

# Girls 12 'A Force to be Reckoned With'

By Diane Esecson

With a strong start to the 2011 paddling season, the Girls 12 are a force to be reckoned with. As coach Mark Sandvold exclaims, "I am super proud of them as this is my second year working with this great bunch of girls and I can see them sticking together and being very successful throughout the years to come."

"The Outrigger Girls 12 and under program consists of over 20 young girls who vary in levels of experience with some of them being new paddlers and some of the "older" girls going into their third season of paddling," Coach Sandvold explains.

With such a strong contingent of young paddlers to choose from the competition to make the crew is formidable. "Ultimately Sunday's race crew will have the girls who had the best time during practice as well as a good attitude and attendance. I let all the girls know what they need to do to improve and what I expect of them. The good news for our age group is over 15 girls are able to race every Sunday with the mix crew and open keiki crews, so it is very easy to get every paddler race experience," comments Coach Sandvold.

When asked what they enjoy the most about paddling Malia Gacutan says, "My favorite part of racing is being in the boat when we hit full stride during practice or a race. I feel like nothing can stop me, the sky is the limit. The boat

glides in the water like flying fish, how they float over the water and fly free." Kiana Sandvold adds that her favorite part is "having my Dad coach me and doing well with my friends."

Coach Sandvold explains the early success of his team, "I believe it's all on the girls work ethic and willingness to put in the effort and focus to be successful. I have told them my main goal is to make paddling fun and at the same time work hard. I also stress to them the "Team Concept" of everyone is a member of the team and that when one crew wins they all win!"

Of course it also takes the dedication of the coaches to make a program a success. Coach Sandvold comments, "Stew Kawakami, Mike Lum, Alan Pflueger and I are totally committed to building a successful junior program at OCC today and into the future." The future of OCC paddling looks bright- most importantly through the eyes of a 12-year-old girl. Congratulation girls!

Members of the Girls 12 are Kaitlin Allen, Lauren Bloom, Emma Bradley, Malia Gacutan, Kailee Graf, Maile Heyer, Hina Kahikina, Kanani Kato, Sophia Krivatsy, Rafael Lee, Kaya McTigue, Kiana Sandvold, Chloe Saracco, Kealoha Scullion, Mapuhola Sekona, Kailey Totherow, Chien Winter, Victoria Woo, Sarah Worrall, Lyla Wunderlich.