

Rules of Competition

Race Committee

The management of the competition shall be in the hands of a race committee, which shall consist of:

- Head Race Official
- Race Organizer
- Board Representative

The Race Committee shall:

1. Hear any protests that may be made and settle any disputes that may arise. In the event of a protest involving an international team.
2. Decide matters concerning disqualification in cases where the regulations have been broken during the competition. The decision of the committee shall be based on the rules as shown in this document.
3. Before any decision is made regarding an alleged infraction of the rules, the committee shall hear the opinion of the officials who were in control of the race at that time. (The race committee shall caucus and determine the appropriate actions as a group.)

The race committee may disqualify any competitor who behaves improperly, or who by his/her conduct or speech shows contempt towards the officials, other competitors, or onlookers.

A member of the race committee may not participate in a judgment concerned with his/her team, or a member thereof (however all the committee members shall give their full support to the final decision and act as a cohesive group).

Official Timing Procedure

Stopwatches or other accurate timing devices shall be used to time the race heats.

There shall be at least one backup timer per lane using a manual stopwatch. The team with the fastest time shall be declared the winner.

1. General

1.1 A team representative from each team shall attend an orientation of the race regulations prior to the races.

1.2 Written guidelines and the race rules shall be available to teams upon request prior to the competition.

1.3 All boats and paddles used by the competitors shall be provided by the race officials. Race officials shall assure that paddles of various lengths and weights are equally distributed among boats. The allocation of boats and paddles to individual teams shall be at the discretion of the officials.

The officials shall not be responsible for any failure of equipment during a race and each team is advised to carefully check the boat and paddles before racing and request any spares. The race officials are obligated to replace damaged equipment at the request of a team before the team leaves the marshaling area.

For Hong Kong style racing, paddlers may bring their own paddles, but all paddles must meet the USDBF competition standards.

- 1.3.1 Paddlers are not permitted to alter the supplied paddles in any way -- including but not limited to -- applying sticky or waxy substances to the shaft and roughening the hand gripping surfaces.

- 1.4 A team is under the control of the race officials from the time it is called to the team assembling area, or twenty minutes before the time of its race, if earlier, until it leaves the team assembly area after its race.
- 1.5 Kneepads and/or gloves may be worn; however, any other equipment (automatic bailers, spray skirts, cushions, etc.) or modifications to the boat not be allowed.
 - 1.5.1 Small water bottles may be taken into the boat for drinking between heats.
- 1.6 Each team must have a representative, who must be present during the time that the team is under the control of the race officials.

The team representative shall be responsible for liaising with race officials.
- 1.7 Once in the marshaling area or on the racecourse, teams must obey any instructions given to them by race officials.
- 1.8 All competitors must be fourteen years of age or older at the time of the event.

A responsible adult must accompany any competitor under eighteen years of age. The adult has responsibility for the competitor's conduct. (This adult may be the crew captain.)
- 1.9 The race organizer reserves the right to refuse any team entry into a race if the team does not comply with the race rules and conduct.
- 1.10 Any team that fails to observe these rules may be disqualified.
- 1.11 Signaling devices such as radio communications or other electronic items (intercoms, etc.), shall not be used by any team during the races.
- 1.12 Only the drum and drum sticks provided shall be used to signal the stroke rate; whistles, rattles, air horns or any other noise making devices are prohibited from use.

2. Competitor Conduct

- 2.1 Each competitor shall be required to wear a life jacket or approved floatation device during the competition and all practice sessions.

It is the responsibility of the team captain to make sure that all members of the team comply with this rule.
- 2.2 All teams shall have the opportunity to train in a dragon boat prior to the races.
- 2.3 The race organizer shall provide an experienced Dragon Boat steersperson unless the team has a steersperson who is experienced and approved by the practice committee.
- 2.4 Each lane shall be at least ten meters in width to help prevent collisions.
- 2.5 **NO** alcohol is permitted on or near the boats during practice or competition.
- 2.6 All paddlers must sign a release form prior to boarding a boat and be physically fit enough to participate.
- 2.7 Liability waivers must have been signed by every participant and the initialed that they read the safety plan.

NOTE: If you have people who must leave (such as a Doctor) or have commitments during the dragon boating activities, **make arrangements ahead of time! Races/practices will not be held up for missing paddlers.**
- 2.8 When loading, follow the directions of the staging/marshalling staff.
- 2.9 When unloading at the dock, paddles should be placed on the outside of the boat and away from the dock or taken out of the boats as instructed. Paddlers should disembark in the reverse order as when they loaded. It is essential that everyone leaves their seat in order and that the seated paddlers have their hands up to offer support. Failure to unload correctly may result in serious injury and/or disqualification.
- 2.10 It is the captain's responsibility to orient his/her team to these rules before they enter the boats for the first time, or to have a qualified person do so.
- 2.11 Respect the equipment. Do not scrape paddles along the gunwales of the boat. This creates potential splinters and ruins the boats and paddles.
- 2.12 Do not sit or stand on life jackets. This shortens the life span of the jackets and is in violation of these rules of the competition.

- 2.13 Insure your team is warmed up before taking your team through any strenuous sprints or race starts to avoid strains and exertion injuries.
- 2.14 In the event of bad weather, high winds, lightning, or approaching darkness get your team off the lake immediately.
- 2.15 Use common sense. If safety rules are followed by all, everyone can have a day that is fun and injury free.
- 2.16 The race committee reserves the right to refuse the use of any dragon boat or equipment to any team member failing to follow these rules.
- 2.17 Each competitor is solely responsible for his/her own safety during official practice sessions and during races and no responsibility shall be accepted by the race officials, any official volunteer, or any sponsoring organization for any injury, damage or loss incurred or born by competitors or members of a team.
- 2.18 Any injuries sustained as a result of participating in the races or practices must be reported immediately to the information tent, and the team captain must submit an injury report to the information tent immediately following the injury. Incident report forms are available at the finish tent area.

3. The Team

- 3.1 Team composition shall be governed by the race organizer except in the events that are qualifying races for international competition. In such cases the USDBF rules concerning team composition shall take precedent. Each team must have at minimum 16 paddlers. All teams must have a minimum of eight women paddlers in the boat at all times. Drummer, and steersperson do not count as paddlers.
- 3.2 A competitor can only be listed on one roster and be a paddler for one team.
- 3.3 Paddlers may be added to a team the day of the festival (prior to their first race) in order to be considered on the original roster.
- 3.4 Teams will be disqualified for medal competition if less than 90% of the boat's paddlers were not on the original roster for the team. In this scenario, a team could add a maximum of two additional paddlers.
- 3.5 Paddling styles are restricted in dragon boat racing to a seated position. The race organizer may be requiring a team to demonstrate their ability to race safely and successfully the entire course length.
- 3.6 Each team is entirely responsible for team conduct and for complying with the race rules.
- 3.7 Crews shall paddle short when paddlers are missing but must have a minimum of 16 paddlers.
- 3.8 Any person observed by an official to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs shall be removed from paddling and cannot be replaced. In addition, that person's team may be disqualified.
- 3.9 A team that allows a non-waivered / registered person to participate as a team member shall be subject to disqualification for that race, and may be disqualified from further participation in the festival.
- 3.10 Teams will be granted one practice before the event and needs to be scheduled ahead of time.

4. Marshaling

- 4.1 A team must be assembled in the designated area and be ready to board 30 minutes before the time of its race.
- 4.2 A team must board the boat in accordance with the instruction of the race officials.
- 4.3 A team must board the boat allocated to it. In events with more than two boats, each boat shall carry a number indication of the lane in which the boat is to race.
- 4.4 A team is not permitted to choose which boat or lane to use and must race in the lane allocated to its boat.
- 4.5 Teams shall leave the boarding area and proceed to the starting area, keeping clear of the course and not interfering with any race in progress.

5. The Start

- 5.1 A team on the water shall obey the instructions of the course umpire, starter, and other race officials.
 - 5.2 A team shall take up its position in the starting area in the correct lane allocated to it.
- 5.3 Boats shall line up at the starting point according to instructions from race officials.
- 5.4 Approximately one to three minutes before race start the starter will ask the boats to approach the starting line. Boat alignment commands will be given. "We have alignment", "Attention", "Go" will start the race. The "Go" command may be a horn, cannon or other audible start device. Three blasts of a horn immediately after a start indicate a false start and teams should stop paddling immediately.
- 5.5 In the event of a false start, a second horn, gun, whistle or shout shall sound and all boats must return immediately and the race shall be restarted. The starter shall issue a warning to any team that causes a false start.
- 5.6 Any team that fails to return after a false start, or that causes two false starts shall be disqualified from that race.

6. Race Conduct

- 6.1 Each boat must remain in its correct lane and must not interfere with other boats in the race. Lane markers may be positioned beyond the finish line to guide teams.
- 6.2 Umpire boats may follow each race to observe the course taken by each boat.
- 6.3 Any boat failing to keep to its proper course shall be warned by a race official. Boats must not pass outside buoys marking the edge of the course.
- 6.4 In the event of a boat failing to keep its proper course and thereby interfering with the course of another boat, or in the event of a collision between two or more boats, the head race official present a time penalty of 5 seconds to the offending boat or boats, or may order one or more boats to re-paddle the race if, in the opinion of the head race official, the result of the race has been substantially effected.
- 6.5 If, in the opinion of the head race official, a boat has been swamped or capsized deliberately by a team, the race organizer after consultation with the race committee reserves the right to refuse said teams entry in future races.
- 6.6 If, in the opinion of the head race official, a boat is damaged deliberately by a team, the race organizer reserves the right to require a team to pay for the costs of repairs to the damaged boat(s) and bar the said team, entry in any / all future races.
- 6.7 It is the responsibility of the race organizer to provide adequate safety boats and keep the course clear of unauthorized crafts.
- 6.8 Broken paddles. It is the participant's responsibility to ensure that the equipment is acceptable for competition. Broken paddles and sterns paddles are NOT grounds for protest.

7. The Finish

- 7.1 The finishing order of a race and the time taken by each boat shall be determined by the finishing judges, whose decision shall be final.
- 7.2 A team must finish with someone in the drummer and steersperson positions. In the event of a boat deviating from its course, see section 6.8.
- 7.3 If a paddle is dropped in the water by accident during a race and not retrieved, the paddler may, at his or her discretion, use a spare, or not paddle for the remainder of the race. All paddlers must stay in the boat.
- 7.4 If a paddle is deliberately thrown in such a manner as to enter the lane and hinder a competing boat, the boat from which the paddle came may be disqualified.
- 7.5 All paddlers must stay in the boat after the finish. Teams with paddlers jumping out of the boat may be disqualified.

8. Tie Breakers

This shall be as listed in the captain's information packet.

8.1 Regardless of bracketing or festival format, the result of a tie shall be determined by the following methods:

- Running an additional race.
- Average race time (the sum of all previous races divided by the number of races).
- The better over all record (wins divided by races run).
- The fastest race time of all runs to this point.

9. Protests

9.1 In the event of a team wishing to lodge a protest, the team captain must lodge the protest **in writing** with the head-race official within fifteen minutes of the conclusion of the race. The protest, together with the report and recommendations of the race officials, shall be referred to the race committee whose decision shall be final. A \$25 dollar (US) fee shall accompany the written protest. The protest fee shall be refunded to the protesting team if the protest ruling is in favor of the protesting team.

9.2 No protests shall be allowed concerning equipment or any matter other than the conduct of teams in a race.

9.3 In the event of a protest *only* the team captains shall be permitted in or near the race committee tent. If other team members are present, team disqualification may result.

9.4 The race committee may disqualify any competitor who behaves improperly, or who by his/her conduct or speech shows contempt towards the officials, other competitors, or onlookers.