

1996-10-14  
PADDLING



*Exhausted perhaps, but certainly overjoyed, Lanikai Canoe Club paddlers celebrate their second consecutive Molokai Hoe victory yesterday at Fort DeRussy, above. Light surf and weak currents made the journey particularly arduous, below.*

Photos by George F. Lee, Star-Bulletin

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# Lanikai captures Molokai Hoe

## Wins second straight Bankoh challenge

By Jack Wyatt  
Special to the Star-Bulletin

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Lanikai Canoe Club, winner of yesterday's Bankoh Molokai Hoe - the men's outrigger canoe race from Molokai to Waikiki - proved it is for real.

"Our first place today laid to rest any rumors that our win last year was a fluke and that our crew is over-the-hill," Lanikai steersman Jim Foti said.

Charging from the start, Lanikai overpowered its competition, winning the 41-mile cross-channel contest from Hale O Lono Harbor to Fort DeRussy Beach in 5 hours, 15 minutes, 42 seconds.

Last year, the same Lanikai crew, paddling the same fiberglass canoe, arrived first in a record of 4:53:03.

Waikiki Surf Club placed second in 5:18:06, followed by Faa'a of Tahiti in 5:22:12. Honolulu's Outrigger Canoe Club, a perennial race winner the past two decades, placed fourth in 5:24:58.

Because of an adverse current and smaller than usual surfing waves, times were slow and paddling was hard.

"We got little or no help (from waves and current). The poor conditions made this a difficult race," Foti said.

The 45th annual crossing drew a record 102 teams. In addition to local teams, crews from Australia, Canada, Tahiti, Johnston Island and the mainland took part.

The first 14 finishers used canoes of fiberglass construction. Big Island's Kai Opua-2, with a 15th overall finish (5:44:16), won the koa-wood division.

"Winning the Molokai Hoe just once is a paddling feat," said Lanikai crewman John Foti, brother of steersman Jim. "But back-to-back wins? And winning against this top competition? What happened today was pretty amazing, in my opinion."

Rocky Owens, 42, a veteran of Lanikai's three Molokai Hoe victories - in 1974, '95 and '96 - credits his crew's long, hard training sessions and his team's close bond.



"Our crew has no stars," he said. "We're simply a bunch of guys, holding down full-time jobs, who practice when we can. Training for the Molokai Hoe takes sacrifice and dedication. Winning is the icing."

In addition to the Foti brothers and Owens, Lanikai's team included Bo Eastabrooks, Kalani Irvine, Rich Lambert, Bob Nottage, Mike Pedersen and Mike Smith.

Waikiki Surf Club, in an attempt to regain its winning tradition of decades past, pressed Lanikai throughout the race.

"Our club won the Molokai Hoe 12 times - our last win coming in 1973," said WSC's paddler/coach Greg Edwards. "After today's strong finish, I'd say we're on track to a winning tradition once again."

WSC, along with Faa'a and Outrigger, were always in contention.

"The Molokai Hoe has become a world-class competition," veteran Outrigger paddler Walter Guild said. "Seems it's every crew's goal - foreign or local - to win this race. We'll take our fourth-place finish this year and be happy we placed so well."

Waikiki Beach Boys drew applause for its fifth-place finish (5:26:15). "We finished ahead of a lot of stronger and more experienced crews," Beach Boy coach Kala Judd said. "I'm proud of my team of young City and County lifeguards and watermen. They trained hard for this moment."

Joan Malama, president of the organizing Oahu Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association, believes the race may have reached its maximum.

"One hundred canoes, each with an escort boat, may be all our start and finishing areas can safely handle," she said.

Two teams withdrew from competition when their respective canoes developed problems.

## **PADDLING**

### **Bankoh Molokai Hoe**

#### **40.8 miles, Molokai to Oahu, Yesterday's results**

##### **■Fiberglass**

1. Lanikai 1, 5:15:42. 2. Waikiki Surf Club 1, 5:18:06. 3. Faa'a (Tahiti), 5:22:12. 4. Outrigger 1, 5:24:58. 5. Waikiki Beach Boys 1, 5:26:15. 6. Hui Nalu 1, 5:28:21. 7. Tui Tonga, 5:33:37. 8. ue8 el,3 Dana Outrigger (Calif.), 5:34:40.

9. Lanakila, 5:37:24. 10. Hui Nalu 2, 5:39:18. 11. Kai Opua 1, 5:40:03. 12. Maohi Nui (Tahiti), 5:41:51. 13. Hawaiian 1, 5:43:12. 14. Kailua 1, 5:44:55. 15. Lanikai 2, 5:44:56. 16. Anuenue 1, 5:48:19. 17. Manu O Ke Kai, 5:50:30.

18. False Creek (Canada), 5:52:14. 19. Napili 1, 5:57:30. 20. Outrigger 2, 5:57:51. 21. Kamehameha (Hilo), 6:05:52. 22. Sydney Outrigger (Aus.), 6:10:02. 23. Waikiki Surf Club 3, 6:10:33. 24. Kailua 2, 6:13:06. 25. Lokahi 1, 6:14:27.

##### **■Koa**

1. Kai Opua 2, 5:44:16. 2. Waikiki Surf Club 2, 5:53:24. 3. Lanikai 3, 6:05:14. 4. Keahiakahoe, 6:38:26. 5. Kihei, 7:03:51.

**■35 years and over**

1. Mooloolaba (Aus.), 5:34:48. 2. California Renegades (Calif.), 5:53:59. 3. Lokahi 3, 5:56:59. 4. Hui Lanakila 3, 6:08:03. 5. Manuiwa (N.Z.), 6:10:17.

**■45 years and over**

1. Kailua 6, 6:12:34. 2. Anuenue 2, 6:22:29. 3. Keauhou 2, 6:26:35. 4. Na Kai Ewalu 1, 6:34:41. 5. Kawaihae, 6:40:03.