

## **Southern California Outrigger Racing Association Chronicle**

The Southern California Outrigger Racing Association (SCORA) is the governing body for the sport of outrigger canoe racing in Southern California, Arizona and Nevada. Most of its teams reside on Southern California beaches between San Diego and San Luis Obispo with several outlying teams in Catalina and surrounding states. SCORA sanctions outrigger competitions and provides competitive ocean training programs to foster the healthy, active lifestyle of its members.

SCORA is a member of both the Pacific Outrigger Canoe Association (POCA) and the International Va'a Federation (IVF), the latter being the governing body for outrigger canoe racing worldwide. The IVF, Va'a meaning canoe in Tahitian, sanctions international races including biennial World Sprints. Members of the IVF reside in all points of the globe including Tahiti, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Hawaii, California, New York, Guam and France. The World Sprints are held in select global venues for the specific purpose of gaining recognition as a competitive sport in the Olympics.

In addition to racing in the IVF events, SCORA teams participate in those of other Associations throughout the United States and the world. In June 2004, 2005, and 2006 SCORA paddlers not only participated in, but took home 1st place medals in the renowned PowerAde Hamilton Cup in Hamilton Island, Australia. In September and October of 2004, 2005 and 2006, SCORA women and men paddlers competed in the world class Molokai Channel Crossing, a 41-mile race from the island of Molokai to Waikiki Beach on Oahu. SCORA teams have also successfully competed in the Liberty Cup in New York and the Gorge Games in Oregon, and the prestigious Hawaiki Nui Va'a, a race among the Leeward Islands west of Tahiti that is the country's biggest outrigger canoe event and one of the most prestigious in the world.

SCORA encourages and assists all members to participate in local, national and international events. Coaches and veteran athletes provide training to assist paddlers in developing the requisite paddling skills which include a refined and efficient stroke, increased strength, superior cardiovascular performance, steering skills and water change technique. SCORA also conducts quarterly outside training clinics for the purposes of improving the competitive edge.

In addition to its competitive facet, SCORA maintains an important slice of American cultural and athletic history, as well as preserves the presence of Polynesian culture in Southern California and surrounding states. For example, one of SCORA's teams, Marina del Rey Outrigger Canoe Club, was founded in the late 1960s by the nephew of the late Duke Kahanamoku. Duke Kahanamoku was an Olympic swimming champion, a world-class surfer, an all-around show-stopping waterman and the pride of the Hawaiian Islands. Duke's descendant, Allison Kahanamoku, is not only a member of Marina del Rey Outrigger Canoe Club but she also sits on SCORA's Board of Directors and serves on the Cultural Preservation Committee.

Via resources like Allison and her family, SCORA brings the genuine heritage of the

Islands to the mainland in a significant and positive way. At SCORA events, traditions are followed with respect to the foods that are served, the awards presented, the Polynesian dancing performed, and respect of the traditions of the Polynesian culture as it relates to the canoe - not stepping over a canoe and traditionally naming and blessing canoes with Hawaiian names.

Southern California families are brought together by the sport as well. It is truly an all encompassing sport offering the ocean/surfing lifestyle with a team environment that is family focused. SCORA provides organized outrigger races for paddlers of all ages. The Keiki (children) races allow children from ages 12 to 19 to compete in short races. The open divisions are comprised of individuals from ages 20 to 35, and the masters and senior-masters divisions provide competitive fields for ages 35 to 65 or older. It is not uncommon to see a family of paddlers, with moms and dads paddling in the open and masters divisions and the kids participating in the keiki races. It's a great way to spend time with your family and also enjoy the thrill of racing an outrigger canoe on the open ocean.

SCORA and each of its member clubs strive to share their wealth of cultural and athletic camaraderie with the community at large. SCORA continues to support the healthy, active and culturally rich lifestyle of outrigger canoe paddling and continues to pursue its goal of one day to further enrich the global community through a presence in the Olympic Games.