



Kirk Agoan, 17, Lea Wong, 16, Kealoha Bagood, 17, Adriana Guzman, 16, and Natash Mancao, 17, head for shore after a "man-overboard" drill on the E'ala. They and other Waianae High School students are learning to sail Polynesian canoes.

Each high school contingent will get two days of training at Kualoa in preparation for the round-island voyage

## Polynesian sailing thrives

With wind uncooperative, Waianae students train on land

By Bunky Bakutis

Advertiser Lee Ward Bureau

**KUALOA** — No wind, no sail — even if the class schedule says sailing at 3 p.m.

That's the first lesson any sailor learns: Human timing with natural elements is everything, even life or death.

But not to worry, there's plenty to learn about Polynesian sailing, even without the immediate cooperation of the wind.

For starters, there's the swim test, canoe safety and what all those ropes do and, just in case, the man-overboard drill.

That was enough to keep a class of 15 Waianae High School Language and Studies' students busy yesterday and today in their preliminary training camp at Kualoa Beach Park. The training helps prepare students for a sailing experience around Oahu, similar to last year's pilot project.

This year the program has come of age.

Polynesian voyaging has expanded to four more schools: Castle, Kailua, Waipahu and Hana high schools.

Last year, the Polynesian Voy-

aging Society launched a pilot project which took students in Waianae High's Marine Studies Program for a round-Oahu cruise aboard the double-hulled sailing canoe E'ala.

The pilot program was run with the society's Nainoa Thompson at the helm. Thompson, an expert Hawaiian sailor, learned the rudiments of Polynesian sailing and star navigation from master sailor Mau Pialug of Satawal Island.

### New heights for sailing

At the end of last year's week-long voyage, Thompson had nothing but praise for participating students, their families and community leaders who worked long hours to support the effort.

Now, Polynesian sailing — with its cultural roots in the way Hawaiians came to Hawaii hundreds of years ago and its multitude of practical and scientific applications — has reached a new level.

It has evolved beyond a dream which began with a 1976 round-trip voyage by Hawaiians to Tahiti aboard the double-hulled sailing canoe Hokule'a. A very

specific sea-faring cultural revival is now a reality in an official state educational program that gives the children of Hawaii a connection to their sea-faring past.

### Program expands

The Polynesian Voyaging Society has spearheaded this project by acquiring a grant from the Hawaii Community Foundation and also by supplying four instructors along with Thompson: Keahi Omai, Ka'au McKinny, Dennis Kawaharada and Shantell Ching. They all have sailed on Hokule'a which has made numerous voyages into the South Pacific and Pacific Northwest.

According to Waianae High School Hawaiian studies teacher Linda Gallano, the expansion of Polynesian sailing is not stopping with this year's program.

"Our science teacher Rick Gressia is taking part in the program to see if the voyaging class can fit into his class next year. The astronomy section is a natural with the kids learning about star navigation," Gallano said.

This year's program draws 15

students from each school except for Waianae with 40 and Hana with eight.

Each high school contingent will get two days of training at Kualoa in preparation for the round-island voyage which is tentatively set to begin with an orientation March 16.

### Trip around Oahu

When the cruise begins, school crews will alternate between sailing and land-based activities such as fishpond and scientific explorations at stops like Kahana Valley or Coconut Island.

Waipahu students will begin the voyage by sailing the 40-foot E'ala from Ke'ehi Lagoon to Maunaloa Bay. Other crews will sail to Kualoa, Kahana Valley, Haleiwa, Waianae High School students will sail the final leg of the voyage around Kaena Point to Makaha Surling Beach.

A luau March 22 at Waianae High School will cap the week-long voyage for all participants.

All of this, of course, winds permitting.

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## Learning the right strokes



Bruce Asato/The Honolulu Advertiser

Hokule'a navigator Nainoa Thompson demonstrates open-ocean swim strokes to Waianae High School students participating in a Polynesian voyaging program at Kualoa Park in Windward Oahu. In its second year, the program has expanded to include five schools, including Castle, Kailua, Waipahu and Hana high schools. The students will get hands-on training on voyaging canoes. See story, Page B3.

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