

Posted on: Monday, October 8, 2001

## New Zealand/Hawai'i team triumphs in canoe race

By [Dayton Morinaga](#)  
Advertiser Staff Writer



Team New Zealand/Hawai'i, left, beats Lanikai to the finish line of the Bank of Hawaii/Hinano Moloka'i Hoe in the closest finish in the race's 50-year history. New Zealand/Hawai'i was timed in 5 hours, 2 minutes, 57 seconds.

Deborah Booker • The Honolulu Advertiser

Like most 50th anniversaries, this one was memorable and emotional.

Team New Zealand/Hawai'i made sure of it by winning the 50th Bank of Hawaii/Hinano Moloka'i Hoe by two seconds yesterday.

New Zealand/Hawai'i edged defending champion Lanikai in the closest finish in race history.

"I still can not explain how it feels right now," New Zealand/Hawai'i paddler Raven Aipa said an hour after the race. "To be in that close of a race and come out on top . . . I think it'll take a while for it to sink in."

New Zealand/Hawai'i completed the 41-mile course from Hale O Lono Harbor, Moloka'i, to Duke Kahanamoku Beach, Waikiki, in 5 hours, 2 minutes, 57 seconds. Lanikai, which set the course record of 4:50:31 last year, was second at 5:02:59. Pirae Va'a from Tahiti was third at 5:06:32. The rest of the fleet was well behind, with Outrigger-Australia placing fourth at 5:18:23.

The event, which drew 107 entries, is considered the world championship of long-distance outrigger canoe paddling.

New Zealand/Hawai'i, which is comprised of five paddlers from New Zealand and four from O'ahu, rode 12-foot ocean swells and even larger waves of emotion en route to its first Moloka'i Hoe victory. In the past three years, New Zealand/Hawai'i had placed third, second and second, respectively.

"It was like no matter what we did, we couldn't win it," said paddler Rob Kaiwai.

### **Emotional lift**

But this year, the team had emotional incentive. Four months ago, Chrissy Herbert, the wife of New Zealand/Hawai'i paddler Bo Herbert, died of complications associated with a brain hemorrhage. Yesterday's victory was dedicated to her.

"Paddling for her gave us that extra 10 percent we needed to reach back," Kaiwai said. "In a close race like this, that made all the difference."

Bo Herbert reluctantly left his three sons and private dairy farm back in New Zealand to paddle with the team yesterday. Sept. 26 was the Herberts' 20th wedding anniversary; Sept. 27 would have been Chrissy's 42nd birthday.

"Emotionally, I didn't think I was ready for this," Herbert said. "But I really felt like she was riding my back the whole way. I was thinking real hard about her, and how much she would have enjoyed this."

Chrissy Herbert was a widely known and respected paddler in New Zealand. "Every time we got tired, we'd call out her name, and it got us going again," Aipa said.

Herbert, Kaiwai, Eugene Marsh, Maui Kjeldsen and Andrew Penny are the winning paddlers from New Zealand. The O'ahu paddlers are Aipa, Kea Paiaina, Bill Pratt and Karel Tresnak Jr. Each team could rotate nine paddlers into the six seats of the canoe throughout the race.

Tresnak, who paddled on the winning Lanikai crew last year, proved to be a crucial addition as a steersman, as swells were breaking in the 8- to 12-foot range across the Kaiwi Channel. A receding tide that was pushing the canoes away from O'ahu was the only factor preventing faster times.

"We were getting rides of 200 to 300 yards," said Tresnak. "These guys are so strong, all I had to do was find the waves."

Lanikai, with its own star steersman, Jim Foti, was equally adept at surfing across the channel.

"Lanikai is the ultimate surfing team, but I thought we surfed pretty well with them today," Kaiwai said. "That was certainly a key."

Lanikai, using seven returnees from last year's championship crew, was the first to reach East O'ahu, holding about a 400-yard lead on New Zealand/Hawai'i off Koko Head. In the calm waters off Maunaloa Bay, New Zealand/Hawai'i countered with a stunning run.

"That's where we knew we had to make our move," Aipa said.

Within a five-minute span, New Zealand/Hawai'i not only caught Lanikai, but pulled ahead by about 300 yards. Perhaps fittingly, Herbert was paddling in the canoe at the time.

"When we were behind Lanikai, (Kjeldsen) turned to me and said, 'We absolutely can not finish second again,'" Herbert said. "So we got in (the canoe) and went ballistic."

Lanikai paddler John Foti said: "I don't want to say I was surprised that they passed us, because I was more disappointed that we sputtered in that one section."

Lanikai made up for it with a daring final charge in the waves off Waikiki. With New Zealand/Hawai'i "playing it safe to protect the lead," according to Tresnak, Lanikai nearly stole it in the closing moments.

"We stayed wide around Diamond Head because I thought we had enough of a gap," Tresnak said. "But (Lanikai) made a great move by going inside."

Still, New Zealand/Hawai'i never relinquished the lead and held off Lanikai by half-a-canoe length at the finish.

"It was left all out on the water," John Foti said. "You can't be frustrated by that. We paddled a great race; they were just one better."

Added Lanikai teammate Mike Judd: "Today was good for the sport. Even though we didn't win, it's the kind of race we're going to remember for the rest of our lives."

### **Mistakes hurt**

Outrigger-Australia, the 1997 Moloka'i Hoe champ, actually led for the first half of the race, but two mishaps dropped it out of the lead pack. One of the Australian paddlers passed out from exhaustion while in the canoe and could not paddle for the final two hours. Another failed to climb in the canoe during a relief changeover, leaving the canoe with just five paddlers for a brief stretch.

"You can't afford any mistakes if you want to win this race," said Australia steersman Chris Maynard. "And we made more than our share today."

Pirae, paddling in a new canoe courtesy of Lanikai, was even with the leaders across the channel, but took a course that was more southerly than New Zealand/Hawai'i and Lanikai, and was forced to battle against the tide near the stretch run. All four of the top finishers paddled in Mirage canoes designed by Kailua canoe-builder Karel Tresnak.

Tepaetia of Tahiti was fifth, followed by Kai 'Opua of the Big Island, Wailea from Maui, Kailua, Hui Lanakila and 'Anuenue.

Outrigger's 12th overall placing at 5:34:50 was even more impressive when considering that it paddled in a koa canoe (the other leaders paddled in lighter fiberglass canoes). The second-place koa canoe was Keoua O Honaunau at 6:29:42.

Hui Lanakila placed 20th overall and first in the masters (35-and-older) division at 5:47:23. Manuiwa from California was 34th overall and won the senior masters (45-and-older) division.

Kailua won the inaugural golden masters (55-and-older) division, and was 42nd overall at 6:17:28. The crew was affectionately called "Team Viagra" after securing a sponsorship from a Viagra representative, and they proved to be quite potent as paddlers.

"Now days, there's a lot of guys in their 60's and still in great shape," said Kailua paddler Hank Leandro. "And we trained really hard for this. We were ready for it."

The second-place golden masters crew, Nappy Napoleon's 'Anuenue, came in almost nine minutes later. Napoleon completed the Moloka'i Hoe for a record 44th consecutive year.

All of the teams were not aware of America's military action against Afghanistan yesterday until the finish of the race.

"It takes a little bit of the shine off the race when you think about what's happening in the world," Kaiwai said.

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### **Final results**

#### **Overall**

1, Team New Zealand/Hawai'i (Raven Aipa, Bo Herbert, Rob Kaiwai, Maui Kjeldsen, Eugene Marsh, Kea Paiana, Andrew Penny, Bill Pratt, Karel Tresnak Jr.), 5:02:57. 2, Lanikai-1, 5:02:59. 3, Pirae Va'a, 5:06:32. 4, Outrigger-Australia, 5:18:23. 5, Tapaetia, 5:18:44. 6, Kai 'Opua, 5:26:44. 7, Wailea-1, 5:28:35. 8, Kailua-1, 5:30:18. 9, Hui Lanakila-1, 5:31:47. 10, 'Anuenue-1, 5:32:07. 11, Hui Nalu-1, 5:34:00. 12, Outrigger-1, 5:34:50. 13, Kawaihae, 5:35:56. 14, Dana Outrigger-1, 5:37:39. 15, Puna-1, 5:38:24. 16, Dana Outrigger-2, 5:40:26. 17, Waikiki Surf-Kanaina, 5:41:30. 18, Lanikai-2, 5:41:50. 19, Team B.C.-Canada, 5:42:27. 20, Hui Lanakila-Junior Masters, 5:47:23.

21, Hawaiian-1, 5:48:42. 22, Team California, 5:49:22. 23, Mooloolaba, 5:52:24. 24, Hanalei-2, 5:57:11. 25, Leeward Kai-Green, 5:59:02. 26, Outrigger-Japan, 5:59:07. 27, Kailua-2, 6:03:23. 28, Niumalu, 6:03:52. 29, Newport Aquatic Center, 6:04:26. 30, Manu O Ke Kai, 6:04:45. 31, Waikiki Beach Boys-1, 6:04:58. 32, Outrigger-2, 6:05:27. 33, Kai 'Opua-2, 6:05:54. 34, Manuiwa, 6:09:52. 35, Hanalei, 6:09:52. 36, Waikiki Surf-Laniakea, 6:11:10. 37, Hui Lanakila-2, 6:11:23. 38, Banque de Tahiti, 6:11:38. 39, Outrigger-Novice, 6:14:17. 40, Pu'uwai, 6:15:52. 41, Lokahi-2, 6:16:35. 42, Kailua-Golden, 6:17:38. 43, Kanu Connection, 6:18:14. 44, Kahana, 6:18:16. 45, Hanalei, 6:19:47. 46, Keahiakahoe, 6:20:13. 47, Hui Nalu-2, 6:20:25. 48, Tamalpais, 6:21:21. 49, Healani, 6:21:32. 50, Waikiki Yacht-1, 6:21:41. 51, Hui Lanakila-Senior Masters, 6:22:57. 52, 'Anuenue-2, 6:23:28. 53, Koa Kai-1, 6:23:51. 54, Kailua-3, 6:24:13. 55, Wailea-2, 6:24:34. 56, Hawaiian, 6:24:52. 57, Lanikai-3, 6:26:18. 58, 'Anuenue-3, 6:26:19. 59, Keoua O Honaunau, 6:29:42. 60, Napili-2, 6:32:20.

61, Outrigger-Senior Masters, 6:33:42. 62, Kihei, 6:35:05. 63, Kai Elua, 6:36:07. 64, Kamehameha-Hilo, 6:36:59. 65, Waikiki Beach Boys-2, 6:38:37. 66, Niumalu/Pu'uwai, 6:39:31. 67, Healani-2, 6:40:03. 68, I Mua, 6:41:16. 69, Waikiki Yacht-2, 6:41:17. 70, Lokahi-1, 6:41:52. 71, Hui Nalu-3, 6:42:08. 72, Koa Kai-2, 6:42:26. 73, Jericho, 6:42:35. 74, Puna-2, 6:43:57. 75, Lokahi-3, 6:44:19. 76, Lanikai-4, 6:44:34. 77, Na Keiki O Ka Mo'i, 6:44:52. 78, Hong Kong, 6:49:55. 79, Na Kai Ewalu, 6:51:02. 80, Hawaiian-Senior Masters, 6:54:42.

81, Waimanalo, 6:57:52. 82, Napili-1, 6:58:02. 83, Illinois Brigade, 6:59:35. 84, Hee Nalu O Marin, 7:02:08. 85, Keoua O Honaunau-2, 7:06:04. 86, Keaukaha, 7:06:17. 87, San Francisco-1, 7:06:18. 88, San Francisco-2, 7:06:44. 89, Leeward Kai-Yellow, 7:09:13. 90, Kai Oni/New Hope, 7:10:53. 91, Keaukaha-Senior Masters, 7:10:55. 92, Kupuna Poe Wa'a Keauhou, 7:11:36. 93, Ho'okai Pu'uwai, 7:16:36. 94, Lanikai-5, 7:17:23. 95, Kai Oni/New Hope-Senior Masters, 7:18:56. 96, Hui Nalu-4, 7:19:13. 97, Keaukaha-Golden Masters, 7:20:32. 98, Team Duke, 7:25:57. 99, Hui Lanakila-3, 7:30:07. 100, Alapa Hoe, 7:30:25. 101, Kai Poha, 7:31:06. 102, Kailua-Novice, 7:31:08. 103, Fairmont Kealani Maui, 7:32:01. 104, Koa Kai-3, 7:58:26. Did not finish: Kona Athletic, He'e Nalu, Kilohana.

### **Koa canoe**

1, Outrigger-1, 5:34:50. 2, Keoua O Honaunau, 6:29:42. 3, Kihei, 6:35:05.

### **Masters (35-older)**

1, Hui Lanakila, 5:47:23. 2, Team California, 5:49:22. 3, Mooloolaba, 5:52:24. 4, Kailua-2, 6:03:23. 5, Newport Aquatic Center, 6:04:26. 6, Kahana, 6:18:16. 7, Napili-1, 6:58:02. 8, Keoua O Honaunau, 7:06:04. 9, Hui Nalu-4, 7:19:13.

### **Senior Masters (45-older)**

1, Manuiwa, 6:08:04. 2, Hanalei, 6:09:52. 3, Hui Lanakila, 6:22:57. 4, Outrigger, 6:33:42. 5, Lokahi-3, 6:44:19. 6, Hawaiian, 6:54:42. 7, Keaukaha, 7:10:55. 8, Kai Oni/New Hope, 7:18:56. 9, Team Duke, 7:25:57.

### **Golden Masters (55-older)**

1, Kailua-Golden, 6:17:38. 2, 'Anuenue, 6:26:19. 3, Illinois Brigade