

Dragon Boat Coaches Outline

Safety –

Before your team loads in the boat, make sure they know who has control of the team while on the water. It is the steersperson that takes control. For **everyone's safety**, team members need to respect and adhere to his/her instructions.

Each paddler should partner up with the paddler next to them. The front three (including drummer) and back three (including steers) are also partners

In the event of capsizing or man-overboard, each teammate should be sure to locate their partners. Everyone must stay with the boat. Do not try to swim to shore. Wait with the boat for rescue. **This is very important.** The Coast Guard, Sherriff's Response Unit and chase boats are nearby for this unlikely scenario.

Wear your PFDs whenever you are on the water.

How to Paddle -

Create an "A-frame" with one hand on top and the other near the base of the paddle blade.

Keep your arms straight - reach as far forward as possible - pivot at waist so upper hand is over the water (allows extension).

Push the paddle down and pull back using your braced feet for power. Pull out when you reach your body and reach forward for the next stroke.

Do not bring the paddle back beyond your body - all your power is generated from your "reach" to your body.

Don't lean your body out of the boat. That creates problems for the steersman.

Keep your eyes on one of the front paddlers (pacers) or if further back, on a paddler 2-3 rows ahead to keep in sync.

Positions in the Boat

The front six paddlers are called the Pacers. It is their job to set the pace. Smaller, but strong paddlers are needed here. The front two set the pace and the drummer watches them to relay that pace to the rest of the boat.

The next eight paddlers are in the Engine Room. These are the largest most powerful paddlers. They propel the boat forward.

Then come the Rockets. These paddlers need to be aerobic, as they have to paddle in the “fast water” created by the forward paddlers. It is important for these paddlers to try to paddle water that is not the frothy bubbly water generated by the forward paddlers so taller people with longer paddles can be effective here.

It is important to balance the boat by keeping weight on the left side equal to that of the right. Each team should look to see that the boat is not leaning to either side (the steersperson can see down the boat)

Paddle in Sync

The fastest boats are those that can paddle in sync. If the drummer or steersman sees that people are not paddling together an effective way, an easy “fix” to get back in sync is to count together to ten.

Keep your eyes on paddlers ahead of you to see that you are paddling with them.

Don't look down.

Boat Formalities

The steersman is to be in charge of the boat while in the water. Obey his/her commands.

“Hold the boat” means placing your paddle straight up and down in the water to stop the boat.

“Back Six” only means his/her command is only for the Rockets - all others keep paddles out of the water.

“Left side” or “Right side” only means just that.

The steersman will bring you to the start line. Following his/her commands at the start will help keep the races moving along smoothly and on time.

Race Course Strategy

Starter will say “Attention Please” All paddlers get paddles in “A-frame position” and ready to paddle. The boats will not start until all three are in position and at the starting line.

Then horn will sound and pacers will begin.

First five strokes will be solid, slower stronger strokes followed by 10 fast (eggbeater) strokes. While paddling these strokes the paddle should not go beyond half way along one's thigh. These are fast but short strokes.

Then one will transition with a 3-2-1 Race Pace..... to settle into the pace to go down the racecourse.

The above strategy is not set in stone and can be individualized according to team captains.

Do not stop paddling at the finish line until the steersperson gives you instructions, as it is hard to judge the line from paddling positions. Be sure to not celebrate until you have successfully slowed your boat and turned toward the docks.

Drummers Role

The drummer does not set the pace but rather echoes it with the drum and counting aloud to help keep the team in sync. He/She can also remind paddlers to reach forward and to keep looking ahead.

The other boats will also be making a lot of noise so the drummer should be a vocal, assertive person.

Steersman

The steersperson is always in command of the boat. It is his/her job to bring the boat up to the start and follow the official's commands at the start - also to keep the boat tracking a straight line through the course.