



2002 Individual Eliminations



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Aii Holo Kai News

A message from Frank

We are trying to finalize the divers that will makeup the teams for the Nationals. Presently, there are 2 teams (each possibly missing one member) from the team elimination and 1 team (all 3 members not finalized yet) from the individual elimination. The final determination and selection for members (and alternates) of the 3 teams (and possibly 4) depends on the availability of all the divers who participated and qualified in the individual elimination.

Therefore, it is requested that either Dennis Okada @ 677-9010 Frank Farm @ 732-1756 be contacted by April 17, 2002.

1. All members of the 2 teams that qualified in the team elimination must provide commitment information, if they will compete or not, as a member of their team.
2. All divers that participated in the individual eliminations must provide availability information as a member of a team.
3. This information is requested and required to plan for the 3 (or 4) teams final makeup.
4. Where you placed in the individual eliminations does not matter.

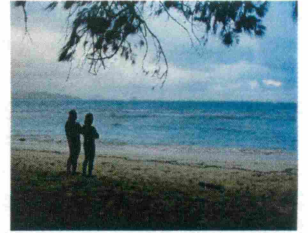
We appreciate it if everyone above will contact Dennis or Frank. Please cooperate and give us a ring.

A beeg beeg MAHALO to all that help at the last two dive meets--and at the risk of forgetting some, we should acknowledge those that are the sidelines support of the club's activities...the Kokua Krew spearheaded by Lance Ohara, Matthew Ha, Tony Chun, and Glen Suzuki for all the help at the beaches for both elims...and also for helping setup tables, etc.. at my house, and to Chef Afalla for his ono grinds and his whistles to move divers out (in), and to Mike Tulang (Marshall's Dad) and the Gleemen for donating soft drinks, and the Iwaniecs for their food, etc., and Michael Otsuji for the newsletter and pictures. Hey, I'm sorry for those that I may have missed—but you're all appreciated. By da way—Treasurer Terrence Takahata has informed me that you should be sure your dues are current or be dropped from the mailing list. It costly for processing, printing, mailing what you receive—so be up to date or check with Terrance 836-5009 if in doubt...better yet just mail the dues.

Aloha and safe diving,

Frank

The Eliminations



As the sun rose off Waimanalo Beach Park, on the island of Oahu, the ocean conditions became visible. The conditions were as bad as the competitors had feared. The wind was whipping. The rain was falling. The sea was choppy. The divers suited up, and debated as to whether these conditions were worse than the team eliminations last year. As the divers debated the Executive Board of Aii Holo Kai, the sponsor of the event, had there own debate. After a quick discussion the Executive Board decided the conditions were unsafe, and to move the competition to the alternate site at Kahala Beach Park.



The competitors were gathered together, informed, and then everyone had to pack their gear up and head to the alternate site.

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Much better sea conditions greeted the divers at Kahala Beach Park. After a quick meeting, at which the divers decided that they wanted the full six hours of dive time. The divers hit the water. The first thing many of the spectators, and the long time competitors, noticed was that there were more divers than they thought, and many of them were new faces. There were also two faces that everyone knew would be in the hunt, and those were the faces of Gene Higa, and Wayde Hayashi, the team members of 1999 U.S. National Championship team. Wendell Ko, the captain of that team, had also planned to compete but missed the competition since he was in the Marshall Islands filming a spearfishing segment for producer Cal Hirai's new television show on the Outdoor Life Network called Pacific Expeditions.

As people walked by Gene Higa's kayak they noticed that there were no spearguns on the kayak, only a selection of three prong spears. Gene is considered one of the top three-prong spearfisherman in Hawaii. He decided to try and compete with three prongs for the eliminations. As some of his friends walked by a few, jokingly said "show off" to Gene, to which Gene politely smiled. Despite the jokes, and the handicap of using the three prong, everyone knew that Gene would still be in the hunt for the competition.

One of the first divers to reach the beach park was Brian Chang who flew in for the competition from Maui. As he looked out to the water he murmured, "I didn't dive here in over 12 years." Brian, like many of the other competitors who flew in for the competition, only scouted the primary site, and thus knew that they would be at a serious disadvantage. All of them learned the lesson that they should have scouted both the primary and alternate sites for the competition. Brian, who had to borrow a kayak to compete, laughed it off and said that he was just out there to have fun.

As the whistle sounded, signaling the start of the competition, most of the divers raced off into the competition ground. Shawn Fujimoto, and Vernon Takata, who competed in the Team eliminations knelt on the beach in a moment of prayer. Both divers hoped that they would have better luck on this day. As they finished their prayer they smiled, and dragged their kayaks into the water.



One of the last divers out was Tanya Bernie, a female competitor, who decided to swim it out. Tanya is part of four female divers from Hawaii, want to compete in the Nationals. If all four divers compete the Hawaii will send two women's teams to the competition in Carmel.



Most of the divers headed straight out, or turned left to the northern boundary. One diver who turned the other way to head towards the southern boundary was Wayde Hayashi. Wayde's first drop was on a Nenu (Chub) hole. He

picked up four Nenu at the hole, but this took longer than expected. Wayde decided to move further south and headed to an Ulua (Trevally) hole that he knew about. Wayde, anchored his kayak down current, and dove in 50+ feet of water. Wayde decided to swim each fish back to the kayak after he shot them because of the current, which mean he had to fight the current every time he wanted to return to his spot.

On his spot Wayde dropped down past 50 feet into the Ulua hole, and noticed that there were small Jacks swimming all over. There were also a lot of other fish swimming around. Then in an instant he saw a White Ulua in the hole. Wayde aimed, and fired. A perfect shot. The shaft pierced the head of White Ulua "stoning" it immediately. It was a perfect shot, and the Ulua was the perfect size. Wayde knew that he was in the running. Wayde speared one more Ulua (Omilu - Blue Fin Trevally) with another head shot. He packed up and began the 1.5 hour paddle back to the beach.



The spectators on the beach speculated as to what was going on in the competition zone. There was speculation as to whether the new divers would have a chance, and if any one from the outer island had any hope of finding fish. As it got closer to the end of the meet, one of the spectators yelled out "Wayde's coming in." Almost a full hour before the end of the competition. As Wayde hit the beach the tail of one of the Uluas poked out from the back of his kayak. The crowd gasped as Wayde pulled out

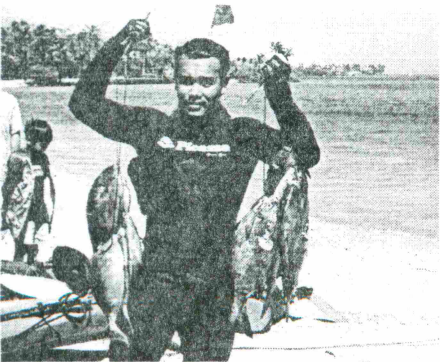
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his stringer of fish. Everyone knew that Wayde would be the man to beat.

The divers started to come in at about 30 minutes prior to the end of the competition. There were looks of disappointment on many of the faces as they had difficulty finding any fish. When Tyler Nishioka hit the beach and pulled out his stringer, there was nothing but smiles. The crowd gasped again as Tyler pulled out two large Papio (Trevally under 10 pounds). Tyler would definitely be in the running.



Keaka Ching pulled up soon after and pulled out an impressive stringer of fish of mainly Nenu (Chubs) and Kala (Horned Surgeon Fish). The guessing on the beach put Keaka right behind Wayde, right along with Tyler, but Gene Higa did not arrive on the beach. Gene's kayak could still be seen paddling in past the surfline.

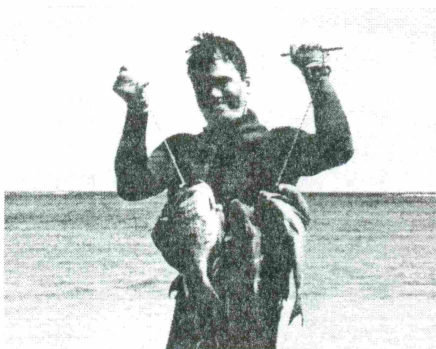


The crowd noticed that Shawn's kayak was in the shallows about 100 yards down the beach in the water right off

the sand. It looked as if Shawn was resting. This was not a good sign. Shawn had one of the top catches in the team eliminations, but due to some bad luck that befell his team members his team came up just short. When Shawn unloaded his kayak, and people asked him how he did Shawn just shook his head. 2002 was not to be Shawn's year.

One of the last divers to come in was John Iwaniec. John joined Alii Holo Kai just days before the competition, and joked as to whether he would have to give up his LA Fathomiers membership. Though John had been spearfishing for over 40 years, this was his first competition in Hawaii. John did not have a stringer, which was a requirement, Marshall Tulang, told him not to worry since it was not made clear to him. John put all of his fish in a mesh bag, and when he pulled it out of his kayak, there was talk that this new comer was in the running.

Gene Higa, and Brian Chang, were the last two divers to hit the beach. Gene smiled when he dragged his kayak up the beach, and said "Man I am out of shape." However, when he pulled out his catch of eleven fish, many laughed in amazement. Three prong Gene was definitely in the running.

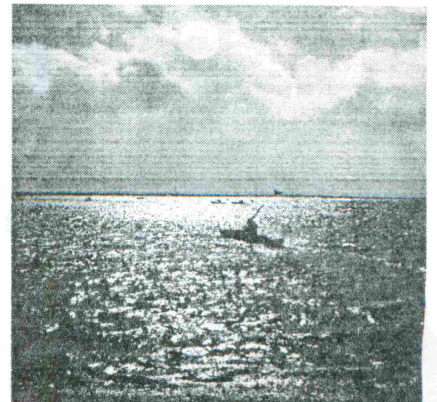


Brian Chang unloaded his kayak as the crowd gathered around Gene. He said, "Well I lost a flag," and commented on how he had to buy the owner of the kayak a new one. When Brian pulled his stringer out only a few people were

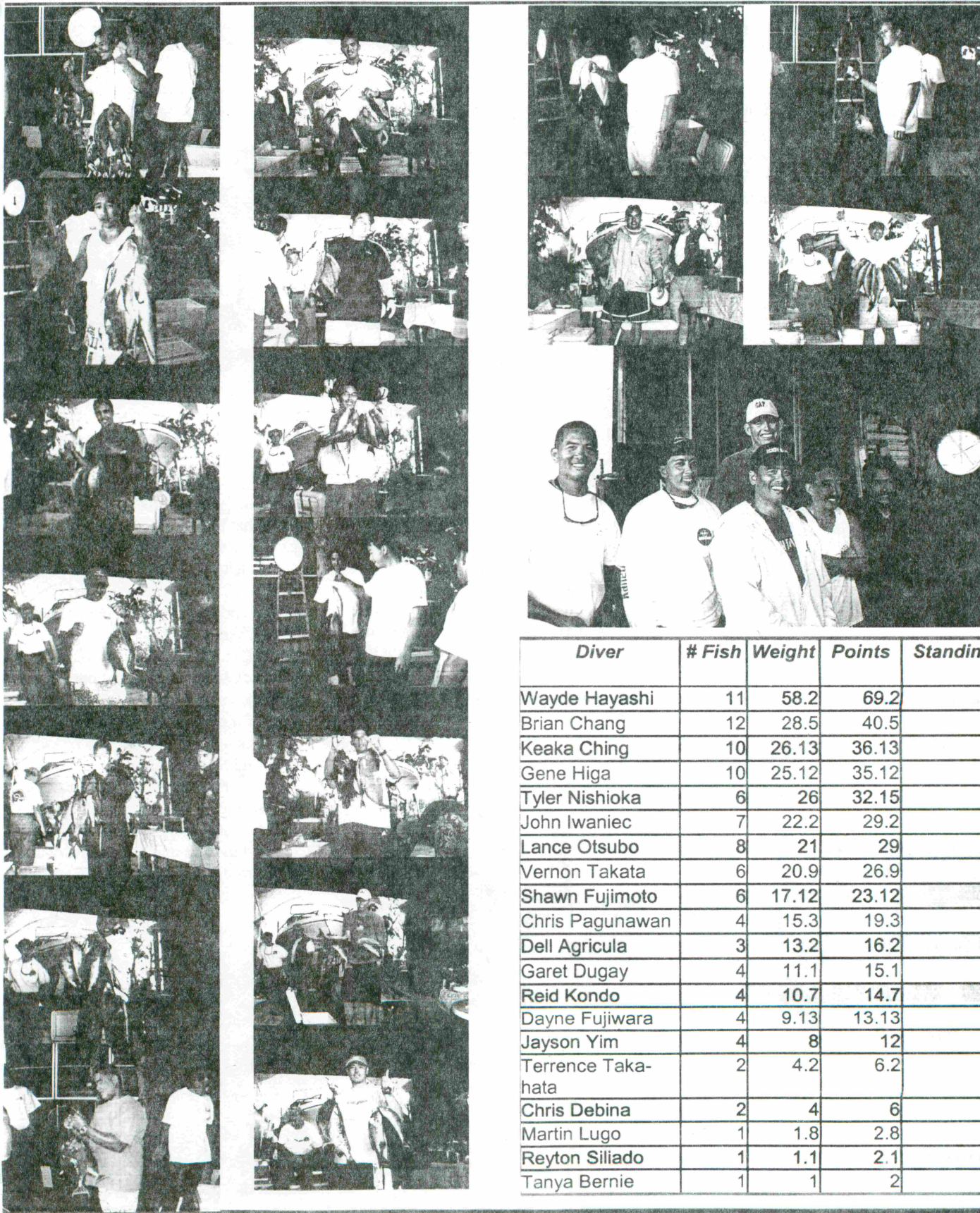
around. Talk quickly spread to the photographers to check Brian's catch out. Brian brought in 12 fish. The man from Maui, who was just out to have fun, was also in the running.



As the meet ended the divers packed up, and moved everything to Frank Farm's house for the weigh in. When everyone got to Frank's house, Ken Lee noted that they are going to need a bigger venue soon. The weigh in began after lunch. Everyone knew that Wayde was first. The questions was who was second and third. When the dust settled Brian Chang came in second with Keaka Ching in third. Gene Higa came in a close fourth. Gene had one of his fish thrown out because it was slightly short of the minimum of 14 inches. This was to be the difference between Gene and Keaka Ching. Tyler Nishioka came in fifth, and John Iwaniec sixth. The final team will be chosen by the Alii Holo Kai Executive Board based on the standings and the divers availability to dive in the Nationals at Carmel.



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Diver	# Fish	Weight	Points	Standing
Wayde Hayashi	11	58.2	69.2	1
Brian Chang	12	28.5	40.5	2
Keaka Ching	10	26.13	36.13	3
Gene Higa	10	25.12	35.12	4
Tyler Nishioka	6	26	32.15	5
John Iwaniec	7	22.2	29.2	6
Lance Otsubo	8	21	29	7
Vernon Takata	6	20.9	26.9	8
Shawn Fujimoto	6	17.12	23.12	9
Chris Pagunawan	4	15.3	19.3	10
Dell Agricola	3	13.2	16.2	11
Garet Dugay	4	11.1	15.1	12
Reid Kondo	4	10.7	14.7	13
Dayne Fujiwara	4	9.13	13.13	14
Jayson Yim	4	8	12	15
Terrence Takahata	2	4.2	6.2	16
Chris Debina	2	4	6	17
Martin Lugo	1	1.8	2.8	18
Reyton Siliado	1	1.1	2.1	19
Tanya Bernie	1	1	2	20