

The Millennium Bankoh Hinano Molokai Hoe

By Bill Danford

The 49th Molokai to Oahu marathon canoe race on October 8, 2000 really separated the young from the old and the record breakers from the dreamers. The conditions were ideal if you were a male paddler with superb physical and mental attributes able to withstand the gusty channel trades and the relentless and sometimes brutal Kaiwi Channel conditions.

Some would surf while others wallowed in their own inability to surf the 44-foot Hawaiian racing canoes down the face of eight to 12-foot mountainous channel rollers. Many would cascade down the face of many of the rollers ending up at a 90-degree spin and sometimes as much as a 180-degrees going back to Molokai instead of leaving.

Many would become sea sick from the escort boats and would rather stay in the canoe and brave the conditions. All would, at the finish of the race, say what a great time they had in the 49th crossing. All doubts and dark thoughts during the crossing having been completely erased as many stepped on the terra firma of Oahu.

Our Open crew included first year rookies Luke Estes, Bret Chuckovich, Evan Rhodes, Rick Hobson, and veterans Byron Ho, Ralph Gray, Paki Vaughan, John Eveleth, steersmen Matt Guard, and first year coach Colin Perry.

They paddled to their potential and a little bit more in a tough channel with great competition during a rebuilding year for the Open men's program. Finishing in a good time of 5:28:26, they were 15th in their division and 17th overall. This is the nucleus or the building block for next year's program.

The Masters, led by Walter Guild and Courtney Seto, teamed up with Bill Bright, brothers Matt and Mark Rigg, Scott Rolles, and Marc Haine, all past channel winners with approximately 8 to 10 Molokai titles between them over the last 20 to 21 years paddling under Big Red and White's banner.

Rounding out the Masters crew was OCC President Karl Heyer IV and teammate Robbie Harrison. This was the year that many of these veterans just wanted to go out and have fun, but as their record shows, they did well.

They did not want to adhere to the fixed schedules of the past, which for all of them had spelled success and seven World titles from 1984 through the 1999 crossing. It was time to move on and move on they did by surfing across the channel in the record time of 5:04:31, finishing fifth overall out of a field of 107 teams, and first Masters. They eclipsed approximately 16 minutes off the Masters record set in 1995 by Moloolaba of Australia.

Our Senior Masters team captained by Brant Ackerman included Bill Mowat, John Mounts, Mike Schwinn, Pokii Vaughan, Juvie Coito, Henry Ayau, Doug Bechart and John Finney.

Brant set a course from Laau Point, Molokai to Black Point, Oahu. The most he deviated from the line was approximately a half-mile north. With all the experience in the canoe, the team still found itself unable to take advantage of the big sea conditions. It was almost impossible to muscle into a wave and take advantage of the fast conditions.

This would be one of those days where the visions of yesteryear vanished as each successive wave swept the canoe high above the trough and then almost gradually slid it back on a swell instead of exploding across the face of a roller and surfing for a couple of hundred yards. This was, as previously noted, an extremely physical channel crossing, testing every bit of mental metal deep down in the dark recesses of the mind.

Until reaching Black Point where most of the canoe teams converged, the OCC Senior Masters held tightly to the thought that they were right up front with the division leaders and continued to cover their competition that they could identify.

All hopes of winning the division escaped when arch rival Hui Lanakila zipped by on the inside at Diamond Head along with Surf Club. In the end the OCC had not accounted for Hanalei, Kailua, and Kona Athletics of the Big Island. Hanalei finished 27th overall. OCC Senior Masters finished in a time of 6:05 and sixth in their division.

Our three teams from the Outrigger Canoe Club—Open, Masters, and Senior Masters Men—all fared exceedingly well. First of all, they all crossed the finish line with bodies and equipment intact. Most were in good spirits, while some continued to shake their heads asking where did that canoe club come from.

Secondly, and most importantly, the Big Red and White held to tradition and took up the challenge to field a men's program for a successful long distance season and finally, three men's crews for the channel crossing.

On behalf of all the OCC paddlers and Club Captain, I would like to thank the membership of the Outrigger Canoe Club for their fantastic support of the Canoe Racing Program. To the Board of Directors and John Rader, General Manager, and his staff, I compliment you on your steadfast support of all paddlers in this year's canoe racing program.

Congratulations to all Outrigger Canoe Club men and women who stood by the 2000 Canoe Racing Program and competed in the World Championship Molokai to Oahu Outrigger Canoe Race.

To Courtney Seto, Canoe Racing Chairman 1999-2000, thank you for all of your hard work. To Coaches Colin Perry, Liz Perry, and Michele St. John, on behalf of all of the canoe family thank you for your dedication to the sport, time and energy.

OCC Masters finished 5th overall and first in their division. Front, Matt Rigg, Karl Heyer IV, and Scott Rolles. Standing, Mark Rigg, Walter Guild, Robbie Harrison, Courtney Seto, Bill Bright, Marc Haine.



The Senior Masters crew was John Finney, Brant Ackerman, Chris Crabb, Doug Bechart, Tom Arnott, Henry Ayau, Pokii Vaughan, Bill Mowat. Not pictured: Mike Schwinn, Juvie Coito, John Mounts.

"You are the bows..."

Spring Break 2001
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And the woman who held her babe against her bosom said,
Speak to us of Children
And he said:
Your children are not your children
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.
You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.

The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite,
And He bends you with His might that His arrows may go swift and far.
Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;
For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so He loves also the bow that is stable.

Kahlil Gibran

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