

Rules and Regulations
Northeast Dragon Boat Challenge
Cooper River Park, Pennsauken Township, NJ

Introduction:

Welcome to the Northeast Dragon Boat Challenge – an experience like no other! As a participant in this unique event your main goals should be safety and fun. The organizers are proud to have the opportunity to work with the Cooper River Park staff to bring this fun event to your community.

What is Dragon Boating:

Born of a time-honored Chinese tradition, dragon boating's roots are over 2,000 years old. The tradition has transformed into a fun paddle sport that appeals to all ages and is growing quickly world-wide. Dragon boat racing is the ultimate team sport, and with a short lesson almost anyone can enjoy paddling. Twenty paddlers sit side by side in a 41-foot long boat. A steersperson stands in the back guiding the boat and a drummer sits on the bow and beats out the cadence of the strokes. The boat simply will not glide unless the 20 paddlers work together as a team. It is a sport that knows no limits and calls to people of all ages, genders and athletic skills. The appeal of dragon boating is truly universal because it is challenging teamwork at its finest, and a whole lot of fun getting to the finish line!

Registration:

To participate in the Northeast Dragon Boat Challenge, your team must submit a valid team registration, including payment by credit card. All registrations shall be submitted via the challenge website at www.northeastdragonboatchallenge.com Space may be limited, so team entries will be granted on a first come, first served basis.

Divisions:

The following divisions will be available for registration:

- Sports – Women, Mixed, Open
- Community – Mixed
- Community - Women
- Breast Cancer Survivor - A minimum of three registered teams are needed for this division to proceed. In the event there are not three teams registered for BCS the available teams will be placed in the sport division. The event will not have a carnation ceremony.

Crew Composition:

- Steerspersons will be provided for the day of the race.
- Teams are responsible for providing their own drummer. A light-weight person is recommended.
- Each team should consist of 20 paddlers and one drummer. NO EXPERIENCE REQUIRED. Teams must race with a minimum of 18 paddlers.
- Teams will be allowed to have up to (24) paddlers listed on their roster.
- Team members must be at least 13 years of age as of their first practice session.
- Sports mixed teams must have 10 males and 10 female paddlers (the drummer does not count toward this gender requirement).
- Female crews will race against other female crews, if at least 3 other all-female crews register. All female crews must consist of all women, including the drummer. The provided steersperson may be male or female

Check-in:

- Team Captains are required to attend the mandatory team captain meeting on race day.
- Team Captains must check-in early the day of the race to provide final team rosters and confirm all waivers have been signed. Check-in time will be posted on the race website www.northeastdragonboatchallenge.com. Captains will receive a full set of wristbands based on the number of crew listed on the roster for each team.

Practices:

Each registered community team will receive one free hour of practice as part of their race fee. The date and time of this practice will be scheduled closer to the race date.

What should I wear/bring?: Wear comfortable clothing that does not absorb or hold moisture. Quick dry fabrics (nylon sports shorts and capris) and cotton tee shirts are recommended. Footwear should be water shoes on sneakers; no flip flops. Bring water and sunscreen. A dry change of clothes is also recommended. This is a water sport and you will get wet.

Athlete's Village:

- All teams may erect a single 10' x 10' tent in the athlete's village area (see site map at for locations). Teams will be assigned to their tent location in advance based on registration. Tents must be put up in designated areas and not interfere with designated central open spaces
- Tent, table and chair rentals will also be available on the website – no outside vendors will be allowed
- No portable grills or alcohol are allowed
- Parking is prohibited at the Athletes' Village; however, teams may pull in and drop off supplies prior to parking off-site
- The festival organizer, staff and volunteers will NOT be held responsible for lost or stolen articles left at the site
- Teams are expected to take all trash and items with them at the end of the day. DO NOT leave any items behind

Race Day Plan

- Check-in, captains' meeting, marshaling and round one heat start times will be posted on the website the Monday before race day. Teams must arrive a minimum of two hours prior to their round one race
- Race organizers will direct teams on procedures for marshaling, loading and starting procedures during the captains' meeting
- Each team will race three times
- Teams are expected to be in the marshaling area warming up 30 minutes prior to their posted start time
- All team members must be present in order to load a boat. Races will NOT be held up waiting for team members that are not present. Incomplete teams will either race with a short crew or forfeit the heat
- The first races will be prescheduled and start-times posted on the website Monday before race day. The second and third races will be determined on race day based on the team times. **Each team is responsible for knowing when their team is scheduled to race and for being at the marshaling area on time.** Event times will be posted and available at the timing tent.

Race Starts:

- Each boat will be called up to the start buoys for alignment.
 - The race starter will use certain commands until each boat's dragon head is aligned evenly. Commands might include:
 - Boat (number), one stroke forward
 - Boat (number) back two strokes Boat (number) hold your boat (keep it from drifting by placing the entire paddle blade perpendicular in the water and hold it there to stop the current from moving the boat)
 - Once alignment has been established, the start commands will be:
 - We have alignment.
 - Are you ready or attention
 - Air horn will sound
 - If your team is not ready for a legitimate reason, the drummer is instructed to raise his/her hand to notify the race starter (keep hand down otherwise until horn blows). Examples for a reason to raise the hand:
 - Boat is wedged in a buoy
 - Medical emergency
 - Bow of the boat is turned in the wrong direction
- Drummer and steersperson will communicate until the issue is resolved. Drummer will **not** lower their hand until the steersperson gives the command to do so. False starts may occur so you may hear a "hold your boat" command

Award Ceremony:

- Award ceremonies will follow the last race of each division
- Medals will be awarded to each first, second and third place finishers in divisional championship finals. Awards will also be awarded to each first place finisher in each Minor Final
- Teams must be present to receive their medals

Safety:

- **PFDs (Personal Flotation Device)** will be provided and must be worn in practices and races. A paddler with their own PFD may use it, so long as it meets the requirements laid out in this document. The marshaling official may reject any personal PFD if these requirements are not met. Any team member's failure to wear a PFD during the race will result in the team's disqualification. Sports Teams may wear inflatable PFDs
- **Each crew member is solely responsible for his or her own safety at all times during any activity in or near the dragon boats.** Team members, especially the team captain, drummer and provided steersperson must know that they have additional responsibilities regarding the safety of their team. Each team member must 1) wear a PFD; 2) be reasonably dressed for the weather, water and race conditions; and 3) be able to swim at least 50 meters wearing a PFD in case of capsize or other emergency.
- During **distress** the steersperson will take control of the safety of the boat. Team captain and steersperson will work together to make sure all paddlers are safe and accounted for in case of capsize. Stay with the boat until help arrives, know who your seatmate is and verify that he/she is safe. Everyone will count until all are deemed present. **DO NOT** swim to shore; stay with the boat until help arrives.

- **Person overboard** is cause for the boat to STOP. Follow instructions from the captain/steersperson
- **Injuries** sustained as a result of participating in practice or on race day should be reported immediately to your team captain to determine if it is safe for you to continue to paddle. On race day EMT services will be available
- All paddlers must **remain seated** for the duration of the race. Kneeling, standing or jumping into the water is prohibited. If you lose or break your paddle do not attempt to save it
- In the event of lightning, thunder or other **severe weather emergency**, the organizer may cancel the event with no rain date or refund of entry fees. Races may continue in the rain
- No consumption of alcohol is allowed at the festival event. Teams who violate this requirement may be disqualified and removed from the challenge.

Inclement Weather & Cancellation:

- Race fees are non-refundable – no exceptions. The race will proceed rain or shine.
- In the event of lightning in the area, racers will be pulled off the water until it is determined that it is safe to proceed.
- The event organizers will attempt to complete the full race program, but should inclement weather cause delays, the race program may be modified at the organizers discretion to complete racing on time. This may include elimination of races as needed to get back on schedule.
- **In the unlikely event the race needs to be cancelled in its entirety due to reasons outside the organizers control (e.g. flooded lake conditions, severe weather); no refunds will be provided to teams. NO rain date will be scheduled.**

Info/Tips for New Teams:

Conduct in the Boat: other than during loading and unloading there is to be NO standing in the boat. For the safety of your teammates, do not wave paddles in the air. There should be no talking once your team is in the boat. The drummer and steersperson must be able to always communicate with the team and each other, and all team members need to be able to hear the commands. In case of emergency raise your paddle straight up in the air if you need to draw attention to yourself

Buddy System: make certain that each of your team members knows who is sitting beside them in case the boat capsizes, which is highly unlikely. Teammates will be responsible for each other's safety until rescue arrives. **STAY WITH THE BOAT! DO NOT SWIM TO SHORE!!**

Life Jackets: everyone must wear a life jacket during practice and on race day. NO exceptions!

Drummer: the drummer should attend all practices, if possible. They will assist in setting the timing for the team and can be an excellent source of motivation and inspiration during practices and on race day

Challenge Rules Contact Info:

The Challenge organizer and race manager reserves the right to waive or amend the subject matter addressed in these Festival Rules and Regulations. Anything not addressed in the Rules and Regulations will be determined by the challenge organizer at its sole discretion. The challenge organizer also reserves the right to remove any team for failure to follow established rules or sportsmanship guidelines.

