

# Kai Oni Wins Molokai-Oahu Race

Adv. 10/21/57

## Sets Record Of 5 Hours 56 Minutes

By KENNY HAINA

Kai Oni Canoe Club of Kailua in Windward Oahu, a second year entry in the sixth annual Molokai-to-Oahu outrigger canoe competition, turned in a record-breaking time of 5 hours and 56 minutes yesterday to win the 37½ mile channel crossing.

The Windward Oahu paddlers, coached by Joseph (Stew) Kalama and captained by Tom Schroeder, bettered the 1956 time of 7 hours 58 minutes set by Outrigger Canoe Club which did not compete this year. All nine crews competing yesterday bettered the 1956 record as Molokai, last to cross the finish line, was clocked at 2:27 p.m. Kai Oni crossed the finish line at Duke Kahanamoku Beach at 1:16 p.m.

Paul Jones, chairman of the Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association race committee, said the race started at 7:20 a.m. He reported that the race was to have started at 5:45 a.m. but there were heavy swells inside the breakers at Kawakui Beach. As a result, the canoes and officials had to make their way to the convoy boats to calmer waters outside the breakers.

Finishing behind Kai Oni in second place was Walkiki Surf Club who finished only nine minutes later at 1:25 p.m. Biggest surprise of the 1957 competition was the third place finish of Coach Frank Henriques' youthful Kai Opua crew from Kailua, Kona, who made the crossing for the first time.

Kai Opua, which held second place all the way until it



Gordon Morse

Kai Oni's paddlers pull for the finish line in record-breaking Molokai to Oahu crossing. Left to right: Joseph Gilman, Nick Pezel, James Souza, Chris Bode, Percy Nakachi and Tom Schroeder, captain and stroke. (Related photo on Page B-3).

reached Koko Head, was clocked at 1:28 p.m. Two of the Kai Opua paddlers are 17 years of age and one is 18. Lack of experience caused the Kona entry to give up the runnerup spot and \$300 in prize money to the more veteran paddlers of Coach Noah Kalama.

The order of finish of the other entries and their arrival times were: Healani, 4th, 1:28 p.m.; Hui Nalu, 5th, 1:32 p.m.; Hale Auau, 6th, 1:39 p.m.; Kamemeha of Hilo, 7th, 2:18 p.m.; Holomua, 8th, 2:20 p.m.;

and Molokai, 9th, 2:27 p.m.

Kai Oni, which arrived with a winning crew of Joseph Gilman, Nick Pezel, James Souza, Chris Bode, Percy Nakachi and Schroeder, led from the start. The winning club gets \$500 in prize money, the H. F. Wichman Co., Ltd., perpetual trophy and individual awards.

An estimated 5,000 persons were on hand to greet the nine competing clubs. Kai Oni's winning crew, who also in-

cluded relievers Raymond Marugame, Stanford Keaweehu and Andrew Manoa, was given a tremendous ovation as it flashed across the finish line.

Schroeder said the crossing was very good. The swells, he said, were excellent and his boys had no trouble. No one got sick and no one suffered from the cramps. This is due largely to the new free substitution rule adopted by the HCRA which permits a paddler to relieve another more than once.

Schroeder, who was the only paddler to go the entire distance, said his crew had the hardest time when they hit Diamond Head. From this point to the finish line, Schroeder said they had to work hard because there were no waves and the sea was choppy. The six paddlers said they were tired but otherwise felt fine. They were greeted by the Aloha Week king and queen.

Sol Kalama, who served as

clerk of the course, reported that Hui Nalu and Healani lost valuable ground when they ran into "dead water" in the area between Aina Haina and Perilock. The two crews ran into smooth water when they hit this area, Kalama said.

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He hailed the free substitution rule as a good thing for the channel race. "All paddlers finished fresh," Kalama explained. "Although tired, they were not on the verge of collapsing from being too exhausted or folding up with the cramps," he stated.

All coaches and captains contacted agreed with Kalama that the new rule is a big improvement. Jones said this will also make for faster times and keener competition.

Kai Oni, which was organized four years ago, placed fourth in the 1956 race. The Kailuans used a maximum of 39 strokes a minute in paddling to their record-shattering triumph. Kai Oni for the first time this year switched to the Uwila after using the Manuiwa during the other 1957 races.

Kai Oni's winning time also broke the 6 hours and 3 minute record set by Hui Naju when the finish line was located at the Outrigger Canoe Club, which is a shorter distance at 36 miles.

In addition to Kai Oni and Waikiki Surf, Kai Opua received \$125 and Healani \$75 for their third and fourth place finishes, respectively. Yesterday's event marked the opening of a week-long observance of Aloha Week activities on Oahu.