

MidWeek

Super Paddle Woman

August 26, 2005
By Gary Kewley



Carol Cunningham photo

Kanesa Duncan finished fourth in the Quiksilver edition Molokai to Oahu Paddleboard Race in July

Aloha, Wave Riders and Paddlers!

We saw a little more action this past week — and I mean a little. This is better than nothing, which is what we've had (zero) for weeks on end. Now, as we sit on our last weekend in August, it's guaranteed that next month will be much better (read "bigger"). Indeed, in our sport, *size does matter!*

What kind of size can we expect for September 2005? Typically, we see three or four small- to medium-sized swells — meaning 3-5 "Hawaii Scale Feet" (HSF), or head-high to several feet overhead! Remember though, anything can happen. As I always say:

"Mother Nature rules!" For example, my good friend and forecaster

Pat Caldwell recently shared with me that we "may" get a "tropical recurving" from the winter surf source region. If so, this warm moist air adds another source of energy to the area, which translates into higher winds ... which then leads to bigger surf ... which leads to happy people called surfers! At present we do have tropical storms up there. So it may turn out that next month gets up to six to eight feet! Go to surfnewsnetwork.com to see what happens — and here, too!

Recently, I had a chance to catch up with super-paddlegirl, Kanesa (Ka-neesa) Duncan. Kanesa cranked out a fourth place finish in the Quiksilver edition Molokai to Oahu Paddleboard race July 31 — sounds like a long time ago, but it's not. Considering that this is one of the most grueling World Championship long-distance races (32 miles), some of the competitors may still be sore! Now here's the extra catch: Kanesa placed fourth overall — in the smaller stock board division (12 feet and under) — beating out most of the seriously buff and committed males! She did this last year too! Listen to one of the world's best long-distance paddlers.

GQ: "Has a woman ever placed fourth overall before?"

Kanesa: "You know, I think that I have actually ... three or four times. I thought this race was the best I'd ever done. But overall with stock boards, it's been about the same ... three or four times."

GQ: (Laughing.) "Do you have something out for the men or something?"

Kanesa: (Giggling.) "No, a lot of those guys I paddle against, they beat me in shorter distances, then you start getting like three hours into it, and I get a little faster."

GQ: "Oh!"

Kanesa: "I'm starting to get faster at the beginning, though, I used to pass more people."

GQ: "Have you ever thought about switching over to the bigger standard boards division?"

Kanesa: "This year I've thought about it more than any other year, but I knew Haley (Australia's phenomenon) was coming over and she only paddles stock, so ..."

GQ: "Is she your No. 1 competitor/ rival? The person you push and vice versa?"

Kanesa: "Yeah, definitely. I've raced her five times: here, Australia, Molokai twice ... it was good, but she's just very, very fast."

GQ: "Would you say that between you and Haley, you're both the world's fastest long-distance stock paddlers?"

Kanesa: "Maybe, yeah. But there are a lot of really fast Australian girls who aren't far behind. But Haley does it professionally."

GQ: "How 'bout you? You're at the professional level. Is this what you do for a living, or do you have a day job?"

Kanesa: (Giggles.) "No, the only person I can think of that does it full time is Jamie (Mitchell, who has won four times straight). He's only had that going for about a year. Quiksilver picked him up."

GQ: "With all that time and talent, energy and commitment, why would your sport only support so few great athletes?"

Kanesa: "Because it's not a spectator sport."

GQ: "Gotcha. 'Cause you're gone out of sight most the time!"

Kanesa: "Right. It's the same with canoe paddling — only a handful can be considered pro, and that's part-time even."

GQ: "Amazing. You're world class and deserve it!"

Kanesa: "Thank you, GQ."

GQ: "Thank you, Kanesa! See you out there — passing me by!"

I'll see you on dry land right here next weekend ... GQ, Dropping in 4 U!

Find this article at: http://www.midweek.com/content/columns/surfnews_article/super_paddle_woman/