



Peekskill Dragon Boat Festival

Team Information Package

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General information

Dragon boating is an ancient sport, rich in culture and tradition; it originated in China over 2000 years ago. It began when the famous and much loved Chinese poet, Chu Yuan, threw himself into the Miluo River to protest against government corruption. When the people of his village saw this, they jumped into their boats and paddled furiously to try and rescue him, while beating drums to fend off evil spirits. Unfortunately they could not save him, but every year thereafter the people would commemorate this day by gathering in their boats and racing in his memory.

Over the last 20 years Dragon Boating has exploded in popularity in North America with nearly 100,000 people taking part in festivals across the United States and Canada. It is easy to learn, the boats are extremely stable, and once a paddler is in stroke, it doesn't matter how big, small, old, or young he or she is, they are contributing to the team.

Dragon Boats are 41 feet in length, 45 inches wide and weight 550lbs. Races are typically 250m or 500m in length taking around 1 minute and 2 minutes to complete respectively.

Preparing for practice

Each team will be given 1 or 2 practices to prepare for the race. It is essential that everyone be present for these practices as getting 20 people paddling together can be a challenge. Show up early so that your coach may spend some time with you on land explaining the basics.

Follow the tips below for an enjoyable paddling experience.

1. **You will get wet! Be sure to dress appropriately.** For hot days this includes shorts and a t-shirt/tank top and any pair of sandals or old shoes you don't mind getting wet. Sunscreen, hat and sunglasses are strongly recommended.
2. For cold days avoid loose fitting clothing that will get soaked in the water. Choose synthetic fabrics (like polyester) that move water away from the skin rather than cottons that soak up water like a sponge. Try and layer many thin layers rather than wear one heavy layer. Non-cotton track pants and old shoes are fine for legs and feet.
3. Drink lots of water. You'll be on the water for 1 hour so bring a water bottle with you.
4. Make sure to eat well so that your energy levels are high before getting on the water.
5. **Leave Valuables And Electronics On Shore.** Remember, this is a water sport and electronics don't mix with water. There is also the remote chance of capsizing that could totally saturate your equipment. Fingers and hands can get accidentally knocked on the boat damaging other jewelry.
6. Listen to your coach. Synchronization, technique and a positive attitude make a boat go fast. Your experience will be that much more enjoyable and safer if you are attentive to your coach's commands.
7. Before getting in the boat, familiarize yourself with your seat partner or "buddy". In the event of a capsizing make sure that your buddy is ok. Stay calm, stay with the boat and wait for instructions from your coach. The drummer will buddy with the two stroke, and the steersperson with the last two paddlers.
8. Thoroughly read through the rules of racing so that there are no surprises come race day.

Preparing for Race day

1. Follow all the preparations for practice accept know that you will be spending the whole day down at the festival site. You'll be racing 3 times within a 6 hour period.
2. **Bring a change of clothes (or two if the weather is not nice.).**
3. **Bring lots of food and snacks.**
4. Know what time you are racing and respect the meeting times provided by your team captain. One late person can slow down the entire event or force your team to forfeit a race.

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Rules of racing

1. General

- 1.1. The overall management of the Peekskill Dragon Boat Festival shall rest with the executive committee who shall be the supreme authority over all matters pertaining in any way to the Festival. The executive's decisions and rulings shall be final on any group or individual concerned with the decision.
- 1.2. The dragon boat races shall be under the supervision and control of the Chief Race Official who shall retain authority over all matters related to racing.

2. Team Composition

- 2.1. There are three divisions: Open, Women's and Mixed.
 - 2.1.1. A mixed crew must have a minimum of 8 female paddlers.
 - 2.1.2. A women's crew must have all female paddlers
 - 2.1.3. An open (or men's crew) may have female paddlers.
 - 2.1.4. The drummer and steersperson for any crew may be male or female
 - 2.1.5. The minimum for any crew is 16 paddlers, a drummer and a steersperson
 - 2.1.6. The minimum age for a participant is 14 years old
- 2.2. Divisions and special finals within each category may be formed according to registration (i.e. student, bankers, technology, rookie etc). The organizers will decide on any specialty divisions based on registration
- 2.3. Women's and Open (men's) divisions will only be raced if registration permits. Teams may be seeded with mixed teams for heats with their own separate finals.

3. Safety

- 3.1. All participants must wear a certified PFD (Personal Flotation device). Your own PFD may be used so long as it is United States Coast Guard Approved
- 3.2. All participants are strongly discouraged from taking any kind of valuable or electronic device on board with them as there is a possibility of these items getting wet from paddling or during capsizing.
- 3.3. Unless absolutely necessary and under the control of the coach, it is strictly forbidden for a paddler to stand up in the boat for risk of capsizing (especially at the finish of a race)
- 3.4. **It is strictly forbidden to consume any kind of alcoholic beverage before or during racing.** Any participants caught consuming alcohol before having completed all his or her races will be immediately barred from further racing and risk their elimination of their team from the festival.
- 3.5. Any participants injured or who become ill during the festival are to report to medical staff immediately. If the condition is serious, medical staff may restrict a participant from continuing in the festival. Their decision is final.
- 3.6. **All participants must sign a waiver form before being allowed to practice or race.** The waiver of a participant under the age of 18 must be signed by a Parent or Guardian. It is the captain's responsibility to ensure that all participants in his or her crew have signed a waiver form. Any paddler caught racing who has not signed a waiver form risks the disqualification of his or her crew from the race.

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- 3.7. Capsizing is extremely rare but there is a possibility that it could happen. Observing the following safety guidelines will ensure the safety of all participants
 - 3.7.1. Before getting in the boat, each paddler must identify their buddy. Their buddy is their seat partner. The drummer will buddy with the two stroke, and the steersperson with the last two paddlers.
 - 3.7.2. In the event of a boat capsizing all paddlers are to remain calm, check that their buddy is ok, remain with the boat, and wait for instructions from the safety boat.
 - 3.7.3. The safety boat that will make sure that everyone is present and check for anyone that needs immediate medical attention.
 - 3.7.4. Once the safety boat has guaranteed that everyone is ok they will begin retrieving participants.

4. Racing

- 4.1. **All teams will race three times. This includes two heats and a final.** The fastest of the two heat times will be used to place teams into the appropriate final.
- 4.2. Teams are to report to the marshalling area 25 minutes before their scheduled race time.
- 4.3. The starting procedure shall be "Attention Please" followed by a shot or air horn. Any team caught false starting will receive a 2 second penalty.
- 4.4. All crews must remain in their lane for the duration of the race. Leaving your lane may result in a 2 second penalty at the discretion of the referee following the race.
- 4.5. A collision between crews will result in a re-race. The crews causing the collision may be assessed a 2 second penalty at the discretion of the referee. The referee will then determine whether or not the steersperson is competent enough to continue. If the referee feels the steersperson is unfit to steer then the festival will provide an alternate.

5. Etiquette

- 5.1. All participants are expected to treat the officials, organizers, volunteers, their fellow competitors and spectators with respect. Any abuse of this fact witnessed during the festival is to be reported to the organizing committee who will review the situation and take appropriate action that may include expulsion of a participant or crew from the festival.
- 5.2. All crews are expected to respect the rules and regulations of racing and the judgment of the officials. Un-sportsmanlike towards the officials in this regard may bring about further penalty and risk disqualification the infracting crew.

6. Protests

- 6.1 Should a protest or dispute arise, the Team Captain(s) must file a protest on water at the finish line, no exceptions. Captains will have thirty minutes from the end of the race to file a written protest of the incident. A Peekskill Celebration 2009 Protest Form must be filled out in its entirety and submitted to the Race Clerk at Race Control. Consistent with other Dragon Boat venues, a protest fee of \$20 U.S. currency is required with all protests. The Race Clerk, the Head Judge and one other member of the Executive Race Committee will make a decision by the end of the day. The Team Captain will be informed orally of the decision and the decision will be posted in the Race Clerk's Tent. If the decision is made in favor of the protesting team, the team is refunded their protest fee.