



By RON HAWORTH

Hawaii sets selection pace

It was with a calculated eye to the small surf expected at San Diego during the World Surfing Championships that the Hawaii selection committee after a difficult decision named Hawaii's team.

A lot of time and hard work went into the selections. But that wasn't anything new to chairman Wally Froiseth, George Downing, John Kelly, Johnny McMahon and Dave Rochlen. These names are synonymous with surfing's growth in the Islands.

Brennan (Hevs) McClelland, World Surfing Championships chairman, summed it up this way upon his arrival last week with Pat McNulty, managing editor of Surfer Magazine.

"The World Committee has the utmost respect for men like Froiseth and McMahon who have given us all 13 Makaha International Championships, and we seek and welcome their assistance in ironing out certain phases of the W.S.C."

It was Tom Morey, president of the United States Surfing Association, who requested that Rochlen oversee the way in which Hawaii's team was to be selected.

Rochlen accepted the responsibility and quickly formed a committee named above.

"It was decided that contest results over the past year should be a heavy factor in determining method," reports Rochlen, "with most of the emphasis on the Kahanamoku, Makaha, Haleiwa, and Hawaii State meets. Results of the scattering of meets held during the winter at Chun's Reef were also scrutinized.

Unfortunate incident

"Individual character was another element we considered. The committee agreed that Hawaii could ill-afford a repeat of last year's incident in Peru when two California surfers acted in a manner unbecoming amateur athletes." (It took letters of apology to both the Peruvian government and the U.S. State Department to clean the diplomatic slate.)

Once these five men had resolved how the team would be selected they were left with the problem of who would have the task of judging hundreds of surfers.

It's difficult at best to place yourself in a position of absolute authority over so many surfers. Luckily, these five took a long look at themselves; none other are more qualified.

Rochlen acted as the committee's voice during the press conference held at the Outrigger Club. At that time he elaborated on each selection, pointing out to the press each individual's recent achievements in the surfing realm. (Only five men were unanimous choices. The next five were culled from 15 hotly contested names.)

"Be assured that Hawaii's team will display ability and sportsmanship on the waves, as well as dignity while guests of San Diego," Rochlen affirmed.

"It may surprise some," he continued, "who are not smack on top of the sport, that names such as Buffalo Keaulana, Conrad Cahna, and Buzzy Trent have been omitted. These men are proven big wave riders, but would be at a disadvantage in the small California shore-break surf.

"By this same token, George Downing withdrew himself as a contender, and has since graciously consented to act as coach for the Hawaii squad."

The fact that our team will be accompanied by a coach is a milestone in surfing. Downing's experience gained in winning three Makaha crowns, knowledge of the California surf, and mature wisdom make him a valuable asset.

McClelland said, "I am truly impressed that your fine committee has given such weight to proper management and coaching. Hawaii is the first representative to the W.S.C. to advance the sport in such a manner, and I believe it to be a significant step."

Valuable as coach

Downing's value will be fully appreciated when our team finds itself in San Diego facing unfamiliar surf. Like a crafty baseball manager, he'll have to alter strategy to suit the surf—perhaps from Windansea reef surf, or point surf with shifty onshore winds and unpredictable shoulders. Each day the tension will rise and subside, only to rise again.

Only the beach-break portion of the contest is fixed and inflexible at Ocean Beach. The other two breaks will remain unknown until the morning of competition after experts have analyzed the coastline from Point Loma to La Jolla.

More work lies ahead for the selection committee, too. The World Surfing Committee bylaws state that three fares from Group One countries will be paid, and this has been broken down to read two surfers and a judge (Froiseth). That leaves 11 surfers and one coach still unaccounted for and in need of aid to reach California. Once there, San Diego picks up the tab.

David Darling and Charles Shipman hope to help along these lines by sponsoring a nose-riding contest September 10-11 on either the north or south shore, depending on where the surf is. Contestants will compete against a stop watch.

First prize is a round-trip ticket to San Diego and the W.S.C. It would be appropriate if that winner was one of the 10 men selected to take part in the championships. Entry fee is \$10 and entry blanks are available at surf-board shops.

Hopefully, Hawaii will field a full complement in San Diego, and that one of these surfers returns a champion.