

MEET HEAD COACH GUY WILDING

Just Another 'Bloke from Down Under'

By Kehau Kali Berquist



Guy Wilding

At first glance, with his outstanding credentials in training elite athletes, and vast experience crossing the Molokai Channel as a paddler and coach with crews from Australia, I was a bit intimidated to interview him. I'm very relieved that Outrigger Canoe Club's new Head Coach, Guy Wilding, is 'just another bloke from Down Under.'

Guy and his wife Shelley have trained, competed and worked in Hawaii on and off over the years, making their final move back 'home' to Hawaii in 2010. When asked by Keahi Pelayo, Outrigger Canoe Racing Chair, to serve as the Head Coach, he asked, "What's the job description?" So Keahi provided him with one, and he accepted.

Guy shared that he is feeling trepidation (along with enthusiasm and excitement) about the enormity of the position. He is comforted by the fact that last year he served as the Equipment Manager and so has a good understanding of the amount of time and energy it takes to lead Outrigger's canoe paddlers.

Guy shared that he'd like to improve Outrigger's canoe paddling culture and create more collaboration between the different demographics of the paddling program. He also wants to increase effective communication between the coaches and paddlers to eliminate any tension, frustration and anxiety between the crews. Lastly, he is encouraging Outrigger members who are paddling or coaching elsewhere to come back and paddle with Outrigger.

Guy, with Canoe Racing Chair Keahi Pelayo and Club Captain Al Darling, will be implementing a system to help ensure the continuity of the paddling program over the years with a focus on instilling in all coaches and paddlers an outrigger canoe paddling technique that is uniquely OCC's.

When he coached elite athletes on the Australian national team and the U.S. national team in the past, he developed and implemented a kayaking technique model for them as well.

He is also planning on developing, in conjunction with the coaches, objective selection criteria for getting to race that is *quantifiable* to eliminate negative chatter among paddlers and parents. This will hopefully minimize 'paddletics' and negativity which are unhealthy in a program.

Veteran coach Liz Perry will once again helm the Novice Program which has grown tremendously over the years. Guy is enthusiastic about the Novices and the Youth Programs as they are the future of the sport. He knows that to win any regatta, much less States, you have to race crews in every single race; so one of the program goals is to field crews in as many races as possible at regattas.

Regarding the Youth Program, his and Youth Coach Mike Lum's vision is to develop a better tomorrow than yesterday. Their focus on continuous development and improvement is a value that they hope will expand throughout our entire paddling program, from youth to masters.

Outrigger has two new fiberglass canoes: a Bradley lightning-model canoe and a new unlimited fiberglass. OH CRA created a new racing category for distance races that allows fiberglass canoes to weigh as little or as much as desired. Their intention is to help create excitement and engage younger paddlers.

Guy said most canoes weigh on average 400 pounds, which is a lot for the kids to carry. The new canoe, named A'a and designed by John Puakea and built by Tiger, weighs only 150 pounds. He mentioned that when they picked it up at Young Brothers, he and Men's Coach Mark Cluney could load it by themselves. Amazing!

Good luck to Guy and the other paddling coaches! Excitement is growing for the upcoming canoe paddling season, especially with great blokes like Guy, Keahi, Mike, Men's Coach Mark Cluney and blokette, Liz in charge! Go Outrigger!

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