



Posted on: Monday, July 31, 2006

Mitchell's 'perfect' in record fifth victory

 [Moloka'i to O'ahu Paddleboard Race photo gallery](#)

By [Dayton Morinaga](#)
Advertiser Staff Writer

Even on a day when conditions were unfavorable for record times, Australia's Jamie Mitchell still made his mark in the Quiksilver edition Moloka'i to O'ahu Paddleboard Race.

Mitchell won the 32-mile race, completing the course from Kaluako'i Beach, Moloka'i, to Maunalua Bay, O'ahu, in 5 hours, 19 minutes, 26 seconds.

The event is considered the world championship of long-distance paddleboard racing, and Mitchell has won it a record five consecutive years.

"I think today, out of every crossing I did, I just did everything perfect," said Mitchell, 29.

The proof came not in the winning time, but in the winning margin. Mitchell's time yesterday was well off the course record of 4:56:03 he set in 2004.

"I knew it wasn't going to be a record from the start," he said. "We had a horrendous tide."

However, he finished 17 minutes, 12 seconds, ahead of runner-up Zane Holmes of Australia. It was clearly the largest margin of victory in the 10-year history of the race (the previous largest margin was 10 minutes, 11 seconds).



Jamie Mitchell said he pulled away to victory during a 10-minute stretch "where I got an amazing couple of (swells)."

JOAQUIN SIOPACK | The Honolulu Advertiser

"The time really doesn't matter," Mitchell said. "You're not really racing the time, you're racing yourself and the other guys."

Mitchell and Holmes were near each other for the first half of the race, but Mitchell pulled away with what he described as "a 10-minute stretch there where I got an amazing couple of (swells)."

The Kaiwi Channel featured challenging conditions yesterday, and many competitors said it was difficult to ride the 3- to 4-foot swells.

Mitchell said part of his strategy was to chase after the waves he knew he could catch.

"You don't want to be going hard for a (swell) and then not get it, because that's what drains you," he said. "So the ones I thought I could get I gave it my all and the other ones I just let it go."

Holmes was entering the Moloka'i Race for the first time. He said it may also be his last.

"I definitely expected it to be tough, but that's longer than I've ever paddled," said Holmes, who had a time of 5:36:38. "Probably the toughest thing I've ever done."

Holmes actually held the lead early in the race, but then said he got drained as Mitchell pulled away.

"I'd catch up a little bit and then he'd pull away; then I'd catch up again," Holmes said. "But I just didn't have it in me."

The third-place finisher, Gary Fortune of California, was even farther back, crossing in 6:00:28. Matt Barnett of O'ahu's North Shore was the first Hawai'i solo finisher with a time of 6:26:44.

Kanesa Duncan of Honolulu was the only solo female entry, and she finished in a time of 6:33:54. It was the fifth time in the past six years that she won the female division.

"I think this is the hardest one I've done," she said. "It was just hard to catch (swells), and I was throwing up. It was the first time I had a stomach problem."

Duncan's previous four titles came on a stock paddleboard. Yesterday, she used an unlimited board (stock boards are identical 12-foot boards; unlimited boards can be any size).

Keoni Watson of Makaha was the first to finish on a stock paddleboard with a time of 6:28:03.

California's Eric Meech crossed the finish line a few seconds ahead of Watson, but he was assessed a one-minute penalty for using two different boards during the race.

"I think it's fair, and I'm glad they didn't disqualify him," Watson said of Meech. "We both worked hard to finish the race, but (the officials) knew what happened."

Meech started on an unlimited board, but switched to a stock board when the rudder on his unlimited board broke in the first 10 minutes.

Maui paddlers John Gangini and Kiva Rivers were the first to finish in the team-relay division in 5:46:34.

Maui brothers Dave and Ekolu Kalama were the first to finish in the team-relay stand-up paddling division in 5:28:36. Kaua'i's Kevin Horgan was the first solo finisher in the stand-up division in 7:23:14.

NOTES

Chris Owens of O'ahu's North Shore and his son, C.J., finished in 6:47:00 in the team-relay division. It was the final leg of Chris Owens' adventure across all the ocean channels from the Big Island to Kaua'i. The crossings raised funds for Malama Na Pua Traditional Hawaiian Healing Center. Gene (Tarzan) Smith was the first to paddle across the island channels in 1940, and Owens is believed to be the second.

Reach Dayton Morinaga at dmorinaga@honoluluadvertiser.com.

[Back](#)

© COPYRIGHT 2006 The Honolulu Advertiser, a division of [Gannett Co.](#) Inc.

All materials contained on this site are protected by United States copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, published or broadcast without the prior written permission of The Honolulu Advertiser. You may not alter or remove any trademark, copyright or other notice from copies of the content.