

# Arkansas' voyage<sup>10/12/87</sup> was a little rocky

By Stephen Tsai  
Advertiser Staff Writer

Arkansas Outrigger, a group of white-water paddlers from Little Rock, made a splashing debut yesterday in the 36th Bankoh Molokai Hoe.

"We flipped twice," said Bill Sowell, whose team finished 38th.

The first mishap occurred early in the race, after Arkansas paddled its way into the top third of the 49-crew field.

"It really didn't take us that long to get it back over," Sowell said. "It was just a lot of time getting all of that water bailed out."

Arkansas made up some ground before taking another spin-wash in the middle of the Kaiwi Channel.

"We had passed a few boats, but when we flipped, they passed us again," Sowell said. "I guess we hurt ourselves."

Sowell said his crew had hoped to emulate the performance of Illinois Brigade, which

won its debut race, the 1985 Molokai Hoe.

Arkansas even had a head start, buying a canoe from the Outrigger Canoe Club in April. Arkansas learned its techniques the Jane Fonda way, from numerous videos.

But the videos weren't able to help Arkansas adjust to ocean conditions.

"The next time we come back, we'll know how to prepare ourselves better," Sowell said.

Of the newcomers, the top finish went to Atlantic Division, a team in which eight of its nine members lives on the East Coast.

Despite having but four days of practice, Atlantic Division paddled well enough to place 15th.

"We were moving well, but the current wasn't with us," captain Bob Bennett said. "We were in the slop a lot."

The winner of the koa divi-



OCC's crew of Kainoa Downing, Marc Haine, Chris Kincaid, Steve Van Ribbink, Scott Rolles and Tom Conner powers to the finish.

sion was Kai 'Opua of Kona, with a time of 6:13:40.63. It was a fitting victory, particularly since captain Jerome Kanuha said about "95 percent" of all koa canoes come from Kona.

"It's a proud thing, a good tradition," Kanuha said of koa boats.

Kanuha said he hopes his team's high finish — 11th overall — might encourage other crews to use koa boats in the future. All but seven of the boats entered yesterday were made of fiberglass.

"It was the opposite before with fiberglass boats trying to

compete with koa boats," he said. "Now, it's the koas trying to compete with the fiberglass boats. I think everybody's sad to see just seven koa boats in the race."

Ironically, Kai 'Opua borrowed a Kona-made boat from a Tahiti crew.

The Puna Canoe Club paddled the final 1½ hours of its race without a crew change after its escort boat broke down. . . . Tama — the floatation bar on the outrigger — from the Offshore No. 2 became dislodged early in the race. The crew took 20 minutes to repair the damage.