

All-Star Crew First Again

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# Offshore Swell in Molokai Ho'e

By Jack Wyatt

Special to the Star-Bulletin

After yesterday's Molokai Ho'e—the Molokai to Oahu outrigger canoe race for men—had finished off Waikiki, Dennis Campbell of California's Imua Canoe Club lowered his head and said, "there must be more to this sport."

The soft-spoken coach and steersman has had better days. As a competitor, Campbell accepted the fact that his crew finished second to its California rival, Offshore Canoe Club, because Imua was runnerup to Offshore in last year's race.

Even the 10-minute interference penalty which dropped Imua from second to fourth place in the standings didn't bother Campbell that much. As a sportsman, he understands such official rulings.

But after months of training in California and then coming to Hawaii and paddling for six long hours across a choppy channel only to be beaten by crew of Offshore all-stars, Campbell was disappointed and it showed.

"Offshore has a tough bunch of guys and they beat us," conceded Campbell, "but it just doesn't seem right that club teams must compete against hand-picked all-stars."

FOR THE SECOND consecutive year, Offshore has been quietly criticized by some competitors for recruiting Olympic-class kayak paddlers and rowers for feature events such as the Molokai Ho'e. Meanwhile, Imua, along with the Hawaiian clubs, must make do with their regular club paddlers. But Offshore wasn't the only crew drawing competitor's ire. One Tahitian team was also said to have fielded an all-star crew instead of using club paddlers.

However, with no fast rule governing the eligibility of visiting crews, Offshore was not to be denied its well-earned victory.

The Offshore men from Newport, Calif., powered through a choppy sea, conquered an adverse current and held off an armada of hard-paddling competitors to arrive at Ft. DeRus's sun-drenched beach a winner.

Offshore completed the 40.8-mile trek in a relatively slow six hours, eight minutes and 35.5 seconds—43 minutes and 28 seconds off its course record set last year. "The sea was like a washing machine," remarked Offshore crewman Jon Van Cleave. "We had to paddle the race all the way.

There was no surfing help from waves."

IN WINNING OVERALL and the koa division, Offshore used Malama, the same borrowed canoe which suffered severe damage during the Na Wahine O Ke Kai Molokai to Oahu Race for women two weeks ago.

"A crack opened in the bow area during our practice on Saturday," explained Billy Whitford, Offshore's coach and steersman, "but we made a quick fiberglass repair and it held for the crossing."

A record 47 entries, including teams from California, Illinois, Canada, Tahiti plus five Hawaiian Islands, took part in the Aloha Week-sponsored race. Lanikai Canoe Club, which finished fifth overall in 6:22.45.3, topped the fiberglass division.

Several quick-stroking Tahitian crews surged into the lead shortly after yesterday's 8 a.m. start from Molokai's Hale O Lono Harbor and Offshore couldn't catch them until two hours into the race. "We had to paddle out butts"

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OFFSHORE'S NEAR SHORE—The Offshore Canoe Club of California paddles to the finish line in winning yesterday's Molokai-to-Oahu canoe race with a time of six hours, eight minutes and 35.5 seconds.—Star-Bulletin Photo by Dennis Oda.

## Cal Crew First in Race

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off to win," Whitford said. "Any one of the four boats (Imua, Outrigger, Hui Nalu or Offshore) could have won it."

WHILE CALIFORNIA'S Offshore dominated first-to-finish, Oahu's Hui Nalu and Outrigger canoe clubs staged a fierce battle to become the first Hawaiian finisher. "This is the closest racing that I've ever been in," said Hui

Nalu steersman Myron Thompson.

The two long-time Island rivals raced side-by-side from Koko Head on past Diamond Head with only a long sprint to the finish remaining. Then Outrigger got hit by a wave and Hui Nalu inched ahead and surged on to beat its rival by a scant one-minute and 12 seconds.

"It was a real dog fight," Outrigger's steersman Fred Hemmings said.