

TELLICO HEAT DRAGON BOAT CLUB STRUCTURE

2026 SEASON PLAN

PURPOSE OF THE CLUB

Mission Statement - The mission of the Tellioco Heat Dragon Boat Club (THDBC) is to promote the sport of dragon boating through fitness, team-building and competitive racing, all while upholding values of honesty, integrity, respect, and sportsmanship.

THDBC provides opportunities for a low-impact full-body workout, cardio fitness, and sporting competition on various levels, while building camaraderie in a truly synchronous group activity and enjoying the beautiful Tellico Lake.

PADDLER CATEGORIES

THDBC embraces all fitness abilities. Training is structured to meet each paddler where they are, through skill-building and encouragement which will be geared to propel each paddler toward their fitness and/or competition goals. Any paddler may attend any practice as long as their fitness and skill levels meet the requirements of that level. All inexperienced guests must attend level 1 Fitness paddles.

****NOTE:** All sessions are dependent upon the interest of paddlers throughout the season. If attendance is less than 8 paddlers per sign-up, these sessions may be canceled. ***

- Paddling schedules are subject to availability of steerers and coaches.
- Paddling sessions may be added or cancelled based on the weather, the number of participants signed up, and the availability of steerers or coaches.
- Coaches highly recommend that paddlers rotate between paddling on port and starboard (except for race practices where a paddler has been assigned a specific spot). Note: Coaches may relocate a paddler based on weight and balance requirements of the boat.

All paddlers on the boat should be aware of the composition of the boat (i.e. skill/fitness level, limitations, guests), and be a good teammate by being patient and understanding of the need for managing the practice accordingly. It is particularly important for experienced paddlers to have their “heads in the boat” for commands that guests may not understand or respond to quickly.

Be a leader in the boat!

A. INTRODUCTORY PADDLES

Introductory paddles are held for the first few weeks of the season for people who are new to the sport of dragon boating and are considering joining the club. New paddlers are able to attend two “try it first” sessions on water before payment of dues is required. (Note that seasoned paddlers may be asked to volunteer to assist in pacing/paddling for these sessions). Once a paddler has completed the two introductory paddles, they can join the club and begin attending their desired sessions.

Introductory paddles may be held as separate sessions early in the season depending on the level of interest and sign up, however, individuals considering joining the club later in the season may attend a Level 1 Fitness session.

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B. FITNESS PADDLES

Designed for paddlers who want the fitness/endurance and camaraderie of the club, but are not interested in racing or are unable to participate in racing paddles. Fitness paddles will have two categories available to choose from.

Level 1 Fitness – Level 1 fitness is designed for new paddlers as part of the on-boarding process; experienced paddlers who wish to continue building technique and endurance; or members in need of a less strenuous option during illness or injury recovery. Sessions will include specific training on the sport of dragon boating focusing on development of the proper stroke, synchronicity and building endurance. There is an expectation for constantly improving technique and fitness level. All guests without Dragon Boat experience or new paddlers joining later in the season must attend the Level 1 fitness paddles until a coach agrees they can join a level 2 fitness paddle*.

Level 2 Fitness - NEW THIS SEASON! Level 2 fitness is designed for paddlers who have some dragon boating experience and are looking for a more intense fitness training. Sessions will focus on endurance with opportunity to increase challenges. Level 2 fitness paddles may run from 60-90 minutes and longer endurance paddles from 1.5 - 2 hours. Level 2 fitness paddles are for paddlers who have a level of fitness and skill that they wish to maintain or advance, but are not interested in or are unable to race.

***NOTE: PADDLERS THAT BRING GUESTS MUST ATTEND a Level 1 fitness paddle on Tuesday or Friday unless pre-approved by a coach. A two day notice is requested because coaches set paddler assignments the day prior to a session. The Waiver and Disclaimer must be signed one day prior to the paddle session.**

****NOTE:** Paddling Sessions for individuals interested in One-on-One training is available subject to coaches' schedule

- **Fitness Paddle Sessions** (no racing training) will be held consecutively or sequentially depending on the level of interest.
 - Level 1/Introductory/Guest fitness paddles will be held Tuesday and Friday.
 - Level 2 fitness paddles will be held Tuesday and Friday. Longer paddles may be added depending on interest.
 - Fitness sessions are open to paddlers interested in Dragon Boat for fitness/endurance
 - Instruction will focus on Safety, Dragon Boat Commands, Stroke Technique, synchronicity, team work, fitness, and endurance
 - Paddling plans will be set by coaches. Coaches will attend Level 1 sessions and sit on the front of the boat to provide specific training for technique. Coaches may attend Level 2 paddles as paddler/coaches or on the front depending on the makeup of the boat
 - Sessions will not include racing specific training (No race starts/finishes or mock races), but it is expected that everyone works on improving form to better efficiency, individual physical safety, fitness, and to be a good teammate.

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- **Endurance/Exploratory Paddle session** will be held on Thursday
 - Sessions will be longer endurance or exploratory paddles to allow for trips across the lake or to farther locations (typically 1.5-2.0 hours).
 - Endurance and exploratory paddles will be longer sessions (1.5-2 hours) to allow for paddles across the lake or to explore farther locations.
 - Additional exploratory sessions may be added or cancelled depending on interest
 - Endurance/Exploratory paddles will be held on Thursday to allow for racing paddlers to rest and recover on Friday prior to the race practice on Saturday.

C. RACING PADDLES

Designed for paddlers who want the fitness/endurance and camaraderie of the club but are also interested in participating in the competitive environment of the sport of dragon boating. Racer paddlers will have two levels of racing available depending on their desire for participation. *(See Race Definition/Description)*

Level 1 - Community Racers – Level 1 racing practice is designed for paddlers who want to compete in festivals that are typically non-sanctioned and intended to raise funds for community non-profit organizations. Donations are gathered via race fees, and participant or corporate sponsorships. Level 1 paddlers should be willing to commit to some required racing training and race expenses for the community festivals but training expectations will not be as stringent as the racing requirements for Level 2 (see below). Races are usually 200 or 250 meters. Level 1 Race practices may be limited to paddlers attending a race festival 2-3 weeks prior to the festival to ensure proper training and balance of the team assigned to the boat.

Level 2 - Sanctioned/Highly Competitive Racers - Level 2 racing is designed for paddlers who want to participate in United States Dragon Boat Federation (USDBF) sanctioned meets, or festivals offering similar club competitive levels. Sanctioned competitions are highly competitive and are positioned for clubs to participate on the national and world wide stage. Paddlers for Level 2 should be willing to commit to a disciplined training routine, travel and related expenses. Level 2 racing teams may stay together throughout the season and participation is at the discretion of the coaches. Practices will develop the team to participate in races that are 200, 500 and 2000 meters. Level 2 Race practices may be limited to paddlers attending a race festival 6-8 weeks prior to the festival to ensure proper training and balance of the team assigned to the boat.

*NOTE: The skill set required for level 2 racing is also required for competitions that may not be USDBF or IDBF sanctioned but are not organized as community fundraisers. Some competitions are designed to attract club teams from greater distances working toward USDBF and IDBF level. While anyone can participate in a Community Festival Event, which often includes community or recreational teams, a sanctioned race requires a higher level of skill and may be limited to USDBF registered athletes. The level 2 racing team may be selected based on interest and kept together throughout the season due to the requirements of participation at this level of competition.

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- **Race paddle sessions** will be held Monday, Wednesday and Saturday. Multiple sessions may be scheduled depending on the sessions required to get prepared for a race.
 - Race sessions are open to paddlers interested in competitive dragon boat racing.
 - Instruction will focus on Stroke Technique, synchronicity, fitness and endurance with some land-based training off the boat.
 - Sessions will include timing for distance and power, pace of paddle, and weekly training plans to build toward specific race preparedness. Rolling mock races may be used without the race starts. Race starts/finishes will be introduced in the final stages of race preparation. Practice sets will be tied to race distance and strategy determined by coaches.
 - While all practices are open to any paddler, Racing practices or participation on a specific boat may be limited to racers planning to attend a festival within the festival preparation time frame (2-4 weeks prior) so coaches can balance the boat and teams will improve their synchronicity.
 - Boat assignments and practice times are determined by the upcoming festival(s) type and sign-ups.
 - **Based on Best Practices**, Coaches recommend racing paddlers prioritize and focus on scheduled Monday – Wednesday – Saturday practice sessions with occasional Fitness/Endurance paddles, to prevent over-training and repetitive-use injuries. It is also a highly recommended training protocol among elite racers, that paddlers build a day or two for recovery into their practice schedule.

*****Please see RACER EXPECTATIONS for further information*****

RACE DEFINITION/DESCRIPTION

The sport of dragon boating originated over 2,000 years ago from the legend of Qu Yuan, a patriotic poet who drowned himself; locals raced to save him and ward off dragons. The core of the sport is teamwork, with all paddlers executing powerful, coordinated strokes to the drummer's beat. There is no one person who can make a difference in a dragon boat team. All must be together as one. THDBC offers two levels of racing to meet the level of competition for those paddlers interested in participating in Dragon Boat Racing.

COMMUNITY RACE: Community festival events are cultural celebrations centered around traditional dragon boat races often with a fun festival atmosphere and community involvement. These Festivals are often charitable in nature with funds raised through entry fees and individual participant contributions being donated to a particular cause. These events have more relaxed rules and are usually geared toward community groups pulling teams together to participate for corporate team building or camaraderie, fund raising, and the enjoyment of the sport.

SANCTIONED/HIGHLY COMPETITIVE RACE: Festivals organized by the United States Dragon Boat Federation (USDBF), the International Dragon Boat Federation (IDBF), or created to prepare clubs for the USDBF level of racing. These events adhere to specific rules and regulations set by a governing body (USDBF or IDBF). The governing body sets the distance, boat specifications, and crew criteria (i.e. age, gender requirements etc). Often a team is required to provide their own sweep and drummer.

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RACER EXPECTATIONS

Level 1 - Community Racer Expectations

- **Accountable** – member is committed to attending at least 2 race paddling sessions/week for 2 weeks prior to the race date so the coach can assure proper boat balance and paddler is prepared for the race start sequence, finish timing, and pace.
- **Training** – Paddlers will be trained in preparation to race 200 and 250 meter races.
- **Coachable** – Paddler must be committed to perfecting their technique, refining their synchronicity, improving their endurance, planning land-based training when off the water, planning recovery days.

Level 2 - Sanctioned Racer Expectations

- **Accountable** – member is committed to attending at least 2 race paddling sessions/week throughout season with emphasis on the critical 4 weeks prior to a race. (Recommended 3x/wk beginning with 60-minute sessions increasing to 90-minute sessions); possible 4 days on the water.
- *Vacation time will be taken into consideration, however, final decision of the paddlers ability to participate in a race will be at the discretion of the Coaches based on established criteria.*
- **Training** – Paddlers will be trained in preparation to race 200, 500 and 2000 meter races.
- **Coachable** – paddler must be committed to perfecting their technique, refining their synchronicity, improving their endurance, planning land-based training when off the water, planning recovery days.
- **Attitude** – committed to focused training when in the boat, positivity, supportive of teammates. If a paddler will miss a practice, they should get a substitute to fill their space when possible and notify the coach directly. Substitutes must be able to handle the race practice. DO NOT just remove your name from insteam without notification to the coach.

* **Race Fees*** - It is the responsibility of the racer to pay full race fees by the published due date and to be committed to travel expenses including lodging and meals. **Race fees are not refundable** because the cost of a team is a fixed amount regardless of the number of participants. The total entry fee is divided among the racers committing to attend. Adjustments will be made on a one off basis where appropriate.

NOTE: It is strongly encouraged that all racers join the United States Dragon Boat Federation (USDBF) as individual members (\$40 out of pocket separate individual fee). In order to race at the Club Crew and some other sanctioned races, you must be a USDBF member according to USDBF Official Rules. The club receives a discounted rate if we have sufficient individual members (Manually Enter **Tellico Heat** for the club name. We are not listed in the drop down).

Tellico Heat is already a member of the Southeast Regional Dragon Boat Federation (SRDBF) which is under the USDBF umbrella.

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PROPOSED RACE SCHEDULE

NOTE: Information may change due to lack of information on the current race not posted yet. Changes may be made to race schedule or the race due dates depending on the event's final requirements and interest in participating.

FESTIVAL NAME	DATE	CITY	STATE	Level 1	Level 2	10 man	20 man
The Asian Festival Dragon Boat Race	5/17/26	Columbus	OH	Yes		N	Y
Central Florida DB Challenge	5/23/2026	Leesburg	FL		Yes	Y	N
Montgomery Dragon Boat Festival	6/13/2026	Montgomery	AL	Yes		Y	Y
Cooper River Dragon Boat Regatta	6/20/2026	Cherry Hill	NJ		Yes	N	Y
Chicago Int'l DBF	7/25/2026	Busse Woods	IL	Yes	Yes	N	Y
Richmond International	8/1/2026	Richmond	VA		Yes	N	Y
Johnson City DBF	8/1/2026	Johnson City	TN	Yes		N	Y
Emory Valley Center	8/15/2026	Oakridge	TN	Yes	Yes	y	?
Atlanta Hong Kong Festival	9/12/2026	Gainesville (Lake Lanier)	GA		Yes	y	Y
Peachtree City Dragon Boat Festival	9/26/2026	Peachtree City	GA	Yes	Yes	N	Y
First Annual Women's DB Challenge	10/17/2026	Leesburg	FL		Maybe	?	Y
TELLICO HEAT INTRA-CLUB RACES	10/?/2026	Loudon	TN	Yes	Yes	N	Y
Lake Hernando	11/7/2026	Hernando	FL		Yes	?	Y