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CANOES

Shell Va'a makes it 3 in row

📷 Photo gallery: [Moloka'i Hoe](#)

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Gas prices continue to fall at Shell stations — just like paddling records for the Shell Va'a team from Tahiti.

Shell Va'a continued to amaze the paddling world with another record-breaking victory in the Moloka'i Hoe men's championship race yesterday.

Shell Va'a won its third consecutive Moloka'i Hoe, completing the 41-mile race from Hale O Lono Harbor, Moloka'i, to Duke Kahanamoku Beach, Waikiki, in 4 hours, 38 minutes, 35 seconds.

Shell Va'a, which is sponsored by the Shell oil company, beat the previous record time — which it set last year — by nearly two minutes.

"We don't look for records, we just look to be first on the beach," Shell Va'a coach Gerard Teiva said. "If the record comes, fine. But we are happy just to get here first again."

It is arguably the greatest three-year run in the 57-year history of the Moloka'i Hoe, which is considered the world championship of long-distance outrigger canoe paddling. No team has come close to Shell Va'a the past three years.

What's more, Shell Va'a has set a course record in each of the past three years.

Venus Va'a — also from Tahiti — finished a distant second yesterday in 4:48:59.

Lanikai Canoe Club finished third in 4:51:50 and was the first team from Hawai'i.

"They're not just the best, they're the best ever," Lanikai's John Foti said of Shell Va'a. "I think you have to say that now. What they're doing is just incredible."

A total of 106 canoes started yesterday's race, and Shell Va'a moved to the front of the pack almost immediately.

"From the first (relief) change, we were already way in front," said Shell Va'a president Richel Moux, who followed the team on an escort boat. "As we got to the (Kaiwi) Channel, our only fear was that we would go the wrong way."

Members of the Shell Va'a crew were Yoann-Claude Cronstedt, Picard Hoani, Hei-Moana Mairau, Jean Manea, Dehors Matatini, Jimmy Pirato, Lucien Tara, Bruno Tauhiro and David Tepava.

Only three of those paddlers — Pirato, Tara and Tepava — have been a part of all three winning crews.



Kekoa Bruhn, left, and his brother, Ka'ai Bruhn, celebrate Lanikai's third-place finish.

Photos by REBECCA BREYER | The Honolulu Advertiser



Shell Va'a finished the 41-mile race from Moloka'i to O'ahu in 4 hours, 38 minutes, 35 seconds.

"We bring in new boys every year to keep it going fast," coach Teiva said. "We had two young ones (Hoani and Manea) this year doing Moloka'i for the first time."

There were some 3- to 6-foot swells across the Kaiwi Channel, but a clashing tide made for "sloppy" conditions.

"There were some waves," Moux said. "We trained for everything, so we were ready if it was flat or lots of surf."

Shell Va'a is now the first non-Hawai'i team to win the Moloka'i Hoe three years in a row. The only other team with a longer streak is Waikiki Surf Club, which won six straight from 1958-63.

"When you see how few teams can make three in a row, you realize how difficult it is," Moux said. "So we are very happy with this. All of Tahiti, I think, is happy."

Venus Va'a surged past Lanikai late in the race to take second.

"Shell is the best," Venus Va'a steersman Owen Manutea said. "We are happy to get second to them. Even more so because usually OPT is a very strong team."

OPT, the only team to beat Shell Va'a earlier this year in Tahiti, placed fourth in 4:53:14.

Lanikai implemented a strict training program this year in hopes of an upset, but was never able to get within striking distance of Shell Va'a yesterday.

"Well, last year we didn't see them at all," Lanikai's Kekoa Bruhn said. "At least we could see them in front of us this year, so that was kind of cool."

John Foti said Lanikai trained "in every condition possible," but was still frustrated by yesterday's sloppy ocean.

"There were days when we'd purposely do backwards tides to try and paddle in rubbish water," Foti said. "But none of those practice runs was as hard as this."

"Not that it would have made a difference, because Shell would have been fast in the surf, too. But it just would have been nice to at least get a little more something to play with."

Members of the Lanikai crew were Kai Bartlett, Ka'ai Bruhn, Kekoa Bruhn, David Daniels, Patrick Dolan, Ryan Dolan, Jim Foti, John Foti and Mike Judd.

"We put so much into this, we refused to quit," Kekoa Bruhn said. "We pushed all the way to the end. I'm still proud. This is the best third-place I ever got because Tahiti is just that much better. Nobody can touch them."

Tahiti teams took four of the first five places.

Outrigger of O'ahu placed sixth, and was second from Hawai'i in 5:04:39.

Pa'a, a mix of paddlers from around the state, was seventh in 5:07:33, and Hawaiian from Maui was eighth in 5:11:20.

Lanikai's second crew placed 10th overall in 5:13:19. That canoe was steered by Karel Tresnak Jr. He pulled out of the first team so that he could steer a "Mirage" canoe. Lanikai's first team used a "Lightning" canoe, the same model as Shell Va'a.

TEAM LIVESTRONG IS FIRST MASTERS CREW

Team Livestrong from the Big Island placed ninth overall and was first in the masters 40-older division in 5:12:35.

The crew is trying to help raise awareness for cancer research. Livestrong is the foundation run by former Tour de France cycling champion Lance Armstrong.

"He's our friend — he's come to the Big Island and paddled with us before," Team Livestrong's Nate Hendricks said. "We're just trying to support the foundation and spread the word."

Members of the Team Livestrong crew were Bruce Ayau, Jerry Bess, Steve Blythe, Mike Field, Hendricks, Seth Kloppes, Keoni Lindsey, Lyle Palakiko and Masepa Tanoai.

Four of them were on the Tui Tonga crew that finished second overall in the 2005 Moloka'i Hoe.

"A lot of us paddled together at Kai 'Opua, then we went to Tui Tonga," Hendricks said. "But we're older now, so we decided to get together and make this crew."

Interestingly, Hendricks said the crew tried to change its stroke technique this year to emulate the Tahitians.

"They're the best, they proved it again, so why not try to do what they're doing," he said.

Mooloolaba from Australia, which won the division last year, placed second in 5:25:45.

OTHER CREWS OF NOTE

- Kailua won the masters 50-older division for the second consecutive year and placed 34th overall with a time of 5:45:31.
- Team Bradley/Hui Nalu won the masters 55-older division and placed 48th overall with a time of 5:56:53.

The crew featured seven paddlers from Outrigger and five from Hui Nalu (crews in the 55-older division could use 12 paddlers, while all other divisions could use nine).

Both Outrigger and Hui Nalu are celebrating 100-year anniversaries this year.

"We were probably going to form this crew anyway, but it was just nice that it happened in a special year for both clubs," team member Chris Crabb said.

- Lanikai's third crew placed first in the koa canoe division. It placed 29th overall with a time of 5:41:28.

There were only two koa canoes in the race yesterday. The other, Puakea Foundation, placed 70th overall.

- 'Anuenue placed seventh in the masters 55-older division with a time of 6:23:52.

The crew was steered by Joseph "Nappy" Napoleon, who completed his record 51st consecutive Moloka'i Hoe.

- Pure Light Racing finished 105th (last in the field), but still made history.

The crew featured 11 adaptive paddlers who are physically challenged. They were steered and coached by Aka Hemmings, an able-bodied paddling veteran.

It was the first time that the team entered the Moloka'i Hoe.

FINAL RESULTS

OVERALL

1, Shell Va'a (Yoann-Claude Cronstedt, Picard Hoani, Hei-Moana Mairau, Jean Manea, Dehors Matatini, Jimmy Pirato, Lucien Tara, Bruno Tauhiro, David Tepava), 4:38:35. 2, Venus Va'a, 4:48:59. 3, Lanikai, 4:51:50. 4, Team OPT, 4:53:14. 5, Erai Va'a, 4:56:38. 6, Outrigger, 5:04:39. 7, Pa'a, 5:07:33. 8, Hawaiian-1, 5:11:20. 9, Team Livestrong, 5:12:35. 10, Lanikai-2, 5:13:19. 11, Kailua-1, 5:13:38. 12, Herberts On Tour, 5:16:39. 13, Hui Nalu, 5:18:07. 14, New Caledonia, 5:19:10. 15, Keahiakahoe, 5:19:55. 16, Hui Lanakila, 5:21:03. 17, Quiksilver California, 5:21:11. 18, Banque de Tahiti, 5:22:19. 19, Mooloolaba, 5:25:45. 20, Team California/Hawai'i, 5:26:20. 21, Team Zebra, 5:28:22. 22, Kailua-2, 5:30:53. 23, Outrigger-2, 5:31:54. 24, Outrigger 40s, 5:34:09. 25, Kai 'Opua, 5:36:06. 26, Healani, 5:36:45. 27, Kukui O Moloka'i, 5:37:02. 28, Waikiki Beach Boys, 5:39:46. 29, Lanikai (koa), 5:41:28. 30, Namolokama, 5:42:05.

31, Hawaiian-2, 5:42:20. 32, Air New Zealand, 5:44:01. 33, Tui Tonga, 5:45:08. 34, Kailua 50s, 5:45:31. 35, Pu'uwai, 5:46:18. 36, San Francisco, 5:46:56. 37, Namolokama 50s, 5:47:59. 38, Hui Nalu 40s, 5:48:16. 39, 'Anuenue-3, 5:50:41. 40, Kilohana, 5:50:42. 41, Kihei, 5:51:07. 42, Keauhou, 5:52:50. 43, Mol Hungary, 5:53:28. 44, Kai 'Opua-2, 5:54:40. 45, Wailea, 5:54:47. 46, 'Anuenue-2, 5:55:25. 47, Team Passage, 5:56:12. 48, Team Bradley/Hui Nalu, 5:56:53. 49, Niupalu, 5:57:46. 50, Waimanalo 55s, 5:57:47. 51, Team Northwest, 5:58:53. 52, Shogun Outrigger, 5:59:10. 53, Kaiola, 5:59:30. 54, Lae'ula O Kai, 5:59:44. 55, Kaiola-2, 6:00:08. 56, Oceanside, 6:00:08. 57, Manuiwa, 6:00:36. 58, Kailua 40s, 6:04:17. 59, Lanikai-3, 6:04:36. 60, Pacific Northwest, 6:05:36.

61, Ka Mamalahoe, 6:06:56. 62, Akau Hana, 6:08:48. 63, California Gold, 6:09:30. 64, Outrigger 55s, 6:11:00. 65, Healani, 6:11:56. 66, Hawai'i County Fire Dept, 6:12:46. 67, Waikiki Beach Boys, 6:12:52. 68, Koa Kai, 6:12:59. 69, New Hope 55s, 6:15:09. 70, Puakea Foundation, 6:15:17. 71, Kaiola 55s, 6:15:39. 72, Lae'ula O Kai, 6:16:12. 73, Jericho, 6:16:49. 74, Kai 'Opua, 6:17:03. 75, Marina, 6:17:30. 76, Lokahi 40s, 6:17:46. 77, Lokahi, 6:18:50. 78, Kai Poha, 6:21:53. 79, Keahiakahoe, 6:23:38. 80, 'Anuenue 55s, 6:23:52. 81, Kamehameha, 6:24:50. 82, Waikiki Beach Boys, 6:26:30. 83, Kamehameha-Hilo, 6:27:11. 84, Kihei/Maui Gold, 6:28:49. 85, Kamehameha-2, 6:30:17. 86, Pu'uwai, 6:30:37. 87, Team Pacific, 6:31:25. 88, Outrigger, 6:32:44. 89, Seattle Huki Wai, 6:35:18. 90, Kane'ohe, 6:36:44.

91, Kai Oni, 6:37:34. 92, Alapa Hoe, 6:40:47. 93, Keahiakahoe 40s, 6:46:19. 94, Honolulu Pearl, 6:50:15. 95, Kihei, 6:49:35. 96, Honolulu Pearl, 6:50:15. 97, Oceanside 40s, 6:50:17. 98, Ke Kai O'uhane, 6:50:17. 99, New Hope, 6:52:03. 100, Alapa Hoe, 6:53:53. 101, New Hope, 6:55:30. 102, Alapa Hoe, 7:03:15. 103, Lake Havasu, 7:22:04. 104, New Hope, 7:28:12. 105, Pure Light, 7:59:25.

KOA CANOE

1, Lanikai (Peter Abcarian, Thomas Cavaco, Scott Freitas, Michael Hall, Bruce Lucas, Mike Scales, David Smith, Michael Smith, Bobby Yoza), 5:41:28. 2, Puakea Foundation, 6:15:17.

MASTERS 40-OLDER

1, Team Livestrong (Bruce Ayau, Jerry Bess, Steve Blythe, Mike Field, Nate Hendricks, Seth Koppes, Keoni Lindsey, Lyle Palakiko, Masepa Tanoai), 5:12:35. 2, Mooloolaba, 5:25:45. 3, Team California/Hawai'i, 5:26:20. 4, Outrigger, 5:34:09. 5, Hui Nalu, 5:48:16. 6, Keauhou, 5:52:50. 7, Lae'ula O Kai, 5:59:44. 8, Kailua, 6:04:17. 9, Lanikai, 6:04:36. 10, Kai 'Opua, 6:17:03. 11, Lokahi, 6:17:46. 12, Keahiakahoe, 6:46:19. 13, Oceanside, 6:50:17. 14, Alapa Hoe, 6:52:53.

MASTERS 50-OLDER

1, Kailua (Lance Anderson, Bob Eheler, Wally Hamasaki, Paul Hewlett, Stephen Holbrook, Kamoia Kalama, Michael McCue, Benny Quitevis, Nyle Warriner), 5:45:31. 2, Namolokama, 5:47:59. 3, Manuiwa, 6:00:36.

MASTERS 55-OLDER

1, Team Bradley/Hui Nalu (Harold Akeo, Tom Arnott, Ken Bailey, Bill Bright, Mark Buck, Chris Crabb, Beanie Heen, Charles Kalama, Jimmy Kincaid, Bill Mowat, Bob Rocheleau, Butch Ukishima), 5:56:53. 2, Waimanalo, 5:57:47. 3, California Gold, 6:09:30. 4, Outrigger, 6:11:00. 5, New Hope, 6:15:09. 6, Kaiola, 6:15:39. 7, 'Anuenue, 6:23:52. 8, Kihei/Maui Gold, 6:28:49. 9, Team Pacific, 6:31:25. 10, Lake Havasu, 7:22:04.

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