

Youngsters reach the top

New, young teams swept away almost all the top placings at this year's Polynesian Festival in Christchurch.

There was almost a complete turn around of top teams at the Labour weekend Maori cultural festival with many long established groups giving way to younger, newer clubs — many of whom had never been to the national competition before.

And, as an aside, the prow of the Tainui canoe was once again raised to the wind with several of the front runners being based within its boundary.

Two of the four top teams (third place was tied) were all first time up and of the first five teams, four were from within the Tainui waka boundary — from Mokau to the south, Tamaki Makaurau

to the north, Pare Hauraki to the east, Waikato to the west and Mangatoatoa in the middle.

The overall first place winner was Waka Huia from Tamaki Makaurau — a new club who hadn't been to the festival before.

Second overall was Whare Wananga o Waikato.

The third place getters were Te Rau-tahi, from Tamaki Makaurau, who came together only 18 months ago, and the long-standing festival goers and past winner Rangiwewehi from Te Arawa.

Next was another Waikato team, Nga Tama-a-Rangi and then came the old campaigners Waihirere.

Tainui waka area teams in the past have included Taniwharau and Te Roopu Manutaki — both of whom have won the

festival.

Twenty-six teams representing all the districts of Aotearoa competed in the festival at QEII Park in Christchurch. It was the first time the national event had been held in Te Waipounamu.

Thousands of spectators, many of them supporters who accompanied their teams, attended the three-day festival.

The Governor-General, Paul Reeves, opened the festival on the Friday and Internal Affairs Minister, Peter Tapsell, presented the awards on the Sunday.

Despite the large number of teams, the audience was kept alive and alert with the variety of styles which ranged from the conservative to the flamboyant.

Such was the intensity of the competition that in many of the compulsory items only one or two marks separated the place-getters.



◀ The fruits of victory. And in a happy co-incidence the trophy, a waka huia, was won by Te Waka Huia. Here are the winners during the trophy ceremony.