

Outrigger triumphs

Paddles off with 14th win

By Paul Giblin
Special to The Advertiser

The Outrigger Canoe Club quite literally swamped any challenge to its claim on the world championship title of outrigger canoe racing yesterday.

The Oahu-based team tipped over its closest competitor early on, and took advantage of rough seas the rest of the way to win the 41-mile Bankoh Molokai Hoe race. Outrigger finished the Molokai-to-Oahu ride across the Kaiwi Channel in 5 hours, 19 minutes and 38 seconds.

It marked Outrigger's 14th victory in the race's 39-year history and fourth in the past five years.

Outrigger's time was more than 13 minutes off last year's record, but fast enough to dethrone defending champion Offshore Canoe Club of Newport Beach, Calif. Offshore placed second in 5:28:52, just nine seconds ahead of Australia's Outrigger Canoe Club.

"We put a lot into this," said steersman Tom Conner of Oahu's Outrigger team. "We were very determined; determined not to let it slip away. We were embarrassed last year."

Last year, his team finished 18 minutes off the lead in seventh place. "It was good to be embarrassed last year. We came back more determined this year. It lit a fire beneath us," said Conner, who's crew was nearly identical to last year's lineup.

The race took a watery twist about an hour after the start at Hale O Lono Harbor in Molokai. Outrigger of Oahu and Outrigger



Advertiser photo by Bruce Asato

The Outrigger Canoe Club heads for the finish line of the 41-mile Bankoh Molokai Hoe race yesterday. Outrigger won in 5:19:38.

of Australia caught the same wave when the local team crashed into the crew from Down Under. The Hawaii crew's koa canoe nosed into the rear of the Australians' fiberglass boat and flipped it.

"There were some pretty big runners coming," said Australian Jason Somerville-Kimlin. "They tipped us on the back. It just bumped us right over."

"It was kind of an error of

inexperience on their part," said Oahu's Mark Rigg. "It just seemed to me that their steersman wasn't really paying attention, and we don't stop for anyone. It's unfortunate it happened, but that's racing."

While the Australians gathered their paddles and righted their boat, the Hawaiians paddled on

See Canoes, Page C4

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HONOLULU ADVERTISER

OCT 8 1990

FROM PAGE C1

and opened a lead they never lost.

Just last weekend, the seas were calm for the women's version of the channel race, the Bankoh Na Wahine O Ke Kai, and Offshore turned in a record time. But yesterday, rugged seas prevailed. Water washed over the canoes nearly the entire way.

Conner said, "Our plan was to go straight to Diamond Head, but the swells were too big and our canoe started to bog down, so we went over to Hawaii Kai." From there, Oahu's Outrigger team paddled up the coast to the finish at Fort DeRussy Beach in Waikiki.

Meanwhile, Outrigger of Australia closed in on Offshore, which had surged into second place.

At Diamond Head, the Australians cut Offshore's 300-yard lead to nothing, but the Australians were unable to pass the Californians.

"We got inside to get all the runs, but they got a really good run and pulled ahead. Then we caught up, and they got another really good run again," Somerville-Kimlin said. "They have a very good crew. They were very hard to catch."

"From Diamond Head, we were neck-and-neck," said Offshore's Willie Reichenstein, whose crew includes two Olympic paddlers. "We were worried all the way."

Hawaii's Outrigger Canoe Club No. 3 won the masters division (5:49:58), while Kailua's No. 4 crew captured the senior masters (6:10:52).

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MAUI NEWS

OCT 8 1990

Outrigger paddles koa canoe to victory in Molokai Hoe race

HONOLULU — Still smarting from a second-place finish in last year's event, Honolulu's Outrigger Canoe Club (OCC) blasted across the Kaiwi Channel yesterday to capture first place in the 39th annual Bankoh Molokai Hoe Molokai-to-Oahu outrigger canoe race.

Outrigger won the event — paddling a traditional Hawaiian koa (wood) canoe — in five hours, 19 minutes, and 38 seconds. Record holder Offshore Canoe Club of Newport Beach, Calif. finished second in 5:28:52, while Australian Outrigger was just nine more seconds back in 5:29:01 in the event that is billed by organizers as the world championship of outrigger canoe racing.

Maui's top finisher was Napili No. 2, which crossed the line in 34th place in a time of 6:16:39, while Napili No. 1 was 43rd in a time of 6:31:48. Kihai took 45th with a time of 6:32:36 and Kahana was one more spot back in 6:37:15.

Hawaiian No. 1 was 48th in 6:41:08 and Hawaiian No. 2 was 49th in 6:41:46. Fifty-one crews finished the race.

Olympians Greg Barton and Terry Kent headed the list of paddlers for Offshore, which set the course record in this 40.8-mile race last year in 5:06:29. The rest of Offshore's paddlers were Willie Reichenstein, Serge Corbin, Randy Drake, Mike Fries, Alan Rudquist, Bob Stafford, and John Puakea.

Outrigger, which won three straight Molokai Hoes before losing to Offshore last year, was paced by noted Hawaiian paddlers Walter Guild and Kainoa Downing. The rest of the Outrigger crew included Bruce Black, Mark Rigg, Courtney Soto, Mark Sandvold, Chris Kincaid, Geoff Graf, and steersman Tom Conner.

OCC coach Steve Scott said his team's strategy was simple. "Get out front and stay there," Scott said.

Basically that is what happened, following an accidental collision with Australian Outrigger at the start.

"We were going with Australia when they tipped over," Scott said.

OCC's win was the club's 14th since the race began in 1952. Steersman Conner, 45, a Waimanalo fireman, has been with OCC since 1960.

"We put a lot into this, we were very determined today," Conner said. "We were determined not to let it slip away from us. We were embarrassed last year and didn't want to let it happen again this year. It was good for us because our loss lit a fire under us."

Conner steered the team for the entire 40.8 miles.

"We got a good start," Australian Outrigger spokesman Jason

Somerville-Kimlin said. "It was just us and OCC vying for the lead. We were on a run on the northern side of the channel when OCC collided with our bow. The canoes were very close and they couldn't really help it. They came across and hit us. It was just an accident."

But the Australian canoe tipped over and filled with water.

"There was eight inches of water through the canoe," Kimlin said. "We got our momentum going and Bruce (Kolikka) bailed for 10 minutes non-stop. Then we took a different course. Offshore came down on us and we were fighting them all the way. Off Diamond Head we caught up to them, then they caught a wave and finished just a canoe length ahead of us."

The finish was in Waikiki at Fort DeRussy Beach, where a crowd was waiting to greet the teams as they came across the line.

Two crews, Teoropaa Nui from Tahiti and Healani No. 2 from Oahu, flipped over and did not finish the race. Keoua Canoe Club from Honaunau on the Big Island was almost five hours into their race and off Aina Haina on Oahu when their escort boat was caught by a wave and capsized.

"We just made a change, picking up our guys, and as soon as we got them on the boat a freak wave hit us and rolled us over," said coach Henry Hua from Honaunau. There were six or seven passengers on board the 21-foot Boston Whaler. Another patrol boat came to their rescue and took everyone aboard.

Keoua's canoe continued toward Oahu with no relief paddlers for the last hour and a half they were in the race.

The race began at 7:30 a.m. yesterday at Hale O Lono Harbor, Molokai with 53 crews from Australia, California, Canada, New Zealand, Tahiti and Hawaii. The Hawaiian Islands had teams from the Big Island, Maui, Molokai, Oahu and Kauai.

The top 10 finishers and Maui crews were:

1. Outrigger Canoe Club (Hawaii), 5:19:38. 2. Offshore (Calif.), 5:28:52. 3. Outrigger Canoe Club (Australia), 5:29:01. 4. Lanikai No. 1, 5:35:50. 5. Outrigger Canoe Club No. 2 (Hawaii), 5:37:07. 6. Hui Nalu No. 1, 5:41:37. 7. Waikiki Surf Club, 5:42:13. 8. False Creek Ocean Eaters (Canada), 5:44:22. 9. Kai Opuu (Big Island), 5:45:38. 10. Hanalei No. 1 (Kauai), 5:46:18. 34. Napili No. 2 (Maui) 6:16:39. 43. Napili No. 1 (Maui) 6:31:48. 45. Kihai (Maui) 6:32:36. 46. Kahana (Maui) 6:37:15. 48. Hawaiian No. 1 (Maui) 6:41:08. 49. Hawaiian No. 2 (Maui) 6:41:46.

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HONOLULU STAR BULLETIN
OCT 8 1990

Outriggers' bump and run wins channel crossing

After tipping over another canoe, they paddle home first

Results in Scoreboard

D-2

By Jack Wyatt
Special to the Star-Bulletin

The open water of the Kaiwi Channel proved too small for two clubs named Outrigger competing in yesterday's 39th Bankoh Molokai Hoe.

That became apparent when Outrigger Canoe Club of Honolulu, the eventual winner of the 40.8-mile men's race from Molokai to Oahu, clobbered Outrigger Canoe Club of Australia, causing the visiting boat to capsize and dashing any chance of victory.

"We were about 1 1/2 hours into the race, a little ahead of your Outrigger and covering its every move," Aussie steersman Jason Somerville-Kimlin said, "when suddenly I saw this huge canoe's bow about to ram our stern."

Outrigger's koa Kaoloa gave the Australian fiberglass boat a hard smack on its left side. "The waves were big and we were both really moving. The next thing I knew our crew was in the water floundering," Somerville-Kimlin said.

While Honolulu's Outrigger, with veteran steersman Tommy Conner in command, paddled on without hardly missing a stroke, the Aussies worked frantically in their attempt to right their craft and resume the race.

"That upset cost us about five minutes. And once underway we still had a lot of water to bail from the boat," the Aussie said.

Said Conner of the mishap: "Instead of looking around to see what happened, the Aussies should have leaned well over the side to provide ballast and prevent the canoe's capsize."



By Dennis Odo, Star-Bulletin

Outrigger Canoe Club steersman Tom Conner gets a victory kiss from his wife, Lesline, yesterday.

Outrigger won the race from Hale O Lono Harbor to Ft. DeRussy Beach in 5 hours, 19 minutes and 38 seconds. Outrigger's finish was 13 minutes slower than Off Shore (Calif.) Canoe Club's course record set last year.

But, considering the rough channel conditions, veterans say it was good time.

Off Shore placed second in 5:28:52, followed in third by Outrigger of Australia in 5:29:01. Lanikai No. 1 was the second Hawaii canoe to finish, its time, 5:35:50, good for fourth overall.

"Your Outrigger crew did a fine job," Somerville-Kimlin said, "and I'm not complaining about our third place. But watch us next year. We're going all out to avoid collisions and win this race."

No protests were filed as all parties agreed it was just one of those paddling accidents.

"Our canoe suffered a small crack but it's repairable," Somerville-Kimlin said. The Koaloa came through without a scratch.

With steep 8-foot seas and tradewinds gusting near 30 miles per hour, the race proved a challenge for steersman and crew. (Each crew consisted of nine men, six in the boat at any one time).

Of the 53 starters, two entries — Tahiti's Teoropaa Nui and Honolulu's Healani No. 2 — failed to complete the race.

The escort boat of Big Island's Keoua Canoe Club swamped off Oahu.

Although there were many capsizes, swamping and dunkings, no severe injuries were reported.

Not only did Outrigger's first team win overall honors, but they did it paddling Kaoloa, the first koa canoe to win the race in six years.

"I'm proud of our koa boat and its performance in the rough channel," Outrigger crewman Walter Guild.

In addition to steersman Conner and paddler Guild, Outrigger's first team included Bruce Black, Kainoa Downing, Geoff Graf, Chris Kincaid, Mark Rigg, Mark Sandvold and Courtney Seto.

Steersman Conner, 45, a Waimanalo fire captain, recorded his ninth victory in 19 trips.

"The steep seas and strong wind made this my roughest crossing in 10 years," he said.

12—Hawaii Tribune - Herald, Monday, October 8, 1990

Sports report

OCC wins Molokai-to-Oahu race

HONOLULU (AP) — Steve Scott, coach of the Outrigger Canoe Club of Honolulu, had a simple enough plan for the Molokai-to-Oahu men's outrigger canoe race: "Get out in front and stay there."

OCC followed the strategy to win yesterday's 41-mile crossing of the Kaiwi Channel in five hours, 19 minutes and 38 seconds. It was the club's 14th victory since the inaugural race in 1952. Outrigger won the race in a koa canoe.

Defending champion Off Shore Canoe Club of Newport Beach, Calif. placed second in 5:28:52, nine seconds ahead of the third-place finisher Outrigger Canoe Club of Australia. Off Shore won last year's race with a record time of 5:06:29.

Kai Opuu of Kailua on the Big Island finished in ninth place with a time of 5:45:38. Other Big Island entries included Kamehameha of Hilo in 20th place at 5:59:38 and Keoua of Honaunau in 35th place at 6:19:55.

Keoua's escort boat got capsized by a wave when the crew was about five hours into the race and off Aina Haina on Oahu.

"We had just made a change, picking up our guys, and as soon as we got them on the boat a freak wave hit us and rolled us over," said coach Henry Hua of Honaunau.

There were about a half dozen passengers aboard the Boston Whaler at the time. A patrol boat went to their rescue and took them on board. Keoua's crew paddled the remaining 1 1/2 hours without relief.

Two crews, Teoropaa Nui from Tahiti and Healani No. 2 from Oahu, flipped over and did not finish.

The race that began at Hale O Lono Harbor and ended at Fort DeRussy Beach drew 53 crews from Hawaii, Australia, California, Canada, Tahiti and New Zealand.