

Molokai Hoe will be shown live via Internet

By Star Bulletin

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The Molokai Hoe is already regarded as the world championship of outrigger canoe paddling.

Now, thanks to some innovative use of technology, the world can watch the race live via the Internet.

Ocean Paddler TV is providing a live Webcast of the Molokai Hoe on Sunday, giving a worldwide audience the chance to see the race as it happens for the first time.

"It is very important, and that's why we decided to do it that way," said race director Stan Dickson. "It's kind of like (watching) play-by-play, but in the ocean. It will probably make the race grow and that's another (positive) issue we'll have to deal with."

The images will be shot from a helicopter over the Kaiwi Channel, and broadcast via a broadband Internet connection. In a recent series of tests, Ocean Paddler TV determined the broadcast would be logistically sound while also cautioning that the feed may come in and out depending on the connectivity in the helicopter.

"On the Molokai side it's going to be a bit spotty, but as soon as we go past Laau Point, it should be clear from there," said Alex Reinprecht, executive producer for Ocean Paddler TV. "This is going to signal the next milestone in event coverage, as far as giving folks that follow our events instant gratification."

Sunday's race marks the 57th edition of the event and will feature more than 1,000 of the top long-distance paddlers representing clubs from around the world. The 41-mile race gets under way at Molokai's Hale O Lono Harbor, spans across the treacherous Kaiwi Channel and finishes at Duke Kahanamoku Beach adjacent to the pier fronting the Hilton Hawaiian Village.

The live feed will commence approximately 5 minutes after the projected 7:30 a.m. start time as the helicopter will need to travel within range of the nearest reliable Internet connection. Near the race's halfway point, there will be an hour-and-a-half break in the feed as the helicopter breaks away to refuel. The broadcast is expected to resume around 10:15 a.m., in time to showcase the event's home stretch and finish.

Viewers can find the live feed at the race's official Web site: molokaihoe.org. The site also features an interactive Web chat section and Twitter updates to complement the streaming video.

"It's very important because the Molokai Hoe is considered the world championship of canoe paddling," said Reinprecht of the broadcast's significance. "Usually people don't see the race

until (the crews) come around Diamond Head. So now they have an opportunity to see what it's like out there."

In a related programming note, the Na Wahine O Ke Kai, which was held nearly two weeks ago, will be featured tonight on Ocean Paddler TV at 7 in high definition on OC 16. The women's equivalent of the Molokai Hoe saw Team Bradley win the race for the fifth consecutive year.