

Paddleboard event created

Paddleboard racing, one of simplest and least expensive of Hawaiian water sports, is also one of the most competitive and fastest growing, enthusiast Dr. Frederick Fong of Outrigger Canoe Club says.

"Outrigger wants to perpetuate this old Hawaiian sport. We've established a firm set of rules to race by; a good schedule and have experienced people to answer most questions how to begin," he said.

In two races last month 200 paddlers turned out for the Sunset Beach to Waimea Bay contest and 50 entries for the tough nine-mile Duke Kahanamoku event, from Hawaii Kai to Waikiki.

"With the adverse wind and a strong current I'm surprised the Duke race drew that many people. It was a hard race," said the winner, Edmund Pestana.

Women's Duke winner Helene Phillips explained that competitive surfers are turning to paddleboard racing for a couple reasons — there's no long frustrating race delays while waiting for the right tournament waves, and there's no subjective scoring by judges.

"First person finishing wins. That's it!" she said. Pestana and Phillips are Honolulu lifeguards. In addition to the Duke winners, Chris Moore and Debbie Wayman are among Hawaii's leading paddleboard racers.

Racing boards are 12-foot long, weigh 20 pounds and cost from \$250 used to \$650 new. Two Outrigger Canoe Club events — the five-kilometer Cline Mann Race Aug. 19 and the 10-kilometer Winter Race Dec. 30 — end this season. Contact Outrigger for details.

Jack Wyatt, Special to the Star-Bulletin