

the Outrigger



4 OCC Canoes Compete in 2014 Molokai Hoe

By Mark Cluney, Open Men's Coach



The recently renovated Grand Dame koa racing canoe the *Leilani* again showed her fighting spirit. She won her first Molokai Race in 1956. This year, 58 years later, Club paddlers won the Koa Division in both the Na Wahine O Ke Kai and the Molokai Hoe in the *Leilani*. Here Christian Bradley steers the men cross the Molokai Channel. Photo by Ropati.

The men's open paddling program entered four crews in the 2014 Moloka'i Hoe race on October 12. Forty six candidates competed for 36 seats to represent the Outrigger Canoe Club while keeping the spirit of teamwork, a positive attitude, and inclusion that carried throughout the entire program.

Our elite paddlers took it upon themselves to share their knowledge with the younger and more novice of our program which produced a more unified "no drama" feel.

Supporters of both open programs stepped up to assist with coaching, escort boat driving, and filling in wherever they were needed. Our open programs could not be as successful as they were without the support of these individuals.

Mahalo to Tom McTigue for help with coaching, escort boat driving, running crew changes, and even assisting our "crew sisters" with grill duties on Moloka'i prior to the Hoe.

Then there were our "crew sisters". These girls, along with Tom, did our Costco food run, prepped our meals, did room assignments, and allowed the boys to get needed rest that would aid in their performance in the Ka'iwi Channel.

A big mahalo to Dianne Vicheinrut, Jenn Kilpatrick, Colleen Hall, and Anella Borges. These women were part of our women's program and the men were very grateful to have them along.

Our *Henry Keawe Ayau* crew placed ninth overall and had a magnificent start, leading the race for the first hour and a half despite a dropping tide and winds more from the north. These factors helped to contribute to slower times for the entire race field.

Members of the crew were; Karel Tresnak Jr., Bret Chuckovich, Scott Gamble, Simeon Ke Paloma, Alfred Van Giesen, Sean Ka'awa, Victor Bovino Agostini, Travis Grant, and Mike Beyer. *Henry* finished with a time of 5:28:42. Anella and Dianne assisted with water drops and constant boat balance!

A great battle ensued at Diamond Head between the *Leilani* koa crew and Lanikai's koa entry with the *Leilani* passing Lanikai, and holding them off for first in the prestigious Koa Division.

Members of our *Leilani* crew were Christian Bradley at the steer, Kealaka'i Hussey, Max Solmsson, Indar Lange, Cory

Nakamura, James Fowler, Ryan Woodward, Uluwehi Keaunui, and Kekoa Santos.

Hats off to Coach Jim Beaton and Casey Kahikina as they guided and assisted *Leilani* and crew to the victory. Strategy and tactics played a big part of their race and Beaton and Kahikina worked their magic to put the boys in the best possible position to surf. They've been doing this all season and we appreciate their help with our program! *Leilani* finished in 26th position

overall with a time of 5:55:03.

The *Manu Ula* crew, a fiberglass entry achieved a great result as well, finishing in the top half of the competition. This crew consisted of experienced and novice paddlers as well as youngsters that we hope will be the future of our Club and program.

At the steer was Kaponu Fujitani. Keep an eye on this young man as you will watch him grow into one of our young leaders with great presence and a positive spirit. Joining him in the *Manu Ula* were Connor Grune, Roydon Yim, Stephan Enos, Jeff Newton, Nate Jenkins, Pat Shea, Riggs Silva, and Deke Kilpatrick.

This crew had the expertise of Gunnar Schull and Billy Philpotts as escort boat crew to guide them through the channel. Jenn Kilpatrick assisted with jokes and water changes. Mahalo for your assistance lady and gentlemen! We all appreciate your enthusiasm and support! *Manu Ula* finished in 57th position with a time of 6:27:43.

In our *Loli'i* crew were a group of novices lead by the experience and leadership of a few good men. Although the novice paddlers made up the majority of our *Loli'i* crew, these experienced paddlers gave this group confidence, and helped them "break through" the mental and physical barriers that only Ka'iwi can throw at you.

Crew members were Leighton Miyachi, Jayson Whitman, Matt Esecson, Art Mallet, Chris Deuchar, Neal Hafner, Steve Valentin, Jeff Hoddick, and John Climaldi. They finished in 72nd place in a time of 6:43:32. Once again, Tom McTigue did a superior job keeping the boys on task while being assisted by Colleen Hall.

Tahiti crews finished in the first five places in this year's Molokai Hoe, with EDT Vaa the overall winner at 4:51:43, out paddling Shell Vaa by 16 seconds.

The men's program would like to especially thank Head Coach Guy Wilding for supporting our program as well as the other programs. His tireless work, and years of Olympic development training and coaching allowed all programs smart enough to tap into his knowledge, the opportunity to be successful and gain ground on our competition. He is key to helping Outrigger reach its goal of returning to the podium.

Moloka'i Hoe: The Experience of a Lifetime

By Yuki Saito



OCC's Junior Crew:

Coach Mike Lum, Noah Deer, Kaiko Manson, Solomon Souki, Walker Bolan, Ke'ea Lum, Kyle Chang, James Freitas, Yuki Saito (kneeling), Paul Goo, Robert Heckman. Photo by Harry Newhart.

When I got selected to be on the paddling crew along with Kaiko Manson, Walker Bolan, Noah Deer, James Freitas, Solomon Souki, Kyle Chang, Ke'ea Lum, and Robert Heckman, I was incredibly happy. I knew that Moloka'i would be the experience of a lifetime and I was so thrilled to be able to be a part of it.

Going into the race, I was nervous and anxious, but also excited. Out of the nine of us, five of us would be crossing the channel for the first time. I knew I would get tired so I went hard, but always knew in the back of my mind that I would have more energy later.

As I dipped my blade into the water for the first time as we all started to paddle, our movements completely synchronized, the warm sun like a blanket over our backs, I got completely lost in the high from my adrenaline and excitement.

Our bodies act as one, each stroke propelling the boat forward, as each pull jerks it forward like an eager dog waiting to get released from its chain. Even at the start, the sea acts as a gate keeper; the small chop along the way to the starting line shoved us, inducing us to turn around, the wind howls in our face, screaming in our faces to go slower, nonetheless we continue forward.

We reach the starting line, lined up with about a hundred other boats, in complete silence. I can hear the throbbing of my heart, the blood pumping through my veins, but I do not feel anxiety, instead I feel excitement.

I realize that in a few mere minutes, my crew and I will begin to cross one of the most challenging channels in the world. If that wasn't hard enough, we would be racing against open men, men completely willing to take us out, and that scared me a little. But from the backs of my crewmates and the energy emanating from their bodies, I knew that each of us was fully committed to this race, and that we would each give it our all.

The preparation for the race had not been easy. During the regular regatta season, aside from regular sprint work and regatta training during the weekdays, we had trained for distance races during the weekends, mainly on Sundays.

Each practice started at around 8 o'clock and lasted about two or three hours. We knew that the Moloka'i Hoe was our goal, but we knew that we could not simply just go from nothing to racing that race. We needed to build up to it so that we could have the most experience and confidence going into the race.

We continued to train on weekends, and had started to do long distance races such as the Duke race or the Henry race to build up racing experience. After completing each race, I figured that the Moloka'i race would be a similar experience. It was not.

After the first change, as I watched my crewmates paddle, I realized that it didn't matter if I got tired, and that I could depend on my teammates, Auntie Rosie Lum, Coach Mike Lum, and Uncle Stewart Kawakami to inspire me to have the energy I needed to paddle.

I think that this was the main difference between the Moloka'i race and all the other races; when you are paddling from Moloka'i to Oahu, and you're in the middle of the channel, there is no choice but to trust and depend on your teammates as well as yourself to finish the race.

The Moloka'i Hoe was an incredible experience that strengthened my bonds with my crewmates and coaches and stretched my mental strength to its limit. I'm not sure if anything can be compared to the experience that is offered by the crossing.

OCC's Junior crew finished second in the Junior Division to Lanikai, finishing in 6:31:07 in the canoe *Mamala*.

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