

Sports

OUTRIGGER IN — On a day marred by protest and controversy, the Outrigger Canoe Club of Oahu rose to the top of the koa mountain Saturday in claiming the state crown at the Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association championships. A Hahaione Beach crowd of between 5,000 and 7,000 people was on hand for the event.

's stretch drive leaves'em dry

by protest and the Club of Oahu rose to the top of koa mountain Saturday in claiming the state crown at the Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association (HCRA) championships before a Hahaione Beach crowd estimated at times between 5,000 and 7,000 people, who were soaking up the rays and races on a sparkling day full of the special type of warmness only Hawaii can offer.

The festive atmosphere lent itself more to a 7,000-person outdoor party which happened to include canoe races every 30 minutes or so. There was shouting, screaming and singing aplenty all in time, of course, to the seemingly 50 different radio stations and cassettes which blared on into the night.

Outrigger in capturing its first state crown since 1977 piled up 52 points with a brilliant stretch run to edge Kauai-power, Hanalei and Healani, the Oahu Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association (OHCRA) champ, with 47 points each. Kailua finished third with 28, Hui Nalu fourth with 27 and Kai O' Pua, the pride of the Big Island, was fifth with 23 points.

KOOLAU, also of Oahu, nabbed the division crown with 10 points. Maui's Kahana and Molokai shared second place with eight points each, Hui Lanakai took third with seven and Team Kihai and Makaha shared fourth with six apiece.

The protests came fast and furious from all quarters and the races were finally halted by the officials after the Boys 14 and Under event, the ninth race of the day, in an effort to quell the dispute and smooth the ruffled features. The main protest centered around the length of the lanes being equal in distance at all points.

There were numerous opinions concerning the validity of the complaints both pro and con. Mary Helen Lindsey, Race Chairman, had this comment: "The protests were justified, adjustments were made and the meet was resumed."

There were talks of withdrawing from the meet but instead the Oahu teams voted unanimously to continue paddling but to do so under protest.

In fairness to the people who spent countless hours laying out the course, the current was so rugged that it was virtually impossible to secure the flag placements.

PUTTING the protests, broken paddles and other controversies aside (Hanalei's canoe, "Kai opua" was said to have been altered) Outrigger was true to its season-long form of starting slow that it seemed they were out of serious contention at the lunch break. They trailed Healani 39-6 at that juncture.

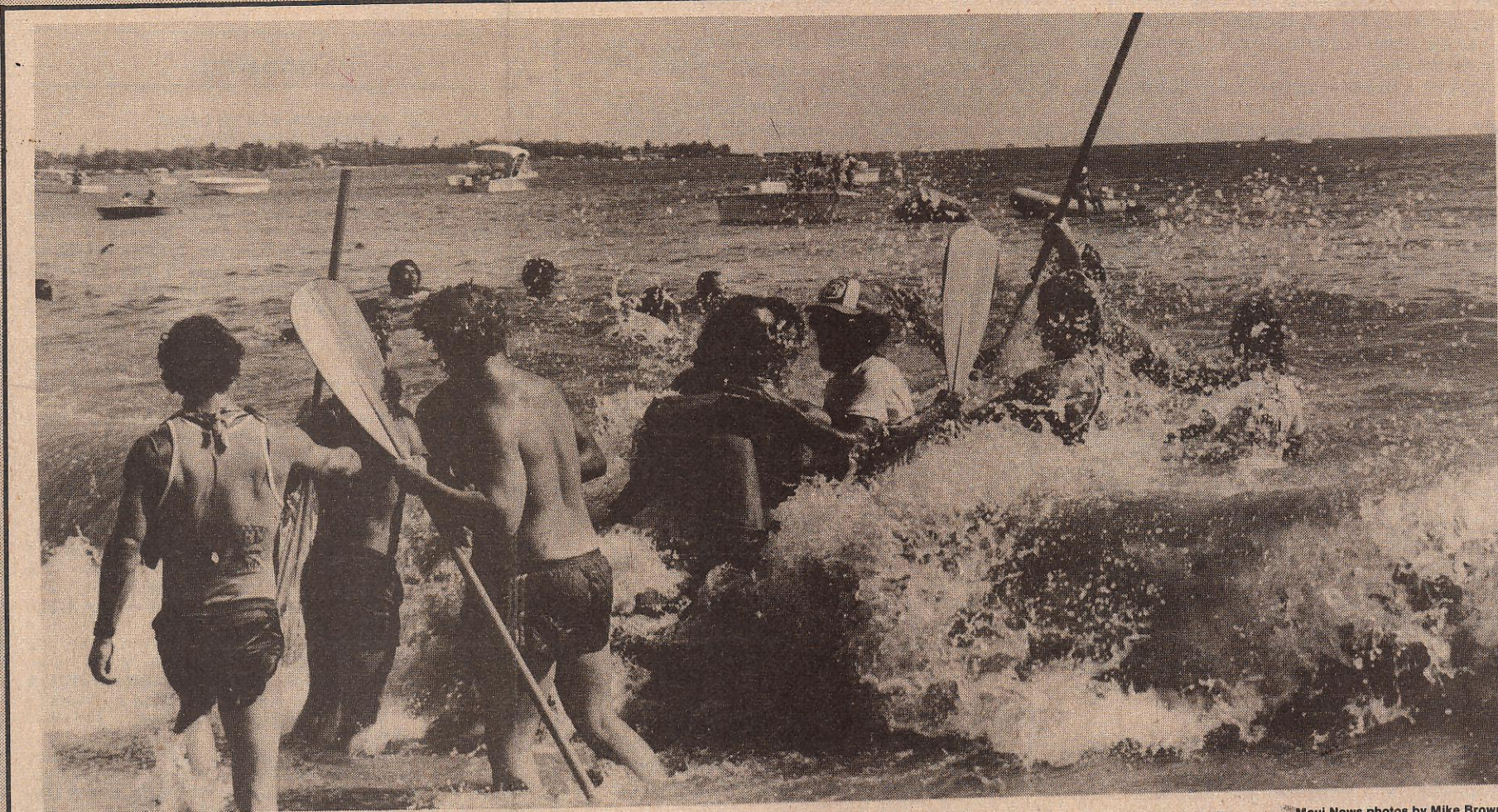
OCC lagged far back of Hui Nalu, 27-6, at the recess in the OHCRA championships and finished in a disappointing third-place tie with Kailua scoring 44 points, Healani edged Hui Nalu, 59-56, to gain the Oahu title.

But Outrigger stunned the crowd and the competition this day coming from a speck on the horizon to a full-blown hurricane of fury in the last 6 races scoring 35 points to earn the state halo.

Every comeback in any sport has a turning point, a shift in the momentum. OCC's pendulum swung upon its first gold of the day, the Men's Open Four, the day's 20 race. Outrigger's nine-second win over Koolau fired up the club as the paddlers stood up and stroked the last few yards. The electricity had been unleashed as OCC was now primed for a finish that would not soon be forgotten.

"That first win got us going," said Lincoln Scafe, a paddler on OCC's winning Senior Men's team. "We won because we were able to carry momentum throughout the day. Even when we were far back we felt confident that we could win. Canoe racing is a momentum game, on any given day, any of the top clubs can win."

OCC nailed down the title with its eight-point victory in the Senior Men's two-mile cooker nudging Hui Nalu by four seconds.



WET WINNERS— Makaha's Sophomore Men's crew had their victory celebration at shore's edge interrupted by a wave Saturday at the HCRA State Championship Regatta held in Lahaina. The normally calm seas in became rough after the mid-regatta break around lunch time and played havoc with the race course and schedule. Several races were delayed until the swells declined. Makaha took the event with a time of 7:28.4. The Makaha Club finished fourth overall in the Single A Division.

BOTH Nick Beck, coach of Hanalei and Gary Murakami, coach of Healani looked to their youth for leadership, they weren't disappointed. Healani grabbed the most wins of the day, 6, all in the younger division as Hanalei took two youth-oriented victories. But both clubs died beneath the heat of OCC's furious charge later in the day.

For Maui clubs the pride rested with Kihai and Molokai, the only two Maui County crews to grab some gold. Kihai's Boys 12 "B" crew and Molokai's Women Novice "A" crew nailed down first-place finishes.

The winning Molokai team was made up of, Carrie Eminger, Camie Kimball, Tania Dudoit, Kathy Mendez, Joey Blair and Liko Rawlins. And the Kihai dynamos were James Arluda, Mark Vaught, Patrick Fisher, Jason Hollister, Mark Takitani and Kahala Huddleston.

To really understand how powerful the Oahu-based teams are take a look at Kai O'Pua from the Big Island. They have won the last five Moku O Hawaii crowns which include 32 consecutive regatta wins over a five-year period. They finished far back and never threatened.

If they gave an award for spirit and enthusiasm Kai O'Pua would have won "hands down." All along the sandy beach the gracious Hawaiian songs of Kai O'Pua found attentive ears.

AS for the prospects of canoe racing on Maui is concerned, Larry Miller, coach of Team Kihai, offered this:

"Maui has a high level of competition, no one team dominates this island any longer. The clubs will only become stronger and stronger as time goes by. It takes time to build a strong club where talent runs deep. The Oahu clubs have been at this business for a long time. Maui's day is coming."

Now it's hoe hapai, imua into the long distance season which runs through October and concludes with the Molokai-Oahu crossing.



ALL RISE— Outrigger's Men's Open Four crew got their club fired-up when they finished their event so far ahead they paddled the end of it standing up. The win came on event 20 out of a 28-event-schedule, it was the first win of the day for late-starting Outrigger. The club went on to clinch the State HCRA Double AA title in the last race when its Senior Men's crew took first place honors.

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Paddling deserves better

There have been events more chaotic than last Saturday's Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association championships. The fall of Saigon, for example.

But the HCRA cornered the Hawaii market on confusion and controversy at its state meet in Lahaina. Among the snafus:

- Lack of communication between officials on boat and on shore prevented scorekeepers from determining the state champ until three hours after the regatta ended. By then, most of champion Outrigger's paddlers had gone home thinking they had finished second.
- After being told that surveyors had found the course's outside lane to be about 100 feet shorter than the inside lane, race officials measured the lanes their way — by pulling a rope — and pronounced them "within the HCRA's tolerance of five yards (difference)." Said Outrigger coach Walter Guild, "The thing that really hurts is seeing how far backward this pushes the sport."
- Scorekeepers sometimes could not identify clubs using borrowed canoes.
- The sophomore women's race was started before half the field reached the starting line. The race was re-started, but not before a handful of crews had paddled half a mile.
- It was no way to run a championship. But it wasn't surprising.
- Canoe racing is run by well-meaning people who aren't very well organized. It is a wonderful sport, full of families and sunshine, but it is also spoiled by too much red tape, sloppiness, long delays between events and a few questionable rules.
- It is a sport of paradoxes, in which the feeling of fellowship and "ohana" is pierced by the sound of this coach or that filing a protest, in which the picnic atmosphere is in contrast to the mountain of paperwork and eligibility regulations officials are forced to tackle.
- As the regatta season becomes a memory and the long distance season gears up, the powers that be in canoe racing — the HCRA and the rival Hui Wa'a & Surfing Association — should stand back and take a hard look at their sport.
- I'll make a few suggestions for starters:
 - Eliminate the lunch break and cut the delay between races. Saturday's state regatta lasted nine hours. Hui Wa'a doesn't stop for lunch, works fast and its regattas are three hours shorter than the HCRA's.
 - Stop disqualifying crews for infractions. Add seconds to their times instead. The HCRA already does this on hitting a lane flag (three-second penalty) but both associations disqualify for false starts. A time penalty would be better.
 - Demand that clubs race with their assigned numbers on their canoes. If a club borrows a canoe, it must attach its number to the bow with a sleeve or some other device.
 - Put up a leaderboard, as in golf, on which a running tally of each team's points is kept to inform each team how they stand. In a regatta that comes down to the wire, such as the state championships, knowing your point total could determine if and when to move up a crew.
 - Roughly 5,000 men, women and children paddle in Hawaii today. Their sport deserves improvement.

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The crowd gathers at Hahaione Beach for the HCRA state championships

Seniors earn OCC a crown

By Andy Yamaguchi
Advertiser Sports Writer

LAHAINA — Outrigger Canoe Club surged in the late going yesterday to capture the controversial and confused Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association state championships before a crowd of 5,000 at Hahaione Beach.

Outrigger edged Healani and Hanalei for the state title. OCC scored 52 points and Healani and Hanalei tied for second with 47. But official results were not immediately available after the last event at 6 p.m. because there was a foul-up in the paper work throughout the meet. Race officials were forced to recompile the point totals after the meet and it took until 9 p.m. for Outrigger to seal the latest in a long line of championships.

In fact, OCC Coach Walter Guild flew to Honolulu, thinking his club came in second place to Healani.

"Probably the reason we did so well was that Healani and Hanalei took Hui Nalu (defending state champion) out of the picture with their younger division crews," said OCC assistant coach Bruce Ames, one of the few late stragglers at the beach. "On the other hand, we're usually quiet in the younger divisions and come on later in the day."

"Walter really pushed us and worked us hard for this one."

Kailua edged Hui Nalu 28-27 for fourth place. Koolau scored 10 points to win the A Division, which is for clubs that qualified in 14 events or less.

Outrigger indeed had to come from way back. Healani and Hanalei dominated the younger division races in the morning, scoring 39 and 33 points respectively before the lunch break. Outrigger, meanwhile, crawled off to its typically slow start, scoring only six points.

But OCC's older crews came roaring back. Outrigger scored in 11 consecutive events after lunch, the caper an eight-point victory in the senior men's race. Senior division winners earn eight points. Junior divisions seven and winners in other divisions get five.

"It was an all-new crew," said steersman Tommy Connor. "I'm the only guy left from last year's crew. One retired and four are paddling on the four-man race." Outrigger has won seven of the last nine senior men state titles.

Also victorious for OCC yesterday were the men's and women's junior crews (both earning seven points), the mixed crew, men's masters and four-man crew.

Most of the paddlers had left the beach by the time the unofficial results were reached and preliminary reports had Healani winning.

Like last year's state regatta, yesterday's meet had controversy. The Oahu clubs had brought a surveying team from Honolulu with them to assist with laying out the course Friday. But because of a breakdown in communication, the surveying team was never consulted by the

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OCC captures canoe crown

For the second straight year, there was controversy at the Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association state championships.

A dispute in laying out the course brought a protest from Oahu team coaches, who voted 13-0 to participate anyway. And finally, when the smoke cleared, it was Outrigger Canoe Club, and not Hanalei of Kauai, as reported in Sunday's Tribune-Herald, that wound up with the title before a crowd of 5,000 at Hahaione Beach on Maui.

Outrigger edged Healani of Oahu and Hanalei 52-47 in total points. A foul up in the paper work throughout the meet forced race officials to recompile the point totals after the meet.

After finally straightening things out, the Big Island's Kai Opua finished in sixth place rather than in third place as previously announced. Kailua was fourth with 28 points, Hui Nalu was next with 27, and Kai Opua finished with 23 points in AA Division, for clubs entered in 14 or more races. Kaula of Kona finished with one point.

Koolau won the A Division with 10 points. Waialani of Hilo scored a victory in the freshmen women 1/2-mile race and finished with five points. Kamehameha tallied two points and Keoua did not score.

enough guys...
and Molokai Beach 4, Hui Lanakai 7, 5 (tie), Makaha and Kihai, each 7, Waialani 5, 8, Hawaiian Warriors 5, 9, Kamehameha, 10, Kaula 11