

OCC pick to win Isles canoe race

What was thought to be an impossibility less than two decades ago—the Molokai-to-Oahu Outrigger Canoe race—will be run for the 16th straight year Sunday.

Thirteen boats—eight in the koa class and five in the fibreglass class—will attempt the marathon between the Friendly Isle and Oahu, a 38-mile dash through some of the most treacherous currents in the world.

The race will start at 7:30 a.m. at Hale O Lono Harbor with the first canoe expected

at the finish line in front of the Hilton Village beach at 1:30 p.m.

The purse for the World Series of canoe racing is \$1,000 (divided among the first three canoes with the best times) plus trophies, and gold, silver and bronze medals. Outrigger Canoe Club, last year's titlist, is favored.

Paddlers have logged approximately 250 miles in two months of training for the grind, one of the highlights of Aloha Week.

The winning crew usually maintains better than 50 strokes a minute for more than half of the distance (once they get through the Molokai Channel).

Getting through the hazardous currents of the Channel is quite a feat in itself. However, while canoes have been broken in half by the mountainous seas, there has never been a fatal mishap.

Each canoe is comprised of six-man crews, whose place in the boat is taken by a relief paddler (each canoe is allowed three).

The relievers leap from the convoy boats and swim alongside the canoes, at times through shark-infested waters, before pulling themselves aboard.

Crews entered are:

Koa Class — Hui Nalu, Kamehameha, Kauai, Leeward Kai, Maile Sons, Molokai, Waikiki Surf and Outrigger, record holder with 5 hours 26 minutes made last year.

Fibreglass — Healani, Hui Nalu, Kailua, Lanikai and Molokai.

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