

# Outrigger wins its most important regatta: Its own

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Special to the Star-Bulletin

How important was it to Outrigger Canoe Club to win its own Walter J. Macfarlane Regatta at Waikiki Beach yesterday?

"More important than winning next month's state championship," OCC's coach John Finney said.

Prior to yesterday's 90-65 win over Hui Nalu, the best Outrigger could manage this season was a tie for first place with Kailua at Nanakuli. In four previous regattas, the five-time defending state champ has been kicked, battered and bruised by rivals.

Healani took third with 54 points, followed by race favorite Kailua with 40. Hui Lanakila topped the small club division with 15 points.

"Outrigger came together for the first time," Finney said, noting that his kids' crews scored points, his veteran paddlers and steersmen came through, and OCC enjoyed a little luck.

An OCC turnaround? "With Outrigger you never know," the coach said.

Outrigger won 12 of the 30 events, placed second in eight others and third in two. OCC paddlers, who admit peaking for this regatta, have now won six consecutive Macfarlane meets and 13 of the past 15.

Next to coach Finney, the happiest Outrigger paddler was Todd Bradley, who steered OCC's men's senior crew to its first Macfarlane win in four years.

"I've been waiting for years for this. Having my name appear on the men's race trophy was my dream," Bradley said.

In winning yesterday, Outrigger pulled out the stops.

"They loaded their crews with their best. Outrigger was strongest today and deserved to win," Hui Nalu paddler Kala Kukea said.

Many clubs, including runnerup Hui Nalu, treated the Macfarlane as a fun participation event and used all their paddlers regardless of skill.

Held in the unpredictable surf, open steering was allowed for safety purposes. That's where expert steersmen may replace less-experienced people at the coach's discretion. In many cases, this meant

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substituting male steersmen for women to improve the club's chances of winning.

"Men are stronger than women. I don't question that," Hui Nalu's steersperson Denise Darval said, "but when you train with a crew all season why should a you have to give up your position to a man because you're a woman?"

Darval, a veteran of seven Molokai to Oahu races in canoes and three in kayaks, was one of a very few women steering canoes yes-

terday.

"The surf wasn't that big. Why more clubs didn't use women is beyond me," she said.

Added Waikiki Surf Club's Luana Froiseth: "Women should steer their own crews even if they lose the race."

The Macfarlane was a success but some paddlers want more. They claim the sport isn't taken seriously enough and that it deserves greater recognition.

"A group of us just returned from Australia where we competed in a series of outrigger races. The Aussies went all out — television, newspapers and magazines," Outrigger Canoe Club's Keone Downing said.

"What's needed," Downing continued, "is for our legislators to become active in the sport to see how many people are participating and the skills that are required."

Anuenue coach Nappy Napoleon practiced a little nepotism in selecting his men's freshman crew. He picked four of his sons: David, Joey, Aaron and Darryn, and signed on Raven Alpa and Wally Rezentos to win the race.