

Sports Afloat and Ashore

by Jerry Ober, Sports Reporter

The Annual Molokai/Oahu Canoe Race

This year's running of the Molokai/Oahu Canoe Race was a matter of course and the pun is intentional. There are as many ways across the Molokai Channel on a given race day as there are entrants in the event. Each can join the fleet or take off on his own.

Outrigger chose the latter method, electing to stay far south of the fleet on a more or less straight line from the race start to a point off Diamond Head. In other years, that course has done well for those who have followed it, but not always. This year it did not prove to be the best of moves. If all things were equal in the sea, the straight line would be the most obvious route to follow. As we all know, the sea, like the weather, is predictably unpredictable. The currents, wind or whatever, weren't with us on the southerly course that Sunday, and so went our hopes of running a tight race with favored Waikiki Surf Club.

If the course was off this year, our Club crew was right on. It's hard to be separated from the pack and know you are really on your own, and still keep that strong competitive spirit, but this crew had it all the way. Their timing was beautiful; their mental attitude always high, and their spirit was equal to the task at hand. When the crew arrived at Diamond Head and their position was obviously not too good, they didn't let down. Instead, they passed three boats in the final three miles of the race. Certainly they were up to the job and then some.

The race this year, for the third year in a row, was run in almost flat seas with light variable winds. There were no rough seas to help the crews along and no spray from waves to cool the paddlers. Rather, it was a bright, beautiful but highly monotonous day on the slick channel waters; the kind of day paddlers wish would never happen. On days like this, there is no help from the sea, just hindrance.

In spite of course and sea conditions, the Outrigger crew had one

plus going for them which was largely missing in previous years. That was a cheering section; in fact, almost an armada. Two boats, both belonging to members of the Club, followed the crew almost the entire distance from the start of the race at Hale O Lono on Molokai to Diamond Head. The Kono, with Larry Clapp at the helm, and the Irish Mist, with Hal Burchard and owner Gordon Howard, both toured the race close upon the Kakina and her crew, providing plenty of loud support for the otherwise isolated crew. There was also a huge catamaran chartered by members of the Club, but it failed to maintain close, continuous contact. The crew to a man reported that the encouragement from the Kono and the Mist were of tremendous help and kept them sharp and alert throughout the race.

We were extremely fortunate to have the services of Capt. Cornelius Choy and his magnificent boat, the Corine C III as our escort. This had to be the most luxurious crossing any of the crew or helpers could recall. Capt. Choy did a splendid job on his first time as an escort driver, a job that demands constant attention and skillful boatmanship. Capt. Choy was backed up by Kimo Austin in his Boston Whaler.

As in past years, the crew went to Molokai late Friday afternoon to relax, play football and just be together for the day prior to the race.

The crew this year was made up of: Brant Ackerman, Bob Anderson III, Henry Ayau, Mark Buck, Bill Burso, Fred Hemmings Jr., Tim Guard, Tuck Siegfried and Marty Wilson. The helpers were Roger Cundall, Jimmy Foytich and Rod Muller. Coaches were Mark Buck, who headed the effort, assisted by Archie Kaawa and Bob Anderson. Jerry Ober and Cline Mann were the two logistics men, providing for the crew's needs.

The final standings in the Koa Division were as follows: Waikiki Surf Club; Hui Nalu; Healani; Lanikai; Outrigger, and Kaiopua. Waikiki Surf Club made the distance in 6:01:46, far off the Outrigger's still standing record of 5:45:16 set in 1968.



Outrigger crew in fine form midway across Molokai channel.

Ober photo.