

# Lake Champlain Dragon Boat Festival

## Tips For Newbie Teams

1. Your Captain should be someone who has a loud, commanding voice but won't let the position go to his or her head. The Captain needs to organize and orchestrate the other 20 members of the team, so they need to be a "take charge" kind of person.
2. Your Captain is the "go to" person for the group. This person will make sure the team gets all the information needed to race—specifics about registration, photo, team shirts, practice times, and Race Day. He/she will make sure that the registration forms, team roster, waivers, and team profile are completed and turned in. The Captain can pick a co-captain to help manage the team.
3. When we say mixed boat, we mean a mix of men and women. Your boat can have a minimum of 16 and maximum of 20 paddlers, plus one drummer. At least 10 of your paddlers (excluding the drummer) must be female. If there are only 17 people on your team, you still must have 10 women paddlers in the boat.
4. No more than 2 paddlers from an established dragon boat club crew can race on a community team. A dragon boat paddler can only paddle on one Community team unless a team is short and is in need of a paddler on the day of the race.
5. Your drummer should be very light in weight and not afraid to sit high up on a drum seat. This person needs some rhythm, because they will be following the strokes' lead and they need a big voice because the drummer relays to the crew what the coach has said so that the front of the boat hears the commands.. The drummer keeps the whole boat together by beating the drum in time with the strokes. Most importantly,
6. Dress up your drummer in something wild to give your team a distinctive look.
7. Choose a Team Cheerleader. This person is the spunky one, who can come up with a song or cheer for the team. Our Spirit Committee will be listening for your spirited song and looking for your team's unique fashion statement. Nothing is too wild and crazy.
8. The community race course is 200 meters long. The race is fast and furious. Believe it or not, the race is over in less than 2 minutes —1 minute if you are REALLY GOOD!
9. Your team gets a professionally coached practice session before the festival. Sign up for your practice session to learn the stroke and to practice your teamwork.
10. You will have a professional coach/steersperson for the race. He or she will make sure your boat is balanced and give your team winning strategies.
11. The team who has the best start usually wins the race. You will be taught a start during your session on practice weekend. A start usually begins with about 6 slow long deep strong strokes to get your boat up on plane. After about 20 long, increasing faster strokes, the team settles into race mode and then sprints to the finish.
12. Teams will want to practice "power 10s." These strokes are needed in the last third of the race when the steersperson can see that people are starting to tire. This is the point when the team needs to sharpen their technique and re-synchronize their timing. It is done by keeping in sync with the lead paddlers (strokes) and counting with them - 1 through 10 - all in a strong cadence. Your team keeps counting 1 through 10 until the team settles on a paddling level for your final sprint. As the end nears, paddlers need to gear up to do a short sprint to the finish line. It's over in a flash!

13. Be safe. Be smart. Be kind to your muscles. Do some warm-ups before paddling and some cool down exercises after paddling. Don't miss the group stretching sessions prior to each race. They're not just a good idea - they're a lot of fun!
14. Many teams bring a canopy and camp chairs. Sunglasses, sunscreen and a hat are helpful, too.
15. Drink lots of water on race day to keep hydrated. Our Green Team will provide a water truck, so please bring your own refillable water bottle.
16. The Lake Champlain Dragon Boat Festival is a smoke-free event—after all, many of us are breast cancer survivors.
17. We provide the boats, paddles, and life jackets. You might want to bring some cushioning for your butt since the dragon boat seat is downright hard. A butt pad can be your best friend. Some people sit on a gardening knee pad. It is best to wrap it in a non-slip cushioned shelf liner (the kind used for your wine glasses) and duct tape it in place. Others only use a folded up piece of this cushioned shelf liner.

Remember the real goal is having fun through paddling together and raising money for our community at the same time.