

Aloha Week, paddlers resolve Molokai mess

By Andy Yamaguchi
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The annual Molokai-to-Oahu canoe race is back in one piece after Aloha Week officials and paddlers agreed to end their tug-of-war that threatened to break the race in two.

The race, a 41-mile trip across Kaiwi Channel that has become the Kentucky Derby of outrigger canoe racing, will be held Oct. 11. Aloha Week had wanted Sept. 19 but the paddlers lobbied for the later date.

"It looks like we're resolving it. There'll be just one men's race — Oct. 11," said Billy Mitchell, spokesman for the Oahu Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association (OHCRA) committee that was challenging Aloha Week for control of the race.

"Everybody seems to be happy with their role in the race," Mitchell said yesterday. "We're definitely a part of it and they're definitely a part of it. We're pretty close to a really, really good race. I think all parties compromised and worked really hard on this."

Said John Kapua, Aloha Week's Molokai race chairman, "The only thing we came to an agreement to was the changing of the dates and

one race. As far as anything else, we're waiting for all parties to get together again."

Mitchell said he expects the details to be ironed out and an announcement made "sometime next week."

The conflict flared last month when the OHCRA announced it was organizing a Molokai race for Oct. 11, three weeks after Aloha Week's scheduled Molokai race. Aloha Week has sponsored the race since it began in 1952.

OHCRA officials charged that Aloha Week did not have the money or expertise to stage the race properly and offered to take it over on Aloha Week's behalf.

Aloha Week officials said they did not intend to relinquish control.

But two weeks ago talks resumed between both sides and a compromise was reached.

There is speculation that the women's Molokai-to-Oahu race, the Na Wahine O Ke Kai, may be moved up from Sept. 27 to Sept. 19 to fill the void in the Oahu Aloha Week celebration.

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