



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **KANE`OHE RETURNS TO THE TOP OF ITS GAME**

*Windward Kai and Manu O Ke Kai take their koa canoe for a test run prior to states.*

**HONOLULU (June 26, 2002)** — Regatta #5, the middle of the season, is a lot like a Wednesday, the proverbial “hump” day. Not unlike a race, the fast and frantic start of the season has given way to a comfortable settled routine. The focus of clubs and crews is shifting toward the strategic game of qualifying the most, and best, crews to the HCRA state championship in Hilo and planning for the long distance season.

In the AA division, Kane`ohe reclaimed the number 1 spot, finishing the day with 65 points to Lokahi's 59. Manu O Ke Kai was a distant 3rd place with 42 points, barely edging out Na Keiki O Ka Mo`i who finished with 41 points. Koa Kai had an exceptionally strong showing by its open men to win its 5<sup>th</sup> straight single A division crown with 41 points. Kalihi-Kai nosed out Windward Kai for second place 21-18.

In a day that was relatively error free and without major upsets, 2 incidents in the one-mile sophomore men's race entertained the crowd along the beach. Just barely 100 yards from the start of the race, Reid Nakaina, the stroker from Kai Poha, broke his paddle and, finding no spare in the canoe, jumped out to lighten the load. Luckily, Kai Poha was in lane 2, and Nakaina swam to shore initially planning to watch his five teammates finish the race as best they could. An astute coach, or perhaps it was the screaming crowd, reminded him that six paddlers needed to be in the canoe at the finish in order to complete the race without disqualification. So, Nakaina grabbed a paddle and swam back to his lane to be picked up in a long distance style change to the cheering of the crowd on the beach. Kai Poha finished in third behind first place Koa Kai, and second place Manu O Ke Kai who had its own lost paddler incident on the ½ mile turn.

Manu O Ke Kai's sophomore men, racing in their beautiful koa canoe, have normally won the event by a comfortable margin each week. This week however, a near huli (capsize) on the turn added additional drama to the sophomore men's race. To keep the canoe from huli-ing, the paddler in seat 4 leaned so hard on the `iako, that he fell out of the canoe. The paddler in seat 5 jumped into seat 4 to keep the `ama down, while the man in the water climbed back into the canoe.

Where the sophomore men gave the crowd drama, the Senior Master Mixed race provided entertainment and friendly rivalry amongst the Hui Wa`a officials and board members. Kalihi-Kai, who finished first, had its assistant representative Cindy Kama steering her crew. Hui Wa`a secretary, and Kamehameha representative, Barb Vasold paddled in the second place crew. George Waikoloa, assistant race chair, and brother of Cindy Kama, steered Kane`ohe to third place, outdistancing Race Chair Henry Palakiko who steered 4<sup>th</sup> place Windward Kai.

Although the clubs from Hui Wa`a generally race fiberglass canoes during the regatta season, several clubs are the owners of fine koa canoes. The koa canoes from Windward Kai and Manu O Ke Kai were proudly raced throughout the day as those two clubs gave their crews a feel for the koa prior to the state races. At all state races, only koa canoes are used, fiberglass is not allowed.



Action moves to Ma`ili Beach Park this Sunday, June 30<sup>th</sup>, where Na Keiki O Ka Mo'i hopes to use its home water advantage to break into the top three. Ka Mo'i also invites paddlers to join them on Saturday, 6/29 for a fun 1-man canoe relay race fundraiser.

For the latest Hui Wa`a information, go to [www.huiwaa.com](http://www.huiwaa.com)

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