

[print](#)

## Hanohano Ocean Challenge is one big 'oar-deal' for paddlers

by ADRIANE TILLMAN

01.21.09 - 05:53 pm



*Kayaks, paddleboards, surfskis and other human-powered watercraft will take to the water Saturday, Jan. 31, paddling 9 miles from Mission Bay to Crystal Pier and back, or 4.75 miles around the bay. BARRY SCHWARTZ | THE BEACON*

On the last morning in January, wake up early to cheer on paddlers young and old, novice and Olympian, who will race all types of muscle-powered watercraft out of Bonita Cove and across the ocean waters.

Top athletes will race skinny, precarious ocean kayaks called surfskis that can blaze across the water reaching top speeds of 20 to 25 miles an hour if they catch a wave. Other athletes will push themselves along on stand-up paddleboards, and teams of two will stroke kayaks to the finish.

It's the 13th annual Hanohano Ocean Challenge that takes off from Bonita Cove, across from Belmont Park, on Saturday, Jan. 31. Paddlers will either push off from the cove at 9 a.m. to race the 4.75-mile course around the bay, or at 10:30 a.m. to race the 9-mile course out to Crystal Pier and back.

"A lot of people don't know about paddle-boarding," said organizer Dan Van Dyck of the Hanohano Outrigger Canoe Club, who has paddled since 1986. "If I can give kids and handicapped athletes a chance to paddle, it's good for me.

Van Dyck said he loves paddling out on a peaceful ocean, away from the hubbub of life. It's also the best place to spot a migrating whale, playful dolphin or sea lion.

Nine-year-olds to 85-year-olds and athletes with disabilities will compete in the event that will bring 300 contestants from around Southern California to Mission Bay. Serious competitors with their eyes on the Olympics will also show up for the nine-mile ocean course.

"It's not just a little, local kayak race," Van Dyck said.

Seventeen-year olds Ryan Stock and Nick Hanoian are training to compete for a spot on the junior national kayaking team that will travel to the world championship regatta in Moscow. Hanoian is a student at La Jolla High School.

"You're out there head to head," Van Dyck said. "You get to see how your training has paid off. It's a chance to see how hard you can go and how fast in nine miles."

Carrie Johnson, a UCSD student, is another star who grew up kayaking on Mission Bay. She joined the San Diego Canoe and Kayak Team when she was 12

and has since made it to the past two Olympics to compete in flat-water kayaking.

Chris Barlow coached Johnson. He is also an Olympian paddler himself, and competed in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics in the flat water kayak regatta.

Barlow launched the San Diego Canoe and Kayak Team in 1996, and he encourages paddlers of all levels to join.

The club just purchased 16 new kayaks for junior paddlers, ages 8 to 14, after receiving \$26,000 in grant money from the LA 84 Foundation that promotes youth sports.

Barlow said the surfski sport is not as well known in the states as it is elsewhere in the world, and that many top athletes come out of South Africa and Australia. But the sport is gaining popularity.

"Kayaking is such a great sport," Barlow said. "You don't need an engine and it's not affecting the environment."

For more information, visit [www.eteamz.com/hanohano](http://www.eteamz.com/hanohano).

---

© sdnews.com 2009