



Vandalia Health

# DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL



## CAPTAIN'S PACKET

PRESENTED BY



# DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL



**JULY 26, 2025**  
**STONEWALL RESORT**

**Mon** Health.  
Preston Memorial Hospital

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## ABOUT DRAGON BOAT RACING

The history of dragon boat racing is rooted in ancient Chinese folk traditions dating back more than 2000 years. The modern sport emerged in Hong Kong in the 1970's and has grown in popularity to become one of the fastest growing team sports in the world. Nearly 50 million people competed in the sport last year and there is even a movement to make dragon boat racing an Olympic sport. Dragon boat racing is the ultimate water sport for all abilities, ages, and background, and no experience is necessary. The sport provides numerous benefits from increasing fitness to fostering team building skills to creating social connections in the community.

## THE DRAGON BOAT

The dragon boat is a long, narrow canoe with an ornately carved dragon's head and tail. The boats are 46 feet long and seat 20 paddlers, a drummer and a steerer. The paddlers sit two by two on ten benches on the boat. They paddle in unison to the beat of the drum to "fly" the dragon across the water. The boats are rented through a company called Dynamic Dragon Boat Racing LLC who provides all of the boats, paddles, drums, and life jackets for the event.

## BUILDING A DRAGON BOAT TEAM

Team work is everything in dragon boat racing. Each team consists of paddlers, a drummer, a steerer and a few alternates. The minimum number of paddlers is 16 while the maximum is 20. Each team is required to have at least eight female paddlers. No exceptions. Each team appoints a drummer to sit at the front of the boat to beat the drum to maintain the team's pace. It is recommended that the drummer weigh less than 175 pounds. The drummer's role is crucial for team coordination, so choose wisely. The steerer stands in the rear of the boat and keeps the team on course. The steerer is provided by the racing company.

Each team can have a minimum of 17 crew members (16 paddlers and a drummer) with a maximum of 21 (20 paddlers and a drummer). **All crew members must be over the age of 15.** It is recommended that each team have 2-3 alternates which would allow for a total of up to 24 team members per team. If a team cannot fill the boat or meet the female requirements, community partners can be added to complete the team.

## CHOOSING A CAPTAIN

When choosing a dragon boat team captain, consider someone with strong leadership qualities who can manage logistics and motivate the team. They will be responsible for the following:

- Registering the team and maintaining the roster
- Recruiting team members of co-workers, family members, and friends
- Distributing and communicating information including waivers
- Getting the team to the marshalling area 15-20 minutes before the race
- Attending mandatory captain's meeting
- Consider appointing a co-captain to help manage the team

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## THE DRUMMER

Each team designates a drummer to set the pace and timing of the team. The drummer sits in the front of the boat and uses a large drum to relay the stroke timing to the rest of the boat. They are considered the 'heartbeat' of the dragon boat. It is recommended that the drummer weigh less than 175 pounds. The drummer's role is crucial for team coordination, so choose wisely.

## THE STEERSPERSON

The steersperson steers the boat using a large oar at the back of the boat and works closely with the drummer to manage the boat and crew communication. The steersperson is provided by Dynamic Dragon Boat Racing LLC, and they are responsible for the safety of the boat and the crew.

## DYNAMIC DRAGON BOAT RACING LLC

Vandalia Health has partnered with Dynamic Dragon Boat Racing LLC who specializes in organizing and managing dragon boat festivals and races. They have been setting the standard in customer service and fundraising for more than 20 years. They have a proven track record of managing quality races attracting large numbers of teams all over the country. From equipment rental to race day production, they are considered an expert in the market.

## SPECTATORS

The festival is free and open to the public. Invite family, friends, and anyone else who wants to learn more about dragon boat racing. All participants and spectators are welcome to bring their own lawn chairs and blankets for seating. Food and beverages will be available for purchase.

## TENTATIVE RACE DAY SCHEDULE

<b>7:30 AM</b>	Saturday morning practice for 2 teams
<b>8:00 AM</b>	Registration begins
<b>9:00 AM</b>	Opening ceremony
<b>9:30 AM</b>	Round one begins - first heat of teams
<b>10:30 AM</b>	Round two begins - second heat of teams
<b>12:00 PM</b>	Lunch break
<b>1:30 PM</b>	Final round begins
<b>3:00 PM</b>	Awards Ceremony

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## **RULES**

1. Please follow all directions of race officials and volunteers, including those in the marshalling area.
2. Teams race with 20 paddlers, 1 drummer, and 1 trained steerer (provided by Dynamic). Teams may have 2-3 alternates for a total of 24 members. Teams can race with a minimum of 16 paddlers on the boat.
3. Each boat must have at least 8 female paddlers. The drummer does not count toward the 8 female paddlers.
4. The minimum age of paddlers and the drummer is 15 years old.
5. A person of any size and fitness can paddle in the dragon boat race.
6. If a team cannot fill their boat with at least 16 paddlers, community partners will be assigned to the team roster to complete the team.
7. 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.
8. ALL participants must wear a zipped and clipped personal flotation device (PFD) at all times when on the dock and in the boat. The PFDs will be provided to all participants. Participants should not remove the PFD until they are off the dock and on dry land.
9. Each race will start as soon as possible following the heat preceding it. Teams must report to the marshaling areas 15-20 minutes prior to their scheduled heat. Each team will be granted only one 5-minute grace period during the festival. Further delays will result in a time penalty or possible disqualification.
10. Do not intentionally rock the boat.
11. Intoxicated boaters will not be allowed to race. Please drink responsibly.
12. Devices and other noise makers including radios, bullhorns, air horns, and whistles, are prohibited.
13. No outside food or beverages are permitted.
14. Please make sure that ALL of your participants are familiar with these rules and with the commands.

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## OUTSIDE FOOD AND BEVERAGES

The Stonewall Resort will provide food and beverages for the event. Food and beverage options are included for our Presenting, Premier, Platinum Dragon, and Gold Dragon sponsorships. Our Presenting and Premier levels will have access to a catered buffet and bar. The Platinum Dragon and Gold Dragon levels will have meal tickets that will be redeemed for a boxed lunch of their choice. These boxed lunches must be reserved by July 11th. We will do our best to accommodate all dietary restrictions.

Silver Dragon and Team sponsors have the ability to purchase boxed lunches for their whole team for \$600. Please reach out if you would like this option.

Food, drinks, and alcohol will be available for purchase from Stonewall Resort for all other teams and spectators. **Outside food, beverages, and alcohol is prohibited.** Those who bring alcohol will be asked to either throw it away or put it back in their vehicles. Those who do not comply will not be allowed to participate. Complimentary water will be available for all.

## TENTS AND CHAIRS

Tents and chairs will be provided for some participants based on sponsorship levels. Presenting, Premier, Platinum Dragon, and Gold Dragon sponsorship levels will have tents and chairs provided. Silver Dragon and Team sponsors will have a designated 10x10 space for their tent if they choose to bring one. Tents may only be placed in designated locations to aide the flow of foot traffic.

## WHAT TO BRING

Come prepared to have fun! You may get wet, so dress accordingly. Shoes must be worn at all times while in the boat. **No flip-flops allowed.** It is recommended that you do not wear jewelry as it may get in the way or lost while paddling. Encourage your family and friends to enjoy the day at Stonewall Resort as they watch you compete!

Consider bringing sunscreen, bug spray, sunglasses, chairs, blankets, dry clothes, towel, hat, a reusable water bottle, money for food, and team uniform/costumes. There will be down time in between the races so feel free to bring outdoor activities including frisbees, footballs, and other games. Reminder that outside food, beverages, and alcohol are prohibited.

## EVENT T-SHIRTS

Every team member will receive a free event t-shirt. Upon submitting your roster, please include shirt sizes for every team member by July 1st. Extra shirts will be ordered for teams that do not meet this deadline, but the sizes will not be guaranteed.

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## **PARKING**

Parking at the Stonewall Resort is limited, so we do encourage carpooling. Our Presenting and Premier Sponsors will have access reserved priority spaces respectively. All other parking is first come, first served. Overflow parking will be available at the Roanoke Event Center. The parking shuttle will be available to shuttle guests.

## **LODGING**

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Stonewall Resort for your convenience. You can reserve your room through our unique group link. Email [VHDragonBoats@gmail.com](mailto:VHDragonBoats@gmail.com) to request this link. Please make your reservation by June 25th to receive this special rate, as space is limited.

## **VOLUNTEERING**

Be a part of the excitement as we gather paddlers, spectators, and enthusiasts for an exciting day filled with teamwork, competition, and celebration. Whether you are passionate about the coordination, hospitality, or simply want to contribute your time, our dragon boat festival welcomes volunteers of all backgrounds. There are various volunteer roles available, from helping with registration to managing logistics to providing guest hospitality to marshalling teams to clean up. Whatever time and energy you have, we can use it!

An event t-shirt and lunch will be provided for all volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering and want to sign up, please reach out by contacting us at [VHDragonBoats@gmail.com](mailto:VHDragonBoats@gmail.com).

## **FIRST AID**

Professional Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) with full response kits will be on site at all times during the dragon boat festival. Team captains should be aware of any crew members with conditions that might affect their ability to race, such as heart problems, blood pressure issues, back problems, diabetes, or asthma.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

In the event of lightning or any other severe weather emergency, the organizers may delay or cancel the event with no rain date or refund of entry fees. Races may continue in the rain.

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## DRAGON BOAT TERMINOLOGY

Dragon boat racing uses several terms and commands unique to the sport. Each team member should become familiar with the terms and obey the commands to keep the boat safe and to paddle in sync. Your appointed steersperson will use these commands to control the boat and it is important that you respond quickly and efficiently. Please **DO NOT TALK** while in the boat. This will allow you to hear all of the commands.

### “Back It Down”

Paddle backwards altogether.

### “Take It Away”

Begin paddling.

### “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. 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.

### “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 sitting in the front of the boat but facing the steersperson in the back of the boat. The drummer can help relay the commands to all of the paddlers. Please do not stand in the boat, rock the boat, or lean to one side! These actions could tip the boat over.

### 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 under the seat or braced effectively and comfortably

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## THE RACE

The race will take place behind the Stonewall Resort at the Little Sorrel boat dock. The course is 200 meters and the average time for each race is a little over 1 minute. The teams will race up to three times.

## MARSHALLING AREA

In a dragon boat festival, the marshalling area is a designated area near the dock for teams to gather, organize, and prepare for the race. The team members typically gather 15 – 20 minutes before the start time or when the team is called. Upon arrival, the team will be asked to line up with the steersperson and drummer first then followed by the team members of the boat. The PFDs and paddles will be distributed in this area. Do not report to the marshalling area until your heat number and team name are called.

## DOCK

Team members are not to gather on the dock until instructed to do so. This is to ensure clear passage for teams needing to get into and safely out of their boats upon conclusion of their heat. Teams will be directed to load the boats starting with the steersperson followed by the drummer then the remaining crew. All teams are required to load in a safe, controlled, orderly fashion. Once the boat is loaded, wait for instruction to leave the dock.

## START OF THE RACE

The race starter will provide instructions when lining up for the start. Each boat will be called up to the start line buoys for alignment. The race starter will use certain commands until each boat's dragon head is aligned evenly. Once alignment has been established, the start commands on race day will be "We have alignment." "Are you ready?" and then "Attention Please.". Next, the airhorn will sound.

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). 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.



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## **FINISH LINE**

The finish line will be marked with buoys. The finish line officials use a digital laser line of sight to determine the actual finish line, used in the computerized finish line software and video equipment. The buoys aren't necessarily the finish line and are only used as a sightline. Steerers are instructed to call "Let it run", after the front half of the dragon boat has crossed the finish line buoys, or designated sightline mark.

## **AFTER THE RACE**

Once your race is over, it is ok to cheer, laugh, or otherwise express your relief, joy, disappointment, etc. in a safe manner that does not capsize the boat. However, you still need to listen for the commands of the steersperson because you still need to get the boat back to the dock so you can reach dry land and really celebrate. Please be prepared to paddle back to the dock immediately after your race ends. Once at the dock, the marshalling officials will direct you in exiting the boat safely and quickly.

## **AWARDS CEREMONY**

The award ceremony will follow the last race of the day. The top three teams from each division will be recognized. A Golden Anchor award will be given to the slowest race time as a way of acknowledging the effort and good humor of the worst team on the water. A spirit award will also be given to the team that shows the most spirit on and off the water, so get creative. You can decorate your tent, dress in costumes, and find unique ways to show your spirit for the event. The true spirit of competition isn't solely about the awards, but rather about the camaraderie, teamwork, and raising money for a great cause!

## **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?**

If you still have questions after reviewing the packet, please contact Laura McCall at [VHDragonBoats@gmail.com](mailto:VHDragonBoats@gmail.com) or 304-692-5896. We will answer to the best of our ability and work with Dynamic Dragon Boat Racing LLC to fill any gaps. We appreciate your patience as we navigate this brand-new event.

We hope you will join us for a day of friendly competition in an atmosphere filled with community spirit to support Vandalia Health and our mission of enhancing the health of our communities through clinical excellence one person at a time.

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## PRACTICE SESSIONS

Practice sessions will be held Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at Stonewall Resort. Our top sponsors have first choice of their preferred practice times. If your team would like to practice but cannot be accommodated by one of the posted times, please reach out to [VHDragonBoats@gmail.com](mailto:VHDragonBoats@gmail.com) or 304-692-5896. We will try to accommodate everyone who wants to schedule a practice within our ability.

While it is highly recommended, all members are not required to attend practice if your team chooses to have a practice. During practice you will review how to get into the boat, the proper way to sit in the boat, how to paddle, your paddling commands, and more. This practice session can be greatly beneficial and help your team to win. This is a team building sport, so the more in sync, the better the results.

Upon registering, you will receive an email prompting you to select your top 3 practices times from those available. These times will be determined by sponsorship level and will be available on first come, first served basis. The times are included below.

TIME	WEDNESDAY JULY 23RD	THURSDAY JULY 24TH	FRIDAY JULY 25TH
4:00 PM			
4:00 PM			
5:15 PM			
5:15 PM			
5:15 PM	BLOCKED	BLOCKED	
6:30 PM	BLOCKED	BLOCKED	
6:30 PM			
6:30 PM			

TIME	SATURDAY JULY 26TH
7:30 AM	
7:30 AM	