

Tahitian Challenge Likely in Molokai-Oahu Race

The final event of the canoe racing season, the October 17 Molokai to Oahu race, promises this year to hold a distinct challenge for the Outrigger, defending champions. The challenge is expected to come from Tahiti, which last year placed crews in 2nd, 4th, and 7th place and this year is believed to be sending eight or nine crews to compete in the inter-island race. In the 1975 race the number one Tahitian crew took an early lead in the 41-mile paddle from Hale O Lono to Waikiki, then after being passed, pushed the winning OCC crew all the way to the finish and a new record of 5 hours, 39 minutes, 7 seconds for that course.

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This year's course is 14 miles longer, with start at Kaunakakai and finish at Magic Island. According to Head Coach Brant Ackerman, "The longer flat water distance from the starting point to Laau Point favors the Tahitian style of paddling, and they could conceivably place very high."

Record holder for this year's 55-mile course is Waikiki Surf Club. This course, the longest ever, was paddled only once before, in 1973. Twelve paddlers will be used and unlimited substitutions allowed. Final selection of the Outrigger crew has not been completed, but it will be made from paddlers who competed in the last two long distance races.

Plans are under way to try to charter a cruise boat or catamaran to take an OCC cheering section over to Molokai to follow the crew during the race. WATCH THE BULLETIN BOARDS FOR MORE INFORMATION.