



TEAM CAPTAIN'S PACKAGE

CHECK-OFF LIST

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED

- ☐ Registration form and fee
- ☐ Team roster
- ☐ Waivers signed by every participant. Preference is for team members to complete our [digital waiver form](#)

PRACTICE

- ☐ Practice scheduled and confirmed
- ☐ All teammates know practice schedule, location and time
- ☐ Comfortable clothes and shoes that can get wet
- ☐ Dry clothes to change into after practice
- ☐ Email basic dragon boat commands to teammates
- ☐ Check Pittsburgh Hearts of Steel a Dragon Boat Racing Team for BCS on Facebook for any updates
- ☐ Post on Facebook telling your friends and family to come and support you

RACE DAY CHECK OFF

- ☐ Provide all teammates with locations, time and items to bring
- ☐ Bring your own tent, table, chairs, and sand bags (or) weights *
- ☐ Bring water, food, snacks, and sunscreen
- ☐ Bring drummer contest outfit (awards will be presented to best costume)
- ☐ Bring seating chart
- ☐ Bring creative shirts
- ☐ Bring a cheering squad for support!
- ☐ Bring a winning attitude!
- ☐ Bring the whole family!

WHAT NOT TO BRING

- ✓ **Alcoholic Beverages:** There is a restaurant located at the finish line where food and beverages can be purchased.
- ✓ **Tent Stakes:** Teams and vendors are strictly prohibited from using metal stakes. You may use plastic stakes no longer than 6" in the ground for securing tents within the premises of Pittsburgh Brewing Company. Instead of stakes, we recommend using sand bags and/or weights to secure your tent. *





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SEATING CHART

Team Name

Drummer Name

LEFT PADDLERS

RIGHT PADDLERS

Front of the Boat

SEAT 1

SEAT 2

SEAT 3

SEAT 4

SEAT 5

SEAT 6

SEAT 7

SEAT 8

SEAT 9

SEAT 10

Back of the Boat

*The biggest & heaviest people should be seated in the middle of the boat. Balance weight from left to right, front to back. Teams may compete with fewer than 20 paddlers. Mixed teams must have a minimum of 8 women paddlers. The drummer should be light in weight and commanding!

Pittsburgh Dragon Boat Festival • Saturday, October 10, 2026 • 8:30am-3:30pm

Pittsburgh Brewing Company • 150 Ferry Street • Creighton, PA 15030

www.pghdragonboatfestival.org





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BASIC COMMANDS

Your steersperson will use the following commands to control the boat. It is important that you respond to those commands quickly and efficiently. Please **DO NOT TALK IN THE BOAT**. This helps so that all can hear the commands in the boat.

DRAGON BOAT TERMINOLOGY

"BACK PADDLE"

What it sounds like. Paddle backwards together.

"LET IT RUN"

Stop paddling and sit still.

"PADDLES UP"

This means leaning forward, the bottom arm (hand near the blade of the paddle) extended, the blade poised just over the water. Your coach will teach you this position just like all of the positions mentioned here. You do not hold your paddle over your head!

"HOLD THE BOAT"

"Hold" or "Hold hard" Put the paddle blade in the water to stop the boat. You must respond to this command quickly. "Hold Hard" usually means your crew is not acting fast enough to stop the boat. Insert the blade all the way into the water and push it forward to slow the boat more quickly. If you slack off and let the boat crash, expect a bill.

"BRACE THE BOAT"

Place the blade of your paddle just under the surface of the water and parallel to it (flat on the water). Hold firmly. This makes the boat more stable.

Note: your drummer will be looking straight back at the steersperson, and can help to relay commands that not all paddlers hear. Do not stand in the boat or lean to one side! These actions can tip the boat over!

STARTING LINE COMMANDS AND THE RACE

The Starter will get your boat to the start line to line you up with the other boats by using these instructions. The Starter will be speaking to your steersperson. He/she will then issue commands to you and your crew to comply with what the Starter needs. You must be quiet and pay attention for this process to work.

GETTING TO THE START LINE

The Starter attempts to get all of the boats lined up at the start line by telling the steerspersons specific commands. This is not always very easy because of wind and water conditions. Therefore it is very important for everyone in the boat to pay attention to the steersperson's commands! The steersperson may tell you to paddle forward one or two strokes and may even ask you to back paddle.

AT THE STARTING LINE

Once the boats are lined up at the starting line, the Starter will call out:

"We have alignment", "Paddlers ready?", "Attention please", then an Air Horn will sound to begin the race.

THE RACE

All races are 200 meters and in a straight line. Please note that the actual finish line will be videotaped at the end of the race. Do not stop paddling until your steersperson tells you to. Dragon boat races are often decided by very small margins – stopping paddling a few strokes early could cost your team.





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RULES & INSTRUCTIONS

RULES

1. ALL participants must wear a zipped and clipped personal flotation device (PFD) at all times when on the dock. Do not step on the dock prior to getting your PFD on. Do NOT start to remove your PFD until you are off the dock and on dry land. (A PFD is a personal flotation device; some people refer to it as a "life vest" although it cannot be guaranteed to save your life). All sports teams can wear inflatable PFDs.
2. Please follow all directions of Race Officials and volunteers, including those in the marshalling area.
3. Please arrive at the marshalling area 20 minutes prior to your scheduled heat. Announcers will be calling your team to the marshalling area.
4. Please line up according to your seating chart.
5. All teams must have a drummer. The drummer must be registered to race.
6. Do not intentionally rock the boat.

Please make sure that ALL of your paddlers are familiar with these rules and with the commands.

HOW THE COMPETITION WORKS

- ✓ All teams will race 3 times.
- ✓ Your average heat times will determine your place in the final race.
- ✓ Awards will be presented soon after all results have been tallied.
- ✓ There will be a special award presented for the BEST Drummer costume. Be creative!

AFTER THE RACE

Once your race is over, it is ok to cheer, laugh, throw up or otherwise express your relief, joy, etc. in a safe manner that does not capsize the boat. However, you still need to listen for the commands of the steersperson. On our race course you will need to "hold the boat" very soon after crossing the finish line, so be ready to do so when your steersperson calls for it. He/she needs to get you back to the dock so you can reach dry land and really celebrate, and so another crew can get to their race on time. Please be prepared to paddle back to the docks right after your race ends. Once at the dock, the marshalling officials will direct you in leaving the boat safely and quickly.

