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Jim Becker's Hawaii

Men against the sea

COLOR me green. Color the Molokai Channel the angriest, swirlingest hunk of ocean you ever saw.

(It is called the Kaiwi Channel on the charts, and it wouldn't be a bad idea to shorten that even more. To "Ekkk.")

And color the Molokai-to-Oahu outrigger canoe race the most brutal, demanding, exhausting and man-eating sports event I have ever seen.

I rode along as volunteer lomi-lomi man on the Meleane, which escorted the canoe of the Hawaiian Athletic Club of

Molokai over 38 miles of storm-burled open sea yesterday.

I'm not going to say it was rough out there, but if they ever wanted to remake that movie, "Shipwreck," it was just the day for it.

Many times we were within a hundred feet of our own canoe and couldn't see it for the Mount Everests of water that rose in the way.

But whenever we happened to be foaming in the same direction on those waves

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