



Lanikai hammers towards Waikiki as a sailboarder crosses its path just past Black Point during the final leg of the Bankoh Molokai Hoe.

Cory Lum/The Honolulu Advertiser

Lanikai wins another

Victory was easier
second time around
in Molokai Hoe

By **Dayton Morinaga**
Advertiser Staff Writer

Lanikai Canoe Club rode the biggest wave it could find — its own wave of confidence — on the way to

winning the Bankoh Molokai Hoe yesterday for the second consecutive year.

The club from Windward Oahu finished the 41-mile course from Hale O Lono Harbor, Molokai, to Duke Kahanamoku Beach, Waikiki, in 5 hours, 15 minutes, 42 seconds. The winning time was the sixth fastest in the 45-year history of the event, but well off the record 4:53:03 set last year.

"Last year was a believing we

could do it," said Lanikai paddler John Foti. "This year was a *knowing* we could do it."

To be sure, Lanikai used the same nine paddlers — Bo Eastabrooks, Jim Foti, John Foti, Kalani Irvine, Rich Lambert, Bobby Nottage, Rocky Owens, Michael Pederson and Michael Smith — in the same canoe it rode to victory last year.

Other clubs seemed to recognize that. Waikiki Surf Club followed Lanikai almost the entire course,

content with a second-place finish. Faa'a brought in its own steersman for the first time in three years in an effort to try and out-paddle Lanikai, but had to settle for third. Outrigger, trailing Lanikai early, took a chance on a different course — a gamble that would result in a fourth-place finish.

See Lanikai, Page D7

Lanikai: Wins Molokai Hoe

FROM PAGE D1

"Those guys are the defending champs," said Waikiki Surf Club paddler Greg Edwards. "They hold the world record. For us to be pushing them the whole way and finish two minutes behind is a great accomplishment as far as I can tell."

Especially considering that conditions favored Lanikai's bigger, stronger paddlers. Swells of 6 to 8 feet and 20 mph trade winds were similar to last year's record-breaking conditions. But yesterday, a shifting tide caused the swells to break inconsistently. The trick was finding the right waves and avoiding the wrong ones.

"There were some screamers, but they were few and far between," said John Foti.

Further, Irvine said some of the swells were like illusions. "The current was ripping up, so you would get on top of some waves, but it wouldn't let you drop down. It was tough."

But with last year's victory in the back of their minds, the Lanikai paddlers said they never panicked. Not even when they found themselves behind three canoes in the first hour of the race.

"After last year, we knew what it would take to win," said Irvine. "In fact, last year was almost the same thing — we were behind in the beginning and then got ahead."

The start of the race — with 102 canoes lined up side by side — went smooth, with Faa'a, Outrigger and Waikiki Surf Club breaking ahead early. But Lanikai was like a stalking predator.

"We were real comfortable with where we were," said John Foti.

Moments later, just off the end of Molokai, Lanikai slowly picked off the leaders. About 30 minutes into the race, Lanikai was already pulling away. The only mystery revolved around the conditions.

In a two-hour period in the middle of the course, Lanikai steersman Jim Foti said the current was pushing directly at the canoe.

"It was difficult to stay straight," he said. "But you couldn't hide from it. You just had to paddle through it."

So they did. Halfway through the race, Waikiki Surf Club and Outrigger took different strategies in trying to catch Lanikai.

Waikiki Surf — despite a broken zipper on its canvas that was allowing water to fill the canoe — rode the surf right behind Lanikai.

"We just said, 'Hey, it's working for them, it'll work for us,'" said Edwards. "If they make a mistake, we'll be right there to pounce on them. Well, they didn't make any mistakes, so we got second."

Faa'a followed the same path to third. Outrigger decided to go more toward the north but only ended up falling farther behind.

"Hindsight is always golden, but looking back, I wish we went more south," said Outrig-

ger coach Mike Mason. "We made some mistakes, no doubt. But you can't just follow Lanikai and expect to out-paddle them. We had to take the chance."

It's a chance more teams might have to try next year.

"Lanikai is going to be real tough to beat," said Edwards.

"Like for us, we're extremely happy just to finish second to them. The fact that we could finish second to them was what was pushing us. Along the way, we were like, 'That's Lanikai. They're supposed to be untouchable.' And yet we

were right there. I can do nothing but smile."

Lanikai was not about to argue.

"Last year was sweeter just because it was our first (in 21 years) and we got the record," said Irvine. "But this is still special. A win is a win."

Mooloolaba of Australia was the first masters (35-over) crew to finish and ninth overall; Kai Opua from the Big Island was the first to cross in a koa canoe and 15th overall; Kailua was first in the senior masters (45-over) division.

NOTES: Although the contest was sponsored by Bank of Hawaii, Lanikai had a Bank of America logo on the side of its canoe. Lanikai paddlers said Bank of America, Windward Boats, Island Snow, Gordon Biersch and Rodeo Cantina combined to pay for the club's expenses this year. ... Lanikai became the fourth club in the 45-year history of the Molokai Hoe to win more than two races. Outrigger holds the record with 15 victories followed by Waikiki Surf Club (12) and OffShore (three). ... Of the record 102 canoes that started yesterday's race, 96 finished. ... Manu O Ke Kai, featuring North Shore lifeguards entering the race for the first time, finished 19th overall with a time of 5:50:30. ... Tom Conner, who steered Faa'a to victory in 1993 and '94, steered Dana Outrigger to an eighth-place finish yesterday.

PADDLING HA 10/14

Bankoh Molokai Hoe 96

From Hale O Lono Harbor, Molokai, to Duke Kahanamoku Beach, Waikiki (41 miles)

■ Overall

1, Lanikai-1, 5:15:42. 2, Waikiki Surf Club-1, 5:18:06. 3, Faa'a, 5:22:12. 4, Outrigger-1, 5:24:58. 5, Waikiki Beach Boys-1, 5:26:15. 6, Hui Nalu-1, 5:28:21. 7, Tui Tonga, 5:33:37. 8, Dana Outrigger, 5:34:40. 9, Mooloolaba, 5:34:48. 10, Lanakila, 5:37:24. 11, Hui Nalu-2, 5:39:18. 12, Kai Opua-1, 5:40:03. 13, Maohi Nui, 5:41:51. 14, Hawaiian-1, 5:43:12. 15, Kai Opua-2, 5:44:16. 16, Kailua-1, 5:44:55. 17, Lanikai-2, 5:44:56. 18, Anuenue-1, 5:48:19. 19, Manu O Ke Kai, 5:50:30. 20, False Creek, 5:52:14.

21, Waikiki Surf Club-2, 5:53:24. 22, California Renegades, 5:53:59. 23, Lokahi-3, 5:56:59. 24, Napili-1, 5:57:30. 25, Outrigger-2, 5:57:51. 26, Lanikai-3, 6:05:14. 27, Kamehameha (Hilo), 6:05:52. 28, Hui Lanakila-3, 6:08:03. 29, Sydney Outrigger, 6:10:02. 30, Manuiwa, 6:10:17. 31, Waikiki Surf Club-3, 6:10:33. 32, Kailua-6, 6:12:34. 33, Kailua-2, 6:13:06. 34, Lokahi-1, 6:14:27. 35, Hawaiian-3, 6:15:06. 36, Puuwai, 6:15:28. 37, Kanu Connection, 6:17:36. 38, Kaiola-1, 6:18:13. 39, Keauhou-1, 6:18:37. 40, Napili-2, 6:18:42.

41, Kahana-1, 6:19:37. 42, Hawaiian-2, 6:20:02. 43, Koa Kai-1, 6:20:29. 44, Rocky Outrigger, 6:22:16. 45, Anuenue-2, 6:22:29. 46, Malama Ula, 6:24:27. 47, Hui Lanakila-1, 6:24:38. 48, Outrigger-3, 6:24:58. 49, Hui Lanakila-2, 6:25:10. 50, Keauhou-2, 6:26:35. 51, Kahana-2, 6:27:53. 52, Kailua-3, 6:28:08. 53, Jericho, 6:28:40. 54, Na Keiki O Ka Mo'i, 6:29:28. 55, Koa Kai-4, 6:29:43. 56, Lanikai-4, 6:31:08. 57, Koolau, 6:33:47. 58, Na Kai Ewalu-1, 6:34:41. 59, Na Kai Ewalu-3, 6:35:01. 60, Napili-3, 6:35:02.

61, Waikoloa, 6:36:33. 62, Kailua-4, 6:36:32. 63, Keahiakahoe, 6:38:26. 64, Honolulu-1, 6:38:58. 65, Lokahi-2, 6:39:01. 66, Kilohana, 6:39:39. 67, Waikiki Yacht Club-2, 6:39:46. 68, Kaiola-2, 6:39:57. 69, Kawaihae, 6:40:03. 70, Keaukaha, 6:40:28. 71, Kalama Malolo, 6:41:59. 72, Hui O Hawaii, 6:42:26. 73, Kai Opua-3, 6:42:36. 74, Koa Kai-3, 6:42:43. 75, Kamehameha (Oahu), 6:46:04. 76, Kailua-5, 6:46:55. 77, Healani-1, 6:47:10. 78, Koa Kai-2, 6:47:12. 79, Windward Kai-2, 6:50:46. 80, Windward Kai-1, 6:52:41.

81, Na Kai Ewalu-2, 6:53:46. 82, Lae Ula O Kai, 6:58:32. 83, Anuenue-3, 6:59:41. 84, Waikiki Yacht Club-3, 7:01:54. 85, Healani-2, 7:02:31. 86, Lanikai-5, 7:03:15. 87, Kihei, 7:03:51. 88, Keauhou-3, 7:04:01. 89, Kai Poha, 7:09:51. 90, Alapahoe, 7:10:55. 91, Poi Boys, 7:13:12. 92, Honolulu-2, 7:14:58. 93, Kai Opua-4, 7:15:15. 94, Ohana Kalama, 7:15:26. 95, Hui Nalu-4, 7:18:04. 96, Koa Kai-5, 7:20:43.

■ Koa Canoes

1, Kai Opua-2, 5:44:16. 2, Waikiki Surf Club-2, 5:53:24. 3, Lanikai-3, 6:05:14. 4, Keahiakahoe, 6:38:26. 5, Kihei, 7:03:51.

■ Masters (35-over) Division

1, Mooloolaba, 5:34:48. 2, California Renegades, 5:53:59. 3, Lokahi-3, 5:56:59. 4, Hui Lanakila-3, 6:08:03. 5, Manuiwa, 6:10:17. 6, Hawaiian-3, 6:15:06. 7, Keauhou, 6:18:37. 8, Koa Kai-4, 6:29:43. 9, Kaiola-2, 6:39:57. 10, Windward Kai-1, 6:52:41. 11, Waikiki Yacht Club-3, 7:01:54. 12, Lanikai-5, 7:03:15.

■ Senior Masters (45-over)

1, Kailua-6, 6:12:34. 2, Anuenue-2, 6:22:29. 3, Keauhou-2, 6:26:35. 4, Na Kai Ewalu-1, 6:34:41. 5, Kawaihae, 6:40:03. 6, Hui O Hawaii, 6:42:26. 7, Na Kai Ewalu-2, 6:53:45. 8, Anuenue-3, 6:59:41. 9, Honolulu-2, 7:14:58. 10, Kai Opua-4, 7:15:15. 11, Koa Kai-5, 7:20:43.