

# Women Paddlers Wrap Up Season

If the island of Molokai is called the Friendly Isle, then why is the Kaiwi Channel between Molokai and Oahu at times so unfriendly? This year's Na Wahine O Ke Kai Molokai to Oahu canoe race was one of those where Mother Nature was determined to work against all 52 crews entered with her southerly winds. The finishing times for all but three crews was over seven hours, and the last crew crossed the finish line in 8 hours and 47 minutes.

For the Outrigger Canoe Club, the third, 13th and 15th place finishes were outstanding, considering the sea and wind conditions as well as the level of competition, and for the second consecutive year an Outrigger crew flipped right after the start.

This year's distance season was about more than just the Molokai to Oahu Canoe Race, it was about a TEAM of very dedicated women who have come together as the most dominant club team anywhere. Here is a brief history of their season and a few of their accomplishments:

From the very first race, the Dad Center, the Outrigger showed its dominance against local competition, winning in under three hours, setting a course record of 2 hours and 57 minutes. More importantly, there were four Outrigger crews racing. Besides finishing first, the battle of the day was between two Outrigger crews that fought almost literally to the end finishing 9th and 10th.

The next competition was in Kona, where the race had 148 canoes entered, three from the Outrigger Canoe Club. With a flying wedge start, Outrigger was able to break out ahead from the first stroke, and despite a strong challenge from Kai Opua, was able to finish well out in front, with the two other Outrigger crews finishing 8th and 13th.

The Outrigger sent one crew to the Newport to Catalina Race, where the women knew they would face strong competition from Offshore and Lanakila of California. It was a battle between these three crews for the first hour until Lanakila fell back, and then it was Outrigger and Offshore doing battle. Outrigger was ahead, but Offshore did not let up until the three hour mark, at which point we were able to slowly pull away. This was a great win against tough competition, Outrigger setting another record, finishing in 4 hours 13 minutes.

In the Pokai Race, there were two Outrigger crews racing, the Catalina crew taking a break. As

in previous races, the competition was very close with the two Outrigger crews battling two other crews for position. At the finish, Outrigger was 4th and 7th (.2 seconds out of 6th). Considering that these crews were competing against the other club's first teams, the Outrigger women were great.

There was a lot that went right this season, all of which was a direct result of the effort from all the women in the paddling program. They learned that even though you're "such a small girl in such a big world", that you survive and prosper together. They understand the concept of finger power, and everything being "just so". There's Snappy and Iron Woman, Fanny, Nails, Poo, and the Gomez sisters, there's Pearl now Magellan, Sarge now Ayatollah, and Pasa. These are but a few of the alter egos within the crews.

This was a TEAM of women competing for the Outrigger Canoe Club, not three individual crews. Everyone shared in the good and the bad, and they made it happen together. The following women are those that made the commitment:

The steering was handled by Kisi Haine, Vanessa Lowe, Kimmy Everett, and doing a great job with their first distance races were Carolyn Hall and Tisha Love.

The strokes leading the way were Nicole Wilcox, Mary Smolenski, Traci Phillips, Allison Guard, Jackie Muller, Genie Kincaid, Jennifer Thayer, Kendra Jenkins, and Possie Dudgeon.

Those women sitting in two seat making for a great transition from stroke were Donna Kahakui, Diana Clifford, Sara Ackerman, Ann Marie Mizuno, Na'u Kamalii, Stefanie Smart, Dawn Davenport, Prancer Muller, and Spanky Kinney.

The balance of the women paddled in the engine room of the canoe: Lisa Livingston, Pam Clifford, Starr Dawson, Tricia Nagatani, Norma Santiago, Erin Worsham, Susan Ireland, Shannon Dudgeon, Tracy Selling, Laura Williams, Jana Arakaki, and Heidi Friese.

The sum of the 1996 season is defined by more than just the Molokai to Oahu Canoe Race. It is the pride all of the women above can have in their paddling accomplishments throughout the distance season. They are the best, holding records in three of the five races they entered, but most importantly I hope they had fun being a part of a very successful effort. I did! ☺

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