

Makahiki Day 8 and 9 Report

Written by Paul Belmudes
Friday, 18 June 2010 07:11

28 Miles and 15 Hours on the Water in 2 Days

Just spent the last 2 days competing in the Aquahunters Makahiki tournament. The goal of Day 8 was to explore Red Hill and Black Point just north of Kawaihae Harbor, 7 miles up the coast. I did my preliminary research and was given great advice from a kahuna fisherman named Eddie "Lala" La'au Jr. of Kawaihae. Uncle Lala shared points of interest in my search for great fishing for that area. I really enjoyed talking to him at the La'au Fish Market where I picked up some dead opelu for my kayak fishing trip for the following day.

On Tuesday, I set out 7 miles north up the coast of Kohala combining sailing and pedaling my Hobie Revolution for the destination Black Point. The wind was light and the current was moving with me as I averaged 3.5 miles per hour. It took 2 hours to reach my destination and just as I was perpendicular to Black Point 30 fathoms out, my line went off at 8:30 am in the morning in unison to a reel on a boat that was 100 yards away from me trolling at the same time. I could hear the fisherman named Joe as he came across the VHF broadcasting to another boater that he just landed a 20 to 25 pound cobalt. I guess cobalt was used as the terminology for a mahi. On my line also was a mahi. I fought the mahi for five minutes only to lose the fish right next to my kayak as it shook its head and body to avoid the spear of death. To no avail, the mahi won the battle and retreated back to the open ocean. I let out the biggest F bomb in disgust as I saw 25 points (Makahiki point value) disappear before my eyes. I always think of Aloha Dan when this happens as he always lectures that you should never bring a mahi close to the boat when it is still green. Maybe he's right!

Frustrated, I decided to head back and troll in the direction where I started. As I reached Red Hill, I decided to drop a palu bag. As I put the bait on the hook and tossed it over the side, the bait settled 12 feet below my kayak. I started to fill the palu bag with chum and just as I was almost topping it off, the palu bag shot out of my hand and splattered over my kayak, legs and hand. It was a result of a fish taking the bait 12 feet below and running my line. I quickly emptied

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the palu in my plastic bag rinsing it off in the ocean and controlling the fish with one hand. I really did not have a strong fight as I brought the fish up to the surface. It was a kahala (amberjack) that weighed in at 15.4 pounds. I was hoping it was an uku but nonetheless, it was a fish that had value for the makahiki tournament. I boated the kahala and said that I had enough of the palu ahi bag for now.

I baited up a dead opelu and tossed it over the side and not more than 30 seconds into releasing some line to reach my 200 feet of trolling distance, the line went off again. I could see an aha (needle fish) jumping up and somehow got it itself tangled up in my line with the trailer hook sticking in its body. I pulled it closer to my kayak in a horseshoe fashion for a catch and release as soon as I took it's photo. Another score for the tournament. Now I was determined to land a pelagic. There had to be some in the area as I started my trolling under sail and pedal power. I had a crosswind and was going against the current. Then I felt my mirage drive (pedal system) go limp only to lift it out of the water to find that I had broken the shaft on one of the fins. Oh well! I still had six miles to go and the water was becoming more choppy with light white caps. I looked to the shoreline to see a dirt road leading to the highway and low and behold there was a fisherman on the shores. It crossed my mind to just ditch the kayak on shore, hitch a ride or ask the fisherman with the right amount of cash to give me a lift back to my SUV. And then the light bulb went off... I have a sail and why not make an attempt to tack and sail back to my launch site. I had all day to make it back and I really did not want to take down some of my rigging to paddle in 6 miles. So I began to sail back.

During the next few hours as I sailed back, I became so relaxed and want to just take a cat nap, but I feared if I did relax in that state, I might end up against the rocks so I killed that idea. Low and behold, it took just a little over a few hours to make it back. So that ended day 8. I headed up to the P&P Kayaks and Kelly had the part to repair my mirage drive. Back in shape, I planned on making the following day number nine and would head out one more time as this was going to be the last day I would have time because of work for kayak fishing this week.

Day 9

This one is going to be short and quick. On the following day, I decided to launch Keauhou and spent 4 hours sailing and pedaling and did not get one nibble. Out of frustration, I packed my gear, kayak and headed back to Kawaihae. I drove back to the dirt road I discovered the day where my mirage drive broke as I marked it with a GPS. It was just south of Red Hill and the water was in great condition. I gave myself a three hour limit to kayak fish and planned to get off the water by 6 pm. Again I had no nibbles, the same result as the morning. The fish of the Big Island decided that they did not want any part of me for day 9. So I called it a day. I did have a positive outlook over the 2 days as I discovered another launch site so I could concentrate future efforts in coming back to fish Red Hill and Black Point. It was beautiful up there overlooking the Kohala cascade. See you soon and aloha! {mos_fb_discuss:5}