

OCC Mixed Plate Runners Finish 1st

in the Mixed Division at the Hana Relays

By Candes Meijide Gentry

The Hana Relays, a 52 mile windy run from Kahului to Hana in Maui along the Hana Highway, is one of the most scenic races in Hawaii. Having participated for over 20 years, Katy Bourne can attest to its challenge, excitement and fun.

At 5:30 a.m. your team arrives in a parking lot about a half mile from the Kahului Airport. You find yourselves surrounded by costumed runners in the dark making their last minute adjustments to the runner lineup. Teams are comprised of six runners each running three legs ranging from 1.9 – 3.4 miles each for a total of about eight miles. Leg 13 is the most dreaded leg of the event; 3.3 miles in total, 2.1 of which are uphill From Wailua Bay Lookout to Puaa Kaa State Park.

Due to the staggered start, the race is wonderful for building confidence for teams such as ours which was in the last heat that started at 6:45 a.m. Our team of Outrigger athletes had all day to catch and pass runners, motivated by what costumes and decorated flats, cars, vans and trucks we would find around each bend in the road.

Team members follow their runners loaded into vans, with a dedicated sweaty seat, of course, until the next drop off point. As with most adventure races, runners must be prepared for all types of weather and pack their cars full of snacks and cool drinks. You can always stop along the way as we did to shop for smoked swordfish and dried ginger coconut, but if you are not mindful of the time you might just miss your runner at the next drop off point.

After finding ourselves in a similar situation, we were lucky enough to catch up only to find ourselves unexpectedly battling with "The Mariachis" for an overall win as we approached Leg 8. Thus, we decided to focus more on our tactics and less on the delicious distractions.

Once you arrive in lovely Hana Maui there is an outdoor party in the Hana Ball Park with a live band, a plate lunch fundraiser and the ever beautiful one of a kind, black sand beach that is considered one of the most exhilarating and treacherous "honorary" legs of the event.

Awards for the top teams are given, but the most coveted of all is the Spirited Award given to the most decorated, costumed and enthusiastic team. After an incredible day, racers chose to marvel in Hana's peaceful surroundings and camp out, vacation for the weekend, or head back to the airport for the last flight back to reality.

The Outrigger Canoe Club puts together a team of runners, sometimes several teams, depending on the interest every year. The Outrigger Runners would like to thank Dave Stackhouse and

Showing off their winning medals were Todd Iacovelli, Wil Yamamoto, Aaron Wallen, Candes Meijide Gentry, Katy Bourne and Dave Stackhouse.

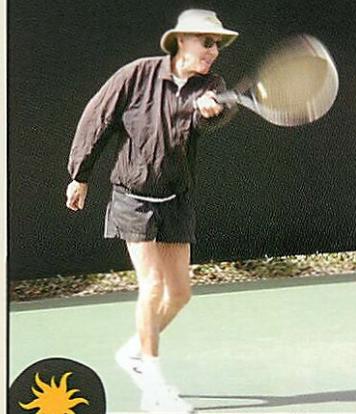
Katy Bourne for organizing the logistics this year and the Outrigger Canoe Club for their support in sending runners to this incredible yearly event.

For more information about the Valley Isle Road Runners on Maui please visit www.virr.com/hana, or if you are interested in participating in next year's Hana Relays please contact OCC Running Committee Co-Chairs Katy Bourne and Tommy Damon.

This year the OCC Mixed Plate Team finished first in the Mixed Division with a time of 5:28:53, which averages out to 6:19/Mile, and second overall to "The Mariachis" out of a total of 133 teams.

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