



Joint practice of OCC men and women. Photo by Robyn Singh.

On Saturday, July 23 approximately 50 men and women teamed up on the beach at the Outrigger to participate in the first-ever Open Men and Open Women paddling practice. The brainchild of coaches Robyn Singh and Johnny Puakea kicked off at 9 a.m.

Joined by Coach Liz Perry, Robyn and Johnny organized seven six-man canoes all stacked with both men and women.

With both Outrigger Whalers canvassing the waters around the fleet of canoes, the paddlers worked their way past Sand Island, whipped a U-turn, and hammered upwind, returning to the Club by 10:45 a.m. The perspectives of this experience by five open women paddlers are cited below:

Open Men and Open Women Team Build with a Joint Paddling Practice

By Erika Eberhart

Malia Kamisugi Pietsch, who has paddled for 23 years, "...loved (the practice)! Great to get new energy in the boat and provide a good venue for just pure paddling—the men commented on the smoothness of the blend in paddling, while the women obviously loved the power!"

Diana Allen, a 26 year paddling veteran, thought this was "a great way to bond...and get to know three or so members of the other program really well. Also was great to follow a very different kind of stroke to see how that felt."

Mary Smolenski, with 23 years of paddling experience, reflects on the experience as "good fun, entertaining and a good workout!"

Sarah Field, who has paddled for nine years, boasts it "was incredibly awesome to be in a mixed boat with six other canoes filled with men and women on the water...The men make paddling seem effortless and I learned so much from paddling with them. We should make these practices happen more often...at least a few times each season. I am waiting for a Mixed Molokai Crew!"

Lisa Livingston, with 24 years of paddling under her blade, found the mixed practice "enlightening and pleasurable. It was fun! It was everything you'd ask for in a practice and more...awesome energy!"

Let's do it again sometime soon! HOE WA'A MAU! HANA HOU!