

Outrigger First in Molokai Race

By Dave Kogo
Star-Bulletin Writer

There had been ominous weather forecasts issued the day before, but neither the 10- to 15-foot waves or the 25- to 34-knot gusts which had been predicted materialized, and the Outrigger Canoe Club's Kākina — one of only five kōa canoes entered — sailed to a record win in yesterday's annual Molokai-to-Oahu race, making the marathon 38-mile crossing in five hours, 39 minutes and seven seconds.

"It was pretty calm compared to yesterday," said Outrigger Coach Tom Connor. "The swells were running about five to six feet and it was very sunny, but there was enough chop and wind to keep us cool most of the time."

"WE ARE really glad we won."

The three visiting teams from Tahiti — whose bubbling enthusiasm and joyous music and dance firmly established them as popular favorites of both spectators and participants — surged off the starting line at dawn and

held a formidable 1-2-3 lead almost until mid-channel before falling off later to finish second, fourth and eighth in the over-all standings.

The Imua Canoe Club of Newport Beach, Calif., was third, and Waikiki Surf finished fifth.

"I thought it was going to be between us and Waikiki Surf," said Connor, who felt that the Tahitians' unfamiliarity with the rugged channel would hinder them.

"I DON'T know what they do for conditioning," Connor said, "but they must be some fantastic athletes to do what they did."

According to Connor, the turning point in the race came after about two hours when the Kākina, trailing the three Tahitian canoes from the start, gained ground and finally cruised past the leading canoe which belonged to the second-place Maire-Nui club.

Explaining the psychological factor of "showing the stern of your canoe to the opposing crews," Connor said, "We pulled up next to them so they could see us pass them."

"We didn't know how

we could demoralize them in Tahitian so we did a lot of yelling." The trick obviously worked.

ONCE PAST the Tahitians, it became simply an effort to ward them off, to maintain the lead, and OCC's veteran crew — Connor, Marshall Rosa, Mark Buck, Tim Guard, Brandt Ackerman, Fred Hemmings Jr., Paul McLaughlin, Donald Mailer, and Mike Rodrigues — came through in their usual fashion.

The final over-all standings, with the times of the top 10 finishers:

1. Outrigger (kōa canoe) 7-5:39.07;
2. Maire-Nui (Tahiti) 7-5:47.33; 3. Imua (California) 7-5:59.25; 4. Pelele (Tahiti) (7-6:02.12); 5. Waikiki Surf (Hon.) (7-6:07.34); 6. Lanikai (kōa) (7-6:08.04); 7. Waikiki Beach Boys (7-6:08.33).

8. Makani (Tahiti) (7-6:08.34); 9. Kaihū (7-6:07.41); 10. Hanalei (Kauai) (7-6:08.46); 11. Anapoua 12. Kaneohe 13. Healihi (Koa) 14. Hui Nalu 15. Hawaiian Warriors 16. SON'S AND DAUGHTERS of the Pacific 17. Makana 18. Outrigger #7

19. Kai-Oua (Kona) (one) 20. Kai-Oua #2 21. Kamehameha 22. Waikiki Surf #2 23. Paumotu 24. Waipahoia 25. Prince David Kawanakoa (Hilo) 26. Kōkōlūloa 27. Kaihi 28. Weilihi 29. Windward Kai.