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## Record victory for Shell Va'a

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Advertiser Staff Writer

Maybe Shell is providing the Shell Va'a paddling team with jet fuel or something like it.

Shell Va'a once again left the rest of the field in a proverbial vapor trail as it won the Bud Light Moloka'i Hoe in record time for the second consecutive year.

Shell Va'a — which is from Tahiti and is sponsored by the Shell oil company — completed the 41-mile course across the Kaiwi Channel in 4 hours, 40 minutes, 22 seconds.

It was almost six minutes faster than the record time it set last year.

"Last year when we won, people said because (the ocean) was flat," Shell Va'a club president Richel Moux said. "We wanted to prove that even on the waves, we can do it."

The race from Hale O Lono Harbor, Moloka'i, to Duke Kahanamoku Beach, Waikiki, is considered the world championship of long-distance outrigger canoe racing for men's teams. A record 111 crews entered this year.

The last two years, nobody has come close to Shell Va'a.

Team OPT, another crew from Tahiti, placed second in 4:43:15. It was the second consecutive year that Tahiti teams finished first and second.

Team New Zealand/Hawai'i was third in 4:56:59 — more than two miles behind Shell Va'a.

"For them to break the record again — and not just break the record, but smash it — is really incredible," said Andrew Penny, a member of the Team New Zealand/Hawai'i crew. "It says a lot about their preparation and commitment to the sport."

Members of the Shell Va'a crew were Moana Mairau, Heiarii Mama, Karyl Maoni, Dehors Matatini, Jason Ori, Jimmy Pirato, Lucien Tara, Roland Teahui and David Tepava. Seven of them returned from last year.

"The past three months, we do nothing but train for Moloka'i; no races," Maoni said. "In Tahiti, we went out every day and looked for waves to practice for this day."

There were some 4- to 8-foot swells across the Kaiwi Channel yesterday, but the conditions weren't completely "clean."



Shell Va'a spent the last three months practicing in the waves off Tahiti, and it paid off with a record-breaking victory in the Bud Light Moloka'i Hoe yesterday. Shell Va'a finished with a record time of 4 hours, 40 minutes 22 seconds, to win it for the second straight year.

JOAQUIN SIOPACK | The Honolulu Advertiser

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"You really had to work for the (wave) bumps," Penny said. "But I think the Tahitians wanted to prove a point by winning in rough conditions like this and they did."

As Shell Va'a's Ori said: "It was important for us to show that Tahitians can paddle in waves."

Team New Zealand/Hawai'i stayed with the Tahitians for the first hour, but after that it became a two-team race for first.

"We got ahead of Shell for a little bit in the first half of the race, but then they went ahead for good," Team OPT spokesman Sebastien Maurice said. "As we got close (to O'ahu), we went inside to try and get a favorable surf line, but no. Shell was too far ahead."

Still, it was an impressive showing for OPT when considering it was the first time they were competing in the Moloka'i Hoe.

Tahiti teams also placed fifth (Venus Va'a), sixth (Pirae Va'a) and ninth (OPT's "B" team).

"Two teams getting first and second is very good news for Tahiti," Maurice said. "And others were in the top (10), so it was a good day."

Team New Zealand/Hawai'i also had a good day. Although it finished third yesterday, the time of 4:56:59 was the eighth fastest in the 56-year history of the Moloka'i Hoe.

"To top off the season with that kind of performance and have a fun race like that is really sweet," Penny said. "We were hammering. We had a good race. To be first from Hawai'i and third overall behind the two best Tahitian teams is not bad."

Team New Zealand/Hawai'i featured one paddler from New Zealand (Penny), one from Australia (Travis Grant) and seven from Hawai'i (Nick Agorastos, Raven Aipa, Heath Hemmings, Donovan Leandro, Thibert Lussiaa, Kea Pa'iaina and Bill Pratt).

Hawaiian Canoe Club from Maui placed fourth with a time of 4:58:44. It was the best showing ever for a crew from Maui.

"We're stoked with this," Hawaiian's Kai Bartlett said. "To improve this much and break that top five is a big thing for us."

Hawaiian was also the first team to finish with an all-Hawai'i crew yesterday.

Perennial contender Lanikai edged Outrigger for seventh place in 5:05:04.1. Outrigger, which was considered the top seed from Hawai'i prior to the race, finished in eighth place, in 5:05:04.8.

Team Tiger placed 10th with a time of 5:06:26, and was the first from Australia.

'Anuenue Canoe Club — steered by Joseph "Nappy" Napoleon — finished 56th with a time of 5:55:55. Napoleon completed the Moloka'i Hoe for an unprecedented 50th consecutive year. Members of his crew were his five sons and three of his grandsons.

In any case, the Hawai'i teams have yet another year to figure out how to catch the Tahitians.

"Hopefully, we can be competitive with them one day," Team New Zealand/Hawai'i's Penny said. "Right now, they're kind of by themselves."

Hawaiian's Bartlett said: "It's more of a professional sport over there. We don't have the big sponsors like they do. But it's no excuse. We just have to suck it up and deal with it. Try to get faster."

## **OTHER DIVISIONS**

- Mooloolaba from Australia placed 22nd overall and first in the masters 40-older division in 5:27:14. It was the ninth time in the last 12 years that Mooloolaba won the 40-older division.

"We got fourth last year, so we really wanted to come back and get it," steersman Danny Sheard said. "Five of us are old enough for the (50-older) so this is nice."

The crew had eight paddlers from Australia, and Kaua'i's Steve Cole.

Outrigger 40s, which won the 40-older division last year, placed second yesterday.

- Kailua 50 placed 34th overall and first in the masters 50-older division in 5:42:36. It was the fastest time ever posted by a 50-older crew in the Moloka'i Hoe.

"You have races within the race, and that's how we look at it," team captain Kamoā Kalama said. "A lot of us are friends who have been paddling for a long time, so it was fun."

- Team Bradley/Waimanalo placed 35th overall and also set a record in the masters 55-older division with a time of 5:43:12.

It was the third consecutive year that Waimanalo won the 55-older division.

"It was a hard race — the (wave) bumps were coming from all kinds of angles," team member Dennis Sallas said. "We pray a lot, and at our age, making it across safely is the main thing."

Teams in the 55-older division could rotate 12 paddlers into the six seats of the canoe. All other teams could use nine.

- Lanikai placed 32nd overall and first with a koa canoe in 5:40:21. Only three crews used koa canoes yesterday; all the others raced in fiberglass canoes.

## **FINAL RESULTS**

### **OVERALL**

1, Shell Va'a (Moana Mairau, Heiarii Mama, Karyl Maoni, Dehors Matatini, Jason Ori, Jimmy Pirato, Lucien Tara, Roland Teahui, David Tepava), 4:40:22. 2, Team OPT, 4:43:15. 3, Team New Zealand/Hawai'i, 4:56:59.4, Hawaiian-1, 4:58:44. 5, Venus Va'a, 5:01:02. 6, Pirae Va'a, 5:03:51. 7, Lanikai-1, 5:05:04. 8, Outrigger-1, 5:05:04. 9, Team OPT-B, 5:06:26. 10, Team Tiger, 5:10:28. 11, Hawai'i Canoe & Kayak, 5:13:33. 12, Tui Tonga, 5:15:20. 13, Lanakila-Calif., 5:16:01. 14, Team Pogue, 5:18:19. 15, Herberts On Tour, 5:19:25. 16, Leeward Kai-1, 5:19:57. 17, Outrigger-2, 5:21:35. 18, Keahiakahoe, 5:22:18. 19, Team Cal/Hawai'i, 5:23:19. 20, Hawaiian-2, 5:26:22. 21, Kailua-1, 5:26:58. 22, Mooloolaba 40s, 5:27:14. 23, Keaukaha, 5:30:31. 24, Te Awa Haku, 5:30:46. 25, Outrigger 40s, 5:30:48.

26, Hui Lanakila-1, 5:31:19. 27, Namolokama O Hanalei, 5:32:32. 28, Team West Hawai'i, 5:34:14. 29, Hui Nalu-1, 5:35:13. 30, Puna, 5:38:36. 31, Waikiki Beachboys-2, 5:39:48. 32, Lanikai-2, 5:40:21. 33, Outrigger-koa, 5:41:36. 34, Kailua 50, 5:42:36. 35, Team Bradley/Waimanalo, 5:43:12. 36, Canoa Republic, 5:44:00. 37, Hui Lanakila-2,

5:45:53. 38, Hanalei, 5:46:23. 39, Kihei, 5:46:33. 40, Hawaiian-3, 5:48:22. 41, Keauhou, 5:48:43. 42, Lae'ula O Kai-Green, 5:48:50. 43, New Caledonia, 5:50:05. 44, Hawaiian-4, 5:50:21. 45, San Francisco, 5:50:33. 46, Kilohana-Calif., 5:50:57. 47, Lanikai-3, 5:51:18. 48, Kalihi Kai, 5:51:38. 49, Pu'uwai, 5:52:02. 50, Kai 'Opua-2, 5:52:08.

51, Koa Kai-1, 5:52:39. 52, California Gold, 5:52:58. 53, Kahana-1, 5:54:00. 54, Casco Bay, 5:54:13. 55, Oceanside-A, 5:54:36. 56, 'Anuenue-1, 5:55:55. 57, Pacific Northwest, 5:56:33. 58, Easy Living, 5:57:52. 59, Team Big Island, 5:59:32. 60, Keahiakahoe, 6:00:56. 61, Marina Del Rey, 6:01:41. 62, Kaiola, 6:01:41. 63, Leeward Kai-2, 6:02:55. 64, Kailua-2, 6:02:55. 65, Healani, 6:03:49. 66, Kai 'Opua-1, 6:05:58. 67, Lae'ula O Kai-Red, 6:06:09. 68, Ka Mamalahoe, 6:06:31. 69, Hawaiian Kanaktion, 6:06:55. 70, Puakea Foundation, 6:07:57. 71, Kamehameha-Hilo, 6:08:26. 72, Maui Gold, 6:08:45. 73, Firefighters, 6:09:23. 74, Oceanside-B, 6:11:29. 75, Shonan Outrigger, 6:12:26.

76, Team Brazil, 6:12:32. 77, 'Anuenue-2, 6:15:01. 78, Lokahi 40, 6:15:41. 79, Waikiki Surf Club, 6:16:26. 80, North Shore Renegades, 6:16:37. 81, Pu'uwai-1, 6:18:20. 82, Na Keiki O Ka Mo'i, 6:18:25. 83, Pu'uwai-2, 6:19:20. 84, New Hope-1, 6:20:17. 85, Lokahi, 6:20:47. 86, Namolokama 50, 6:21:24. 87, Kaiola 55, 6:21:24. 88, Kailua-2, 6:23:05. 89, Waikiki Beachboys-1, 6:23:09. 90, Kahana-2, 6:23:10. 91, Lanikai 55, 6:24:20. 92, Kona Athletic, 6:26:32. 93, Waikiki Yacht-Blue, 6:28:11. 94, New Hope-2, 6:37:16. 95, Koa Kai-2, 6:39:06. 96, Kihei-2, 6:41:20. 97, Keola O Ke Kai, 6:42:48. 98, Hui Nalu-2, 6:42:50. 99, Waikoloa, 6:43:10. 100, Mountain Home, 6:43:17.

101, Kai Poha, 6:44:37. 102, Honolulu Pearl, 6:44:52. 103, Alapa Hoe 40, 6:47:01. 104, Waikiki Yacht-Orange, 6:47:24. 105, Alapa Hoe, 6:55:07. 106, Kawaii, 7:01:37. 107, Lake Havasu, 7:02:47. 108, New Hope 55, 7:03:32. 109, Waimanalo, 7:15:01. 110, New Hope-3, 7:26:59. DNF, Lanakila-Calif.-2.

#### **MASTERS 40-OLDER**

1, Mooloolaba (Steve Cole, Ron Grabbe, Darren Humberstone, Andrew Jones, Danny Sheard, Mick Smith, Wayne Smith, Phil Thistlewood, Trevor Wendt), 5:27:14. 2, Outrigger 40, 5:30:48. 3, Canoa Republic, 5:44:00. 4, Hui Lanakila-2, 5:45:53. 5, Keauhou, 5:48:43. 6, Casco Bay, 5:54:13. 7, Oceanside-B, 6:11:29. 8, Lokahi 40, 6:15:41. 9, Waikoloa, 6:43:10. 10, Honolulu Pearl, 6:44:52. 11, Alapa Hoe 40, 6:47:01. 12, Kawaii, 7:01:37. 13, Lake Havasu, 7:02:47. 14, Waimanalo, 7:15:01.

#### **MASTERS 50-OLDER**

1, Kailua 50 (Bob Eheler, Walter Hamasaki, Paul Hewett, Steve Holbrook, Kamoia Kalama, Mike McCue, Mark Myers, Ben Quitevis, Nyle Warriner), 5:42:36. 2, Namolokama 50, 6:21:24.

#### **MASTERS 55-OLDER**

1, Team Bradley/Waimanalo (Harold Akeo, Tommy Arnott, Ken Bailey, Bill Bright, Mark Buck, Chris Crabb, Charles Kalama, Jimmy Kincaid, Bill Mowat, Bob Rocheleau, Dennis Sallas, Nathan Ukishima), 5:43:12. 2, California Gold, 5:52:58. 3, Team Big Island, 5:59:32. 4, Hawaiian Kanaktion, 6:06:55. 5, Maui Gold, 6:08:45. 6, Kaiola 55, 6:21:24. 7, Lanikai 55, 6:24:20. 8, Kihei, 6:41:20. 9, New Hope 55, 7:03:32.

#### **KOA CANOE**

1, Lanikai-2 (Peter Abcarian, Kahaku Aspelund, Quinn Barber, Clifton Botelho, Thomas Cavaco, Robert Edge, Brett Fillmore, Scott Freitas), 5:40:21. 2, Outrigger-koa, 5:41:36. 3, Puakea Foundation, 6:07:57.

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