

Loa'a Classic Saturday

Twenty-seven hundred dollars and some answers to the canoe-design debate will be at stake Saturday when 30 clubs compete in the Loa'a Open Classic long distance canoe races.

The men's 25-mile race will start at 8 a.m. at Magic Island and finish at Kailua Beach. The women's 10-mile race will start at 1 p.m. at Kailua Beach and finish at Heeia Kea Pier in Kaneohe.

After the races, the public is invited to a luau at Ulu Mau Village, behind Heeia State Park. Entertainment will be provided by Rap Reiplinger and the Breakaway Band. Tickets are \$10.

The first-place men's crew will win \$1,000, the first-place women \$500. Paddlers on the winning crews will also win round-trip interisland plane tickets.

Cash prizes will also be awarded to the second-, third- and fourth-place crews.

The race is believed to be the first to be open to canoes of all designs, not just those of traditional Hawaiian design. The purpose of such an "open" race is to compare the performances of different designs, race spokeswoman Robyn Wilson said.

"Some people believe the Hawaiian design is the best, others say it's the Tahitian design, and others think it's something in between," Wilson said. "This will be a showdown — everybody will bring their best boats and race them."

State champion Hui Nalu and Outrigger are two clubs that have "bullets" — canoes more streamlined than traditional Hawaiian canoes.

The luau will start at 4 p.m. and last until 9. Tickets may be purchased at Women's World Spa in Kailua and at K & L Auto Parts stores in on the Windward side.