

Lanikai rules channel



Sets mark in Molokai crossing

By Dayton Morinaga
Advertiser Staff Writer

In a record that almost wasn't, the Lanikai Canoe Club won the Bankoh Molokai Hoe with the fastest time in the 44-year history of the race.

Lanikai finished the 41-mile outrigger canoe race from Molokai's Hale O Lono Harbor to Waikiki in 4 hours, 53 minutes, 3 seconds for its first victory in the historic event since 1974. The time broke the previous record of 4:55:27 set by Faa'a of Tahiti in 1993.

"Conditions (in the Kaiwi Channel) were just perfect," said Jim Foti, who steered Lanikai the entire route. "And we didn't make any mistakes this year. In previous years, we made a lot of mistakes that always seemed to cost us."

Yesterday, Lanikai almost kept that forgettable streak alive.

Less than 30 minutes after

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Despite choppy waters off Black Point, the crew of Lanikai 1 powered through the waves to victory in the Molokai Hoe.

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Lanikai: Race ends in debate

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the start, confusion arose among the leaders. Ten escort boats zoomed in front of the lead officials' boat and started unloading paddlers to start the relief process.

(In the Molokai Hoe, six paddlers are allowed per canoe, but three others follow in an escort boat to replace tired paddlers throughout the course).

According to the official rules, relief changes can not take place during the first 30 minutes of the race. Yesterday, the 10 teams that passed the officials' boat started unloading paddlers at around the 29:50 mark.

Originally, race officials assessed a 10-minute penalty to each of the 10 teams. The top three finishers — Lanikai, Faa'a and Outrigger — were all accused.

Thus, even with the penalty, Lanikai would have won the race. They just wouldn't have the record.

"It didn't change the outcome of the race at all," Foti said. "I don't think it should change the outcome of history, either."

About an hour after the first finishers arrived at Waikiki yesterday, officials from those 10 teams were notified. Paddlers and coaches from Lanikai and Outrigger immediately stormed the officials' tent to file protests.

Outrigger's Walter Guild insisted that his crew was not one of the 10. Lanikai paddlers said they started jumping in only after an official told them it was OK.

About a half-hour later, the penalties were removed, although race officials are supposed to meet today to discuss the situation, and technically could reapply the penalties.

But as Lanikai paddler Kalani Irvine queried: "Did anybody gain an advantage by doing that? I don't think so. I don't think any of those teams were out there doing it intentionally

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and I don't think it affected the rest of the race."

Steven Wood, a coach for Lanikai, was on one of the escort boats that passed the officials' boat. He said he clearly heard someone on the officials' boat yelling "go ahead."

Still unsure, Wood said his team waited until they saw nearby paddlers jumping in the ocean before following.

"I'm sure they can track down the one person that made the mistake of saying 'go ahead,'" Wood said. "And then they should take responsibility. Not us. To take the record away from us would be real disappointing."

In any case, Lanikai paddled the race of its life. Shortly after the first relief changes, Lanikai pulled away from the rest of the pack and was never threatened.

Foti said currents and swells of 6 to 10 feet were pushing in the same direction as the canoes. The extra force allowed Lanikai to break the record. That and experience.

Many of the Lanikai paddlers — Foti, his brother John Foti, Rich Lambert, Bob Nottage, Rocky Owens, Bo Eastabrook, Kalani Irvine, Mike Smith and Mike Pedersen — have been



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In exultation, the Lanikai crew was all smiles after finishing first yesterday.

paddling for the club since they were 10 years old.

"We've been trying to get this for the past seven, eight years," said Foti. "And we've stuck together all those years. We easily could have gone and paddled for other crews, but we wanted to win it together."

Further, Lanikai's victory ended what seemed like a stranglehold on the championship trophy by Faa'a.

Two years ago, in its first Molokai-to-Oahu race, Faa'a set a course record. Last year, it finished a whopping 13 minutes ahead of the second-place crew.

"You can talk about the conditions and the canoes and all that, but the bottom line is that the best team wins this race," said Faa'a steersman Tom Conner. "The best team won today. We didn't paddle well enough to win."

For a majority of the race, Faa'a was the only team within sight of Lanikai. But Faa'a was never able to catch the leaders and finished more than

eight minutes behind at 5:01:39.

Toward the end, Outrigger made its move, taking an inside course along the Oahu shoreline. The strategy worked as they pulled away from the rest of the pack and nearly caught Faa'a.

However, the move proved to be too little, too late as Outrigger settled for third with a time of 5:03:00.

Waikiki Surf Club was fourth, but would have been second had the penalties been assessed — a leapfrog of places they did not want.

"We finished fourth," said Tim Twigg-Smith. "So we're fourth. We don't want to be second because of a penalty."

NOTES: Anuenue 2, which features several paddlers in their 50s and 60s, finished 30th overall and first in the senior masters division (over 45). ... Mooloolaba of Australia was 10th overall and first in the masters division (over 35). ... Outrigger 2 was the first of six koa canoes to finish and 21st overall. ... A record 88



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Saying "I did it for her," Rich Lambert gave his four-month-old daughter Lia a victory kiss. crews completed yesterday's crossing. ... Team Nike Hungary — Hungarian paddlers competing in their first Molokai Hoe — finished 28th overall.

Canoe Results

Bankoh Molokai Hoe

■ Final Results

1, Lanikai 1, 4:53:03. 2, Faa'a, 5:01:39. 3, Outrigger 1, 5:03:00. 4, Waikiki Surf Club 1, 5:09:08. 5, Outrigger Australia, 5:10:56. 6, Dana Point 1, 5:13:27. 7, Hawaii Canoe & Kayak Team, 5:15:42. 8, Waikiki Beachboys 1, 5:17:09. 9, Hawaiian 1, 5:26:15. 10, Mooloolaba, 5:20:09. 11, Lanakila 1, 5:21:54. 12, Kai Opua, 5:25:15. 13, Outrigger 3, 5:27:01. 14, Hawaiian 2, 5:28:06. 15, Hui Lanakila 2, 5:28:27. 16, Lokahi 1, 5:30:24. 17, Hamilton Island, 5:30:55. 18, Marina Del Rey, 5:32:23. 19, Lanikai 2, 5:33:06. 20, Hui Lanakila 1, 5:35:36.

21, Outrigger 2, 5:36:23. 22, Malama Ula, 5:38:40. 23, Waikiki Surf Club 2, 5:39:13. 24, Tui Tonga, 5:40:23. 25, Puna, 5:40:49. 26, Tiger Canoe & Kayak, 5:41:43. 27, Napili 1, 5:42:12. 28, Nike Hungary, 5:44:19. 29, Waikiki Beachboys 2, 5:46:42. 30, Anuenue 2, 5:47:12. 31, Lanikai 3, 5:47:24. 32, Keahiakahoe, 5:47:57. 33, Puuwai 1, 5:48:24. 34, Anuenue 1, 5:49:14. 35, Kona Athletic 1, 5:49:23. 36, Kailua 5, 5:49:23. 37, Keauhou 1, 5:50:17. 38, False Creek, 5:51:03. 39, Waikiki Surf Club 3, 5:51:19. 40, Dana Point 2, 5:51:58.

41, Lanakila 2, 5:52:05. 42, Kahana, 5:52:41. 43, Napili 2, 5:53:37. 44, Kailua 2, 5:54:21. 45, Outrigger Whitsund, 5:54:36. 46, Hawaiian 3, 5:56:00. 47, Jericho Outrigger, 5:56:08. 48, Northcliff Australia, 5:57:48. 49, Koa Kai 1, 5:58:41. 50, Manuiwa, 5:59:58. 51, Waikiki Beachboys 3, 6:00:15. 52, Healani 1, 6:01:38. 53, Koa Kai 3, 6:03:00. 54, Koolau, 6:03:55. 55, Lokahi 3, 6:04:54. 56, Waikiki Yacht Club 1, 6:06:03. 57, Kailua 3, 6:06:52. 58, Puuwai 2, 6:07:04. 59, Kamehameha (Hilo), 6:08:50. 60, Honolulu 1, 6:09:08.

61, Lokahi 2, 6:10:40. 62, Waikiki Yacht Club 3, 6:11:38. 63, Lanikai 4, 6:14:57. 64, Kailua 4, 6:15:58. 65, Kamehameha (Oahu), 6:17:18. 66, Kalama Ohana, 6:18:40. 67, Keauhou 2, 6:19:59. 68, Na Kai Ewalu 1, 6:20:45. 69, Malama Ula 1, 6:21:09. 70, Hui Nalu 1, 6:21:55. 71, Waikiki Yacht Club 2, 6:22:04. 72, Kai Poha, 6:22:11. 73, Kona Athletic 2, 6:25:04. 74, Na Kai Ewalu 2, 6:27:00. 75, Alapa Hoe, 6:27:07. 76, Kihei, 6:27:28. 77, Taniwha Grizzlies, 6:27:30. 78, Lae Ula O Kai, 6:30:12. 79, Koa Kai 2, 6:33:59. 80, Hui Nalu 2, 6:36:53.

81, Johnson Island Ekahi, 6:39:38. 82, Kalihi Kai, 6:39:54. 83, Kai E Hitu, 6:40:48. 84, Johnson Island Elua, 6:40:59. 85, Lanikai 6, 6:44:21. 86, Lanikai 5, 6:51:30. 87, Healani 2, 6:52:12. 88, Honolulu 2, 7:13:29.

■ **Koa Division:** 1, Outrigger 2, 5:36:23. 2, Lanakila 2, 5:52:05. 3, Lanikai 4, 6:14:57. 4, Hui Nalu 1, 6:21:55. 5, Kona Athletic 2, 6:25:04. 6, Kihei, 6:27:28.

■ **Masters Division:** 1, Mooloolaba, 5:20:09. 2, Outrigger 3, 5:27:01. 3, Malama Ula 2, 5:38:40. 4, Tui Tonga, 5:40:23. 5, Puna, 5:40:49. 6, Keauhou 1, 5:50:17. 7, Outrigger Whitsund, 5:54:36. 8, Hawaiian 3, 5:56:00. 9, Manuiwa, 5:59:58. 10, Koa Kai 3, 6:03:00. 11, Lokahi 3, 6:04:54. 12, Puuwai 2, 6:07:04. 13, Waikiki Yacht Club 1, 6:06:03. 14, Taniwha Grizzlies, 6:27:30. 15, Lanikai 5, 6:51:30.

■ **Senior Masters Division:** 1, Anuenue 2, 5:47:24. 2, Kailua 5, 5:49:23. 3, Dana Point 2, 5:51:58. 4, Keauhou 2, 6:19:59. 5, Na Kai Ewalu 1, 6:20:45. 6, Kona Athletic 2, 6:25:04. 7, Na Kai Ewalu 2, 6:27:00. 8, Hui Nalu 2, 6:36:53. 9, Kai E Hitu, 6:40:48. 10, Lanikai 6, 6:44:21. 11, Honolulu 2, 7:13:29.