

WSC Wins Molokai to Oahu Race

By KENNY HAINA

A young crew from the Waikiki Surf Club, with veteran Blue Makua as steersman, finished the 37 1/2-mile Molokai-to-Oahu canoe race in first place yesterday with a time of 6 hours and 32 minutes.

The WSC paddlers, coached for the channel crossing by Makua, finished by three-quarters of a mile ahead of 1957 winner Kai Oni. The Windward Oahu crew, which won in 5 hours and 56 minutes last year, finished in 6 hours and 44 minutes yesterday.

An estimated 3,000 persons crowded Duke Kahanamoku Beach to greet the winning crew. All paddlers were received by Aloha Week king and queen Charles Kaul and Mrs. Mildred Ng.

Hui Nalu was third in 7:03, Healani fourth at 7:20, Hui Kalia fifth at 7:24 and Kamehameha sixth in 8:09. Holomua and Hui Lanakila O Molokai were disqualified after being swamped by high waves halfway across the channel.

The victory for Waikiki was the third for the club since the annual event was started in 1952. Waikiki Surf won in 1953 and 1955 before winning again yesterday. The Surfers are the only paddlers to win the gruelling race more than once.

Finishing the race for WSC were Dutchy Kino in No. 1 or stroke position, Randolph Chun, Barron Postmus, Joseph Napoleon, Ruben Makua and Blue Makua.

Makua was the only member to complete the entire 37 1/2-mile

crossing. The others alternated with James Koko, Conrad Canha and Archie Kaaua.

The channel race was the first for 17-year-old Napoleon, Chun, 19, Ruben Makua, 22, and Koko, 18. Makua did not compete in the first race but has entered since 1953. Kino has paddled in all seven channel crossings.

The WSC canoe was the Malia which was escorted by the convoy boat Melo, skippered by Guy Rothwell.

The Waikiki paddlers said they did an average of 40 strokes a minute in staying in the lead from the start. They led by as much as one mile until they passed Koko Head when Kai Oni narrowed the gap.

They said also the crossing

was hampered by unpredictable currents which shifted in every direction.

"At times the current favored us but then another time we would find ourselves paddling against the current or alongside of it," said Makua.

"It was rough," added Makua, "but our boys were all in top condition and they did a grand job."

The 22-year-old Postmus, No. 4 man on the WSC team, was sent to Honolulu by the Glendale, Calif., Chamber of Commerce to paddle in the Aloha Week event. Postmus is a former resident of Honolulu and a member of the Waikiki club.

A charge containing two sticks of dynamite was set off by Eddie Tam, Maui County chairman, at 6:23 a.m. yesterday

to get the race under way at Kawakui Bay. Race committee chairman Paul Jones of the Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association reported that this was the first time a dynamite blast was used to start the race.

He said the sea was smooth and calm at Ilio Point to allow the canoes to get off to their best start in the seven-year history of the gruelling test.

Paddlers from the winning crew and others in the race reported that 10 to 15-foot waves hit them once they got in the channel. Holomua, Kai Oni, Healani, Molokai and Hui Kalia all reported they were swamped at least once by big waves.

Kai Oni's crew was forced to abandon their canoe when the boat began taking on too much water and started to go under.

But the Windward paddlers had their canoe in top shape within five minutes and the gallant crew resumed the race to finish a strong second.

The canvas on the Molokai canoe was ripped down the middle by the high waves. The incident also caused damage to the bow and stern of the Molokai canoe which forced the crew to call it quits. The Molokai boat was towed in by Sam Kahanamoku's Malolo.

Yesterday's race was the first major event on Oahu's week-long observance of Aloha Week. It was sponsored by Aloha Week Hawaii, Inc., and conducted by the HCRA race committee headed by Jones.

Francis H. II Brown, widely known island sportsman, was grand marshal.