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PACIFIC PADDLER

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COVERING HAWAII'S STATE TEAM SPORT SINCE 1996

OluKai Ho'olaule'a



Kai Bartlett and Danny Ching paddle battle



Andrea Moller stroking it out for a 1st place OC1 win



Helicopter and film crew capture Manny Kulukulalani leading the race



For visitors, May 16th and 17th was a picture perfect spring weekend on Maui, but for paddlers the island's beautiful coastline presented a challenge at the OluKai Ho'olaule'a. The event featured an OC1 race and a Stand Up Paddle race beginning at Maliko Gulch and ending at Kanaha Beach Park on the island's North Shore.

Although racers typically face this eight-mile downwind course with the support of 20-30 knot gusts propelling them from behind, on both race days, paddlers faced the grueling conditions of calm winds and glassy water.

Maui's own Kai Bartlett describes it to be "a pretty good race course straight down the coast. On a normal basis it is one of the top runs you can get. It presented a good little challenge for us, but I was just happy we had something to play with out there, and anytime you can get a downwind it's a good thing."

On the opening day of The OluKai Ho'olaule'a, the OC1 final ignited spectator enthusiasm with a 180-degree buoy turn and sprint to a waterline finish.

Manny Kulukulalani was the first to cross the men's OC1 finish line at 53:28.9, followed by Danny Ching, 53:40.2, and Kai Bartlett, 54:20.5, in close pursuit.

In the women's division, Andrea Moller swept the competition both days, coming in first with a time of 59:27.3 in the OC1 race and a 1:21:21.5 in the Stand Up race. Although fellow paddlers kept her on her toes for a tight finish on the OC1 course, she powered ahead in the Stand Up race leaving a four minute gap between her and the rest of the pack.

The Stand Up Paddle race was highlighted with a 200-yard run finish over a rugged coral-filled sand beach. SUP

SUP competitors dig in

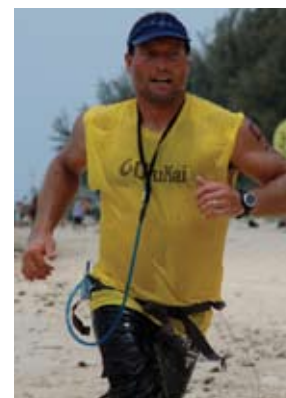
icon, Dave Kalama swiftly captured the top finish time of the course coming in at 1:08:18.4, nearly two minutes ahead of his trailing competition.

"At the end of the day, even though we are all out there, trying to beat each other into submission, when we get on the beach it's all hand shakes and talking about how fun it was," said Kalama. "It can be so serious on the water, but when you get on the beach there's a lot of Aloha and there's a lot of camaraderie."

The race was built around the community, bringing elite paddlers, locals and visitors together for a weekend of competition, authentic Hawaiian activities and music by Paula Fuga. In a sport that is often supported by the paddlers themselves, OluKai awarded the contestants of the Ho'olaule'a with \$15,000 in cash prizes split equally between men and women. Part of the proceeds from the event, a total of \$6000, went to benefit OluKai's 'Ohana Giveback Program and its grass roots preservation efforts in Hawaii.

"It was one of the first races that they had all these fun games for people to come and enjoy. The industry should look at the OluKai race and

really design their races off of its model," said Kai Bartlett. "It was an event with a good course, great competition and festivity for all."



Dave Kalama looking fierce as he strides to a 1st place SUP win

Father and son enjoy the ancient Hawaiian game of Moe Pahe'e (dart sliding)



Women's SUP winners

Sharon Balidoy's Hula Halau Alapa'i I Maluluolele performs for the crowd



Below, men's SUP winners



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