



The Outrigger Canoe Club crew heads home with Diamond Head in sight.

Warren Bolster photo

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Outrigger dominates Molokai Hoe

Foes, course record easily fall to defending champs

By Marshall Hughes
Advertiser Staff Writer

Fifty-eight crews from homes as distant and diverse as Tahiti, Virginia, England and Canada converged for yesterday's Bankoh Molokai Hoe, the Molokai-to-Oahu canoe race.

But it was a team from a few strokes down Waikiki Beach — the Outrigger Canoe Club — that put distance between itself and the rest of the field to win going away.

Outrigger did more than just win the 40.8-mile race. It destroyed its

own record of 5:18.19 (set in 1984) by more than 10 minutes, crossing the finish line at Fort DeRussy Beach in 5:08.11.

Oahu's Hui Nalu, which was three seconds off the old record, finished a distant second in 5:18.22. Tahiti's Ihilani was third in 5:19.13 and Kailua was fourth in 5:20.53.

Hanalei won the koa division in 5:28.07 and Great Lake Outrigger from Illinois won the masters (35-and-older) race. Outrigger crews finished second in those categories.

In the race, Outrigger led nearly the entire way. Only some early logistical problems preventing it from a wire-to-wire finish.

"We got tangled up with some other outriggers at the starting line," said Outrigger steersman Tommy Conner, who has been a member of seven previous Oahu-to-Molokai winners. "Then we got caught with our own (koa) canoe."

The entanglements cost Outrigger about 50 yards, but it caught and passed the leaders "in about six min-

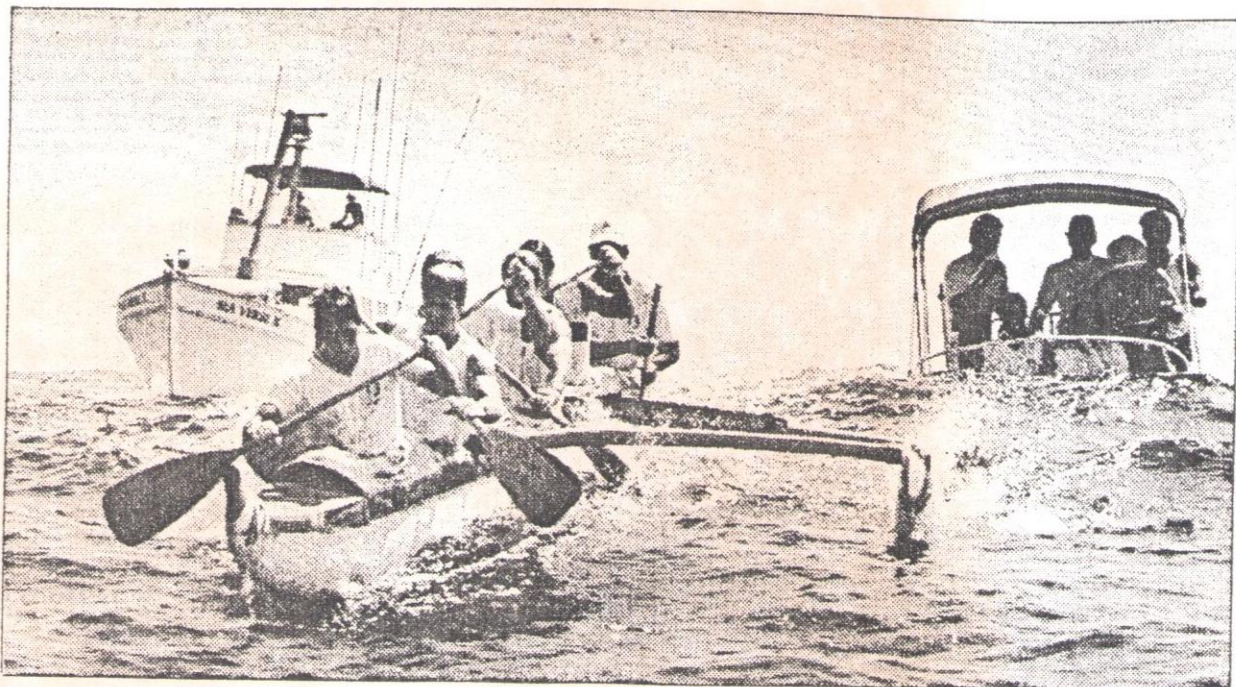
utes."

From there on it was all Outrigger, lengthening its lead little by little throughout the day.

"When you have a good lead, it's not life or death if you relax for a while," Conner said. "When everyone is behind you, you can relax when you have to."

Strategy is not as big a worry for a crew that has a race well in hand, but Conner really didn't have to worry

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Warren Bolster photo

Outrigger got some company in its trek to a record finish.

Outrigger dominates Molokai

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about strategy anyway.

"We always want to lead," Conner said, "but we develop strategy as we go along in the race, depending on if we are in front, behind or whether there is somebody close to us but taking a different course."

While Outrigger was pulling away with a strategy no more complicated than going as hard and smooth as possible, there was a battle shaping up for second place.

"We couldn't even see them (Outrigger)," Hui Nalu coach Kala Kukea said. "We were trying to hold off Tahiti at Kahala."

When asked about the difference between Outrigger and Hui Nalu, Kukea laughed and said,

"They're a dynasty."

How true.

Outrigger has won three races in a row, five of the last six and seven of the last 10. Teams that dominate their sports sometimes have to be motivated by forces other than by just winning.

Yesterday, as his team was paddling by Black Point and Diamond Head, Conner was thinking about breaking the record.

"We talked about it," he said. "Once we got to Oahu I knew how long it took to get from point to point and I knew we had a chance."

"We couldn't give any extra effort though, we were running on empty at that point."

BREAKWATER BITS: Sixty-one crews were scheduled to race yesterday, but only 58 made it to the starting line. New Port Bleu and New Port Outrigger of California did not show up, while one of the Na Kai Ewalu crews was disqualified for not having its boat approved by the Oahu Hawaiian Canoe Racing Associa-

tion. Each Canoe must be checked for water line measurement, length (maximum 45 feet) and weight (minimum 400 pounds) ... **Leo Santana**, a paddler for the Kai Opua Masters' team, dislocated his shoulder about an hour into the race. His team, which was in first place in the master's division at the time of the injury, competed with eight members for the next 3½ hours. Santana eventually got his shoulder popped back into place and re-entered the race.

Overall

1. Outrigger, 5:08.11; 2. Hui Nalu, 5:18.22; 3. Ihilani (Tahiti), 5:19.13; 4. Kailua, 5:20.53; 5. Imua (Calif.), 5:22.00; 6. Tahiti (Tahiti), 5:22.49; 7. Pirae (Tahiti), 5:24.16; 8. Healani, 5:26.19; 9. Hanalei, 5:28.07; 10. Port Autonome (Tahiti), 5:28.53.11. False Creek #1 (Canada), 5:29.32; 12. Great Lake Outrigger (Illinois), 5:28.53; 13. Outrigger #3, 5:31.16; 14. Outrigger #2, 5:31.54; 15. Hui Lanikila #1, 5:33.53; 16. Tiare Tahiti (Tahiti), 5:34.49; 17. Kai O Pua, 5:35.24; 18. Puna, 5:37.29; 19. Hawaiian, 5:38.39; 20. Lokahi #2, 5:38.40.21. Atlantic Division (New York), 5:39.09; 22. Hanalei #2, 5:39.32; 23. Lanikila, 5:40.58; 24. Kamehameha (Hilo), 5:41.35; 25. Kihei #1, 5:42.52; 26. Hui Lanakila #2, 5:43.27; 27. Kailua-Master, 5:43.47; 28. Kailua #3, 5:44.24; 29. Lokahi #1, 5:45.05; 30. Healani #3, 5:45.39.

Koa

1. Hanalei #1, 5:28.07; 2. Outrigger #2, 5:31.24; 3. Kamehameha (Hilo), 5:41.35; 4. Hui Lanakila, 5:43.27; 5. Kai Opua #1, 5:47.38.

Masters

1. Great Lake Outrigger (Illinois), 5:29.45; 2. Outrigger #3, 5:31.16; 3. Tiare Tahiti (Tahiti), 5:34.49; 4. Kai O Pua, 5:35.24; 5. Lokahi #2, 5:38.40.