



Team Cascadia - Origins



The CORA Historical Committee published an article in Spring 2023 titled "*Team Cascadia – Paddlers Without Borders*" that captured four racing events (Molokai Hoe 2019; Catalina Crossing 2016; Queen Liliuokalani 2015; Molokai Na Wahine 2013) where paddlers from Oregon / Washington / Hawaii / Canada formed international crews to compete against some of the best crews in the world – and did very well. [01]

That CORA website article mentioned the *Team Cascadia* crew from the 2018 Gorge OC6 race, but little was known about the history of *Team Cascadia* at that time except for the names of the Oregon / Washington / Canada paddlers (Alan Goto; Erik Scharffenberg; Mike Bernemann; James Hill; Ashley James; Jeremy Cole) who would finish 1st Place Men Masters 40+ Spec Iron and 3rd Place Overall. [02]

That CORA website article generated some commentary and several members of *Team Cascadia* shared the back story on how this whole concept came to be from back in 2011.

There are four North American open-ocean channel crossing outrigger canoe racing events with a storied history. Molokai Hoe across the Kaiwi Channel began in 1952. Catalina Crossing across the Catalina Channel began in 1959. Molokai Na Wahine across the Kaiwi Channel began in 1979. Pailolo Challenge across the Pailolo Channel began in 2009. Interestingly, the Pailolo Challenge was inaugurated by Canadian Outrigger Hall Of Fame Inductee Rick Nu'u. Pailolo Challenge is unique in that mens / womens / mixed / iron / changes / spec / unlimited crews all race on the same day with staggered starts depending on the ability of jetski marshals to maintain some semblance of control for the multiple starts. Crews from all divisions might be side-by-side during the race and crossing the finish line at the same time. [11] [12] [13] [14] [15] [16]



The back story begins with the 2011 Pailolo Challenge when a FCRCC Mens crew would finish 4th Place Men Open Spec Iron and 35th Place Overall. Ashley Paul James and Mike Bernemann recognized that there were struggles with the big water as this was not something that Pacific Northwest paddlers would get in local waters. There was a desire to take that part of the equation out of the mix and see if some of the top local Pacific Northwest guys could compete with the Hawaiian crews with a stern that was exceptional in those waters. [21]

Mike Bernemann reached out to Jim Foti who was known from coaching clinics hosted by the Foti brothers. Jim Foti has amassed more victories in Hawaii than any other steersman in the history of the sport and is still adding to that list (including Molokai Hoe Open Division 1st Place: 1995, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2005; Queen Liliuokalani 1st Place: 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2001, 2005; Australia Hamilton Cup 1st Place: 1996; Catalina Crossing 1st Place: 1992, 2001; New York Liberty Cup 1st Place: 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001). [31] [32]

The 2012 Pailolo Challenge would be the first time that *Team Cascadia* would officially race together. This would be top paddlers from Oregon / Washington / Hawaii / Canada competing against some of the best crews in the world. This 2012 crew was comprised of Molokai Hoe 2019 Masters 40+ Silver Medalist Ashley Paul James, Another Dam Race 2013 OC2 Champion Mike Bernemann, Queen Liliuokalani 2013 OC1 Masters 40+ Champion Calvin (Pake Nui) Chow, V1 distance rock-star Vance Hashimoto, Sand Point Outrigger Canoe Club coach and Seattle Paramedic and Kialoa Teva Hoe Hinano Hybrid Limited Edition spokesperson Alan Goto, with legendary Hawaiian steersman Jim Foti. This 2012 *Team Cascadia* crew would finish 1st Place Men Open Spec Iron and 10th Place Overall. [41] [42] [43] [44] [45] [46] [47] [48] [49]



Jim Foti; Vance Hashimoto; Ashley Paul James; Mike Bernemann; Calvin (Pake Nui) Chow; Alan Goto

The 2013 Pailolo Challenge would be the second time that *Team Cascadia* would officially race together. This would be once again top paddlers from Washington / Hawaii / Canada competing against some of the best crews in the world. This 2013 crew was comprised of Ashley Paul James, Mike Bernemann, Latitude 48 co-founder James Hill, Vance Hashimoto, strip plank rudderless va'a builder Jasen Kaya, and Hawaiian steersman Jim Foti once again. This 2013 *Team Cascadia* crew would finish 1st Place Men Open Spec Iron and 7th Place Overall. [51] [52] [53] [54]

The 2014 Pailolo Challenge would be the third time that *Team Cascadia* would officially race together. This would be once again top paddlers from Washington / Hawaii / Canada competing against some of the best crews in the world. This 2014 crew was comprised of Ashley Paul James, Latitude 48 coach James Hill, Vance Hashimoto, Fiji paddling adventurer Jasen Kaya, Seventy48 Race 2018, 6 By 600 Leader Alan Goto, and Hawaiian steersman Jim Foti for the third consecutive year. This was a flatwater race as the temperatures were 100F+, the humidity was off the charts, there was no wind, and there was no surf. This 2014 *Team Cascadia* crew would finish 6th Place Men Open Unlimited Iron and 10th Place Overall. [61] [62] [63] [64] [65] [66] [67]

The 2018 Molokai Hoe would be the last time before the COVID Global Pandemic that *Team Cascadia* would officially race together. This would be once again top paddlers from Washington / Oregon / Hawaii / Canada competing against some of the best crews in the world. Although the Tahitians would dominate the 2018 event once again, this would be one of the top showings by Pacific Northwest paddlers (Alan Goto; Ashley Paul James; Beau Whitehead; Erik Scharffenberg; Gavin Godfrey; Graham Smith; Jeremy Cole; Mike Bernemann; Rob Magus) in the history of Molokai Hoe. This 2018 *Team Cascadia* crew would finish 7th Place Men Masters 40+ Spec and 33rd Place Overall. [68] [69] [70]

Pailolo Challenge may not have the longevity and cachet of Molokai Hoe or Catalina Crossing or Molokai Na Wahine, but an international crew of paddlers from Oregon / Washington / Hawaii / Canada took 1st Place in the Men Open Spec Iron Division in back-to-back years. Canadian paddlers Ashley Paul James and Mike Bernemann went against conventional wisdom at the time of forming club crews, but instead opted to bring together cross-club talent to compete on the world stage. The *Team Cascadia* crew has noted that the *Scatterchicks* were a very successful womens team "back in the day". The CORA Historical Committee would be interested in hearing from anyone that knows of the exploits of the *Scatterchicks*.

References

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