is to excel in the luge.

"I can't expect to beat the top (luge) girls. That will take years of training," she said.

Phillips does, however, look toward 1994 when the Winter Olympics begin alternating with the Summer Games every two years.

Growing up near Waikiki's waters, Phillips became a competitive Outrigger Canoe Club paddler and a top amateur surfer in women's open events.

"My paddling loyalties are with Outrigger but surfing is my favorite recreational sport," she said.

Between waves Phillips starred at volleyball, competing for HSC in high school competition, and for Outrigger and Nick's Fishmarket women's club tournaments.

"I found I could jump pretty high," she said.

Later Phillips took up racquetball and quickly soared to the top of the state women's rankings.

"My upper body strength gained from water sports gave me the power to hit the ball hard," the three-time Hawaii women's champ said.

But for all Phillips' sporting experiences nothing compares with kayaking in last year's Olympic Games.

"I'm so happy having the opportunity to participate. Even had I finished ninth (last in the finals) I would still have this feeling of accomplishment," she said.

Phillips came in sixth in the K-1 finals, the highest finish for an American woman.

### Luge

#### Steering

Lugers change the flex of runners with their legs or shift their weight with their shoulders.

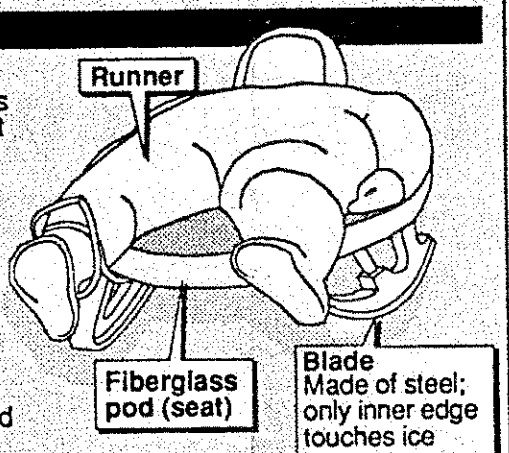
#### Aerodynamics

Drivers, wearing snug-fitting clothes, lean back to reduce air friction and can gain speeds of over 120 km/h (75 mph).

#### Object: Speed

Racing on ice, drivers search for the shortest path from start to finish. A quick start and tight sled control are important elements.

Source: XV Olympic Organizing Committee; "What's What in Sports," Hammond and AP



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lokai to start the race at 7:24 a.m. The pre-race practice session was Offshore's first workout together as a team.

When they rounded La'au Point into the Kaiwi Channel, the Offshore crew was in seventh place. Still, Whitford wasn't worried.

"We're not the greatest starting team," he said. "We knew the flat conditions were to our advantage. We just had to start reeling them in one at a time."

One by one, the boats in front were eaten up by Offshore's juggernaut. Whitford, who now lives in Palolo Valley and is the National Junior Kayak/Canoe Development Coach, has finished this race 12 times and four times his crew has finished first — the last time with Offshore in 1981 and '82.

"About three hours into the race it was goodbye to Outrigger, goodbye to Australia, goodbye to Tahiti, hello open water," Whitford said.

Barton, a double gold medalist in kayaking in the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games, and his

Olympic teammate Kent were both ecstatic to win the race, billed as the world championship of distance outrigger canoe racing.

"I have been third, fifth and seventh in this race," said Barton. "I figured if I was ninth this year I was going to quit. The Olympics were obviously the highlight of my career, but this race is right up there with anything else I have ever done."

Kent, a two-time Olympian in kayaking, was in his sixth Molokai-to-Oahu race and was also ready to call this one his last with a loss.

"If we did worse than seventh this year, I was going to

quit," Kent said. "This is a very fun race. There is a lot more to it than just a canoe race. You come and learn a lot about the Hawaiian culture and meet a lot of different people."

For Hui Nalu's Kukea, the race was satisfying even though it marked his second straight second-place finish. Kukea, 46, has finished the race 17 times, but never has his boat been the first over the finish line.

"We paddled as well as we could paddle," Kukea said. "The expectation is to do as well as you can do. When another crew is better than you like Offshore was today, well, that is the way it goes."

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## Canoe race to aid Special Olympics

Paddlers competing in the Third Annual Paddlethon for the Honolulu Area Special Olympics will race down the Ala Wai Canal starting at 8 a.m. Sunday.

The Paddlethon is the major fundraiser for the more than 300 Special Olympians living in the Honolulu area, said volunteer Garrett Toguchi.

Funds raised from the event cover sports equipment for the Olympians, transportation to and from games and costs of the winter and spring area games, he said.

No paddling experience is needed to compete in the quarter-mile race. The Outrigger Canoe Club and the Lokahi Canoe Club are supplying a canoe and an experienced steersman for each team.

Teams will consist of five paddlers and the steersman.

Cost per paddler is \$15 and applications for entries will be accepted through tomorrow, Toguchi said.

Last year, Toguchi said, almost 50 organizations and individuals competed in the race.

For further information, call the Hawaiian Special Olympics at 955-2606.

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## Kayaking is beginning to make its mark in ILH

By Robert Collias  
Advertiser Staff Writer

As Billy Whitford looks out over a crowded Ala Wai Canal filled with paddlers, he sees his dream coming true.

Whitford is the National Junior/Development Coach for the U.S. Canoe and Kayak Team (USCKT) and now he and several of Hawaii's top paddlers have become integral parts of a unique high school sports program.

"This is the only place in the U.S. where you can letter in kayaking," Whitford says. "We've got something special."

Kala Kukea, Marshall Rosa, George Kissner and John Mailolo know that. All have extensive backgrounds in paddling in Hawaii and all are kayaking coaches in the Interscholastic League of Honolulu.

The ILH begins its second season Oct. 21 and will culminate with the championships on Nov. 25.

Whitford and his friends have been instrumental in starting the program.

Kukea, 46, is the coach for Kamehameha Schools. He started paddling in outrigger canoes when he was "9 or 10."

Last weekend he steered Hui Nalu Canoe Club to second place in the Molokai Hoe men's Molokai-to-Oahu outrigger race.

"A couple of years ago Billy came to me and said let's try to do something in high school," Kukea said. "The first year we had about 50 kids come out and only six boats. Now the situation is better."

"They are better thanks in large part to Rosa, whose Rose Ski Co. manufactures some of the surf skis used in the ILH season. Rosa estimates that 30 to 40 of his surf skis will be used this season."

Rosa, 43, and a long-time member of Outrigger Canoe Club, is the coach of Punahou, where he is still trying to trim a squad of 98 to 30.

Kissner, 42, the coach at Mid-Pacific, is a convert to the sport. He was a football player



Advertiser photo by Ron Jett

ILH kayaking coaches are giving back to their sport. They are (from left) Marshall Rosa (Punahou), Billy Whitford (national team), George Kissner (Mid-Pacific) and John Mailolo (Iolani, Lutheran and Sacred Hearts).

at the University of Hawaii in 1968-69 and he coached the offensive line for the Pac-Five football team for seven years until the kayaking program began in 1988.

"Believe it or not, there is a lot of similarity in the way I coach the kayakers and the offensive linemen at Pac-Five," Kissner says. "I use a lot of individual techniques for both groups. It is a satisfying thing to get results out of an offensive line or an individual kayaker."

Mailolo, a gold medalist at the USCKT nationals held in August, has stepped in to help coach small teams from Iolani, Lutheran and Sacred Hearts.

Whitford became the national coach when the USCKT approved a grant to revive a junior program. The plan was to jump-start the junior program in Hawaii two years ago as an experiment. It worked to near perfection — of the 10 juniors on the 1989 U.S. team that went to the world championships in Nova Scotia, nine were from Hawaii.

Whitford hopes the ILH program can become a training ground for the national team, as well as a breeding ground for new paddlers.

"We have so many kids out here that are not the junior all-world people," Whitford says. "Sure the national team kids are great for the program, but we want everybody to race and feel wanted here."

For Whitford and the young paddlers in the ILH, it is a dream come true.