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Shell Va'a leads Tahiti sweep

By [Dayton Morinaga](#)
Advertiser Staff Writer

Tahi, piti, toru.

In "Tahitian conditions" — humid air and a flat ocean — Tahiti teams finished one, two, three in the 55th annual Moloka'i Hoe yesterday.

The most impressive showing came from Shell Va'a, which won the 41-mile race in record time.

Shell Va'a completed the course from Hale O Lono Harbor, Moloka'i, to Duke Kahanamoku Beach, Waikiki, in 4 hours, 46 minutes, 4.5 seconds. It beat the previous record time of 4:50:31, set by Lanikai Canoe Club in 2000.

The Moloka'i Hoe is considered the world championship of long-distance canoe paddling.

"That was a crushing," Lanikai steersman Jim Foti said. "Tahiti is back."

Shell Va'a crushed the course record and the other 101 teams in the field. Hititoa/Erai came in second with a time of 5:00:27. The winning margin of 14 minutes, 23 seconds, was the largest gap between first and second places since 1962 (when Waikiki Surf Club beat Lanikai by 15 minutes).

"What (Shell Va'a) did today is unheard of," Outrigger Canoe Club steersman Karel Tresnak Jr. said. "Today was not supposed to be a fast one, and they blew everybody away. This was a really good field this year and how far ahead they were from the rest of us is crazy."

Raromatai placed third in 5:00:43, giving the Tahitians a sweep of the top three places for the second time in Moloka'i Hoe history. In 1976, Tahiti teams took the top four places.

Outrigger was fourth overall and first from Hawai'i with a time of 5:01:10. Lanikai, which won the Moloka'i Hoe in 2004 and '05, was fifth in 5:05:56.

"We don't go out to break records, we just try to go as fast as we can," Shell Va'a coach Gerard Teiva said. "But today, I guess God gave us the strength to get the record."

Last year, Shell Va'a did not enter the Moloka'i Hoe, but set a record in the Hawaiki Nui Va'a — Tahiti's biggest canoe race.

"We won the big races in Tahiti, but we knew we had to win Moloka'i to prove we were the best," Shell Va'a president Richel Moux said. "Now we have both."



Shell Va'a of Tahiti set a Moloka'i Hoe record, winning in 4 hours, 46 minutes, 4.5 seconds.

Photos by REBECCA BREYER | The Honolulu Advertiser



Shell Va'a is the fifth team from Tahiti to win the Moloka'i Hoe. The others were Te Oropa'a (1976), Faa'a (1993 and '94), and Ra'i (2002).

Members of the winning crew were Heiarii Mama, Karyl Maoni, Jason Ori, Jimmy Pirato, Lucien Tara, Vatea Taraufau, Bruno Tauhiro, Roland Teahui and David Tepava.

Outrigger stayed with Shell Va'a for the first hour of the race, but that was as close as it would get.

"At the beginning of the race, many teams were around us," Maoni said. "After maybe one hour, nobody was around us."

Shell Va'a coach Teiva said the team basically took a straight course from Moloka'i to O'ahu.

"Once we saw Diamond Head, we went straight for it," he said. "All our guys worked really hard today. Nobody gave up, and so (the lead) just got more and more."

It probably helped the Tahitian teams that the Kaiwi Channel was calm and winds were very light. Or, in other words, it hurt the Hawai'i teams that there were no waves to surf.

Nena Tauhiti of the second-place Hititoa/Erai team said: "We knew from Thursday that it would be flat, so we were happy. We know the Hawaiians are better at surfing than us."

As far as placing a distant second to Shell Va'a, Tauhiti said: "Shell is the best in all Tahiti — almost like professionals — so we're happy to be second to them. We're even more happy that Tahiti took the top three."

Tahitian reporter Yves Fortunet was sent to cover yesterday's race by La Depeche de Tahiti, the largest daily newspaper in Tahiti.

"It will be on the front page of our paper — a big story," he said. "The radio stations and television stations are already excited about it."

Shell Va'a, which is based in Papeete, received \$5,000. The first-place prize money was sponsored by Anheuser-Busch.

Outrigger came close to breaking up the Tahitian domination at the top of the standings.

"When we got to Hawai'i Kai, we were shocked to be in a battle for second place," Outrigger paddler Bill Pratt said. "It was Tahitian conditions, so to a degree, it's a good feeling to be that close to some of the top Tahitian teams."

"And we always have a healthy battle with Lanikai, so for us to hold them off is a victory in itself. To be the first Hawaiian crew is definitely a nice consolation."

Members of the Outrigger crew were Jimmy Austin, Kapono Brown, Mark Cluney, Will Estes, Rob Harrison, Ikaika Harbottle, Mike Kane, Pratt and Tresnak.

"I thought we paddled an incredible race under these conditions," Tresnak said.

Foti said the Lanikai crew was frustrated at the lack of surf across the Kaiwi Channel.

"There was some little stuff, but it was so hard to get into it," he said. "And it was so hot — like paddling in a frying pan."

However, Foti said the performance of the Tahitians was "good for the sport."

"This keeps things exciting," he said. "It's going to make everybody scratch their head and think about what we can do to beat them next time."

Rounding out the top 10 teams were Mooloolaba of Australia in sixth, Lanakila of California in seventh, Hawaiian of Maui in eighth, Team Paddler from Australia in ninth and Hui Lanakila of Honolulu in 10th.

A separate Outrigger crew won the masters 40-and-older division and placed an impressive 18th overall in 5:30:17.

Australia's Mooloolaba, which had won the masters 40-older division the three previous years, placed fourth.

Namolokama O Hanalei won the masters 50-older division in 6:10:40.

Waimanalo also had an impressive showing in the masters 55-older division, winning it for the second consecutive year. Waimanalo placed 35th overall and established a new record time for that division at 5:45:16 (Kailua held the previous mark of 5:47:00).

"There was no swell, so we had to paddle a lot," Dennis Sallas said. "And when you get to be our age, you rather surf and go downhill. But we train hard and it paid off on a day like this."

Members of the crew were Harold Akeo, Ken Bailey, Fred Berengue, Charles Kalama, Nolan Kim, Loka Lii, Mel Mau, Jeff Metzger, Bernie Paloma, Sallas, Nathan Ukishima and Carl Woehrl.

"What we try to do is stay next to the young boys and see if we can keep up," Sallas said.

Most teams rotated nine paddlers into the six seats of the canoe. Masters 55-older teams could rotate 12.

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PADDLING

MOLOKA'I HOE

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

41 MILES

FINAL RESULTS

OVERALL

1, Shell Va'a (Heiarii Mama, Karyl Maoni, Jason Ori, Jimmy Pirato, Lucien Tara, Vatea Taraufau, Bruno Tauhiro, Roland Teahui, David Tepava), 4:46:04. 2, Hitito/Erai, 5:00:27. 3, Raromatai, 5:00:43. 4, Outrigger, 5:01:10. 6, Mooloolaba, 5:07:53. 7, Lanakila (Calif.), 5:07:59. 8, Hawaiian, 5:10:05. 9, Team Paddler, 5:11:33. 10, Hui Lanakila, 5:12:33. 11, Tui Tonga, 5:14:54. 12, Team Pogue, 5:17:29. 13, Hui Nalu, 5:20:11. 14, Outrigger-2, 5:24:13. 15, Tui Tonga-2, 5:25:47. 16, Namolokama, 5:27:42. 17, Keaukaha, 5:29:18. 18, Outrigger 40s, 5:30:17. 19, Hui Lanakila-2, 5:30:50. 20, Team West Hawai'i, 5:31:51. 21, Lanikai-2, 5:32:00. 22, Team Fiji, 5:32:02. 23, Puna, 5:32:56. 24, Team California, 5:33:50. 25, Keahiakahoe, 5:34:43. 26, Waikiki Beach Boys-3, 5:35:09. 27, Kukui O Moloka'i, 5:36:34. 28, Hui Nalu-3, 5:36:59. 29, Hawaiian-2, 5:39:29. 30, Mooloolaba-2, 5:40:15. 31, Team Italy, 5:41:18. 32, False Creek-1, 5:42:43. 33, Kahana, 5:43:20. 34, Outrigger Japan, 5:44:20. 35, Waimanalo, 5:45:16. 36, Outrigger-3, 5:45:55. 37, Kaiola, 5:46:35. 38, Healani, 5:47:23. 39, Eastern Outrigger, 5:48:32. 40,

Leeward Kai, 5:48:39. 41, 'Anuenue, 5:50:30. 42, Lae'ula O Kai, 5:51:12. 43, Healani-1, 5:51:56. 44, Kai 'Opua, 5:52:16. 45, Lanakila (Calif)-2, 5:53:11. 46, Pu'uwai, 5:53:44. 47, Kanu Connection, 5:54:04. 48, Koa Kai, 5:54:48. 49, Waikiki Beach Boys-1, 5:55:02. 50, Hawaiian-3, 5:55:15. 51, Manu O Ke Kai, 5:55:54. 52, Hana, 5:56:19. 53, San Francisco, 5:57:25. 54, Brisbane, 5:57:46. 55, Kailua-1, 5:57:51. 56, Waikiki Beach Boys-2, 5:58:04. 57, Kilohana, 5:58:13. 58, New Hope-1, 5:58:31. 59, Kai Aniani, 5:58:44. 60, Shonan, 5:58:52. 61, Koa Kai-1, 6:00:15. 62, Lanikai-3, 6:00:23. 63, Honolulu Fire, 6:02:25. 64, Lokahi, 6:04:15. 65, He'e Nalu, 6:05:01. 66, Pacific Northwest, 6:05:01. 67, False Creek-2, 6:05:11. 68, Keauhou, 6:05:36. 69, Lokahi, 6:06:16. 70, Waikiki Surf Club, 6:06:31. 71, North Shore Renegades, 6:08:07. 72, Lae'ula O Kai, 6:09:05. 73, 'Anuenue, 6:09:20. 74, Kai Elua, 6:09:33. 75, Namolokama O Hanalei, 6:10:40. 76, New Caledonia, 6:10:49. 77, Hui Nalu-2, 6:10:51. 78, Kukui O Moloka'i-2, 6:11:43. 79, Kamehameha-Hilo, 6:15:34. 80, Kailua-2, 6:17:00. 81, New Hope 55s, 6:17:14. 82, Waikiki Yacht-2, 6:17:17. 83, Kihei, 6:19:05. 84, Hawaiian Kanaktion, 6:19:52. 85, Healani-2, 6:21:37. 86, Pu'uwai, 6:22:21. 87, Lanikai 55s, 6:24:24. 88, New Hope 40s, 6:25:32. 89, 'Alapa Hoe-2, 6:26:07. 90, Ka Mo'i, 6:27:38. 91, Kilohana, 6:27:59. 92, Waikiki Yacht-1, 6:28:15. 93, New Hope-2, 6:29:36. 94, Keola O Ke Kai, 6:30:37. 95, Ka Mamalahoe, 6:31:21. 96, Honolulu Pearl, 6:32:35. 97, Puakea Foundation, 6:33:59. 98, 'Alapa Hoe-1, 6:34:19. 99, Keahiakahoe-2, 6:34:53. 100, Kihei, 6:35:21. 101, NAB Vets, 7:09:19. DQ, Team Hawai'i/Kailua.

MASTERS 40-OLDER

1, Outrigger 40s (Jim Beaton, Todd Bradley, Walter Guild, Marc Haine, Karl Heyer, Chris Kincaid, Chris Miller, Mark Rigg, Courtney Seto), 5:30:17. 2, Team California, 5:33:50. 3, Hui Nalu-3, 5:36:59. 4, Mooloolaba-2, 5:40:15. 5, Healani, 5:47:23. 6, Eastern Outrigger, 5:48:32. 7, Koa Kai, 5:54:48. 8, Kailua-1, 5:57:51. 9, Lokahi, 6:06:16. 10, Waikiki Yacht-2, 6:17:17. 11, New Hope 40s, 6:25:32. 12, Kilohana, 6:27:59.

MASTERS 50-OLDER

1, Namolokama O Hanalei (Mark Baird, Mick Callahan, Kawika Goodale, Aldrino Togo Hermosura, Gene Lopez, Tom Perry, Andy Reich, Reed Summer, Tom Thompson), 6:10:40. 2, Kihei, 6:19:05. 3, Hawaiian Kanaktion, 6:19:52. 4, Ka Mamalahoe, 6:31:21.

MASTERS 55-OLDER

1, Waimanalo (Harold Akeo, Ken Bailey, Fred Berengue, Charles Kalama, Nolan Kim, Loka Lii, Mel Mau, Jeff Metzger, Bernie Paloma, Dennis Sallas, Nathan Ukishima, Carl Woehrl), 5:45:16. 2, Keauhou, 6:05:36. 3, 'Anuenue, 6:09:20. 4, New Hope 55s, 6:17:14. 5, Lanikai 55s, 6:24:24. 6, Kihei, 6:35:21.

KOA CANOE

1, Outrigger-3, 5:45:55. 2, Puakea Foundation, 6:33:59.