

## SUN FISH RACE FROM MOLOKAI TO OAHU?

It was an idea that reasonable men would have disregarded following their hangovers—a race from Molokai to Oahu in the Sun Fish class sailboats. The 13-foot Sun Fish is designed for sailing in wading pools. After all the flap and banter, 10 stout Vikings still elected to sail five of these diminutive craft from Hale-o-lono Point to the Outrigger. They were Billy Cross, Tom Rohr, Kim Woolaway, Jim Growney, Doug Kilpatrick, Paul MacLaughlin, Gizmo Sylva, Pete Pierson, Butch Hemmings and Don Smith. Assisting the intrepid dingy sailors as race committee were Buddy Norewood, Bunny Lee and Aka Hemmings.

For some inexplicable reason (probably because everyone one had talked too much to back out), the preparations were begun. For several weeks the crews worked to make the Sun Fish seaworthy enough to cross the world's roughest channel. The race was set for October 17, the day of the annual Molokai Canoe Race.

The Sun Fish were barged to Kaunakakai and were waiting at the Young Brothers dock when the crews arrived the day before the race. The crews had decided to sail the boats to the starting location at Hale-o-lono, and the resulting trip was indicative of things to come. Four of the boats bobbed smartly away from the loading pier into the most treacherous channel in the world—now as rough as a glass of water. The fifth boat, which was manned by Rohr and Cross was to leave right after lunch; it arrived at Hale-o-lono in the race committee truck.

The trip to Hale-o-lono took the first boat three and a half hours. Two others arrived at one hour intervals, pulling into the harbor just before dark. Pierson and Sylva had to put into the beach about three miles from their destination and hike in to Hale-o-lono in very unseaman-like fashion.

Nevertheless there was no thought of giving up the venture, even when Bill Tackaberry and Gordon Howard arrived at 10:30 that night on a P-Cat after a crossing that took better than 10 hours. It was the Molokai Channel to be sailed and the wind was sure to come up.

Race day was calmer than the day before. The boats drifted away from the starting line at 7:00 AM, escorted by the USCG Cutter Cape Corwin about a half hour after the canoes. By 9:30 AM they reached Laau Point, a distance of 3 miles. By noon, they had drifted another three miles into the glassy calm of the channel. By then the wind had died completely and the channel was a glassy calm. With the recriminations up and the wind down, the crews held a conference and decided to throw in the towel. They were taken aboard the Cape Corwin with the Sun Fish in tow, strung out behind the ship like cars in a child's choo-choo. Tackaberry and Howard in the P-Cat who had left with the canoes, were lucky enough to get the wind to make it back to the Outrigger by 2:00 PM Sunday afternoon.

When the Coast Guard cutter reached the Diamond Head Buoy, the cross-channel sailors disembarked and sailed the boats into the club basin to face the derision of their fellows. Fortunately, the members were quite sympathetic.