

# The Outrigger

OUTRIGGER CANOE CLUB

OUTRIGGER BEACH AT DIAMOND HEAD, HONOLULU, HAWAII

NOVEMBER 1976

## Tahitians Sweep Molokai Classic

### Determined OCC Crew Finishes Seventh

by Tim Guard

Seventh place finishes in the annual Molokai-to-Oahu Outrigger Canoe Race receive only brief mention in the press and quickly pass into history.

On the face of it, Outrigger Canoe Club and a score of other Hawaiian canoe clubs saw their domination of the Molokai race buried by a fleet of Tahitian paddlers in the 25th running of canoe racing's most prestigious event Sunday, October 17. The quick-stroking Te Oropaa crew covered the 55.6 mile course in 7 hours, 53 minutes—a record—and it in turn was followed by three additional Tahitian entries. Kailua was the first Hawaiian finisher, placing fifth, and Outrigger was the second island entry across the finish line in seventh place.

To complete the historical record, Outrigger's time was 8:26:50. For the general public and the casual observer that performance merits little more than passing comment.

But the real story of the race, as seen through the eyes of our paddlers, our helpers, and our loyal supporters, lies elsewhere than in newspaper columns.

Title the real story "Desire" and, parenthetically, add "guts" and "determination." This means that the Outrigger paddlers didn't give up when the odds against a finish even in the first half of the fleet of 39 canoes were overwhelming. Where a

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Crossing the Magic Island finish line. From bow to stern: Tim Guard, Jay West, Donnie Mailer, Mike Clifford, Mark Buck, Brant Ackerman. On escort boat in rear are crew members Ed Pickering, Jay Pynchon, Mike Holmes, Bill Mowat, Milton Beamer, Bill Bright. Photo Mazeppa Costa.

### Robello and Anderson Win Fall Golf Tournament

by Frank Walton

Shooting a steady 38-38 (76), Harry Robello won the Club golf championship by three strokes over Sam Kaaua in the Fall Tourney played at Olomana Golf Course on Monday, September 27. Walter Fleischaker was third with an 84.

Scoring an 80 with 14 pars, seven on each side, Pam Anderson annexed the ladies title by a handy 15 strokes over Kay Banning. Barbara McGuire was third with 109.

A total of 36 players, 10 ladies and 26 men, headed by Club prexy Roy Kesner, participated in the event which started out under blue skies and, because of an inordinate delay due to slow play, ended under misty

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### First Hobie 16 Worlds Off and Onshore

The great white laundry line strung along the beachfront just before sundown and after sunup early this month is the rigging and dacron of 54 sleek new Hobies, the fleet assembled for the first Hobie 16 World Championship Regatta.

At mid-day, they're mostly offshore, competing in the eight races (after qualifiers) which make up the series, ending Sat., Nov. 6. After dark, the craft are beached (under security) at the Natatorium end of our shorefront.

Ninety-six local and Mainland skippers and crews are competing for 20 top honors to be awarded at the big celebratory banquet in the

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lesser crew might simply have struggled home a dejected and forgotten loser, our men started paddling with a vengeance and put on a performance that inspired all who witnessed it.

The story begins in the first light of dawn at Kaunakakai on Molokai. Despite a confused and disorderly assembly, Outrigger tore away from the starting line at 6:14 a.m. and after 20 minutes of furious stroking found itself in third place—already well behind the first place Tahitian boat but gaining open water on canoes to the rear. Then, suddenly, the fleet of escort vessels which had previously been seaward of Outrigger cut across our bow to join up with canoes proceeding closer towards shore. The result was that for 15 minutes "Kakina" pitched and yawed in the confused and turbulent wake kicked up by 40 or more powerboats. By the time the crew was able to find clear water, virtually the entire fleet had gone by OCC. Outrigger was in no better than 30th position with six miles of the race behind it.

The cause seemed hopeless. The front-running Tahitians were practically out of sight and Outrigger was barely holding its own against some of the weaker crews in the field. The initial air of optimism which had infused the paddlers seemed to have dwindled away with the sunrise.

I talked with Cline Mann, who was aboard our escort boat "Aukaka" directing navigation and supervising the change chart, about the way he felt at this point in the race. "I never once gave up on them (the crew)," said Mann, "but I wasn't sure that the guys could pull themselves together and move on the leaders. All of a sudden, though, we caught fire; the boat started moving smoothly through the water, and we began making up ground on the boats just ahead of us. I knew then that no one was going to give up and that incredible things might happen in the six hours remaining."

Outrigger began its inexorable march on the leaders just after it passed Hale O Lono, the previous starting point for the race. First to fall was Healani, who took its stroke up



Exhausted crew at the end of the race. Left to right: Tim Guard, Jay West, Don Mailer, Mike Clifford, Mark Buck, Brant Ackerman. Advertiser photo.

to 52 a minute in a desperate effort to ward off "Kakina," which by this time was virtually flying across the water. In rapid succession other crews, including Hui Nalu, Lanikai, Waikiki Surf, Lahaina, and Leeward Kai, fell to the onrushing Outrigger. In the intervening hours, canoes once so far distant that no one could intelligently believe they could be caught, were passed and left in "Kakina's" wake. The final crews to succumb to Outrigger's furious charge were two Tahitian entries—including Te Oropaa II in our own "Paoa"—the all-star crew representing California, and the Keauhou entry from Hawaii which had practiced for five months in the manner of the Tahitian paddlers.

In all, 22 crews were challenged and passed by OCC's resolute paddlers. A position at nearly the tail end of the fleet early in the race was converted into a respectable seventh place finish. Perhaps most importantly, a tradition of strong and courageous performances by OCC's Molokai-to-Oahu crews was maintained and the reputation of our Club embellished among our fellow competitors.

Coach-paddler Brant Ackerman summed it up for me after the race. "I think the crew performed brilliantly against very tough odds," Ackerman observed. "Three weeks before the race we lost three key paddlers; their departure at a critical juncture had a marked psychological impact on all of us. We had to go with a relatively

inexperienced crew. Only half the crew had more than one Molokai race behind them. And the conditions of the race itself were tailor made for the Tahitians. The Molokai channel was practically a 'glass-off.' Then to come back strong, pass 22 boats, and literally overwhelm crews like Surf Club, Hui Nalu, Lanikai, and the Californians, that's a fantastic performance."

Full credit must go to the Tahitians, of course, for their stunning showing in this year's race. Make no mistake that Te Oropaa and Maire Nui dominated the channel crossing from start to finish. As swift as the leading Tahitian entries proved to be, though, Outrigger's strong showing in the somewhat rougher channel waters convinced many observers that the sea is indeed the conditioning variable. On flat water the crews from Tahiti are all but unbeatable; given the rough, tempestuous conditions one might ordinarily expect in the Molokai channel, the best crews from Hawaii can hold their own against their South Pacific competition.

This year's Molokai crew included Mark Buck, Brant Ackerman, Jay West, Ed Pickering, Mike Clifford, Jay Pynchon, Mike Holmes, Billy Mowat, Milton Beamer, Donnie Mailer, Bill Bright and the author of this article. And there were, of course, many non-paddling Club members whose selfless contributions in time, energy, enthusiasm and spirit were part of the total effort.