



Advertiser Photo by Don Graydon

Under the brow of Diamond Head, Outrigger Club paddlers dig hard for the Waikiki Beach finish line.

38 miles in a canoe

the real victory is in finishing

By DON GRAYDON
Advertiser Special Writer

This is a story of canoe racing, and of a winning losing team.

You might read about canoe racing on the sports pages. But it's not a sport. It's more a religion.

In the dedicated effort of its adherents to outmaneuver nature, it is comparable to some of those other useless, but magnificent, endeavors of man: mountain climbing, long-distance running, or swimming from Hawaii to Maui.

THIS COULD have been the story of any of the 12 nine-man teams that completed the grueling 38-mile Molokai-to-Oahu canoe race yesterday.

It could have been the story of the Waikiki Surf team — the official winner — or any of the other eleven teams. Because they all made it, and that's where the victory lies.

This story is about how it went yesterday with the Outrigger Canoe Club.

OUTRIGGER was the team to beat. It won in 1965, 1967 and 1968. (They say they lost in '66 because their canoe swamped. But it swamped in '68 also). They came in second yesterday.

There was no swamping to blame it on (or to credit it to) yesterday. They simply came up against a team that was just a little bit tougher.

7:25 a.m. — Twelve canoes are off from Hale O Lono and sailing, five seconds ahead of the starting gun. Six men are aboard each boat; three relief paddlers

for each canoe are on their respective escort boats.

8:10 — Outrigger's boat, the Kakina, takes a slight lead over Waikiki Surf's Malia shortly after the Kakina makes its first relief paddler substitution.

The operation is very slick. Relief paddlers dive into the water from a little runabout racing ahead of the canoe. As the canoe comes abreast of them, paddlers jump out and their substitutes climb in and start paddling. The entire operation takes 10 seconds.

TAKING turns on the Kakina are Mark Buck, Tom Conner, Tim Guard, William Mitchell, Glenn Perry, Fred Hemmings, Henry Ayau, Butch Ledford and Pat Spencer. More than half the crew raced last year. Coach Buck is on his seventh crossing.

9:00 — The Kakina still leads, barely. The Malia is a

See Outrigger on A-4, Col. 5

festival tonight

Today's Aloha Week events:

11:30 a.m., Ala Moana Center — Keolaulani Hula Studio program. Mall level, ewa courtyard.

11:45 a.m., Fort Street — John P. Watkins Hula Studio entertainment; Aloha Week royal court. Between Hotel and King Streets.

7:30 p.m., Waikiki Shell — "Echoes of Paradise" festival, with Ed Kenney, Sonny Kamahele, Marlene Sai, Beverly Noa, Royal Hawaiian Hula Maids, Phil Ingals and Royal Hawaiian orchestra.

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Waikiki Surfnips Outrigger in canoe race

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close second, with the Healani team moving up fast. And this is the basic situation for the next five hours, in a race that men aboard Outrigger's escort boat, the Hula Kai, describe as the closest they can remember.

IT'S AN official Hawaiian day: sunny, some clouds, nice breeze. The sea is kindly, with only small swells and occasional chop.

9:30 — A Coast Guard helicopter sits close to the water, just in front of the Kakina. The blades stir up the water, and frantic coaches shout and wave the copter away.

Dr. Bob Smith of Honolulu is a busy man by this time. As paddlers climb aboard the Hula Kai for a 10-minute break, they get a rubdown or oxygen or a pill to loosen up muscles or a drink to replace minerals lost in sweating.

10:10 — "We've never had it so good," says one of the men on the Hula Kai as the easy seas and their first-place position continue. The Kahala Hilton and its neighboring high-rises come into view several miles ahead.

10:25 — One of Outrigger's relief paddlers is sick, and vomits from the side of the runabout. The crew continues paddling the Kakina at a steady 48 strokes per minute toward the tip of Diamond Head.

From the bow of the escort boat Hula Kai comes a steady stream, a steady scream, of encouragement, via bullhorn: "Way to go, Bucky, way to go! Come on, Bucky babe, let's go! Let's go!"

FRED HEMMINGS shouts from the Kakina that he doesn't want to be relieved.

He is relieved anyway. "He's a wild man," one of the fellows on the escort boat says of Hemmings, who serves as steersman during much of the crossing.

12:25 p.m. — Sherry Dowsett, Hula Kai's skipper, says: "I think we're ahead. But, anyway, whoever's ahead isn't very far ahead." Outrigger is nearing Diamond Head. Waikiki Surf is pulling ahead, about a quarter-mile to port. Off to starboard, Healani is threatening.

1:00 — The Malia pulls across the path of the Kakina and takes up a position about 100 yards ahead. It takes up a lead that is never again given up.

An armada of catamarans, monohulls, speedboats, and motor cruisers assembles off Diamond Head to accompany the canoes in to Waikiki. By 1:30, there are 30 visiting boats; 20 minutes later there are 80 boats, and then more.

More and more girls, wearing less and less, race by in motor boats, gawking and cheering.

IT'S A lonely business, being in second place. Most of the visiting boats gather around the Malia as it charges toward the finish line.

"Let's not give up now," Hemmings shouts to the paddlers. "Let's go!"

The Outrigger crew gambles on a dash straight in toward shore, setting a course just off Waikiki Beach to the finish line.

THE MALIA paddlers cross the finish line and wade into the arms of some of the hundreds of persons waiting on the beach at the Hilton Hawaiian Village.

The Kakina finishes 4 minutes and 57 seconds later, followed in another 1 minute



Advertiser Photo by Don Graydon

Relieved paddlers climb aboard Hula Kai.



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Rev. Abraham Akaka blesses racing fleet.

and 13 seconds by Healani.

"Why do you think you won the race?" a Waikiki Surf paddler is asked.

"Well, when you're in second place, you've got to do something. I think we just tried harder."