

# Visitors Give Hawaii Paddlers Something to Work For

By Cindy Luis  
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What does the outstanding showing by non-Hawaiian canoes in yesterday's Bankoh Moloka'i Ho'e say about Hawaii's canoe clubs?

"Eh, I think it's super that they did that good," Kai Opua Coach Junior Kanuha said. "It means we're going to have to practice a little harder for next year. I can accept them beating us; they were in better condition and we just ran out of gas."

Kai Opua of Kona was the

fifth finisher" overall and the first Neighbor Island canoe to complete the 40.8-mile Kaiwi Channel crossing yesterday. For quite awhile, the Big Island club was the only one of the 37 Hawaii canoes challenging for the lead.

"We were running third most of the way and came in higher than the other two," Kanuha said. "For a while it worked and we got the current with us. But then we got tired and Kai-lua passed us at Diamond Head."

KAI OPUA'S COURSE strategy was to head for Koko Head then

follow the current to Diamond Head and the Fort DeRussy finish. First-place Illinois Brigade Y and runner-up FFPP 1 of Tahiti stayed off Oahu by two miles, angling for Black Point.

"It was smoother than we were hoping for," said Kai Opua steersman Bill Rosehill. "The current was moving well but our guys didn't have the experience to stay with the leaders. This was the first distance season for seven of our (nine) paddlers."

"I made a prediction before the race that we'd finish fourth but after finishing fifth, I guess

now I'm surprised we did so well."

Equally surprised about his club's finish was 16-year-old David Napoleon, the youngest of four brothers paddling for Anue-nue of Oahu. His dad, Nappy, steered the koa *Ho'ola* the entire distance, completing his 27th consecutive channel crossing, in 6:06:27 for 27th place.

"DURING THE RACE, when we looked back, nobody was there except us," said the youngest Napoleon of his second time across. "But when we got to Portlock, we saw plenty boats

behind us and I felt better. It was better the second time for me."

So was staying on the beach at Hale O Lono. "It was better than a hotel; there were so many stars to look at and such a nice night," said the Maryknoll junior. "And it was better than staying home."

There were times during mid-channel that the Australian crew members wished they had stayed home. After several *hulis* (flippings) and a swamp, the Aussies finished last in 6:57:31.

"We flipped two, three times

but we took only about three minutes to get the boat back over," said Nick Tromp. "It was when we swamped that we spent an hour swimming in the ocean, trying to get the boat hauled out."

"We finally had to put it on the back of the escort boat and bail it from there."

Other than that, Tromp said the race was great. "It was disappointing to finish last but it was the first time for all of us," he said. "The distance didn't bother us and we enjoyed it. We'll be back next year."