

Australians paddle 1-2 in Molokai Hoe

By Paul Giblin

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Though the 40.8-mile race from Molokai to Oahu has been billed as the world championship of outrigger canoe racing for years, the sport was properly christened as a true international competition yesterday.

A pair of Australian crews emerged from the six-nation, 58-boat fleet to complete the first-ever 1-2 sweep by foreign teams in the 40th annual Bankoh Molokai Hoe. It marked only the second time a non-U.S. team has won the open-water event; the first was in 1976 when a crew from Tahiti took the honor.

Australian Craig Shelton of the second-place Hamilton Island crew said, "We've beaten the best teams in the world and there's only a team ahead of us that's better."

That team is Outrigger of Australia, which paddled through glassy seas across the Kaiwi Channel in 5 hours, 39 minutes and 15 seconds. The win-

TOP 5

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| □ Outrigger, Australia | 5:39:15 |
| □ Hamilton Island, Australia | 5:43:03 |
| □ Lanikai, Oahu | 5:45:44 |
| □ Offshore, Newport Beach, Calif. ... | 5:47:01 |
| □ Outrigger, Oahu | 5:48:16 |

ning time was nearly 33 minutes off the record, which was set by Offshore of California in 1989.

Hamilton Island finished second in 5:43:03, while Lanikai of Oahu surged in the final three miles to finish third in 5:45:44. Three-time winner Offshore placed fourth in 5:47:01, and 14-time winner and defending champion Outrigger of Oahu, which led most of the way, fell to a disappointing fifth in 5:48:16.

Hundreds of people lined Fort DeRussy Beach to watch the florescent green-clad Australian team win the

most competitive race in recent years.

Three crews blasted to the front of the pack near the Hale O Lono Harbor on Molokai when the race started about an hour after sunrise. Outrigger of Hawaii led the trio, with Hamilton Island and Outrigger of Australia trailing.

The three teams took a northern route to Oahu, while a larger second group of six-man canoes wandered along a more southernly path.

At times, Outrigger of Hawaii darted ahead of the Australians by as far as 10 boat lengths, but the three crews stayed within 200 yards of each other for most of the journey.

"It was a cat-and-mouse game the whole way," said Bruce Kolka of Hamilton Island.

"Everybody covered each other. Outrigger of Hawaii knew the channel, knew the currents, knew the wind, knew everything. We just had the paddle power to cover everything they did and stay with them."

About three miles from the finish,

the lead trio stalled when they paddled into strong currents at Portlock. Meanwhile, non-contenders Lanikai, Offshore and Hawaii Canoe and Kayak suddenly caught up and joined the dash for the finish.

Lanikai's Kalani Irvine said, "We just looked at each other and said, 'Hey, there's no tomorrow. Let's get going.' We just started moving. We started picking off boats. We didn't know till Diamond Head what place we were in."

As Outrigger of Hawaii stayed bogged down near Portlock, both Australian canoe crews broke through the currents. Then Australians slipped in front of the challengers from Hawaii and California, and held them off to lock up the 1-2 foreign sweep.

"We've proved it's an international sport because we've won the world championship here today," Kolka said. "Australia first and second."

Results in For the Record, Page C5

CANOES

Bankoh Moloka'i Hoe

Across the Molokai Channel

Overall

1, Outrigger Australia, 5:39:15. 2, Hamilton Island, 5:43:03. 3, Lanikai 1 (First Hawaiian Crew), 5:45:44. 4, Offshore, 5:47:01. 5, Outrigger 1, 5:48:16. 6, Hawaii Canoe Kayak, 5:50:11. 7, Tahiti, 5:55:03. 8, Kal Opua, 5:56:39. 9, Waikiki Surf 1, 5:57:28. 10, Taniwha, 5:58:53.

Koa Division

1, Outrigger 1, 5:48:16. 2, Tahiti, 5:55:03. 3, Faa'a, 6:01:07.

Masters Division

1, Marina Del Ray 2, 6:04:14. 2, Outrigger 3, 6:21:17. 3, Kailua 3, 6:34:23.

Sr. Masters Division

1, Anuenue 2, 6:52:09. 2, Keauhou, 6:56:51. 3, Outrigger 4, 7:04:20.