



Padding on the Masters crew were Tom McTigue, Henry Ayau, Mike Clifford, John Mounts, Bill Danford, host Max Christmas and Brant Ackerman.



Seas were rough in the Hamilton Cup race.

Winners of the Hamilton Cup race were Scott Rolles and Bruce Black, front; Mark Rigg, Chris Kincaid, Tom Conner, Coach Steve Scott and Marc Haine. Not pictured, Walter Guild, Keone Downing and Kainoa Downing.



OCC Wins Hamilton Cup

By Steve Scott

Australia, the land Down Under, home to koala bears and kangaroos, is now host to the newest international outrigger canoe race, the Hamilton Cup. The Outrigger Canoe Club was invited to compete in this year's race on June 10 and 11 by virtue of having won last year's Molokai-to-Oahu canoe race, and in June that winning crew left for Hamilton Island, located off the coast of Australia in the Great Barrier Reef.

Our host in Australia was Keith Williams, owner and developer of Hamilton Island resort, and one of the primary forces in getting outrigger canoe racing started in Australia.

In 1984, Keith brought a crew from Australia to Hawaii to compete in the Molokai-to-Oahu canoe race and finished a very respectable fifth overall.

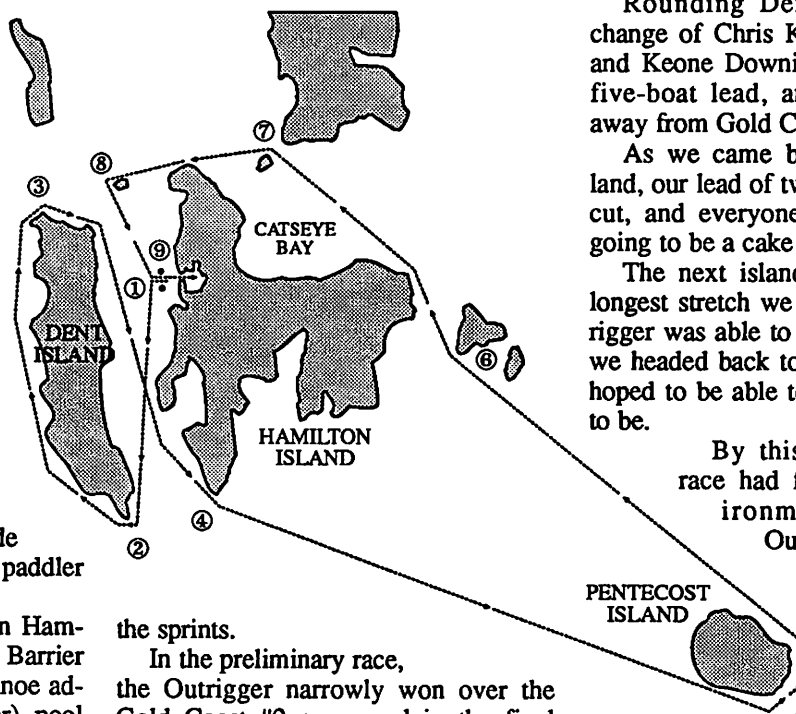
The Outrigger group of 16 paddlers, including a masters crew, landed in Australia not knowing what to expect, but thanks to everyone at the Hamilton Island Resort they made it very difficult to leave. One paddler even stayed an extra week.

Despite all the distractions on Hamilton Island, trips to the Great Barrier Reef, Dirty Nellie's, one-man canoe adventures, Awesome, XXXX (beer), pool paddling and parasailing, we were there to race.

The open crew had a race of 25 miles, a distance we couldn't take lightly, against competition we knew nothing about, except their 1984 Molokai finish.

After a preview of the race course on Keith Williams' boat Awesome, we knew the race would be difficult because of the many different conditions we would face in doing a figure eight around three islands. There were also tides to contend with, which could be a fluctuation of 12-15 feet from high to low.

On Saturday, the sprint races and beach events took place. The Outrigger crew breezed through the volleyball competition, didn't enter the cheerleading contest, and had its eyes opened in



the sprints.

In the preliminary race, the Outrigger narrowly won over the Gold Coast #2 crew, and in the final would be facing both Gold Coast crews.

The final was very close for the first 500 meters, and on the second turn, with the Outrigger in second place, the Gold Coast #1 crew and Outrigger collided, knocking Tom Conner out of the steering seat and Outrigger out of the race.

The eventual winner was the Gold Coast #2 crew. We now knew our competition was fast for 1,000 meters.

The marathon race Sunday found the competitors facing stiff winds and currents, conditions we felt would be in our favor. The starting crew of Kainoa Downing, Marc Haine, Bruce Black, Mark Rigg, Scott Rolles and Tom Conner paddled head-to-head with Gold Coast #1 for the first 20 minutes in rough conditions.

Rounding Dent Island, the first change of Chris Kincaid, Walter Guild and Keone Downing was made with a five-boat lead, and Outrigger surfed away from Gold Coast #1.

As we came back to Hamilton Island, our lead of two minutes was being cut, and everyone knew this was not going to be a cake walk.

The next island was Pentecost, the longest stretch we would face and Outrigger was able to open up its lead. As we headed back to Cats Eye beach, we hoped to be able to surf, but it was not to be.

By this time, the Masters race had finished, a nine-mile ironman race, with Outrigger's Mike Clifford, Henry Ayau, John Mounts, Bill Danford, Tom McTigue and Brant Ackerman winning handily.

They came out on Awesome to watch the marathon race, and provided the incentive to push to the finish. It was a XXXX kind of day, and Outrigger won in a time of 3 hours and 33 minutes, with Gold Coast #1 in second place, four minutes behind.

The Hamilton Cup has the potential to be one of the great outrigger canoe races in the world, because of the varied conditions and the beauty of Hamilton Island.

The Outrigger Canoe Club crew is thankful to Keith Williams for his invitation and everyone on Hamilton Island for their hospitality, and to Continental Airlines for their support. They made it possible for the Outrigger to participate in a great canoe race, the Hamilton Cup. ☺