

# 'Baby' agrees—it was a nice race

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*Advertiser Staff Writer*

"Eh, Baby, nice race!" people yelled yesterday.

Baby knew it was a nice race, and he smiled big through a salty face, several flower leis and some eight large koa and gold trophies.

Baby — Richard Bell, 34, a repairman with Honolulu Gas Co., Ltd. — was exhausted and thirsty, but very happy.

"It was a perfect trip for us," said Bell, the paddler-coach of the Healani Canoe Club which won yesterday's annual Molokai to Oahu outrigger canoe race.

"We were the first canoe off Molokai Point, and we stayed in front all the way across — a straight line from Molokai to Diamond Head, about 46 to 48 strokes a minute," he said.

**YES, 46 TO 48 STROKES** a minute — for five hours, 59 minutes and 2 seconds — from Hale O Lono Harbor, Molokai, to Duke Kahanamoku Beach here — through splashing, back-bending surf.

"You get so tired sometimes you think you're about dead," said Bell, "but you work harder because you see your buddy right next to you is really cracking."

The Healani reached the finish six minutes and six seconds ahead of the second-place Outrigger Canoe Club team.

"You've got to win this race, because there's no such thing as second or third place in it. There's just first place and last place, with first getting everything," Bell said yesterday.

**BELL HAD WORKED HIS** paddlers six nights a week, three to four hours each night, for the past six weeks. It was his club's second victory in a row.

"The workouts are only hard until they learn to like it," says Bell. "Then they thrive on them."

Gary Murakami, 33, Healani's steering captain and a Kalihi-Kai fireman-rescue worker, said of his coach: "Baby's real hard on us. And he really wanted to win this one, so the training schedule was even tougher."