

1997-10-13
MOLOKAI HOE



By Kathryn Bender, Star-Bulletin
*Australia won the Bankoh Molokai Hoe yesterday,
upsetting tournament favorite Lanikai Canoe Club of Oahu.*

An Aussie paddling: Men join women as upset champs

Outrigger Australia team pulls away from Lanikai to win Molokai Hoe

By Jack Wyatt
Special to the Star-Bulletin



Things you can count on in Molokai-to-Oahu canoe racing: Australia produces tough, upset-minded paddlers, and controversy can surface.

Just two weeks after Australian women posted an upset victory in the Na Wahine O Ke Kai, the "Down Under" boys pulled off an upset in the 46th annual Bankoh Molokai Hoe yesterday over the same Kaiwi Channel course.

Sweeping into the lead just minutes after the Hale O Lono Harbor start, Outrigger Australia, team 2, charged into the lead, never letting up until reaching the finish at Waikiki's Fort DeRussy Beach.



By Kathryn Bender, Star-Bulletin
The Lanikai crew is welcomed at the finish.

The Aussie men turned the 41-mile course in four hours, 57 minutes, 45 seconds. Two-time defending champ and pre-race favorite Lanikai Canoe Club of Oahu placed second, 3 minutes, 22 seconds behind.

"A mistake-free race," Aussie steersman Chris Maynard said. "Fortunately, we got off to a good clean start and were not among those crews called back by officials for being over the starting line early.

"We held a fast, hard stroke, executed good crew changes and paddled what we believed to be the best and fastest course to Waikiki. I'm just disappointed that sea and wind were not at their best."



By Kathryn Bender, Star-Bulletin
Crowds cheer the arriving teams on Oahu.

Despite the lack of good surfing waves and the absence of helping tradewinds, the Aussies posted the third fastest winning time in history.

Lanikai set the course record of 4:53:03 two years ago. In 1993, Faa of Tahiti set the second fastest winning time of 4:55:27. The race is billed as the World Championship of Outrigger Canoe Racing.

Crews from French Polynesia -- Hinano Hoe (Tahiti); Fare Ara (Huahine); Tapeatia (Rangiroa); Reva Nui (Tahiti); Faa (Tahiti) finished third through seventh, respectively.

"The calm conditions may have helped the fast-stroking Tahiti paddlers," Maynard said.

Of the record 110 teams that started, two -- Kaiola-2 and Waikiki Yacht Club-2 -- were disqualified for exceeding the crew maximum nine paddlers.

Of the dozen or more teams that were noted by race officials for inching over the starting line early, only one team (Kamehameha Oahu) was assessed a time penalty (10 minutes).

"Part of the problem," said Joan Malama, president of the governing Oahu Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association, "was that the (starting) line was not as clear as last year, the floaters not keeping the (starting line) rope high enough where it could be seen by crews.

"We're going to work again on the line and how we can keep it straight and everyone behind it."



By Kathryn Bender, Star-Bulletin
The Tahitian team made a strong showing.

Disappointment hung heavy among Lanikai paddlers.

"We were out-muscled. The conditions were hard. Australia earned their win -- every stroke, every mile," Lanikai steersman Jim Foti said.

Added Jim's brother John Foti: "With their (Australia) fast stroking, we figured that they would burn out. But they never did."

"Disappointed? Yes. A blow to our ego? Yes," Lanikai crewmember Kalani Irvine said. "But we're not embarrassed with our second-place finish among this world-class competition. The Australians were just too strong today."

Australian crews won back-to-back Molokai Hoe events in 1991 and '92. And for Aussies Brad Kane, Chris Maynard and Ian Rollings, yesterday's win was doubly sweet.

"We three were members of the 1991 crew," Rollings said, "Winning the Molokai Hoe was a thrill then and it was a bigger thrill today."

Skipper Maynard, a lifeguard, said his Australian team consists of all talented watermen, from kayakers and surf ski paddlers to water safety specialists.

"We trained hard for this moment," he said. "Big seas or calm, we came well-prepared and confident."

Besides Lanikai, top local finishers were Waikiki Beach Boys; Outrigger-1 and Waikiki Surf Club, who finished eighth through 10th, respectively.

"We had a great battle with Outrigger. We wanted to beat them badly," Waikiki Beach Boy's Guy Pere said after edging the team rival by 48 seconds.

Team Hawaii topped the competitive masters (35 years and over) division with a 27th place finish in 5:35:19. Australia's Mooloolaba crew won the senior masters (45 and over) with its 47th place, 5:50:17 finish.

Team Hungary, with its 13th-place overall finish in 5:19:01, topped a Swiss/German team (50th place in 5:53:18) for the European crown.

Lanikai II won the three-boat koa division with a 22nd place, 5:26:11 arrival.

"Koa canoes are so much Hawaiiana," paddler Moa Kalama said. "I'd give anything to see all clubs turn in all their fiberglass boats and return to koa canoes."

For Hui Nalu's young turks, being part of the Molokai Hoe experience was a thrill.

"The race was hard and our kids knew they had little chance of winning," Hui Nalu's Bruce Blankenfeld said. "But still they came up smiling at the end."

Hui Nalu finished 44th.

Anuenue Canoe Club's Nappy Napoleon celebrated his 40th Molokai Hoe with one of the best attended beach parties in Waikiki.

"Nappy is a paddling legend. He has brought thousands into the sport," paddler Malia Moniz said.

"Sure it was a hard paddle with no waves or wind to help us out," said steersman Charley Kamai of Koa Kai's senior masters crew.

"And so what if we were the last canoe to finish (seven hours and 15 minutes). The channel crossing is special -- a wonderful experience."

PADDLING

Bankoh Molokai Hoe

Molokai to Fort DeRussy Beach
Yesterday's results, 41 miles
Hawaii teams unless noted

■Overall

Top 25: 1. Outrigger (Australia) II, 4 hours, 57 minutes, 45 seconds. 2. Lanikai IV, 5:01:07. 3. Hinano Hoe (Tahiti), 5:02:58. 4. Fare Ara (Huahine), 5:06:28. 5. Tapeatia (Rangiroa), 5:08:09. 6. Reva Nui (Tahiti), 5:10:15. 7. Faaa (Tahiti), 5:10:56. 8. Waikiki Beach Boys I, 5:11:19. 9. Outrigger I, 5:12:07. 10. Waikiki Surf Club, 5:16:53. 11. Lanakila (Calif.), 5:17:59. 12. Hawaii Canoe and Kayak, 5:18:40. 13. Team Hungary (Hungary), 5:19:01. 14. Puna II, 5:20:29. 15. Outrigger (Australia), 5:21:50. 16. Dana Point

(Calif.), 5:22:37. 17. Piroguiers (Tahiti), 5:22:46.
18. Hawaiian, 5:23:48. 19. Hava'i, 5:24:31. 20. Kai Opuua, 5:24:31. 21. Manu O Ke Kai, 5:24:51.
22. Lanikai II, 5:26:11. 23. Outrigger (New Zealand), 5:28:31. 24. Outrigger II, 5:31:16. 25.
Anuenue I, 5:34:12.

■ **Masters**

Top three: 1. Team Hawaii, 5:35:19. 2. Mooloolaba (Australia), 5:35:52. 3. Hui Lanakila,
5:39:32.

■ **Senior masters**

Top three: 1. Mooloolaba II (Australia), 5:50:17. 2. Kailua VI, 5:52:18. 3. Keauhou, 5:58:32.

■ **Koa**

Top three: 1. Lanikai II, 5:26:11. 2. Outrigger II, 5:31:16. 3. Waikiki Surf Club I, 5:40:24.