



Rules and Regulations
Bucks County Dragon Boat Festival
Core Creek Park, Newtown PA

Introduction:

Welcome to the first annual Bucks County Dragon Boat Festival – an experience like no other! As a participant in this unique event your main goals should be safety and fun. The Bucks County Dragon Boat Association (BCDBA) is proud to have the opportunity to work with the Bucks County Park and Recreation staff to bring this fun event to your community. We sincerely hope you will enjoy your day.

What is Dragon Boating?:

Born of a time-honored Chinese tradition, dragon boating has roots over 2,000 years old. The tradition has transformed into a fun paddle sport that appeals to all ages and is growing fast world-wide. Dragon boat racing is the ultimate team sport, and with a short lesson almost anyone can enjoy paddling. Twenty paddlers sit two-by-two 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!

Bucks County Dragon Boat Association: The Bucks County Dragon Boat Association (BCDBA) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization created to promote the sport of Dragon Boating in our region and aid the community's various charitable organizations. BCDBA is focused on inspiring personal growth, community integration and enhanced awareness of the natural environment through the adventures of dragon boating. BCDBA fosters the enjoyment of the waterways of Bucks County through formal and informal educational training programs. Our goal is to attract like-minded individuals whose values are consistent with our mission. Our mission is to "Paddle Out Hunger – One Stroke at a Time." For more information see www.buckscountdragonboat.org.

Registration:

In order to participate in the Bucks County Dragon Boat Festival, your team must submit a valid team registration, including payment by credit card. Registration for the festival will open in January of each year. Register early and save! All registrations shall be submitted via the festival website at www.buckscountdragonboatfestival.com. Space may be limited due to the number of applicants, so team entries will be granted on a first come, first served basis.

The following divisions will be available for registration:

- Sports - Women and Mixed
- Community – Mixed
- Breast Cancer Survivor (A minimum of 4 registered teams are needed for this division to proceed. In the event there are not 4 teams registered for BCS the available teams will be placed in the Sports division).

Crew Composition:

- Steerspersons will be provided for the day of the race.
- Teams are responsible for providing their own drummer. A light-weight female is recommended.
- Each team should consist of 20 paddlers and 1 drummer. NO EXPERIENCE REQUIRED. Teams must race with a minimum of 16 paddlers.
- Teams will be allowed to have up to (25) people listed on their roster.
- Team members must be at least 13 years of age as of their first practice session.
- ***Any Sports Mix teams utilizing the event as an ERDBA qualifier must abide to the 50/50 gender ratio. In addition, roster checks will apply to these teams. Any other Sports Mix team NOT using the event as an ERDBA qualifier will abide by the 60/40 gender ratio (12 male paddlers & 8 female paddlers). For each paddler a mixed team is short for the gender requirement a paddler of the opposite gender must sit as well (e.g. a mixed team with only 7 female paddlers may only race 11 male paddlers, even if a 12th male paddler is available).***
- All 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 at www.buckscountdragonboatfestival.com.
- Team Captains will receive a full set of wristbands based on the number of crew listed on the roster for each team. Wristbands will only be given to team members who have signed waivers. Wristbands must be worn at all time. Entry onto a boat will be prohibited without a wristband.

Practices:

Each registered 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 and posted on the website. Any additional practices are the responsibility of each team and can be arranged through other organizations as a fee-for-service. See www.dragonboatadventures.com for more information.

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 or sneakers; no flip flops. Bring water and sunscreen. Bringing a dry change of clothes is also recommended. This is a water sport and you will get wet.

Athlete's Village:

- As a part of the registration fee each team will receive a 10' x 10' tent in the athlete's village area located www.buckscountydragonboatfestival.com site map. Teams will be assigned to their tent location in advance based on registration. Additional tents may be put up in designated areas and must not interfere with central open spaces or other teams.
- No portable grills or alcohol are allowed.
- Parking is prohibited at the Athlete's 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, Captain's Meeting, Marshaling and Round 1 Heat start times will be posted on the website no later than 1 week before race day. Teams must arrive a minimum of 2 hours prior to their Round 1 race.
- Race organizers will direct teams on procedures for marshaling, loading and starting procedures during the Captain's meeting.
- Each team will race three (3) 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 race.
- The first races will be prescheduled and start-times posted on the website no later than 1 week 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 (see the site map at www.buckscountydragonboat.com).

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 2 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 their 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 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 each divisional championship finals. Awards will also be awarded to each first place finisher in each Challenge category.
- Teams must be present to receive their medals.
- All teams are encouraged to stay to the end of the event to recognize the efforts of everyone at the festival and to demonstrate team spirit.

Safety:

- **PFDs (Personal Flotation Device)** will be provided and must be worn in practices and races. No inflatable devices are allowed at this festival. A paddler with their own PFD may use it, so long as it meets the requirements laid out in this document. The marshalling 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.
- **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) is reasonable dressed for the weather, water and race conditions; and 3) be able to swim at least 50 meters wearing a PFD in case of capsized 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 capsized. 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 or standing is prohibited. If you lose or break your paddle do not attempt to save it.
- In the event of lightening, thunder or other **severe weather emergency**, BCDBA 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 festival.

Inclement Weather & Cancellation:

- Race fees are non-refundable – no exceptions. The race will proceed rain or shine.
- In the event of lightening 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 BCDBA's 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 communicate with the team and each other at all times, 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.

Festival Rules Contact Info:

The festival organizer (BCDBA) 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 festival organizer (BCDBA) at its sole discretion. The festival organizer also reserves the right to remove any team for failure to follow established rules or sportsmanship guidelines. See www.buckscountydragonboat.com for contact information.