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[PADDLING]



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Outrigger Canoe Club members Kisi Haine, Bret Chuckovich, Jennifer Thayer, Jennie Horner, Walter Guild and Mary Smolenski celebrated the club's win yesterday in the 60th Walter J. Macfarlane Memorial Regatta.

Outrigger shines at regatta

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The canoe club wins the Macfarlane Memorial over 2001 champion Lanikai

By Grace Wen
gwen@starbulletin.com

If the 50th wedding anniversary is golden and the 60th is diamond, consider the Outrigger Canoe Club's victory a gem that sparkled under intermittently cloudy skies at Waikiki Beach.

Outrigger blew by the field and captured the 60th Walter J. Macfarlane Memorial Regatta yesterday. Outrigger defeated defending champion Lanikai 88-72. Hui Nalu (50), Healani (44) and Hui Lanakila (37) rounded out the top five in the AA division.

It was the club's second consecutive win of the season and that much sweeter for Outrigger since it hosted the event.

"We haven't won (the Macfarlane regatta) for four or five years," Outrigger coach Mike Mason said. "It's really exciting. We've gotten a bunch of really good steersmen to come back. Our upper division men and women really, really came on strong today. That was a highlight and a little bit of a surprise."

The Macfarlane regatta is the longest running annual regatta and the only surf race of the Oahu Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association season. Ironically, there wasn't much surf, which allowed for a smooth and fast day of racing.

Outrigger started slow, but finished strong. Ten of the 12 races Outrigger won were in the adult division. The club also finished second in six races. Lanikai battled, winning seven races, but it couldn't match Outrigger's strength.

Mason had a feeling Outrigger was sitting pretty after the club strung together three race victories in a row (freshman women, freshman men and sophomore women) and missed winning a fourth (sophomore men) by two seconds.

Outrigger led by four points before the last three races of the day. The club padded its lead with three more wins in the men's and women's mixed, women's 35 and men's 35.

Mason admits that he still didn't feel comfortable until the final results were announced. The disappointment the club felt two weeks ago was all but forgotten as the club gathered for a loud cheer that drowned out Mason's words.

"Remembered what happened in Nanakuli," Mason said. "But this definitely helps. We haven't done this for a long time. We were close at Nanakuli. We won last week. We just have to make the right moves and we'll be OK."

The women of Outrigger have been making all the right moves. Women's coach Bret

Chuckovich said their improved performance was a result of more training time spent in one-man canoes this season.

"The girls deserve all the credit. They came ready to perform," Chuckovich said. "I'm just really proud of the girls because they've never been on one-mans before. Every other canoe club practices on one-man canoes.

"They haven't done this forever. It's raised the competitiveness. It's helped them become so much better paddlers than they were in terms of conditioning and speed."

The Outrigger women claimed six of the nine women's races, including the senior women's open.

Steered by Walter Guild, the crew of Mary Smolenski, Jennie Horner, Paula Crabb, Jennifer Thayer and Kisi Haine three-peated as champions in the senior race.

The Macfarlane regatta allows open steering, meaning men can steer in women's crews and vice versa.

"We were real familiar with the water and we had some good steersmen," Haine said. "We got lucky. We had a couple of great starts where you catch the backwash out and you can jump ahead two or three canoe lengths.

"We had fabulous starts, so that was a key. If you get ahead ... you have the chance to pick up a bump first. Our senior women's race was unreal. We kind of peaked for this race."

In the A division, Keahiakahoe won two races (boys 12 and women's fours) and compiled 26 points to win the small-club division.

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