

TELLICO HEAT DRAGON BOAT CLUB PADDLER FAQ

Important note:

- Coaches and Sweeps are invested in the safety and the physical wellbeing of the membership. This includes, but isn't limited to overall safety measures and guidelines such as life vests, ID etc.
- Coaches are certified and competent in the development of training plans based on various goals including paddler physical wellbeing.
- Coaches have adopted paddling techniques that have been designed and tested by the PanAm Dragonboat's world renowned Coaches to support the need and potential limitations of older paddlers.

THE FOLLOWING FAQ ASSUMES SUFFICIENT INTEREST IN ALL PADDLER CATEGORIES

GENERAL

IS THE VISION/CULTURE OF THE CLUB MOVING TOWARD A MORE COMPETITIVE NATURE?

- In part yes. The Club's overall direction is a result of the membership survey(s) conducted last season.
- Community racing and Fitness (non-racing) remain the backbone of the Club.
- By introducing training for entry to USDBF sanctioned events, interested members are offered a more challenging opportunity for dragon boat racing at a National/International level.

WHY IS THERE SO MUCH EMPHASIS ON COMPETITIVE BOATS AND PADDLING TECHNIQUE?

- Coaches and Sweeps support Paddlers' racing goals.
- Coaches and Sweeps support Non-racing Paddlers' fitness goals.
- Tellico Heat Dragon Boat Club (THDBC) has adopted the well researched and established form and paddling techniques of Pan Am Dragon Boat, which are applied in all categories of our training for dragon boat racing and fitness.
- The Pan Am Dragon Boat adopted form and paddling technique, designed for Senior B (ages 50-59), C (ages 60-69), and D (70 plus) are aimed at injury prevention and physical wellbeing.

I CANNOT SWIM – AM I STILL SUITED TO DRAGON BOAT RACING?

- Yes.
- All participants are encouraged, (and required) to be responsible for their own safety through participation in drills and in safety mandates.
- Learning to swim with or without a PFD (personal flotation device) and making sure you are comfortable in the water will enhance your personal safety, enjoyment of the sport and is encouraged.
- The Club is very concerned with Paddlers' safety. This is evidenced by the mandatory requirement for life vests or PFDs, Road ID and the conducting safety tasks (loading/unloading the boat, counting off, emergency drills).
- Boat capsizing is rare, however it is part of safety considerations.

WHY IS A 10-PERSON BOAT RACE ONLY AN OPTION FOR USDBF PADDLERS?

- We believe many, if not all paddlers, will want the opportunity to train and paddle in a 10-paddler boat.
- Coaches and Sweeps are aware that the operation of a 10-paddler boat typically requires a higher level of technique, stringent balance requirements, and strength than a 20-paddler boat.
- Initially, the Macon GA event in September was added to the USDBF schedule if paddlers were unable to attend the Chicago race in July. This was to give the paddlers the opportunity to race as a team prior to Club Crew in October. It is listed as a 10-paddler race.

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- When the schedule first came out and reviewed by the Race Selection Committee, there were only 2 races (Macon and Lake Hernando) that had 10-paddler boat entries. Since then, Peachtree Dragon Boat Festival may also take place in GA this year, however, there is no form information available at this time.
- Based on all of the above, the Board will revisit the Macon, GA, Lake Hernando, FL, and Peachtree, GA 10 Paddler entries for Community/Festival racers once we have determined our numbers/interest.

WHAT IS MEANT BY COMPETITIVE BOATS?

- Competitive Boat(s) is a term used to refer to both USDBF and Community Racers and may be used to describe these paddler categories separately or together.

PADDLER CATEGORIES:

HOW DO I DETERMINE WHICH GROUP I WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN?

- Each paddler can determine their interest in participating with Non-Racers, Community/Festival Racers, or USDBF Racers by reviewing requirements for each category and reviewing proposed races.
- Paddlers' determined interest must be identified/submitted by May 1 through the Insta Team identification event.

AS A NON-RACER, WHAT DO I GET FROM DRAGON BOATING?

- Non-Racers will receive:
- Technical coaching
- Great workouts to increase strength and endurance.
- Paddling on a beautiful lake in the mornings without boat traffic and a view of the Smokies.
- Encouragement from other team members
- Inclusion in the family of Dragon Boaters and great social activities.

THREE PADDLER CATEGORIES MAKES SENSE BUT WHY IS THE SCHEDULE SO RESTRICTED FOR EACH?

- The schedules may become more flexible as we move through the season. This will depend on the expressed interests of the majority of participants, and the needs of the Club as a whole.
- Interim, it is important to note that a few factors influence the current schedule for each paddler category.
 - Past history of attendance was poor when too many alternate practices were offered. This resulted in fewer paddlers for each session and/or cancelled sessions.
 - Dragonboat is a TEAM Sport, and it is important for those who are interested in racing to practice together. This improves synchronicity, produces stronger performance, promotes camaraderie and team focus.
 - The coordination and demands of sweeps and coaches is more dependable - a fixed schedule is fairer to the volunteer nature of these critical participants.

CAN I SWITCH BETWEEN PADDLER CATEGORIES - NON-RACING TO RACING, OR COMMUNITY TO USDBF OR ANY COMBINATION LATER IN THE SEASON?

- Yes – if you meet the requirements of the category and coaches agree.

WILL COACHES BE SWITCHING PADDLERS BETWEEN CATEGORIES BASED ON SKILL?

- Coaches are committed to helping paddlers achieve their highest level of proficiency and may suggest that a paddler move to an alternate category based on a paddler's technique, fitness, participation and skill.

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HOW WILL TEAM COHESIVENESS BE MANAGED ACROSS THE MEMBERSHIP?

- We will continue to have:
 1. Joint warmups/cool downs
 2. Post practice breakfasts
 3. Gatherings
 4. Social events that include all club members.

HOW WILL THE COMMUNITY RACE TEAMS BE DETERMINED?

- Racers interested in participating should sign up when the Insta Team event is created and be prepared for the commitment to the team as noted in other sections of this document.
- We will send as many boats as possible based on the interest of the club members. If additional paddlers are needed to fill a boat, USDBF paddlers may opt into a community race at the Coaches' discretion.
- Coaches will divide participants among the boats based on interest, needs of the boats, paddlers selected side (port or starboard), weight distribution, and any other factors necessary to provide the greatest opportunities for success.

HOW WILL THE USDBF RACE TEAMS BE DETERMINED?

- There are two factors to be considered for this question.
 5. The number of team members who commit to the USDBF program.
 - Minimum of 10 members
 6. The number of team members who commit to a particular race.
 - Long boat: 20+ members (Chicago)
 - Short boat: 10+ members (Macon)
 - Long and short boat: 20+ members Club Crew National Championships (CCNC)

ANYTHING LESS THAN 10 MEMBERS' PARTICIPATION FOR 1 RACE AND THE CCNC: USDBF PROGRAM STOPS

- If enrollment is above seating requirements for races, the following guidelines will be followed; otherwise, it will be first come, first serve. (10-person boat paddler requirement: Must have 10 paddlers, 2 alternates, 1 drummer and 1 sweep) (20-person boat paddler requirement: Must have 20 paddlers, 4 alternates, 1 drummer and 1 sweep)
 7. Coaches' considerations include (but are not limited to):
 - Paddler must sign up for the race (at least Macon or Chicago + CCNC)
 - Technical Proficiency
 - Strength
 - Endurance
 - Weight balance (*this is key and may be the only distinguishing factor*)
 - Experience in racing and practicing.

It is too early to determine rosters at this juncture since interest has not yet been established.

PRACTICES

WHY IS THERE NO FLEXIBILITY TO THE PRACTICE SCHEDULE DAYS WHEN PADDLERS HAVE TO JUGGLE VARIOUS APPOINTMENTS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES?

- We understand that life happens but we also know that with 22 plus members on each team, accommodating everyone is not practical.

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- Each of the paddler categories has a level of commitment - some being more flexible than others.
- We ask that you prioritize your paddling experience and goals in conjunction with your other commitments and priorities **to be fair to YOUR teammates.**

IF I WANT TO RACE USDBF OR COMMUNITY BUT I HAVE OTHER COMMITMENTS ON A MONDAY, WEDNESDAY OR SATURDAY, CAN I SWAP OUT A PRACTICE TO THE NON-RACER PRACTICE, ON A PERMANENT BASIS?

- No, not on a permanent basis
- It is your responsibility to move prior and future commitments for the benefit of the team.

WILL USDBF AND COMMUNITY PRACTICES BE ON SEPARATE BOATS?

- Yes
- Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday racing practices will be designed to keep USDBF team paddlers together and Community team paddlers together, however, there may be times when paddlers may be moved between boats to balance the boat/practices.

USDBF ROSTER HAS BEEN MENTIONED SEVERAL TIMES. WHAT IS A USDBF ROSTER?

- Sanctioned races require that a team provide the names of the paddlers including alternates. No other paddlers are allowed to race.
- Once the “roster” has been submitted, no other paddlers can participate in the race unless there is an injury before the final call for the “roster”.

RACING

WHAT HAPPENS IF WE HAVE TOO MANY PADDLERS FOR A COMMUNITY RACE?

- This should not happen because only the number of paddlers needed will be able to sign up.
- A wait list will be created, and if enough people sign up, additional boats may be sent.

WHAT HAPPENS IF WE HAVE TOO FEW PADDLERS FOR A PARTICULAR RACE?

- We will not participate in the event.

IF I AM A USDBF RACER, MAY I PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY RACES?

- If additional paddlers are needed for a complete boat in a Community event, USDBF paddlers may participate at the coaches' discretion
- **NOTE:** The event in Kentucky is open to all Tellico Heat women racers

IF I AM A COMMUNITY RACER, MAY I PARTICIPATE IN USDBF RACES?

- A paddler may make a request of coaches.

WHAT IF I CAN'T MAKE ONE OF THE RACES FOR USDBF?

- The Crew Championship in Sarasota is the ultimate goal for the USDBF racing team.
- Members of the USDBF racing team must participate in at least one of the other two races (Chicago or Macon).
- Final decision of who will participate in Crew Championships is at the discretion of the coaches.

DOES THE INCLUSION OF USDBF RACES i.e., CLUB CREW IN OCTOBER EXTEND THE SEASON BEYOND WHAT THE CLUB WOULD NORMALLY CONSIDER? DO WE RUN THE RISK OF LOSING PADDLERS BEFORE THE LAST FEW RACES?

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- The Club has always run until the end of October.
- USDBF commitment will be up to the Club membership.
- The extension of the season, expense, traveling etc. is all part of what you need to consider and commit to as a paddler.
- If there is no interest in USDBF as a Club, we will not be pursuing.

WHY HAS THE CLUB DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SENIOR C DIVISION IN USDBF WHEN NOT ALL OF OUR PADDLER COMMUNITY CAN QUALIFY BASED ON AGE REQUIREMENTS?

- Senior C division and its age restrictions is only applicable to Club Crew which is an International Dragon Boat Federation sponsored race and qualifies you for the World Club Crew Championships.
- Macon and Chicago races are generally 50 plus.
- The decision to participate in Club Crew Senior C is/will be based on the ages of those that express interest in the USDBF paddler category.

IF THERE IS NOT ENOUGH INTEREST FOR USDBF RACES, WILL YOU AS THE CLUB BE LOOKING AT OTHER RACES TO REPLACE THE USDBF ONES OR WOULD YOU ONLY ELIMINATE THE CLUB CREW?

- If USDBF is not supported by the Club membership this year, we currently plan to proceed with the outlined community races.

RACE FEES

IF I CHOOSE USDBF AND I GET INJURED OR A COACH DETERMINES I'M BETTER SUITED FOR COMMUNITY, WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE FEES I PREPAID? WILL THEY BE REFUNDED?

- If circumstances will prevent a paddler from being able to paddle, the coaches will try to replace you. You may ask your replacement to reimburse you for race fees. If a replacement cannot be found, the funds cannot be refunded because the cost of the boat entry still needs to be covered.

IF THERE ARE MORE PADDLERS THAN NEEDED FOR A RACE AND I AM NOT CHOSEN TO PADDLE DO I GET THE RACE FEES BACK?

- This will not happen because the "rosters" will be established prior to the payment deadline.

COACHING

WILL THE COACHES ACTUALLY COACH RATHER THAN PADDLE WHILE TRYING TO COACH?

- Yes

WILL COACHES STICK TO TRAINING PLANS RATHER THAN TRY TO PUSH PADDLERS BEYOND THEIR LIMITS – i.e., DOING MULTIPLES RACE STARTS AND RACES WITHIN A PRACTICE?

- Yes. Coaches will be following a training schedule designed to support the goals set for each of the three paddlers categories.
 - Non-Racers - technique & progressive fitness.
 - Community Racers - Technique, endurance (aerobic/anaerobic), race strategies to compete in 200/250 meter races
 - USDBF Racers - Technique, endurance (aerobic/anaerobic), race strategies to complete in 200, 250, 500 and perhaps 2K meter races.
- Training plans will ensure consistency and add an element of focus to all sessions for each category.
- Paddlers need to take responsibility for informing Coaches of any limitations they may have.

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Note: It is important to note that each Coach has their own style of coaching. This however does not change the guiding principles of the training plans.

IF COACHES WILL BE ROTATING PRACTICE, WILL THERE BE A COMMON LANGUAGE (COMMANDS, TECHNIQUES, ETC.) USED BY ALL COACHES?

- Teaching styles can vary from Coach to Coach but the Club, therefore, the Coaches have adopted Pan Am (A-frame) style of paddling and are dedicated to using the same techniques, commands and training plans.

For any other questions, please our Liaison at: liaison@tellicoheat.com.

(Please be assured that all questions and/or comments whether by phone or email directed to the Liaison will be held in the strictest confidence.)