

Headquarters may be located in Hawaii

Paddlers form world group, aim for Olympic entry

Canoe paddlers from Tahiti, California, Canada and Hawaii last week organized the World Outrigger Canoe Racing Association, aimed at winning Olympic recognition of the sport.

Canoe races sponsored by the group also could decide the world championship of canoe paddling.

Preliminary plans call for headquarters in Hawaii.

Canoe coaches from Tahiti and California were chosen as co-chairmen — Hugh Laughlin, president of the Tere Matal Canoe Club of Tahiti, and Pete Carolan, coach of the Blaz-



Hugh Laughlin
Co-chairman of canoe group



bob krauss

Advertiser columnist

ing Paddles Canoe Club of Newport Beach, Calif., which won the Molokai-to-Oahu canoe race last Sunday.

Edward Medeiros, vice president for Kauai of the Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association, is treasurer.

"I've always felt this sport should be in the Olympics," said Carolan, a professional life guard. "The only way to do that is to go international. Eighteen countries have to compete in a sport before it will be accepted in Olympic competition."

Laughlin said one of the first problems was to decide on the "shape of the canoe. The shape of the canoes used by the Canadians, the Tahitians and the Hawaiians are all different."

He said Arvid Charlie, coach of Canadian Indian crew which entered the Molokai-Oahu race this year, has agreed that the canoe used in international competition will have an outrigger.

The question of which canoe to use came up again Wednesday night at a

canoe to Hawaii from Tahiti and has donated it to the association, said a mold could be taken from it. He said fiberglass canoes built from the mold could be sold for under \$400.

Lellani Faria, president of the Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association, suggested that canoe clubs could carve their own one-man canoes at even less cost because trees for one-man canoes are not difficult to find.

Laughlin said the one-man Tahitian racing canoe is 24 feet long, weighs about 50 pounds, can be paddled by males and females of any age, and moves at about the same speed as a six-man racing canoe.

Another World Outrigger Racing Canoe event could be between traditional Hawaiian, six-man racing canoes which are more suited to open ocean conditions and which already are in use in Hawaii, California and Tahiti.

Laughlin said he would like to see a race between Tahiti and Raistera, a distance of 250 kilometers over open ocean. He said the paddle takes 24 hours for a crew of 18.

In Hawaii the distance would be equivalent of a paddle between Oahu and the Big Island. In California the race would be equivalent to paddling from San Francisco to Pismo Beach.

One member said the use of canoes from more than one country would make the competitions truly international and would broaden the interest in canoe racing for paddlers.

Several members suggested that the association put on a race in a different part of the world every year.

In the beginning, the competitions for both men and women to decide the world championships would be held in Tahiti, California or Hawaii.

second meeting of the group. Members agreed that a decision at this point is premature. But a possible solution came to the service.

It is to use more than one class of canoe in World Outrigger Canoe Racing events. One could be the traditional Tahitian one-man racing canoe which is ideal for calm waters all over the world; lagoons, harbors, canals.

Laughlin, who brought a one-man



Hugh Laughlin in one-person Tahitian canoe: Standard shapes will have to be agreed upon.

Advertiser photos by Ray Ho

according to this plan.

Later, as other countries enter the competition, the annual races could be moved to each one. When enough nations have entered the competition, outrigger canoe racing could become an Olympic event.

One of the organizers of the new group is A. E. "Toots" Minvielle, patriarch of outrigger canoe racing and president of the Hawaii International Outrigger Canoe Association. He said he has dreamed for years of international competition.

"I would merge the International Canoe Association with the World Outrigger Canoe Racing Association if the new group gets off the ground," he said.

Laughlin appointed Waldorf Wilson, president of the Hui Waa (Canoe) Association, on a committee to draw up by-laws. Assisting him will be Robert Fisher of Hawaii, and Minvielle.

Carolan accepted the assignment of working on racing rules and setting up a racing program. He said he asked Chris Faria, a director of the Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association, to assist him and that Faria has accepted.

Faria said donations of \$1,500 were pledged to the group at the first meeting.

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