

# Waikiki Club Braves Battering Swells To Win Canoe Classic

By DAVID BUTWIN

On a day when little boats should have stayed in their berths, the Waikiki Surf Club gained supremacy of Island outrigger canoe racing yesterday.

Fighting 15-foot swells that at times left them retching and gasping, the Waikiki crew won the 15th annual Molokai-Oahu Canoe Race in 6 hours, 37 minutes and 13 seconds.

Their time was considerably slower than the record of 5 hours 36 minutes set on the 38-mile route in 1964 by the Hawaiian Civic Club, but on those fierce seas yesterday (small craft warnings were up) it was commendable simply to finish the race.

A half-dozen of the crews didn't. Outrigger Canoe Club, the defending champion, battled Waikiki nearly stroke for stroke until the 40-foot koa canoe capsized near the middle of the Molokai Channel.

Coach Al Lemes' crew tried vainly for two hours to right the boat before finally accepting a tow.

With the Outrigger swamped, Molokai Club took over second place in the koa class, finishing 10 minutes behind the winners in 6:47:02.

Healani, coached by Richard Bell, actually turned in the second best time (6:40:46). Its fiberglass canoe easily won the non-koa class.

Rabbit Kekai, at 38 the oldest man in the Waikiki canoe, paddled without relief in the steersman position.

Other members were Joseph (Nappy) Napoleon, Randy Chun, Nick Beck, Blue Makua Jr., Richard Henning, Jeffery Young, Val Ching, Michael Tongg, Dodd Balock, Jeff Chee and Wally Froeseith.

For Kekai, Napoleon and other Waikiki veterans, the victory was particularly savory. For years the Waikiki club had dominated the race, but then fell off the pace and finished out of the running in 1964 and 1965.

For a while yesterday morning it appeared Waikiki would go a third year without the spoils.

On Molokai, where the crews rested on the beach overnight before setting off at 7 a.m., an eligibility question involving big Nick Beck threatened to eliminate Waikiki.

It seemed Beck had com-



After the race, winning crew members unwind on Hawaiian Village shore.

peted this summer for the Kana'i club. The question was whether he had received legal clearance to paddle for Waikiki.

An hour before the race began, the rules committee cleared Beck.

From the start, at Hale O Lono Harbor, the elements went to work on the dozen canoes. Winds reached 25 or 30 miles an hour. Seldom were the swells under 8 feet.

An hour out to sea, the Mali Sons koa canoe capsized. Back it went to Molokai, on a tow line.

Later, the Lanikai, Kailua and Outrigger boats fell victim to the towering seas.

Escort and official boats didn't do much better.

Late in the morning an old

salt named Chris Faria, a race official and Honolulu police officer, sailed from the Hilton beach to check the progress of the race.

Faria got out in the channel and quickly radioed: "This is the roughest I've seen in years. I'm coming back in. It's strictly for the fish."

Back on shore, Faria wrung out his shirt and delivered a lamentation to the paddlers.

"Those poor buggers," he said. "I pity them trying to substitute from the escort boat. In the past they've had rubber mattresses, but this year they're on their own."

"You can spend a lot of time in that water waiting for the boat to pick you up."

After Outrigger swamped in mid-channel, Waikiki fretted more about the violent water than the other boats in their wake.

Twice the red and gold canoe Malia went over, but both times Coach Napoleon and his crew got it going again without much delay.

By the time the Malia appeared off Waikiki Beach, with a watchful convoy of many small boats, there were some 2,000 spectators on the Hilton beach taking in Aloha Week entertainment and waiting to see what damage the element had done to boats and crews.

Just before 2 p.m., with drums pounding and hula girls swaying on a temporary bandstand, the winning canoe nosed across the finish line at the Hilton dock.

Most of the Waikiki crewmen slumped forward in the boat, but within five minutes they had regained enough energy to shout a cheer for the Healani crew.

In another five minutes they hardly looked fatigued.

"That's the kind of shape they're in," said an official. "They've been going hard since August."

Kekai, the legendary surfer, said he remembered only one race tougher, that in 1954.

"Those swells were 15 feet," he said. "Make that 15 plus."

On the bandstand, race officials presented the winning crew with all sorts of trophies, which may not be displayed because the Waikiki crew doesn't have a club house.

Then the crew got another award it was waiting for: A \$400 check.

With that, crewman Chun shouted: "Let's go suck 'em up."

## De-Escalation Of War Urged

BELMONT, Mass. (UPI)

—Former U.S. Ambassador to Japan Edwin O. Reischauer believes "we must work harder to find ways to de-escalate" the war in Viet Nam.

"One possible step might be to stop the bombing of North Viet Nam," he told a newsman at his home here. "It doesn't seem to have been very effective. But such a step would need most careful preparation. Considerations of timing would be all-important."

Reischauer said his position on the war in Viet Nam had not changed. "We must stick it out. If we walked out of Viet Nam now, it might make a significant

number of Asians think that communism is the wave of the future—the results could be disastrous.

"I'm convinced the President is doing his darndest to find peace. It's not easy. If you can't get a conference, you can't get a conference. A lot depends on the other side."

Earlier Reischauer told writer for the Harvard Alumni Bulletin that he had had "doubts about the bombing of the North."

"But we're stuck with the bombing of the North now. You can perhaps gradually cut it off. My own feeling would be, probably that would be the wise course," he said.

**TODAY'S THOUGHT**