

Kala Judd, Geoff Graf First Hawaii Finishers in Molokai Kayak Race

Conditions were perfect for the 17th annual Bankoh Kayak Challenge from Molokai to Oahu on May 23, and Outrigger's Kala Judd and Geoff Graf were the first two Hawaii competitors to finish the 30-mile race.

Kala finished fifth overall in 3:37:27 and Geoff was just behind in 3:39:27.

Conditions were the best in recent years, with 15 knot winds, and 4-6 foot surf that competitors could surf all the way across the Kaiwi Channel.

Geoff got off to an incredible start and led the race for the first hour, taking a slightly northerly course, while most of the Australians and South Africans steered a more southerly course.

Greg Moss, who was escorting

Geoff, used GPS satellite navigation to set the course, which brought Geoff on a straight line course to Oahu.

"Geoff's course was so good, that I followed him all the way across," Kala said. He eventually passed Geoff at Portlock Point and finished two minutes ahead of him, and three minutes faster than his previous best time.

The race was won by Dean Gardiner of Australia in 3:30:15, just three minutes off the record. The race was very close with the first seven finishers completing the course within 10 minutes.

Other Outrigger participants were:

Chris Kincaid, 18th, 3:54:31

Jimmy Kincaid, 24th, 4:02:20

Tom McTigue, 29th, 4:10:35

Bill Danford, 46th, 4:34:09

Dale Adams, 50th, 4:45:41

Lesline Conner, 3rd, women, 4:27:39

There was also a one-person canoe race with six competitors. Tom Harrer finished fourth overall in 5:08:33. 📷



Kala Judd was the first Hawaii paddler to finish.