



VICTORIOUS CREW—Here's Molokai's iron men crew which won the gruelling 36 mile Molokai to Oahu canoe race Saturday, October 18. The victors made a beeline for the Moana Hotel dining room right after the finish to ask for—guess what?—glasses of milk. From left to right: William Wainui, William Foster, Abe Bowman, crew captain William Ahye, Ulysses Puaa and Charles Titcomb.

Star-Bulletin Photo

MOLOKAI RACE CLASSIC – SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1952

The skeptics are confounded. "It can't be done," they said. But it was done and won and by whom? By a crew of stout hearted older men, some of whom had never been in an outrigger canoe before. "Toots" Minvielle who dreamed up the race from Molokai to Waikiki and who spent several years in Molokai, rounded up a crew of six men and two alternates to enter. No one gave them a chance to win but they did.

FROM MOLOKAI

A cash prize was offered of \$500.00 for the winning crew and some of their fellow Molokai citizens put up a purse of \$600.00 which they offered these men "TO NOT RACE." These friends were fearful that they were taking dangerous chances and tried to dissuade them but these men had promised and kept faith.

OFF TO BAD START

The race started under the worst of conditions. A fierce Kona wind blew and "Toots" who acted as starter had a difficult time getting the canoes off at Ilio Point, Molokai. Each canoe bucked a fearful surf and each left separately. At last all were at sea and started for Waikiki at 6:35 a.m. Stiff gales, choppy seas,

rain squalls and huge waves met the three competing crews. Waikiki Surf Club well ahead held the lead in their light racing canoe until they got into trouble. The ama was improperly tied and three times over the thirty-six mile course they were forced to stop, go overboard and re-tie the ama. Twice they succeeded but the third time could not get it into place and were

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forced to tie it, in an upside down position so that it acted as a drag from then in. During these delays much precious time was lost and the Molokai crew caught up and passed the Waikiki Surf Club. They were never overtaken. The Molokai men used the canoe loaned on behalf of Doris Duke by John Gomez.

THEY FINISH

The Molokai crew zigged and zagged into Waikiki Bay steered by a steersman who had never before steered a canoe and did not know the spot on which to land. They were met by a crowd of enthusiastic people who cheered them for their bravery and endurance. A few minutes later Waikiki Surf Club arrived after having swamped in Canoe Surf, followed by another newcomer Club canoe, the Hawaiian Surf Club in Dad Centers' canoe.

A RECORD

About 100 friends and relatives of the Molokai men met them at the beach on arrival, they having flown over in the morning. Many heart warming greetings and emotional scenes ensued after which the men were conducted to the Moana for refreshments. Gay Harris furnished egg nogs. One Molokaian who had never had such a drink thought the milk in Honolulu was fine. Tired, but not worn out they recounted their trials. Bailing out water all of the way, sore muscles, weary bodies, rain, waves boiling over and yet they sang their Hawaiian songs all the way. Every crew arrived, and, within 19 minutes of the winner the last crew arrived. That is some sort of a record for a thirty-six mile canoe grind over open seas and in foul weather. They arrived at 3:30 p.m. starting at 6:35 a.m.—a time of 8 hours and 55 minutes.

Great throng greet the winning Molokai paddlers after their 36 mile race to the beach at Waikiki off the Moana Hotel.

Pic. by "Scoop" Suzuki

