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**OCC TWO-TIMERS**—Triumphant members of defending champion Outrigger Canoe Club cross the finish line first after completing the Molokai-to-Oahu canoe race yesterday in record time.—Star-Bulletin Photo by Dennis Oda.

# OCC Tunes Out Foes in 2nd Channel Win

By Jack Wyatt

Special to the Star-Bulletin

How tough was yesterday's 33rd men's Molokai-Oahu Outrigger Canoe Race? Count the blistered hands and listen to paddler complaints regarding body aches and pains. Crossing the churning Ka'iwi Channel was said to be a most exhausting experience.

"There were no swells to surf," said steersman Brant Ackerman of record-setting Outrigger Canoe Club. "We were pushed. And we had to paddle hard to win."

The 40.8-mile, 38-canoe contest began at Molokai's Hale O Lono Harbor and finished at Waikiki's Ft. DeRussy Beach.

Although the choppy Ka'iwi prevented those long surfing rides, Ackerman and crew, paddling OCC's koa *Lellani*, called

on its months of arduous training in powering to the five-hour, 18-minute and 19-second record. Ackerman said the channel was like a washing machine at times.

**THE DEFENDING CHAMP** Outrigger, which finished 2:08 in front of its California rival Offshore Canoe Club of Newport, bettered Offshore's 1981 record by 6:48. Yesterday's runnerup also finished second to OCC last year.

A surprising Outrigger masters over-35 crew finished third overall in 5:26:49. "I'm about to die," said masters' steersman Fred Hemmings after arriving. Upon recovering, Hemmings explained that his crew's third place was far higher than expected.

While both Offshore and Outrigger's masters' crew paddled new-design fiberglass boats,

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## OCC 'Channels' Its Power into Another Win

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fourth place Hanalei Canoe Club (5:30:30) paddled the fleet's only non-koa wooden canoe.

"It's made from our native Albizia Falcata tree," said steersman-builder Nick Beck of Kauai, "and since we didn't use a koa log race, officials don't know what to do with us." The "wooden" Hanalei canoe was finally lumped with the fiberglass and plastic boats in the non-koa division. A crack Australian crew (in a new fiberglass boat) came in fifth in 5:31:34.

Said Offshore's steersman-coach Billy Whitford, "We were a boat length, or two, ahead at Laau Point, but that was in smooth water." Passing placid Laau and into the churning

channel, Whitford explained that Outrigger worked the chop better. Offshore pressed Outrigger all the way to Waikiki.

ALTHOUGH THE modern-designed canoes proved faster (12 of the first 15 fiberglass canoes were of new designs), crew conditioning became a more important in finishing well.

"My crew was in good condition," said Offshore's Whitford, "but Outrigger's must have been in better condition." Both Offshore, Outrigger and Hul Nalu (6th place) crews include strong kayak paddlers.

Offshore's Olympic recruits, Larry Cain of Toronto and Hugh Fisher of Vancouver, discovered blisters and unused paddling muscles that they never knew existed.

Said Cain, "As a result of paddling C-1s (an Olympic one-man canoe) I have callouses on my hands. But now I have blisters in different places." At last summer's Los Angeles Olympics, Cain won a gold and silver medal in C-1 competition.

Disregarding his aches and pains, Cain said that the cross-channel paddle was fun. "I love it! I'm coming back," he said.

Cain also explained that in C-1 paddling, he strokes only from the right side. "My muscles weren't quite ready for changes (to the left side)," he said.

Added Fisher, who won a gold and a bronze medal paddling K-2 (two-man) kayaks, "We have no Hawaiian outriggers in Vancouver. Maybe I can find an Indian

canoe to practice in for next year."

**BOTH CAIN AND Fisher** believe that, properly publicized, the Molokai Race would draw additional Olympic and world-class paddlers. "Perhaps the Russians would come," Fisher said.

With very little promotion this year, the race drew paddlers from Australia (5th overall), Illinois (10th), Quebec (22nd), Canada's Gerontimo (33rd) and West Germany (38th). "With an agonizing seven-hour and 44-minute crossing (last place) I can't see the Germans showing up next year." Island paddler Melvin Ching added,

"Tahitian crews, normally strong finishers, failed to race yesterday because of lack of funds."