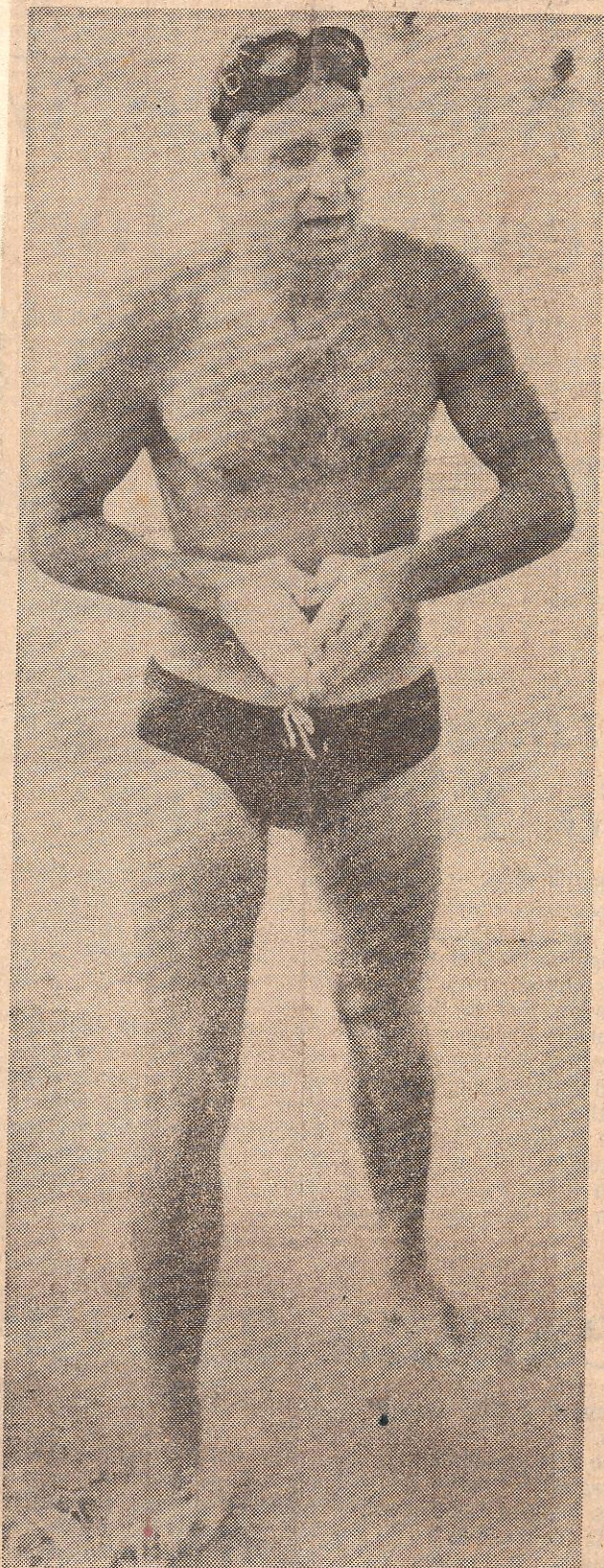


# Swimmer Fails: 'I'll Try Again'



Swimmer Huffaker: Hot soup, cold water.

## 1st Try Fails By 2 Miles

By ROBERT JOHNSON  
Advertiser Maui Bureau

LA PEROUSE BAY, Maui — Dr. Harry W. Huffaker, the dentist from Honolulu, made a gallant attempt but didn't quite make it last night in his bid to be the first person to swim the tricky 32-mile wide Alenuihaha Channel between Hawaii and Maui.

He had to give up about two miles off shore, off Kaupo, about 13 miles south of Hana, after fighting for several hours trying to make progress against a swift current and choppy swells.

He was picked up by his accompanying boat at 6:24 p.m. He had left Upolu Point on the Big Island at 1:17 a.m. He had been in the water for 17 hours and 7 minutes.

"I'll try it again either in September or October," he said, as he prepared to take a hot bath at a friend's house here.

"We had intended to do it then anyway, if we couldn't do it by the end of April.

"The way the current was running I just couldn't get in."

Dr. Bob Smith of Honolulu was aboard the accompanying boat, the 37-foot fishing cruiser Spooki Luki. "For about three hours, he made maybe a mile and a half toward shore before he gave up," said Smith.

Smith said Huffaker refused to leave the water and give up the fight until he had consulted with everyone in his supporting party aboard the escort boat.

The current was running south with a high swell. "That's what prevented him from getting ashore," said Smith.

At one time they had hoped that the hardy 30-year-old swimmer could touch down between Kaupo and Kipahulu. But he kept drifting further south all the time.

His wife, Christine, 28, drove with friends along the Maui coast road trying to be on hand when he came ashore. When she heard that the mission was scrubbed, she said:

"I'm just happy he's all right." Then she cried a little.

Dr. Smith said Huffaker had suffered no ill effects from the grueling ordeal. "He's all right." He said Huffaker was just "groggy from the cold." He explained that being immersed for such a long time in the water (the temperature was about 70 degrees) that he was like a bear who was in hibernation.

As he came close to the shore the helpers aboard the escort boat fed Huffaker hot noodle soup. He also drank orange juice at intervals and ate canned peaches. He had once explained that "peaches

are best. They cut the salt like nothing else."

As soon as he was hauled aboard the escort boat, the men helping him bundled him in blankets and warmed him with a TV light. They said Huffaker fell sound asleep in a minute and a half.

There was reason to fear sharks on the trip but he did not encounter any sharks anywhere along the way.

He swam for more than six hours in darkness. In the beginning the swimming seemed nice and easy and he made his normal two miles an hour swimming steadily along, almost like a mechanical man. He was doing about 50 strokes a minute, Australian crawl. He was doing so well, in fact, that for a time he hoped that he might make the shore by 4 or even 3 o'clock in the afternoon. But the last two miles stopped him.

Huffaker swam 27 miles across the treacherous Molokai Channel in September, 1967, as a sort of a warm-up for the Alenuihaha Channel swim. He had been training for yesterday's contest for almost a year. Since January he has been waiting on a day-to-day basis for the best time to start the test.

"I don't even know if it's possible to do it," Huffaker had said. "For example, I swim at about 2 miles an hour. If there's a current of 4 miles an hour in the channel, the swim will be impossible."

Though it was not possible to measure the strength of the current, it is quite likely the current was that strong off shore and that kept him from succeeding.

The Outrigger Canoe Club, of which he is a member, is his sponsor in the channel attempt. He has no commercial sponsors and his assistants are all volunteers.

Equipment he had along included a small Boston whaler outboard with which to bring food and drink to the man in the water. Some of the volunteers in the escort boat took turns riding alongside Huffaker on a surfboard.

Huffaker wore a red bathing suit and a protective cover of grease. He also wore prescription goggles. Normally, he wears glasses.

He carried a shark "prod" aboard the escort boat, but he was glad enough not to have to use it. He didn't have one on his swim across the Molokai Channel. "That time we depended on a rifle carried on the escort boat," he said.

The shark prod fires a 12-gauge shotgun shell. It is mounted on the end of a stout pole. If a shark were to approach an assistant stood by ready to toss him the prod.

The long, hard swim called for great stamina. Huffaker himself understood very well how wearying an ordeal it would be. "Many can float for survival," he once said. "But to swim at a rate of 56 strokes a minute takes a great deal of physical and mental conditioning."

Huffaker, a native of Michigan, has been swimming since he was 9. He twice tried to swim the English Channel, but did not succeed. On the last attempt in 1964, he got within two miles of shore before being pulled out of the water unconscious. It was the 56 degree water that beat him.

For a month he and his associates from the Outrigger Canoe Club have been studying current and wind conditions with Klaus Wyrski of the University of Hawaii's Oceanography Department. "Until this year very little was known about the Alenuihaha Channel," Huffaker said. "But now someone is doing his doctoral dissertation on it. We've learned a lot about it."

Yesterday, he learned a lot more.

Huffaker was a Big Ten swimming champ in college. He was the University of Michigan's free-style and individual medley swimming ace from 1958 to 1961. He graduated from Michigan Dental School in 1966 and came to Hawaii.

He trained for the task of taking on the unbeaten Alenuihaha Channel by swimming 30 miles a week.

Yesterday, he made his try—and lost. But he is a man who does not give up easily.

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## Volleyball

### 4 Isle Teams In Nationals

Four teams from Hawaii will play in the United States Volleyball Association's National championships May 7-10 at Knoxville, Tenn., it was announced by W. W. Robinson, USVBA delegate here.

They are Outrigger Canoe Club, Church College of Hawaii, Outrigger Seniors and the Nuuanu YMCA women's team.

Outrigger will first go to St. Louis, Mo., to defend its National AAU championship May 5-6.

The Outrigger Seniors will participate in the Senior Division of the National tournament.

Robinson also announced the all-star team for the Hawaii State "AA" tournament won by Outrigger Saturday at Klum gym. The all-stars: Tony and Chris Crabb, Col-

in Chock and Dodger Parker, Outrigger; Willie Kaliipaka and Dick Templeman, Church College, and Bill Bayne, Central Y.

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## Sports Shorts

The Hawaii Baseball League opened its season yesterday with Asahi shutting out the Marines 7 to 0. Holsum defeating Hickam 8 to 2, and Subpac defeating Army 7 to 3. Bill Nishita pitched a no-hitter for Asahi and struck out eight Marine batters.

The Round Robin Baseball Tournament of the Interscholastic League of Honolulu begins today at Honolulu Stadium. Roosevelt and Kamehameha will meet at 4 p.m.

Paul Spengler, Jr., and Rick Weihe have won the Francis Brown Four-Ball Match Play Tournament. They defeated Punahou students Jim Iams and Grady Timmons to win the tournament at Ala Wai Golf Course.

Donny Mailer won the junior men's title and Sharron Weber the girls' championship in the Kui O Hawaii Surf Club meet at Chun's Reef. The men's and senior men's championships will be held next weekend.

The Waikikians scored three goals in the final chukker to defeat International Travel Service 8 to 5 in a polo match at Moku-leia yesterday. The victory earned the Waikikians the perpetual Cutty Sark Trophy.

Four local teams will compete in the U.S. Volleyball Association's national championships in Knoxville, Tennessee, early next month. And Outrigger Canoe Club — which won the Hawaiian AAU championships — will defend its National AAU title in St. Louis, Missouri.

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## Swim To Maui Fails

Honolulu's aquadentist, Dr. Harry Huffaker, Saturday night gave up his attempt to swim the Alenuihaha channel between the Big Island and Maui.

He ended his attempt to swim the 32 miles from Upolu Point in North Kohala to Maui some two miles from the Maui shore where he encountered rough, cold water.

The 30-year-old dentist was in the water over 17 hours after launching his swim at 1:17 a.m. Saturday. He was the second person to swim the Molokai channel in August of 1967 and would have been the first to swim Alenuihaha.