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## 'Beachgirls' boost Beachboys

By [Dayton Morinaga](#)  
 Advertiser Staff Writer

The official name of the club is Waikiki Beachboys, but the women paddlers are the ones making a name for themselves this year.

Thanks mostly to the strength of its open women paddlers, the Waikiki Beachboys was the best "small" club in the Na 'Ohana O Na Hui Wa'a organization this year.

"It's been a process — this didn't happen overnight," said Sean Monahan, who is in his fifth year as coach of the Waikiki Beachboys women. "We've been lucky enough to get some motivated girls the last few years."

At Saturday's Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association State Championship Regatta, the Waikiki Beachboys will enter the A Division, which is for the smallest clubs in the state.

There also is a AAA Division for the biggest clubs, and an AA Division for "medium" clubs.

More than 3,000 paddlers representing 56 clubs from around the state are expected to participate in the day-long regatta at Hanaka'o'o Beach, Maui.

The A Division has 37 clubs vying for the title, making it the toughest division to win. By contrast, there are five teams in AAA, and 14 in AA.

"As a club, we only have a men's program and a women's program," club president Dana Gorecki said. "We don't have kids and we don't have (masters). So we look at the crews that we do have and try to make those the best we can."

The open women of Waikiki Beachboys became the best in Hui Wa'a this year — by far.

They were the top Hui Wa'a qualifier in the



The Waikiki Beachboys' women's crews dominated Na 'Ohana O Na Hui Wa'a competition this season.

GREGORY YAMAMOTO | The Honolulu Advertiser

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**HCRA STATE REGATTA**

What: Hawaiian Canoe Racing Association sprint races for outrigger koa canoes

Where: Hanaka'o'o Beach, Maui

When: Saturday, races start around 8:30 a.m.

Who: More than 3,000 paddlers representing 56 clubs

women's freshman, sophomore, junior and senior races.

The senior race is considered the top division in canoe regattas, and Waikiki Beachboys went undefeated against Hui Wa'a competition this year, often winning the 1 1/2-mile race by several hundred yards.

"I think we stayed motivated by focusing on ourselves and how we did against the clock," said Gorecki, who is also a paddler on the women's open crews. "We keep track of what the other teams are doing around the state and compare their times to ours."

Other top women's crews from around the state include Hui Lanakila, Outrigger, Kai 'Opuua, Hui Nalu and Lae Ula O Kai.

According to Monahan, there are only 15 open women paddlers in the Waikiki Beachboys, and he rotated all of them to win freshman, sophomore, junior and senior races this season.

"I think this group of girls is training harder than any other group of girls out there," he said. "We don't have a big group to choose from, so each girl really has to do her part to make it work."

In addition to practicing in the six-person canoe three times a week during the afternoons, the group also swims, lifts weights or paddles one-person canoes in the mornings.

"The unity of training in the morning tells you that we're all on the same page," paddler Sue Brown said. "We've all given up staying out late so that we can get up in the morning to work out. It shows how much we want it."

Brown has been with Waikiki Beachboys for nine years. Most of the other paddlers joined the club as novice paddlers only a few years ago.

"One of the things that's unique about us is that we're actually a club," Brown said. "Twelve of the 15 girls learned to paddle here, so that makes our successes our successes, and our failures our failures. That's why this is so exciting for us. It's like we did this all ourselves."

Brown is also coach of the women's novice B crew, and she teaches the newcomers the same techniques as the open women.

"That's a key," Brown said. "The novice program has become a feeder program."

Only two years ago, Kelsa Teeters was a first-year, novice B paddler for Waikiki Beachboys. This year, she was a regular in the senior crew.

"The intensity has increased each year," Teeters said. "And I think training together is what keeps us going."

Regardless of how they do on Saturday, the women of Waikiki Beachboys said their ultimate goal is yet to come.

from around the state. Age divisions range from 12-younger to 55-older.



Sean Monahan, who coaches the Beachboys' women, says, "I think this group of girls is training harder than any other group ... out there."

GREGORY YAMAMOTO | The Honolulu Advertiser

"Our training is geared toward the distance season," Brown said. "We look to Moloka'i (the Na Wahine O Ke Kai race in September) as our big race. But what ever good we can do between now and then is a bonus."

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