

FORECAST

Outrigger Canoe Club

OUTRIGGER BEACH

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER / 1969

HONOLULU, HAWAII



THE MOLOKAI-OAHU CREW 1969.

Photo: Ron Haworth

Molokai - Oahu Race 1969

by Jerry Ober

This year's race was run on Sunday, October 19th, in extremely calm seas and under cloudless skies with very little wind. It was a hot and dull day, the usually straight up and down Molokai Channel simply just sat there. It did nothing to help anyone; it really didn't do too much to hinder. It was a void compared to what it can do. Three years ago it literally tore our beautiful Leilani apart. Last year it managed to flip the Kakina completely over with the canoe and crew going over the ama. This year the sea scarcely broke over the bow of the canoe.

Conditions such as these, while perhaps fine for the weak stomach, are miserable and monotonous for canoe paddlers; the steady sea gives no help, the sun is never filtered by clouds and no wind for an extra little push, just hard man-killing work.

This race, in spite of the conditions, was perhaps one of the most tense for Outrigger in the running of the event. Outrigger, with Fred Hemmings steering, got off to its traditional break-away start and held that front position, at times only by yards, until abeam of Niu Valley where Waikiki Surf Club made a very successful finish line dash. Until that time, Outrigger held a tenuous first place pressed every inch of the way by Healani who never once let up the pressure. Waikiki Surf Club chose an outside course and could always be seen almost parallel to Outrigger but always thankfully a bit to our stern. It was Healani that kept the visual, psycho-

logical pressure on. The pace was killing and relentless. Of the four races I have watched, this was the one with the most pressure. If the channel had no personality that day, the race sure did, it was pure guts.

As the race progressed past half-way point, we seemed to be in a command position, not just the lead, small as it may have been, but we were able to pull up if Healani made a strong move to overtake us. Things while tight, didn't look all that bad.

As the race progressed on toward a position abeam of Koko Head, the pace and the stress started to show. Healani had, after the half-way point, made a radical change of course and headed in toward Sandy Beach in what seemed to be a move to improve their position with relation to the swell direction. With Healani now way inside and hard to keep a close watch on and Waikiki Surf Club equally far out to sea and also difficult to keep tabs on, our boys now had to keep the pace not knowing just what advantages the competition might have.

Opposite Niu Valley, Waikiki Surf Club made their move; they came in from their outside course and made directly for the Diamond Head Buoy as they came over. It was clearly evident that they had found some more power and had really put it to use. We could not equal their pace and found ourselves in a following position. The conditions and circumstances had made their mark. To our stern and far inside came Healani,



Tommy Arnott's auxiliary boat working with the crew.

Photo: Jerry Ober



Young Tommy Arnott hands a new paddle to Butch Ledford in the Kakina, from the bow of the Hula Kai! Photo: Jerry Ober

now also on direct course for the Diamond Head Buoy. They saw their chance and went for it. At one point during a change in our crew, Healani pulled ahead and made a vain attempt to stay there; they were pushing and looked very convincing.

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NEAR DIAMOND HEAD.

Photo: Ron Haworth

MOLOKAI . . . *continued from page 1*

Now at the buoy, after more than six hours and some 38 miles of paddling behind, the crew was confronted with a neck and neck situation with Healani and Waikiki Surf Club clearly in view up ahead.

Freddy Hemmings was crew captain this year. Freddy doesn't understand second place situations and regardless of the situation can be counted on to come up with a plan that will change the format. Fred did. Fred's plan was to go inside, hope to catch a wave through the surf in front of Tongg's and then take a straight line course to the finish in front of the Hawaiian Village. For those of you watching the race from the club, the results of that plan no doubt produced a thrill. The crew came right through the lagoon and even made a change just past the club. From there, Fred hoped to nudge out Waikiki Surf Club, but for that moment there were no waves and no assistance and no way

to get past Waikiki Surf Club. Healani kept to its outside course and finished in third place, little more than a minute after Outrigger.

After leading the major portion of the race, it's tough to lose it so close to the finish, even so the crew gave it all they had and gave away nothing and conceded nothing.

This year's crew was: Coach/paddler **Mark Buck**, Team Captain **Fred Hemmings, Jr.**, **Tom Conner**, **Glen Perry**, **Henry Ayau**, **Pat Spencer**, **Butch Ledford**, **Timmy Guard** and **Billy Mitchell**. The helpers were: **Bill Eggers**, **Terry Deacon**, **George McPheeters**, **Kimo Austin**, **Thad Ekstrand**, **Mike Holmes**, **Cline Mann** and **Jerry Ober**. This year, as for the past four races, we were indeed fortunate to have **Sherry Dowsett**, his partner **Darrel Heine** and the incredible ship "Hula Kai." **Tommy Arnett** once again donated his services and his terrific new twin-screw outboard auxiliary boat.