

Controversy doesn't slow Hui Nalu

from page B-1

man.

"We've been able to draw from our club a certain kind of paddler — lean and strong, not heavy," Haine said. "We're able to keep up a high stroke for a long time."

Someone suggested OCC's seniors just might be the crew to end California's two-year domination of the Molokai-to-Oahu race. Haine's eyes lit up. "We paddle for that," he said. "We sit on the beach and say, 'We want Molokai' — not just for Outrigger, but for Hawaii."

Other crews stood out, such as Hui Nalu's unbeaten 12A

boys and OCC's unbeaten 16-year-old boys and senior women.

Also undefeated was the 18-year-old boys crew from Kawaihae on the Big Island. After four years together, that crew finally won a state race.

"You train all year — hey, this is the greatest thrill in the world," Kawaihae's Nate Hendricks said. "We owe everything to our coach, Manny Vincent. He couldn't be here because he's a fireman. He taught us how to paddle."

Not a winner, but just as thrilled, were the "360s" makule (old-timer) crew from Hanalei. They call themselves

the "360s" because that is the combined age of the six paddlers.

"Jim (Towar, 62) started paddling with the young guys, then I got into it," said George Batt, 67. "Then I said, 'We're nuts, we oughta get some other old guys to paddle with us.'"

Bob Rasmussen added, "Now we'd like to get some competition against guys our own age, and not go up against the whippersnappers." Their event is for men over 42.

Beck, like most of the Neighbor Islanders, was appalled by the dusty conditions at Keehi.

"God, what a dismal place to spend the day," he said through a green bandana. "Hanalei is the most beautiful place there is. Sandy beach, clean water." Next year's state regatta is at Hanalei Bay.

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