

# Athlete of the Month

## Amy Lawson

By Art Mallet

Earlier this year, a large group celebrated Natasha Haine's birthday with a riveting game of kickball. Teams were picked the old-fashioned way, everyone lined up and two captains took turns selecting people.

The first pick... Amy Lawson Woodward. I have only known Amy for a handful of years but it didn't take me long to realize that, no matter the competition, you want her on your team. Outrigger's Open Women's program is a testament to that.

While it has been highlighted that our Women's Senior boat went undefeated this year throughout the regatta season, did you know that every Open Women's boat Amy was in also went undefeated?

Rumor has it she did get a couple silver medals in Macfarlane steering this year... but they were hard to see under the three golds she got in the rest of her events, the most memorable being the Senior race with her brother, Billy, steering. As I was doing my research, I couldn't help but imagine Amy diving into a sea of medals



Amy competed in the Maui Jim Ocean Shootout.

like Scrooge McDuck.

After paddling for OCC from ages 10 to 15, she focused on surfing. Then taking a brief sabbatical from watersport domination, Amy went to Westmont College to play soccer. Racking up the accolades in her four years; she was All-NAIA (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics) every year. Not surprisingly, she ranks 10th all-time at Westmont in goals scored.

Her talent is only surpassed by her heart and competitiveness. Her love for competition started at an early age, always trying to copy her older brother Billy. Billy would set a mark (like how many times you could kick a soccer ball against the wall in

ten seconds) and Amy would practice for hours (days, years) until she could reach it. Clearly it paid off.

After taking time off from canoe racing, Amy was eligible to paddle Novice A the summer before leaving for law school. In the time-honored tradition of Novice paddling, she met her eventual husband Ryan Woodward (an accomplished athlete in his own right). But that is a story for another column.

Luckily for Outrigger, Amy returned to Hawaii after completing law school in 2014 and resumed her love affair with

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paddling. In her first solo channel crossing on an OC-1 she finished third, only six minutes behind the winner, officially putting the paddling world on notice.

Since then she has been a regular to the podium, having crossed the channel 11 times; three OC-1 solos, three OC-1 relays, four times in the Na Wahine O Ke Kai, and one torturous time on a Stand Up. While coaches across the country preach about giving “110%”, Amy frequently takes that proverbial saying literally, finishing distance races with a trip to urgent care for an IV.

While Amy is clearly a naturally talented athlete, as anyone who spends any time at the Club can attest to, she does not rely on her natural ability alone. She always makes time to practice either with the Open program or on her own (sometimes both).

Working full time as a lawyer, I am amazed at her ability to do so much. When I asked Amy how she’s able to do it, her response was her love for setting goals both work and sports related. The next goal is Hawaiki Nui in Tahiti, which by the time you read this, Amy, along with five other top female paddlers, will have raced under the OCC flag. If I was selecting paddlers to represent OCC and I had the first pick you know who I’m choosing.