

Seattle Dragon Boat Festival Rules and Regulations 2024

The higher docks and the un-scheduled sea planes make the Seattle Dragon Boat Festival both fun and challenging. Many of the rules and safety practices below are in place to make the event safe for all.

- The basis of all rules are the IDBF rules which can be found here: https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/135293428/IDBF_Rules_of_Racing_2016.pdf
- For the Seattle dragon boat festival, we have relaxed a few rules. Most of them are stated below. If you find one that you would like further clarification on or addressed, please email the race director at director@seattledragonboatfestival.net.

Safety

- When loading into the boat, paddlers will load from the outside benches first, benches 1 & 10, and then load working your way towards the center. When unloading paddlers will unload from the center benches, benches 5 & 6, and work your way out. Steersperson and Drummer have the option of loading/un-loading initially or last.
- When paddling to the start, boat will stay east of the course and not cross the course for any reason. Boats will go past the start line and make a left turn into the docks. In some cases they may have to go past the docks and make a u-turn.
- After completion of a race, all boat will turn counter-clockwise to return to the dock. The only exception will be to avoid a collision.
- Boats must return to the dock slowly and under control. In most cases, boats must come to a complete stop about one paddle length away from the dock and then use the side-draw command to draw to the dock. This is to avoid the head from colliding with the dock. Steerspersons not complying with this request or following the dock master's commands may be asked to retire for the day.
- In most cases the dragon boat will have the right of way. However there are a couple of cases where the dragon boat must give way to commercial boat traffic. This includes the Kenmore Air seaplanes which have very little control. In the event of a plane crossing the course, the course marshal will stop the race by blowing a horn. In the event that the horn is not sounded, it is up to the steersperson to stop their boat to avoid colliding or coming close to the seaplane. Steerspersons not giving way to boats or seaplanes under power will be asked to retire for the day.
- In the event of capsizing or swamping, Seattle Police will rescue all of the paddlers from the water and take them to shore. Depending on where the capsizing or swamping occurs, the paddlers may swim to the nearest dock.

Relaxed Rules and Regulations 2024

- A Crew may paddle with only 16 paddlers. For mixed teams, at least half of the crew must be female.
- Paddlers and Steers person can be on more than one Mixed Division Team roster but can only paddle on one team
- Youth teams consist of paddlers between the ages of 10 to 19 years of age. The drummer must also be at 10 to 19 years of age. The steersperson may be older.

- Gender Composition Basics:
 - All Mixed Crews (Junior, U24, Adult, Senior & Novice) - Standard boat crew (20 paddlers) = A minimum of 10 female paddlers, A maximum of 10 male paddlers. Note the gender rule has been modified for our events to allow for more female paddlers on a Mixed team
 - Women's Crews (Junior, U24, Adult, Senior) - Paddlers, drummer must all be women, Steersperson can be male (As of 2017, all crew members must be female)
 - Open Crews – No restrictions

- Age Category Divisions
 - Adult Boat Crew - All crew members must be 10 years of age or older
 - Youth Boat Crew - All Racers must be under the age of 19 but at least 10 years of age as of June 8th in a given year and will require their parent or guardian's consent in order to participate and compete
 - U24 - All Racers must be aged between 14 and 24 by June 8th in a given year
 - Senior Divisions
 - Paddlers must be of age on June 8th in a given year
 - 39+ Senior A
 - 49+ Senior B
 - 59+ Senior C (Grand Dragon)

Mixed Novice division composition (and few other rules for Novice)

- A Novice crew may paddle with only 16 paddlers. At least half of the crew must be female.
- In general a novice paddler may not belong to a dragon boat club or have raced in more than 1 festival in a year. The exception may be 2 festivals in a year if they competed in the novice at both festivals
- Teams may use their own drummer or the Festival will provide you a drummer
- The Festival will provide you a steersperson. Novice teams may use their own steersperson so long as the steersperson is qualified and experienced
- The festival will provide paddles and PFDs for all novice paddlers. Novice paddlers may use their own equipment.
- In the name of fairness and good sportsmanship we ask that carbon fiber paddlers not be used in the Novice division.

Race Format

- Novice Mixed Division
 - All teams race 3 heats:
 - 2 pelim heats and 1 final
 - All heats have 3 - 6 boats
 - All heats are 250M
 - Total number of divisions will depend on number of Registered teams, division Championships Finals and Novice Consolation apply

- Adult Mixed Division
 - All teams race 4 heats:
 - 2 pelim heats, 1 semi and 1 final
 - All heats have 3 - 6 boats
 - Prelim will be 250M, all other heats will be 500M
 - Total number of divisions will depend on number of Registered teams, division Championships Finals apply for Competitive, Recreational A, B & C Divisions
 - Consolation Finals apply for Recreational Divisions

- Women's Division
 - All teams race 4 heats:
 - 2 prelim heats, 1 semi and 1 final
 - All heats have 3 - 6 boats
 - Total number of divisions will depend on number of Registered teams, division Championships Finals apply for Competitive, Recreational A, B & C Divisions
 - Consolation Finals apply for Recreational Divisions

- Junior Division
 - All teams race 4 heats:
 - 2 prelim heats, 1 semi and 1 final
 - All heats have 3 - 6 boats
 - Total number of divisions will depend on number of Registered teams, division Championships Finals apply for Competitive, Recreational A, B & C Divisions
 - Consolation Finals apply for Recreational Divisions

- Open Division
 - Depending on the number of registrations, All teams race 1 - 2 heats with a maximum of 6 boats per race for a maximum of 8 teams
 - 2 races – 250M and 500M
 - Every race is a final heat and ranked by time

Waivers

- Adult Waivers
 - An online waiver is required to participate
 - Waivers must be signed online by the Friday of the festival/regatta weekend.
 - Note: If a crew member is unable to sign the online waiver, then the crew member can sign the printed roster at the registration tent
 - Paper copies of the roster must be handed into the race registration no later than 1 hour before a team's first scheduled race

- Junior Waivers
 - An online or paper waiver is required to participate and must be submitted by a parent or guardian.
 - Paper copies of the roster must be handed into the race registration no later than 1 hour before a team's first scheduled race

Race Schedules

- Race schedules are available approximately one week prior to each event.

Equipment

- Competitors be permitted to use their own paddles provided that they conform to the IDBF PS202a Racing Paddle specification
- Friction tape and wax may be used *on your own personal paddles only*
- Competitors in CIDBF events shall be permitted to use their own PFDs provided that they are approved by the USCG, Canadian Coast Guard (CCG)
- Manual inflating or auto inflating life jackets are not allowed.
- All personally owned PFDs may be checked by the Race Officials at any time to ensure that they meet the approved specifications

Equipment Cont'

- Seat pads made of foam or other materials are allowed up to 15mm or 9/16 inch thickness and the width of the seat
- Foot braces/blocks will be allowed for paddlers who have difficulty reaching the fixed foot braces in the dragon boat
- Water bottles are allowed on the boat
- Whistles, air horns or any other noise making devices are prohibited from use. Any team shall not use signaling devices including radio communications or other electronic items
- GPS and stopwatches will be allowed on the boat *but cannot be used to set the rate or speed of the boat during the race, they are only to be used for your team's post race information*
- Cox Box speaker system will be allowed to be used by Drummer & Steersperson on the boat

Race Course

- All races to be 250 or 500 meters distance unless specified
- Lanes will be numbered 1 to 4 with lane 1 closest to the south shore (Finish Line tent side)
- The Start Line marker buoys and the Finish Line marker buoys are only approximately in line with the actual Start Line and the Finish Line.
- The race runs East to West at an angle

The Start

- The Officials will signal the crews to line-up in their respective lanes in the boat staging area before the start of the race; the race will start without your team if you choose to ignore line-up instructions
- The Starter will start the race when all boats are lined up. Under the best possible conditions, it will be the fairest start in the Starter's opinion.
- A Drummer or Steersperson may raise a hand over their head to alert the Starter that their Crew has lost positioning.
- The start commands will be:
 - "WE HAVE ALIGNMENT" (*optional command*)
 - "ATTENTION" (*Drummer cannot raise their hand after "Attention"*)
 - Starting signal or air horn blast (from 1-5 seconds after "Attention")
- Race Conduct
 - Any boat heading off course will be warned by the Race Referee and must immediately get back into its lane
 - If after two (2) warnings are given by the Race Referee you do not take corrective action a third (3rd) command will be given to "stop paddling" and your boat may be disqualified.
- Re-Race Rules
- At the Official's discretion, a re-race may be ordered when:
 - There is a false start called by the Starter, or
 - There is clearly a collision within the first 50 meters of the race, or
 - There is an equipment breakage, other than paddle, within the first 50 meters of the race (steering arm, drum, head etc.)
- Note: *There are absolutely no grounds for re-races once all boats have passed the 50 meter mark, except one that is initiated by the Chief Official under extraordinary circumstances.*

Protests

- A protest must be lodged by the Team Captain to the Race Marshal or Course Marshal prior to your team leaving the race staging area.

- A team may protest:
 - Illegal equipment used by another team
 - A crew not complying with the roster/gender rule
 - Wash riding by another Crew (s)
 - Collision initiated by another team(s) during the race
- A team may NOT protest:
 - Boat/lane assignment
 - Interference from another boat that did not result in a collision *unless there are circumstances where a boat had to deviate or stop to avoid a collision*
- Penalties
 - At the Official's discretion, a minimum 1 to 10-second penalty or team disqualification may be imposed for the following infractions; this time penalty can be applied to your following race:
 - Verbal/physical abuse to any Official/Volunteer
 - Crew does not comply with the Official Team Roster or Gender composition
 - False starting
 - Failing to keep proper course and or wash riding
 - Crew does not follow Race Official's instructions to change course, resulting in impeding another crew or resulting in a collision with another crew
 - The use of unofficial equipment

Appendix:

Article A: Venue and Docks



Course layout – 250M & 500M

SEATTLE DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL - RACECOURSE

Lake Union Park, 860 Terry Ave N, Seattle, WA 98109

Finish Line for 250m and 500m races

