

# Tiare Finney Wins at Mauna Kea 200

By Tiare Finney

Mauna Kea rises pale and green in the early light. Her puu are inviting and her curves seem gentle but she holds a dark secret. For the last 12 months or so, very little rain has fallen and the mountain trails are deep in cinder dust.

Powder soft, and in some places two or three feet deep, these roads are hiding football sized lava rocks that bounce a motorcycle or ATV around like a ping pong ball.

There has been a rumor that this year's Mauna Kea 200 Race will be 100 miles long. This is a bit worrisome to me but I figure if the boys can do it, so can I.

The usual prep and tune greet us on race morning. My nephew Justin Richert has flown in from California to be my riding mate. We will ride together and his job is to bring me home alive.

The race day news that the course has been shortened is troubling. Shorter means harder and this plays out to be very true. The 58-mile race has a weird start that takes us down a paved road and into a grass and lava rock field, then in about 200 yards straight up a hill of dust and big rocks.

Several riders are down and we're into the race about two minutes. It's going to be a long day for me.

The race goes well and things seem OK but the trail is so dry and dusty that breath comes hard and fatigue sets in. I began making mistakes and fall and recovery is very taxing. At one point after a crash, my bike was actually facing back down the hill. So figure. It's called a "loop out". Not hard for a 57-year-old woman who is half blind in dust, cramping and out of water.

At one point I had to get Justin to ride my bike as I pushed from behind in a particularly nasty section. With him at the top, I had to hike up in Mato X boots. At that very moment a "sweeper" (rescue) on an ATV appeared from the dust and offered me a ride to the top of the hill. Too tired to even throw a leg over the seat I just laid across the back of his vehicle and he packed me to the top.

As we crested the hill, I got a visual of the hunter bringing his prize boar into camp but that prize was me! Ever thankful for the lift, I gave him a hug of gratitude, and he was gone in an instant. It was a very long day for me but with the help of Justin I made it.

There was only one woman ahead of me, and she was 18 years old, so I was able to pull off a second place in the open women and a first place in masters (it's all about your division).

I have experienced the back of the pack and know the pain and joy of a finish. It's all good. However, may be next year I'll be in charge of the cooler, ride with the gas boys or be a sweeper. It's too early to tell.



ABOVE: Tiare Finney pauses on the beautiful but dusty Mauna Kea 200 course.

BELOW: Tiare proudly accepts her trophy for winning the master's division.



**EOVINO**  
& ASSOCIATES, INC.  
Donald T. Eovino (R)  
GRI, CRB, CRS.  
(808) 735-3066  
don@eovino.net  
\*Specialize in High End Residential Development/ Partnership Management in Kohala and Diamond Head  
website: www.eovino.net