

HCRA, Hui Wa'a showdown tomorrow

By CURTIS MURAYAMA

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All sports come down to this:

To decide who's the best. Who's the best club, or which is the best league. It's no different in canoe racing.

After three months of weekly regattas which determine the King of the Canoes for only a week, the Hui Wa'a & Surfing Association and the Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association will collide to decide the overall State canoe champion at 9 a.m. tomorrow at Keehi Lagoon.

The two associations, different only by the make of their canoes and race courses, have been holding parallel regattas. But now, both combine to hold one final race.

The lists of entrants have been whittled down — for lack of size of the race area — to only the top six canoes per association. The rules have been altered to accommodate the younger association — the Hui Wa'a — in the regatta that has been dominated in its first two years by the older and experienced HCRA.

The regatta will hold 24 events, the HCRA number, but only 17 — or the number of events held in an Hui Wa'a regatta — will be counted.

The flags, usually one eighth of a mile in Hui Wa'a races, will be posted at one quarter of a mile apart — the HCRA distance.

One Hui Wa'a team out to gain some recognition for the all-fiber glass association, however, is Loa'a.

Loa'a, coached by Bobby Wilson, has never had the feeling of "kissing your sister" so far this season, winning every Hui Wa'a regatta, including last week's breeze in the State Hui Wa'a meet.

"We'll be up there," said Wilson, in his usual noncommittal statements. He conceded, however, that the club's main competition would be "Outrigger, Hui Nalu and Kailua."

Loa'a, head and shoulders above the rest of the Hui Wa'a crowd, should be the only team from its association to fight for the overall title.

But the Loa'a's can't go to sleep, especially with the steady and out-

standing clubs like Outrigger, Hui Nalu and Kailua.

While Loa'a has been cruising with no obstacles in its way, the three HCRA clubs, especially Outrigger and Hui Nalu, have been fighting for weekly bragging rights.

"We're looking to win but you never know until you get out there," said Outrigger coach Nat Norfleet, whose association faces the untimely feat of competing in a long-distance race the very next day. "We'll

be up there but I don't know how far."

Outrigger, rebounding from a disappointing performance in the HCRA Oahu Championship, captured the State meet. Hui Nalu earned its recognition by downing the field to win the Oahu Championship.

Kailua, much of its performance overshadowed by the Outrigger-Hui Nalu confrontation, has been creeping up on the competition, finishing second in the State HCRA meet

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