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Team New Zealand/Hawai'i reclaims Moloka'i Hoe title

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Advertiser Staff Writer

Our local legends live on.

Immortalized by those words in a commercial for Steinlager beer, Team New Zealand/Hawai'i fulfilled the hype with a convincing victory in the 52nd annual Hawaii Modular Space Moloka'i Hoe yesterday.

Team NZ/H completed the 41-mile course from Hale O Lono Harbor, Moloka'i, to Duke Kahanamoku Beach, Waikiki, in 5 hours, 2 minutes, 24 seconds. It was their second victory in three years, and avenged a runner-up finish to Rai of Tahiti last year.

"We got it back," steersman Karel Tresnak Jr. said. "That was a big motivating factor for us. We weren't going to be satisfied without a win."

Team NZ/H features a mix of paddlers from New Zealand (Rob Kaiwai, Maui Kjeldsen, Eugene "Woogie" Marsh and Andrew Penny), and Hawai'i (Tresnak, Raven Aipa, Thibert Lussiaa, Kea Pa'iaina and Bill Pratt).

Each team was allowed to rotate nine paddlers into the six seats of the canoe.

Ninety-six crews from around the world participated in the event. It is considered the world championship of long-distance outrigger canoe racing.

Almost from the start, Team NZ/H broke ahead of the field. Less than one hour into the race, Team NZ/H built a quarter-mile lead.

"We got lucky and caught a couple of nice little (wave) bumps off the start," Penny said. "We wanted to get ahead and so we worked really hard that first 30 minutes or so."

From there, Team NZ/H frustrated the other contenders by "covering" from the front.

"We had an idea what course we wanted to take, but once we got ahead, that changed a little," Kaiwai said. "We watched our competition and covered their courses. We didn't want anybody sneaking by us."

All the crews were challenged by a "sloppy" Kaiwi Channel that offered only a few surfable waves.

As Tresnak put it: "The conditions were junk, the tide was junk and it was sloppy. You had to work for everything."

Team NZ/H was 12 minutes off the record set in 2000 by Lanikai. But it was still almost five minutes faster than Lanikai's runner-up time yesterday of 5:07:15. Hui Nalu was a surprising third at 5:12:47, followed by Outrigger in 5:13:24.



Team New Zealand/Hawai'i's outrigger canoe paddlers celebrate after finishing the 41-mile course from Moloka'i to O'ahu in 5 hours, 2 minutes, 24 seconds.

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Top finishers

1. Team New Zealand/Hawai'i, 5:02:24
2. Lanikai, 5:07:15
3. Hui Nalu, 5:12:47
4. Outrigger, 5:13:24
5. Hawaiian, 5:14:48

Maui crews had its best showing ever, with Hawaiian placing fifth in 5:14:48, and Wailea sixth at 5:15:33.

After its breakthrough victory last year, Rai placed seventh yesterday in 5:17:17.

By the halfway point of yesterday's race, Lanikai was the only team with a remote shot at catching Team NZ/H. In an effort to make up ground off East O'ahu, Lanikai zigged and zagged from north to south, hoping to find a fast current.

"You can't follow the leader if you want to make a move to catch them," Lanikai's Mike Judd said. "You have to gamble."

But Team NZ/H refused to take the bet.

"We played a safe race," Penny said. "We watched where (Lanikai) went the whole time."

Hui Nalu, which was hardly mentioned as a pre-race contender, passed several canoes off East O'ahu to finish third.

"At Portlock, we were in seventh, I think, but we went on the inside (course) and started surfing by all the other crews on the outside," Hui Nalu's Chris Ball said.

In what may amount to be their final year together, Team NZ/H won three major international races: Hamilton Island Cup in Australia, Catalina Channel Crossing in California, and Moloka'i Hoe.

"We had one race in mind this year, and that's this one," Penny said. "Every year, there's talk about going our own ways, but for now, I think we'd all just like to bask in the glory."

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CANOES

Hawaii Modular Space Moloka'i Hoe

Yesterday's results

From Hale O Lono Harbor, Moloka'i to Duke Kahanamoku Beach, Waikiki

(41 miles)

Overall

1, Team New Zealand/Hawai'i (Raven Aipa, Rob Kaiwai, Maui Kjeldsen, Thibert Lussiaa, Kea Pa'aina, Eugene "Woogie" Marsh, Andrew Penny, Bill Pratt, Karel Tresnak Jr.), 5:02:24. 2, Lanikai-1 (Kai Bartlett, Kaai Bruhn, Kekoa Bruhn, Pete Binney, David Daniels, Jim Foti, John Foti, Ikaika Harbottle, Mike Judd), 5:07:15. 3, Hui Nalu (Chris Ball, Heath Hemmings, Wyatt Jones, Cliff Miedl, Devlin Murphy, Kai Mowatt, Peter Newton, Geordan Purdy, Eric Tema), 5:12:47. 4, Outrigger, 5:13:24. 5, Hawaiian, 5:14:48. 6, Wailea-1, 5:15:33. 7, Rai, 5:17:17. 8, Hui Lanakila, 5:17:33. 9, Kai 'Opua, 5:19:43. 10, Team Mahina, 5:21:46. 11, Mooloolaba, 5:22:49. 12, Hui Lanakila-2, 5:23:26. 13, False Creek, 5:25:34. 14, Lanakila-1, 5:25:54. 15, Kawaihae, 5:27:05. 16, Kailua-1, 5:28:02. 17, Puna, 5:29:11. 18, 'Anuenue-1, 5:30:18. 19, Jericho Outrigger, 5:31:07. 20, Kalifornia Kahanamoku's-35s, 5:32:50. 21, Team California, 5:35:05. 22, Outrigger Japan, 5:36:50. 23, Namolokama O Hanalei, 5:39:44. 24, Team Mattoch, 5:41:35. 25, Wailea-2, 5:42:03.

26, Keahiakahoe, 5:43:01. 27, Lanikai-2, 5:43:34. 28, Keoua O Honaunau, 5:44:42. 29, Kailua-55s, 5:47:00. 30, Namolokama O Hanalei-45s, 5:49:41. 31, Kailua-35s, 5:50:19. 32, Leeward Kai, 5:50:46. 33, Hawaiian, 5:51:36. 34, Kailua-2, 5:51:49. 35, Fatutira, 5:52:17. 36, Outrigger-II, 5:52:43. 37, Canoa Republic, 5:53:07. 38, Kahana, 5:53:10. 39, Hui Lanakila-3, 5:53:15. 40, Wa'akapaemua, 5:53:25. 41, Lokahi-1, 5:53:28. 42, Kalifornia Kahanamoku's-45s, 5:54:20. 43, Mahina Va'a, 5:55:54. 44, Kanu Connection, 5:56:14. 45, Hawaiian, 5:56:42. 46, Koa Kai, 5:57:09. 47, Pu'uwai, 5:58:30. 48, Waikiki Beach Boys, 5:59:37. 49, Napili, 6:01:46. 50, Lanikai-3, 6:01:50. 51, Hui Nalu-2, 6:02:29. 52, Hui Nalu-35s, 6:04:23. 53, Waikiki Surf, 6:05:56. 54, Lanakila-2, 6:06:33. 55, Kamehameha-Hilo, 6:07:23. 56, San Francisco, 6:07:39. 57, New Hope-3, 6:08:42. 58, New Hope-4, 6:08:47. 59, Na Keiki O Ka Mo'i, 6:10:21. 60, Healani-1, 6:11:36. 61, Jericho Outrigger-45s, 6:12:12. 62, Makaha, 6:12:26. 63, Venus Va'a, 6:14:06. 64, Kihei, 6:15:07. 65, Kaiola, 6:16:51. 66, Kilohana, 6:18:28. 67, 'Anuenue-55s, 6:19:47. 68, Keaukaha, 6:20:54. 69, Jericho Outrigger, 6:21:23. 70, Kukui O Moloka'i, 6:21:34. 71, Koa Kai, 6:23:30. 72, Koa Kai, 6:24:34. 73, 'Anuenue-2, 6:24:37. 74, Keoua O Honaunau-45s, 6:25:09. 75, Hui Lanakila, 6:25:39. 76, Niumalu, 6:25:48. 77, Magnetic Island, 6:28:18. 78, Kahana, 6:29:51. 79, Napili, 6:30:18. 80, Kihei-45s, 6:30:44. 81, Alapa Hoe, 6:33:11. 82, Kai Poha, 6:33:36. 83, Kamehameha, 6:34:20. 84, Keahiakahoe-55s, 6:34:45. 85, Kihei, 6:35:46. 86, Mako Club, 6:36:43. 87, Lokahi-2, 6:36:47. 88, Keola O Ke Kai, 6:37:39. 89, Kihei-55s, 6:39:37. 90, Waikiki Yacht-2, 6:52:05. 91, New Hope-1, 6:55:04. 92, Keaukaha-55s, 6:55:53. 93, Keaukaha-45s, 7:01:16. 94, New Hope-2, 7:04:37. 95, New Hope-5, 7:38:01. 96, Ka Mamalahoe, 8:19:44.

Masters 35-older

1, Mooloolaba (Phil Thistlewood, Marc Haine, Russ Johnson, Ron Grabbe, Ken Powel, Greg Rynne, Andrew Sprizzi, Rob Gowland, Guy Wilding), 5:22:49. 2, Kalifornia Kahanamoku's, 5:32:50. 3, Team California, 5:35:05. 4, Kailua, 5:50:19. 5, Fatutira, 5:52:17. 6, Hui Nalu, 6:04:23. 7, New Hope-3, 6:08:42. 8, Na Keiki O Ka Mo'i, 6:10:21. 9, Venus Va'a, 6:14:06. 10, Kihei, 6:15:07. 11, Mako Club, 6:36:43.

Masters 45-older

1, Namolokama O Hanalei (Steve Cole, Steve Baker, Togo Hermosura, Lance Laney, Mick Callahan, Gene Lopez, Mark Daniels, Leslie Yokotake, Kawika Goodale), 5:49:41. 2, Kalifornia Kahanamoku's, 5:54:20. 3, New Hope-4, 6:08:47. 4, Jericho Outrigger, 6:12:12. 5, Kaiola, 6:16:51. 6, Keoua O Honaunau, 6:25:09. 7, Kihei, 6:30:44. 8, Keaukaha, 7:01:16. 9, New Hope-5, 7:38:01.

Masters 55-older

1, Kailua (Hank Leandro, Mike Watson, Bob Bruce, Paul Gay, Bruce Clifford, Bob Thurston, Willy Dunhour, Sean Murphy, Kalani Delovio, Jeff Metzger, Paul Aguirre, Chris Crabb), 5:47:00. 2, 'Anuenue, 6:19:47. 3, Keahiakahoe, 6:34:45. 4, Kihei, 6:39:37. 5, Keaukaha, 6:55:53.

Koa canoe

1, Lanikai-2 (Kalani Irvine, Mike Smith, Zane Chess, Aaron Creps, Jeff Cummings, Scott Freitas, Bruce Lukas, James Bustamante, Herb Nahinu), 5:43:34. 2, Outrigger-2, 5:52:43.