

Women, Boys Win Gold in Sprints

By John Finney

OCC was well represented at the World Outrigger Canoe Spring Championship races held at Long Beach Marine Stadium in mid-August. Benefitting from private funding, OCC was able to send the Women's Senior Crew, Boys' 18, Men's Junior and Men's Senior crews. The end result was the World Team Championship (unofficial) for OCC.

A spectacular effort by both the Boys 18 (undefeated during 1984) and the Women's Senior crew in the 1,000-meter sprint race produced gold medals. The Boys' 18 consisted of Alan Pflueger, Mark Sandvold, Todd Sandvold, Howie Klemmer, Matt Kresser, Mark Norfleet and Greg Sheehan. The Women's crew consisted of Lesline Conner, Muffer Scully, Sandra Stanley, Tracy Phillips, Mary Franco, Katie Bourne, Jeannie Jenkins and Tiare Finney. Both victories were won by close margins in world championship time.

The Men's Senior and Junior crews placed second and third respectively in the 1,000-meter sprint final, losing to the all-star Tahitian crew from Pirae in an extremely close race. The Men's Junior crew had a faster (world-record) time the previous day than the Tahitians' winning time but were unable to repeat in the finals. The Men's Senior crew consists of Ed Pickering, Bob Riley, Walter Guild, Brant Ackerman, Marc Haine and Bill Bright. The Men's Junior crew includes John Finney, Gib Bintliff, Tom Conner, Kevin Olds, Henry Ayau and Keone Downing.

The Men's Senior crew then followed a few minutes later with a silver medal effort in the grueling 3,000-meter sprint, losing to Imua of California. The Women's Senior crew, with Tiare Richert-Finney and Jennie Jenkins replacing Muffer Scully and Lesline Conner, also won a silver medal in a tremendous 3,000-meter women's final, losing to Hano Hano of California. Both crews would likely have won were it not for the effect of the 1,000-meter races immediately preceding these 3,000-meter "burners."

The closest race of the day followed

with a photo finish in the Men's double-hull race. Stroke counts reached an amazing 95 beats per minute in this 500-meter sizzler. Unfortunately, OCC's Men's double-hull consisting of the Men's Senior and Junior crews were awarded a contested bronze behind the Tahitians (Pirae and Maire Nui) and Imua. The 500-meter course was covered in 1:50 in this exciting race.

The Boys 18 on true form got another gold when they teamed with their chief adversary, Kawaihae Boys 18, to produce a stunning Hawaiian victory. The OCC girls 3,000-meter team joined with Na Kai Ewalu of Maui to gain a hard-sought bronze.

Finally, the dynamic duo of Tracy Phillips and Kevin Olds each turned up world-class finishes in the one-person 1,000-meter races. Tracy won against some tough-looking Tahitian amazons but was disqualified for a questionable lane violation. Kevin was truly spectacular in his bid against the more experienced Tahitian world champion, losing by less than a meter to take the silver. We predict two golds for these kids next year since they are just beginning in the one-person sprint circuit. Some very fine performances without medals were turned in by Tom Conner, Karl Heyer, Mary Franco, Jeannie Jenkins, Tiare Finney, Katie Bourne and Lesline Conner, proving once again that speed will not overcome the old adage that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. Practice your steering, girls, or we'll have to race on circle courses only.

OCC proved once again that it has the finest canoe club in the world with a victorious representation at the World Springs. No other club could match OCC's depth of talent in this world competition. Should canoe paddling become an Olympic sport, OCC will figure prominently in representing the U.S.

All paddlers are now polishing their blades for return matches in the long-distance races where the Tahitians and Californians can measure their success against miles and not just *meters*.