

DOCK STAFF DUTIES

All dock staff have the responsibility to ensure the safety of everyone within the loading and unloading areas. Please use common sense while being on the dock. Misconduct and tardiness will not be tolerated. We reserve the right to remove any persons acting inappropriately.

NO PERSONS OTHER THAN DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL STAFF ARE ALLOWED ON THE DOCK UNLESS THEY HAVE HAD PERMISSION FROM THE DOCK MASTER.

SETUP RESPONSIBILITIES:

If the boats are moored, they will be collected with the launch boat. Only trained persons will drive the launch. Collecting the boats should involve at least three dock staff members: one to drive the launch; one to hold the head of the boat from the moving launch; one to help steer the boat to the dock safely.

Assembling the boats. After tying the boats to the docks and securing buoys in between, assemble the drums and the drummer's chair. Make sure that each boat has a pair of working drumsticks. Bail out any water and patch up any noticed leakages.

Life jackets and paddles. Bring out all the life jackets and separate in a neat pile of same colors. Place paddles carefully on the dock out of the way of people potentially tripping on them.

LOADING TEAMS:

Retrieve black box containing teams' paperwork files. No paddler is allowed on the dock until checked in (refer to CHECKING TEAMS IN). Once a team is assembled and the okay is given, bring them on the dock to suit up. Every paddler, drummer, and steerer must wear a life jacket during his or her practice.

Coaching (refer to COACHING DUTIES). At least two dock staff members must be available if coaching is necessary: one to command the front of the boat and the other to command the end of the boat.

Cast off. When pushing off from the docks, make sure the boats have moved away to a safe distance before resting. Watch out for drifting especially near the dock area. Make sure the paddlers do not use their paddles when pushing off the dock.

UNLOADING TEAMS:

Before unloading the teams from their designated boats, make sure that the boats are tied securely to the dock. Team members are to put their life jackets and paddles in two separate neat piles. Make sure that they do not throw their paddles. Once their practices are over, teams must leave the dock immediately. They can have their pep pow wow's outside the gate.

CHECKING TEAMS IN:

No paddler is allowed on the dock until checked in which consists of the following: waiver form has been completed correctly and signature witnessed by dock staff; photocopy of their id is LEGIBLE and matched; all paddlers, including drummer/captain and steerer are present. No team will be allowed on the dock to practice with less than 8 paddlers. NO PHOTO COPY OF THEIR ID, NO PRACTICE. Mark at the top of the paddler's waiver form, the date that they attended practice. This will help us keep track of whether they have fulfilled their required three practices.

COACHING GUIDELINES:

Dock staff members are present to coach any team's practice. Depending on your experience, you may wish to use the Dock Staff to help your team.

COMMANDS:

Hold Water!/Check it down - By far the most important, paddlers should stick their paddles in the water to slow/stop the boat. If boats are coming in too fast or are on a collision course, this is the command to use!

Ready Position/Paddles Up - Paddles above the water, reaching forward. Commonly used for starting the movement of a boat in a non-race situation.

Go/Take it away - Command to start paddling

Way enough/Let it run - Stop paddling and let the boat coast to a stop.

Starting position/Ready, Ready - Race command in a start situation for paddles to be placed in position for the first stroke (usually completely submerged in the water)

Power 10/20 - Set of 10 or 20 strokes that are more forceful and perhaps (but not necessarily) quicker

PADDLING:

Parts of a stroke:

Catch - The catch phase is the most critical to the speed of the boat. The catch is the moment the paddle blade first bites into the water. The top hand is held over the water, and then drives down on the paddle with the outside arm relaxed and fully extended.

Pull - Once the paddle is fully submerged, the next component of the stroke is the pull phase. The paddles should pull back directly parallel with the boat. The top hand stabilizes the paddle as the bottom arm and back muscles pull back. To use the back muscles effectively, the paddler sits up while pulling and continues to drive the paddle downward with the top hand. Maximum power and endurance will come from using the larger muscles of the back, shoulder, and trunk rather than relying on the smaller arm muscles.

Exit - At the end of the stroke the paddle should exit the water at mid-thigh or the hip. Allowing the stroke to go past the hip results in the paddling blade being at an angle that would slow down the boat. The outside arm bends slightly to allow the paddler to clear the water and then it is pushed or snapped forward.

Recovery - The recovery speed plays a large role in determining the stroke rate. During recovery, the torso rotates and leans forward to set up for another cycle of the stroke. When fully extended, the paddler should be facing the person sitting next to him/her with arms forward.

Synchronization is key! If the paddlers are not in perfect timing, the "out of stroke" paddlers are wasting their efforts. Ideally, all paddlers should have the exact same technique with same angles of entry, same top arm and lower arm motions, etc. When this occurs, the paddlers in the back of the boat can match the top arm motion of the people in the front and know that the paddles will enter the water at the same time.

BOAT SETUP:

Generally, the boat should be balanced front to back and right to left. Any major balance differences could adversely affect the steering of the boat. The middle eight or the "engine room" is usually reserved for heavier, stronger paddlers. The front four paddlers set the pace and should be reserved for people with good long paddling strokes. The back four paddlers are also very important. In more experienced crews, the power series or sprint series is initiated from the back and ripples forward.

RACING TECHNIQUE:

Starts - On a start the paddles should be fully submerged in the water while leaning forward. The first stroke must be powerful and done in unison. The first 3 to 5 strokes

should be long and controlled while leaning forward. The next 10 strokes are called the sprint, where the boat must accelerate into the race pace. Once the racing speed is attained, the crew then slows down into the longer working stroke. The start uses more arm muscles for paddling quicker to get the boat up to race speed while the working stroke uses more back muscles with the twist and reach technique.

Middle - For the purpose of advancing race positions, teams often include one or more power series. A series is a set of 10 or 20 strokes that are harder and sometimes faster to help the boat speed up. The drummer may also use these series to get the boat back in sync.

Finish - The last 20-30 strokes on a race has its own elements. At this point in the race the objective is to bring the boat up in speed for the last finishing kick. It is similar to the 10 strokes of the start. The paddlers are leaning forward and using their arms only to accelerate the boat. Paddling with arms is quicker than paddling using your back although paddling with the back is much more powerful.

TRAINING BASICS AND THEORY:

Generally the first half of the racing season is used for endurance work. This means a lot of longer pieces during practice, while working on technique. In the second half of the season, shorter pieces are done to develop speed and power. The stroke rates are significantly increased. This is when the majority of the sprint or power series work begins as well as start practice sessions.

RULES OF THE RIVER

All dock staff need to remind the teams, please to abide by the rules of the river. Those are as follows:

When approaching the starting line on race days on the Charles River, teams shall stay close to the Boston Side of the River and shall not enter any racing lanes. Dragon Boats must give way to all craft. See rules for finish line. A map showing the appropriate lanes for practice and through the bridges is available on the web site.

Both the drummer and steerer must pay close attention to the river traffic. We have had no accidents on the water and we would like to keep it that way.