



2019 Race Rules & Regulations

Introduction and Team Registration

Welcome to the Charlevoix Circle of Arts Dragon Boat Festival - an experience like none other! As a participant in this unique event, your main goals should be safety and fun. The Charlevoix Circle of Arts and the Race Manager from Alkema Dragon Boat Services reserve the right to waive or amend the subject matter addressed in the Race Rules and Regulations. Anything not addressed in the Rules and Regulations will be determined by the Charlevoix Circle of Arts at its sole discretion.

Conditions of Entry

1. **Rules.** All participants must agree to abide by the regulations set forth by the Circle of Arts as a condition of their participation in the event.
2. **Waiver/Roster.** All team members must sign a waiver form stating they have read the conditions of the waiver and are aware of the risks associated with dragon boat racing, and accept the risk, waiving any right they may have to any cause of action against any or all sponsors, organizers, charities, volunteers, officials, Charlevoix Circle of Arts and Race Manager for injury to person(s) or loss/damage to personal property. The Team Captain is responsible for ensuring every team member has signed a waiver. You are required to turn in a team roster by July 29th, 2019.
3. **Registration.** Each team member must have submitted a waiver before July 29th, 2019.
4. **Double Rostering.** Paddling on more than one team is permitted, but not advised, because of the strenuous nature of the sport. Please use your own discretion and know your physical capabilities. Any paddler on multiple rosters should understand when signing the waiver that it presents even greater risk for injury. If you are paddling on more than one team, keep in mind Charlevoix Circle of Arts will not, under any circumstances, delay races to permit a paddler to join another team.

Team and Crew Definitions

Requirements. Each team must race with a minimum of four (4) women paddlers. While it is recommended each team race with a full crew of 20 paddlers, a drummer and steerer (provided by Race Management), your team may compete with a minimum of 16 paddlers. You may have three alternates, for a total of 24 on your roster. Your team will receive a time penalty of three (3) seconds for every female your team is short. The only exception to this rule – there is no penalty if the seat is empty for every required female and not filled. On any boat, 14 years old is the minimum paddling age. **Note:** For safety reasons, the drummer must weigh 160 pounds or less.

Racing Regulations

1. **Equipment.** All dragon boats, paddles, life vests/PFDs, and any necessary ancillary equipment needed for dragon boat racing will be provided by the Circle of Arts.
2. **Equipment Replacement.** All dragon boats, paddles, life vests/PFDs, and any other ancillary equipment used by teams during racing must be returned to the Circle of Arts intact. Replacement costs of damaged or missing equipment will be charged to the responsible paddler or team if the Circle of Arts and/or Race Manager determines negligence occurred.

3. **Sound Devices.** Devices including radios, electronic signaling devices, such as bullhorns, air horns, whistles and other noise making devices are prohibited. Drummers' use provided drumsticks, their voices and/or plastic megaphones to direct team members. Some small sound devices and cox box are allowed.
4. **Wristband.** All paddlers **MUST** wear the wristband provided signifying each team member has signed a waiver for the duration of race day. Participants will not be allowed in the boat without the wristband.
5. **Race Procedure.** Each race will start as soon as possible following the heat preceding it. The Race Manager and Circle of Arts will do their best to move the race day along in sufficient time. Teams must report to the marshaling area 15-20 minutes prior to their scheduled heat. No race will be held to wait on any team not loaded in the boat on time. Any team that does not report to the marshaling or dock area on time is subject to automatic forfeit of that heat.
6. **Authority.** The Race Manager will judge, stop the race under any circumstances, caution or disqualify any team or team member at his/her discretion. All rulings by the Chief Official are final.
7. **Steerers.** Race Management provides all steerers/coaches. Steering is an acquired skill.
8. **Conduct.** Each captain is responsible for the conduct/sportsmanship of his/her team and complying with race rules. A team is subject to disqualification from competition if any team member purposely exits the dragon boat into the water, or in any way endangers the crew.
9. **Format.** Teams will follow the format as outlined by race management.

Safety Procedures

1. **Responsibility.** Each team member is 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 steerer must know that they have responsibilities regarding the safety of their team. The team captain and steerer will make sure that each team member: 1) Wears a properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard approved PFD; 2) Is reasonably dressed for the weather, water and race conditions; and 3) Can ideally swim at least 50 meters wearing a PFD in case of capsize or other emergency.
2. **Distress Signal.** If the team is in distress due to a capsize, medical emergency, or any other unusual occurrence, each team member should listen to the steerer/coach for instruction. In case of medical emergency, each paddler should turn their paddles upside down – blade up – to signal others to the emergency. The steerer should blow his or her whistle for a few seconds three times to alert water safety officials.
3. **During Distress.** The Steerer will take control of the safety of the boat. The steerer and captain should take note of the number of crew on board before embarking the boat. The team captain and steerer will work together to make sure all paddlers are safe in case of capsize, or other emergency. In the case of capsize, get to the boat and stay with it. Grab your paddle, if you can, and hang on to the boat and listen for instruction from your coach. Make sure you know where your seatmate is and verify that he/she is safe. If you end up underneath the boat after a capsize, get out as soon as possible. Everyone will count until all are deemed present. Everyone will be instructed to stay with the boat and then handle the emergency as instructed by the steerer/coach. DO NOT swim to shore unless instructed to do so by the coach and/or steerer. If safety personnel approach the dragon boat (most likely U.S. Coast Guard), they may take command, or help coordinate a rescue. When a capsize occurs, the crew can usually get the boat up righted and then use bailers to empty the water before safely embarking again.
4. **Person Overboard.** In the event someone inside the boat falls overboard, the dragon boat must stop immediately and implement the safety plan by following instructions from the coach/steerer.
5. **Loss of Steerer or Control of the Boat.** If the steerer falls out of the boat, loses control, or if your boat is in danger of hitting another dragon boat, the drummer should instruct the team to "Let it run" and then immediately follow with "Hold the Boat." Other commands like "stabilize", aka "flare" (paddle blades flat on top of the water) and asking the crew to paddle backward may also be required under these circumstances. It is important that the drummer understands race commands, not panic, and that each paddler stays against the gunwale (side of the boat).
6. **Injury.** Any injuries sustained as a result of participating in practice or on race day should be reported immediately to the Dock or Marshaling personnel and/or Chief Official.
7. **Position.** All paddlers must remain seated for the duration of the race. Kneeling or standing is prohibited. If your paddle breaks or falls, let it go. For your own safety, do not attempt to save it.
8. **Weather. In the event of lightning or any other severe weather emergency, Circle of Arts may cancel the event with no rain date or refund of entry fees. Races may continue in the rain.**
9. There is no refund of fees if a team fails to report on race day.

Race Rules

1. **Lost or Stolen Items.** The Circle of Arts, staff and volunteers will not be held responsible for lost or stolen articles left at the site.
2. **Medical Personnel.** Emergency medical personnel will be on site, but teams are also encouraged to bring a First Aid kit as well.
3. **Chief Official.** Should teams need to consult the Chief Official for any questions or discrepancies on race day, the team captain only should discuss the matter with the Chief Official by asking the Chief Marshaler to summon the Chief Official. Teams must address race discrepancies to the Chief Official within 15 minutes of the end of the race heat.

Starts

1. **Process.** Each boat will be called up to the start line buoys for alignment.
2. **Alignment.** The race starter will use certain commands until each boat's dragonhead is aligned evenly. *Commands might include:* "Boat (number) X, one stroke forward." Or, "Boat number X, back 2 strokes. You will often hear: "Boat (number) X, hold your boat." *Example:* "Hold" means to keep the boat stationary or keep it from drifting. To achieve this, paddlers will place the entire paddle blade perpendicular in the water and hold it there to stop the current from moving the boat. This will help ensure crews have the best start possible.
3. **Commands.** Once alignment has been established, the start commands on race day will be: "We have alignment." "Are you ready?" And then, "Attention Please." Next, you will hear the air horn. At the start command of "Are you ready?" if your team is not ready, the drummer is instructed to raise his/her hand to notify the race starter. (The drummer should keep his/her hand down otherwise, until the horn blows). Examples of a reason to raise the hand: your boat is wedged in a buoy; the bow of your boat is turned; or a medical emergency. The steerer and drummer should communicate, with the steerer giving the drummer direction. The race starter will let you know to make the necessary adjustment. The starter will then start over with the "Are you Ready?" command. If a crew starts after the words "Attention Please" and before the horn, it has made a False Start, or if weather or some other circumstance causes one boat to suddenly advance beyond the other boats, a false start has occurred. The Aligner shall indicate a False Start by saying, "Hold your Boats" through the speaker system, or blow the air horn twice to stop the boats and ask them to return to the start line.

Penalties

The Festival Organizer may impose penalties for the following reasons:

1. Violation of safety procedures.
2. Infraction of written and stated rules and regulations.
5. Unsportsmanlike conduct. (Any paddler - in the opinion of the Chief Official - acting inappropriately or unprofessionally in the context of the competition).
6. Violating any venue rules, including being in possession of and/or under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal drugs on-site.
7. Ignoring requests or instructions from the Circle of Arts.
8. Willful damage to or loss of any Race-owned equipment.
9. The Chief Official will determine if loss of control by a steerer during a race should prompt a penalty, based on the circumstances of the incident.
10. Misrepresentation of the Race or charity associated with it.

Penalties may include:

1. Ban from any official standing and/or awards.
2. Disqualification of team members or a team from further or future participation in the races.
3. Requirement for financial reimbursement for damaged or lost equipment.
4. At the Chief Officials discretion, a time penalty.

Team captains, or designee are required to attend the mandatory team captain meeting.

Otherwise, all information will be shared with team captains by e-mail.

Info/Tips for New Teams

Conduct in the Boat: There should be minimal 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. Paddles straight up in the air, blades up, if you need to draw attention to yourselves in case of emergency.

Buddy System: Make certain that each of your team members knows who is sitting beside them in case the boat swamps/capsizes, which is not a common occurrence. Teammates will be responsible for each other's safety until rescue arrives. **STAY WITH THE BOAT!**

Life Jackets: Everyone must wear a life jacket during practice and on Race Day. Life Jackets will be provided.

Drummer: The drummer should attend practice, if possible. He or she 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.

How To Sit In The Boat:

Outside hip forward

Inside hip back

Outside leg extended along the gunwale (inside top rail of the boat)

Inside foot braced effectively and comfortably

Seven Steps of the Dragon Boat Paddling Technique:

1. Rotation
2. Reach Extension
3. Top Arm Drive (stab the water)
4. Catch -powerfully drive the paddle into the water at approximately a 45-degree angle, burying the entire blade into the water - your hand should get wet.
5. Pull water with the entire blade until you get to just behind your knee
6. Exit - get the paddle straight up and out of the water quickly, no further back than your hip
7. Recovery - snap the paddle back into the paddles up position for the next catch

Dragon Boat Paddling Commands:

- **Paddles Up:** Be ready to paddle. All paddlers with paddles above the water (3-6 inches from the surface) ready to enter the water.
- **Take it Away:** Begin paddling.
- **Let it Run:** Stop paddling and let the boat glide.
- **Hold the Boat or Stop the Boat:** Place paddles in the water, with paddle pointed straight down, blade submerged. It will bring the boat to a stop. If you hear the command, "Hold hard," quickly put your paddle straight down and then back it up one stroke. Some coaches may say, "check it, or check the boat".
- **Back it Down:** Paddle backwards.
- **Draw (left or right side):** Initiates a turn using draw strokes by the designated paddlers. Can also be used to get the boat closer to something, a dock, for example.
- **Stabilize the boat:** Place your paddle blade on top of the water and hold it there. This stabilizes the boat. It is needed when anyone stands up in the boat to change position, etc. Some coaches may say, "flare."

Note: Your coach/steerer will brief you about these commands before your practice.

In the boat, when the coach is talking, please continue to paddle and listen. Never stop paddling unless your coach says, "Let it run."

[Charlevoix Circle of Arts](#)

[109 Clinton Street, Charlevoix MI 49720](#)

[\(231\) 547-3554](#)

CharlevoixDragonFestival.org