

## RULES AND REGULATIONS

**Victoria Dragon Boat Festival Society reserves the right to amend these rules from time to time as it may in its absolute and full discretion may determine.**

### Issued by the Victoria Dragon Boat Festival Society

The aim of the Victoria Dragon Boat Festival Society ("VDBFS") is to promote multiculturalism through dragon boat racing, and the performing, visual and culinary arts.

#### 1.0 Team Registration for the Victoria Dragon Boat Festival

The Race Registrar is responsible for posting the Race Registration Package on the website containing information for prospective teams and for registering dragon boat teams. Please visit the event website for team registration information ([www.victoriadragonboat.com](http://www.victoriadragonboat.com)).

#### 2.0 Conditions of Entry

All participants must agree to abide by the regulations stipulated by the VDBFS as a condition of their participation in the event. Individuals and Teams must conform to all criteria and be able to satisfy and comply with all requirements, as set forth in the Official Regulations. The VDBFS, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to accept or refuse any entry of a Team or any registration of an individual to the Event. VDBFS reserves the right to change rules and update rules from time to time as it requires. Such changes are at the sole discretion of VDBFS.

**Waivers:** All Team Members must sign a waiver release stating that they have read the conditions of the Waiver and are aware of the risks associated with the Races, and accept the risk and thus waive any right they may have to any cause of action against any or all of the sponsors, organizers, officials and the VDBFS for injury to person(s) or loss/damage to personal property. All Team Members must return a duly signed Waiver to their Team Manager, who shall be responsible for submitting it or them from all members of his or her Team to the Registrar by the date specified.

**Team Rosters:** The names of all team members must be registered on the Official Team Roster, and **no individual is permitted to be on the roster of more than one Team within either the Women's or the Mixed division (i.e. A woman on a women's team may also be rostered on a mixed team)**. Only those racers listed on their respective team's roster can race for that team. Any Team which allows a non-registered person to participate as a Crew Member on that Team is liable for and is subject to disqualification from further participation in the VDBFS Festival; at the absolute discretion of the VDBFS Race Committee.

**Final Racing Team Roster:** A minimum of 22 to a maximum of 26 names are to be on the team roster for the actual competition. The Official final racing Team Roster must be received by the Registrar by the deadline specified in the registration instructions issued by the Registrar. Under extenuating circumstances, any changes to the team roster must be received by Registrar as soon as possible and prior to the first race.

Variations to the foregoing Roster Regulations are permitted only with the prior written approval of the Race committee. **The Festival is not responsible for scheduling conflicts for paddlers racing in more than one division.**

Any infraction of the race regulations on the part of an Individual Team Member(s), by the Crew or by the Team itself may result in the disqualification of the entire Team from further participation in the Event. Each Team is entirely responsible for its own conduct and compliance with the

Official Regulations. Any Team which allows a non-registered individual to participate as a Crew Member on that Team may be subject to disqualification from further participation in the event.

### 3.0 **Team and Boat Crew Definitions:**

The following definitions will be used for the purpose of this section

*Team:* this refers to all those listed on the roster and includes the team manager.

*Boat Crew/Crew:* this refers to all those in the boat and includes the drummer and steersperson.

*Racers:* the drummer and steersperson and paddlers.

*Paddlers:* does not include drummer or steersperson.

### 4.0 **Official Dragon Boat Team:** Consists of the following:

1 Team Manager (Non-Participating), 26 Racers maximum: the Drummer, the Steersperson and 20 Paddlers drawn from the Official Team Roster form the Boat Crew, with up to 4 Alternates (or spares).

One member of the Boat Crew must be designated as the Team Captain.

In the event that a paddler on the team also acts as the Team Manager, please ensure that designation is noted on the Official Team Roster.

22 Racers is considered to be the normal Boat Crew complement for VDBFS competition, while 18 Racers is considered to be the minimum number required to race – the Drummer, the Steersperson plus at least 16 Paddlers. (If rough water conditions and/or the weight of the normal crew complement result in the dragon boat taking on water – i.e. being overloaded for the marine conditions), then the Crew Captain or Steersperson must decide whether to race with only 16 or 18 Paddlers – to decrease the weight of the boat load and minimize the risk of swamping and sinking.

It is the responsibility of the Team Captain and the Steersperson to ensure that the crew always complies with the minimum and maximum crew loads.

#### 4.1 **Types of Teams**

Includes Adult, Junior, Breast Cancer Survivor, Grand Dragons, Women

#### 4.2 **Age Basis**

All team members under 19 years of age require their parent or guardian's consent to participate as a team member.

All team managers must be a minimum of 19 years of age as of the first day of race weekend.

In all cases Drummers and Steerspersons are exempt from the special age requirements of specialty race teams. (They may be older than 18 years of age for Junior Crews and younger than 50 years of age for Grand Dragon crews).

**Adult Boat Crew:** All racers must be a minimum of 13 years of age as of the first day of the race weekend.

**Junior Boat Crew:** All paddlers must be a minimum of 13 years of age and not yet 19 as of the first day of race weekend.

Grand Dragon Boat Crew: All paddlers must be a minimum of 50 years of age as of August 1 of the festival year. Exemption: The drummer and steersperson are not required to be a minimum of 50 years of age.

Breast Cancer Survivors: Same age basis as Adult Boat Crews.

Women's Boat Crew: Same age basis as Adult Boat Crews

#### 4.3 Gender Composition Basis

All Boat Crews: (with the exception of crews entered in the Women's award) must be comprised of a minimum of 8 female paddlers with the balance of the crew being of either gender.

Women's Award: All paddlers must be female. The drummer and the steersperson shall be exempt from the gender requirement.

Breast Cancer Survivors: All paddlers must be breast cancer survivors regardless of gender. The drummer and steersperson are not required to be breast cancer survivors and may be of either gender.

#### 4.4 Level of Crew Skill, Experience, Involvement and Commitment

*Novice* – Usually first time teams made up of racers with little or no racing experience. These teams will have participated in no more than 16 practice sessions in the season leading up to the festival.

*Recreational* – Returning teams, made up of racers, which have participated in a dragon boat race in previous years and wish to remain at a recreational level or first year teams which have practiced more than 16 times in the season leading up to the festival.

*Competitive* - Highest level of competition; teams which train seriously and regularly out of paddling clubs.

#### 4.5 Place of Team Origin

Local – teams based within the Greater Victoria Area including Sooke and Sidney.

Visiting – All teams from outside the Local Area.

### 5.0 Individual Team Member Eligibility and Fitness for Dragon Boat Racing

- (a) Adult Team Managers and Crew Members may be members of one and only one Team and may not be on any other Team's Roster.
- (b) Every Team Member is required to read a set of the Official Rules & Regulations, be knowledgeable of its content, and abide by it. Every Team Manager, Captain, Steersperson and Drummer is also required to be knowledgeable of the Official Rules & Regulations in order that their respective team can act accordingly.

### 6.0 Team Sponsorship and Identity

6.1 The VDBFS retains all rights to advertising, sponsorship and commercial representation for the Event.

6.2 Festival Sponsors are sponsors who are directly supportive of the Festival, such as Event, Cup and Boat sponsors, contributors, etc.; they will be acknowledged and represented as Sponsors of the Dragon Boat Festival and Races.

- 6.3 Team Sponsors are sponsors supportive of individual Teams and may not be considered a sponsor of the Festival; VDBFS is not obligated to individual Team Sponsors, and may refuse any commercial representation on the festival site and on the water venue.

It is not a requirement for any Team to be supported by a Team Sponsor(s).

- 6.4 Where the involvement of an individual Team Sponsor is determined not to be in the best interest of the VDBFS or the Festival Sponsor(s), the VDBFS may refuse entry of the supported Team to the Event unless an alternative Team Sponsor is acceptable.
- 6.5 Representation of the organization responsible for the Team and its Sponsor(s) shall be limited to: clothing such as team uniforms, hats, headbands, pins, etc.; one freestanding team flag not exceeding twelve (12) square feet in area; no tents, no booths, no distribution of product, whether free or for sale on site.

## **7.0 Detailed Team Member Roles, Duties and Responsibilities**

- 7.1 Team Manager shall be responsible for: team conduct covered under the Official Rules and Regulations, communicating and distributing to all team members race and festival information, processing and submitting all required team forms, waivers, fees, team name/description, liaison with the Registrar and Race or Festival Officials, attending all specified meetings.
- 7.2 Team Captain shall be responsible for: team conduct whenever the team is on the water or dockside, Liaison and communication with Race Officials while team is on the water or dockside, Altering or curtailing the practice and the routing of the boat should the weather or water conditions exceed the crew's capabilities or put their safety in jeopardy, Taking charge during an accident or mishap, Reporting to Dock or Race Officials on any damage to the boat, or loss/damage of equipment or boat accessories, Ensuring that all changes to crew seating positions or rotations with team members from shore take place ONLY WHILE DOCKSIDE.
- 7.3 Steersperson shall be responsible for: standing at all times at the boat steering station and keeping a proper lookout for other marine traffic, floating debris, fixed obstacles, lines and tethers, rocks and shallows, and all other hazards to navigation and dangerous marine and weather conditions, knowing the boat crew commands to call out and how to steer/control to maneuver the boat so as to avoid colliding with floating or fixed objects and to avoid damaging the dragon boat and any of its attachments in particular, knowing the marine rules of the road and collisions avoidance practices when in the proximity of recreational and commercial vessel traffic and while racing, knowing the designated marine areas (practicing, racing, out of bounds) and the associated procedural rules for approaching and leaving the dock, warming up, racing down the course, keeping within the designated lane, etc., practicing the entire team in the emergency "crash stop" maneuver to avoid collision and ramming, and establishing effective communications signals with the Drummer, stopping the boat and signaling to Race Officials immediately in the event that any crew member(s) suffers an injury or mishap, being familiar with how to inch the boat forward into position at the start line without drifting onto an adjacent lane(s), properly positioning the boat in the assigned lane at the start and during the race. Failure to do so may result in penalty or disqualification.
- 7.4 Drummer shall be responsible for: directing the actions of the paddlers in coordination with the steersperson to control the movements of the dragon boat in all directions (forward, sideways, pivoting, turning backing), whenever underway, docking and unloading, starting, racing, finishing and particularly for stopping to avoid collisions, keeping a proper lookout aft (rearward facing direction), complying with the requests of

Race Officials and Referees ensuring the boat is brought into the correct, marked racing lane for competition ensuring that no noise makers, whistlers, electronic aids or amplifying devices are employed to signal within or communicate with the boat, other than the drum and drum sticks provided.

- 7.5 Drummer and steersperson: must both be competent at calling commands to control and halt the boat, for if either one of them falls overboard, it will be up to the remaining individual to take charge of the boat.

## **8.0 Equipment**

- 8.1 The racing fleet of dragon boats is comprised of closed foam core, fiberglass “Millennium Edition” Dragon Boats or such other dragon boats as the society may designate;
- 8.2 IDBF specification Wood ‘Grey Owl’ paddles or such other paddle as the society may designate will be provided by the Festival. The Festival welcomes paddlers to use their own paddles as long as the paddle meets the IDBF PS101 or PS202 Racing Paddle Specification (carbon fibre paddles will be allowed). The Grey Owl Paddles dragon boat paddles meet these specifications. The length of the paddle can be between 41 – 51 inches;
- 8.3 Competitors may use their own PFD provided they are approved by the Department of Transport (DOT), Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) or Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), except for “self inflating jackets”. U.S. citizens may also use U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) approved PFDs;

## **9.0 Competition Structure**

- 9.1 The racing program is organized into a number of different Divisions, as determined by the Race Committee, with the maximum number of teams entered into the Race and number of teams participating within each Division similarly set. The VDBFS reserves the right to reclassify teams in order to ensure a balanced program. The Race Committee develops a contest structure, race schedule and competition program by taking into account such factors as the number and type of teams entered, minimum number of teams needed to form a separate division, and other practical considerations. Generally, there is the objective of enabling teams to race at least four times per race weekend.
- 9.2 Crew placements in the initial heats and lane assignments shall be randomized or based on a seeding method. Subsequently, the standing of the Crew will be determined either by order of finish, or by the finish time, depending on how the contest has been structured. Each Team will advance or be eliminated in accordance with the structure of the scheduled competitive rounds. Lanes will then be allocated by placing the fastest team in lane 3, the second fastest in lane 2 and so on, alternating between the next vacant outer lanes.
- 9.3 If a team incurs a penalty and a time penalty is applied to its actual finish time, then the adjusted time will be used to alter the order of finish placement and the resulting standing of that team.

## **10.0 Racing Regulations**

- 10.1 All boats, paddles, drums, life jackets/PFD's are to be approved and/or provided by the VDBFS. Personal paddles (including Carbon Fibre paddles) are permitted, as long as they meet festival dimensions or requirements (see section 7.2). No additional equipment will be authorized for use, other than any adaptive devices required to facilitate participation by disabled paddlers, provided such participation and adaptive devices have received the approval of the Race Committee prior to the Race Weekend.
- 10.2 Paddlers are not permitted to alter the supplied paddles in any way, including, but not limited to, applying sticky or waxy substances to the shaft, roughening, or taping the hand gripping surfaces.
- 10.3 All boats, paddles, drums, PFD's and any other equipment used during the races must be returned to the VDBFS intact and in full; replacement costs or repair of such equipment will be charged to the responsible team should negligence be determined by the VDBFS.
- 10.4 Signaling devices including radio communications or other electronic signaling items and any noisemaking devices shall not be used by any Team during the races.
- 10.5 Only the drum and drumsticks provided shall be used to signal the stroke rate. Whistles, rattles, air horns, or any other noise making devices are prohibited from use.
- 10.6 All paddlers must wear their team wristband for the duration of the festival. Paddlers will not be allowed to race without their team wristband on their wrist. Failure to comply with this rule may result in disqualification.
- 10.7 All paddlers must remain seated for the duration of the race. Kneeling or standing is not permitted.

Responsibility for the Race rests with the VDBFS Race Committee, who set and administer the policies, rules and regulations governing these activities. It is responsible for working with associations, registration of teams, marine operations and support, safety, operation of the races, and all matters pertaining to the running of the racing program. The interpretation of policies, rules and regulations rests with the VDBFS, who hold the final authority over their applications, and whose decisions are final.

## **11.0 Watercourse Description: Lanes, Distances, Markings**

- 11.1 **Racing lanes:** In the Victoria Harbour there will be no marked lanes. Steerspersons are to aim for the finish Line and avoid collision with other Dragon Boats and Marine Traffic. Each lane has a designated number, with lane 1 closest to the Festival side. The race distance is approximately 470 meters.
- 11.2 **Start Line:** A surveyed plane determined visually by sighting across shore-based alignment marks. Note that floating buoys and any other markers on the watercourse serve only as guides and approximate indicators of the true standard and are subject to current drift and windage, etc.
- 11.3 **Finish Line:** Similar to the Start Line description
- 11.4 **Entrance:** The area immediately preceding the start line towards which the dragon boats slowly approach the entrance to their assigned lane to take up a starting position, the area might be fitted out with tether lines, gates or arrays of marker buoys.

- 11.5 Run Out: The area immediately after the finish Line in which the dragon boats coast to a stop after crossing the line. Note in the Victoria harbour this Run Out is extremely limited. Crews must make all attempts to stop the boat quickly after crossing the finish Line and avoid collisions with Dragon Boats coming up from behind. i.e. STOP IT QUICKLY AND KEEP A STRAIGHT LINE.
- 11.6 Dock Approach Area: The waters immediately surrounding the various berths and docking stations.
- 11.7 Warm Up Area: A designated portion of the watercourse in which crews can do a short warm up paddle. This area will be from the Staging Area to the Race Start Line. Teams are to proceed only with permission of the Referee.
- 11.8 Staging Area: A position on the water adjacent to the entrance, where all boats must converge to await call up to the start line.
- 11.9 Out-of-Bounds Areas: All other waters in which dragon boats are not permitted to traverse during the Competition.

## **12.0 Daily Program of Competition and Last Minute Changes**

- 12.1 The times of the first race of the day are indicated in the Registration Instruction page of the Race Package.
- 12.2 The Race Officials reserve the right to call meetings of Team Officials to emphasize procedures, go over any program adjustments or resolve any last minute concerns.
- 12.3 Teams should plan to be on site at least one hour before their scheduled time to race; there are a number of stages which Teams must pass through in order to be properly prepared for a successful race, and they are spelled out.
- 12.4 Should it be necessary to alter the schedule, a notification will be posted as soon as possible on the website and on the race results board. It is the responsibility of the Team Manager to be alert for any last minute changes to the race schedule and to know when his or her Team is next scheduled to report to the Check In point and expected to race.

## **13.0 Good Sportsmanship**

- 13.1 If, in the opinion of the Referee, a boat is deliberately swamped or capsized, the Race Officials reserve the right to disqualify the crew from any official standing and may disqualify the offending team from further participation in the VDBFS Festival. If the crew deliberately damages a boat or its equipment, the VDBFS reserves the right to impose a financial and/or disciplinary penalty.
- 13.2 Participants are at all times to practice the principles of good sportsmanship. Any crew or competitor who attempts to win a race by other than honorable means, or who deliberately breaks the rules, or who disregards the honorable nature of the rules shall face disqualification of the whole team from the competition.

## **14.0 Penalties Arising From Racing**

- 14.1 The Race Committee may impose penalties on a Team or its members for reported:
- Violation of safety procedures,
  - Infraction of stated rules and regulations,
  - Unsportsmanlike conduct,

- disobeying reasonable requests or instructions from Race Officials,
- Willful damage to or loss of equipment and boats,
- Violation of sponsorship rules,
- Misrepresentation of the Race/Event or the Race/Event Organization.

14.2 Penalties may include:

- Disqualification from any official standing and/or awards
- Disqualification of Team member(s) or entire Team from further participation in races
- Requirement for financial reimbursement for damaged or lost equipment
- Disqualification of Team member(s) or the entire team from participation in future Races
- At the officials discretion, a time penalty

## 15.0 Racing Protests and Appeals.

15.1 **Protests by teams will be limited to race conduct and race rule infractions only.** A Race Appeals Panel consisting of race officials will decide on all protests.

15.2 On water race officials will signal any race rule infractions, fouls, or disqualification which they have observed while a race is underway to the Finish Line Judge and the offending team(s) will be notified of the specific infraction before they leave the dock. The Race Director or his designate will also be notified and will withhold the official results of the race and notify:

15.3 Scoreboard officials will hold results pending appeal or review.

15.4 A protest must be lodged by the Team Captain to a Senior Official prior to your team leaving the dock area, immediately after the completion of the race. Otherwise, the offence cannot be verified.

15.5 A team may protest:

- Illegal paddle/seat/PFD used by another team
- A Crew not complying with the roster rule
- Collision initiated by another team during the race

15.6 A team may **not** protest:

- Boat/lane assignment
- Interference from another boat that **did not** result in a collision
- A collision with course markers

15.7 A non-refundable payment of \$50.00 is required for all protests.

15.8 All protests must be submitted in written form (provided upon request) to the Race Appeals Panel and on the dock to the dock master.

Upon accepting the protest, the Race Appeals Panel will immediately convene a meeting together with all parties for a hearing and make its decision, which will be final and binding on all parties concerned. The Race Appeals Panel will then notify the Finish Line Judge to release the adjudicated race results.

## 16.0 Marshalling/Embarking

16.1 Arrival On Site and Team Round Up

Teams need to get themselves rounded up at some meeting point on site at least 60 minutes before their scheduled Race Start Time and get organized; use the washroom

facilities as time and facilities are not available once teams report to Check In. Adjust uniforms, do warm up exercises and stretching, review race strategy, etc. Plan for the extra time to move around the site since it will be congested.

#### 16.2 Check In and Line Up

The scheduled times when teams are to race will be determined in advance and will be distributed to all Team Managers, whose responsibility it is to know when his or her Team is next expected and scheduled to compete, and to keep track of any changes to the schedules announced/posted by Race Officials.

Teams must be mustered to report to the Crew Marshal at such check-in as announced by the Crew Marshall generally, approximately thirty minutes ahead of their scheduled race time in order to get ready; failure to do so on time may result in disqualification and the removal of the team from that round of competition with relegation to the position of last place for that round. Personal belongings are not to be brought into the crew assembly area and only those teams in a forthcoming race are allowed through. Crew will then be directed to the final Line Up area where they will form up according to their pre-planned order of seating in the boat, and behind the appropriate lane number marker to await being called down or directed to the dock.

Once reported in, crews will be directed by Race Officials to pick out PFD's; all crew must select the proper size PFD and wear it in the correct manner. When instructed, crews are to proceed down the ramp and down to the dock area, where they will be directed to the proper boat.

#### 16.3 Boarding and Casting Off

Once a dragon boat is ready, the crew will be summoned to go on board; crews must board in accordance with the Dock Master and are not permitted to choose the boat to be used, nor the lane they are to race in; any water should be bailed out of the boat.

After a final check out by a lower Dock Official, the crew will be permitted to cast off and pull away from the dock.

It is the responsibility of the Dock Master to ensure that all of the right crews are correctly identified and dispatched, in boats bearing the correct lane number. Once clear of the dock, all crews come under the authority of the Referees, and must comply with their directions.

#### 16.4 Warm up to Boat Staging Area

Upon clearing the dock, all crews are to listen and obey the Water Marshall as directed upon heading without delay to the Boat Staging Area. FAILURE TO PROCEED DIRECTLY COULD RESULT IN DISQUALIFICATION FROM THE ROUND OF COMPETITION OR TO THE AWARDED OF A TIME PENALTY; TO BE ADDED TO THE OFFENDING TEAM'S FINAL RACE TIME RESULTS, thus affecting its standing and advancement in the competition structure. It may be necessary for early arriving boats to hold steady at the Boat Staging Area while waiting for the rest of the late arriving boats to join them. Due to the shortness of time between races, it is critical that early arriving boats stay put and don't wander away for an extended warm up. This will also help to ensure fairness in terms of all crews having comparable opportunities to warm up. While holding at the Boat Staging Area, Steerspersons should actively assess the effects that the wind conditions and particularly direction when the boat is being lined up squarely for the start.

## 16.5 Starts and Starting Procedure

### 16.5.1 Boat Call Up and Alignment for the Start

- (a) From the Boat Staging Area, the Referees will call boats forward to proceed to the Start Line and take up positions at the Entrance to their respective lanes; at no time shall the nose of any dragon boat cross ahead of the Start Line. Boats doing so risk disqualification.
- (b) When approaching the Start Line, it is important that the crew adjust their paddling so that the forward boat speed is kept to a minimum and so that their boat won't counteract any current or headwind.
- (c) It is also critical that the Steersperson take into account the effect that the wind and/or the current are having on the boat, whether they will cause the boat to drift sideways onto an adjacent lane, and how to best reposition the boat closer to where the forces originate in order to compensate and adjust for the inevitable drifting awaiting the start. It is the responsibility of the steersperson to ensure that the boat is properly positioned in the lane at the start of the race.
- (d) The Referee will address individual boats to either move forward or backward or to stand still in order to line up the dragon head of all competitions even with the Start Line, the commands used to do this are as follows, where X stands for the Lane Number of the dragon boat drummer being addressed and Y is the number of rows of seats in a dragon boat, to indicate the distance to pull ahead/drop back desired by the Referee. "Boat (number) X (pull) ahead Y seat"

Example: Boat 4 ahead 2 seats "Boat (number) X (go) backward Y seats"

Example: Boat number 2 go backward 2 seats "Boat (number) X hold your boat"

Example: Boat 2,3,4 and 5, hold your boat where "hold" means to keep the boat stationary, that is, keep it from drifting in spite of the current, cross wind, or unchecked momentum, paddlers must back paddle, draw sideways or whatever to accomplish this, under the direction of the Steersperson, crews should master these maneuvers to ensure they have the best start possible.

- (e) The Referee, in consultation with the Starter, is empowered to implement a dead slow running start should wind or current conditions warrant; this would involve the boats creeping ahead while all aligned.
- (f) Where there are fewer than five contenders in a round of competition the Dock Master must confirm the numbers of the vacant lanes to the Starter and to the finish Line Judge prior to the race being started.
- (g) In the event that there is no dragon head or the head is seriously damaged, the most forward part of the affected boat will be the reference for aligning that boat and determining the moment of finish.

## 16.6 Starting Sequences

- (a) The Starter on shore controls the countdown to the cannon that is fired to signal the race start.

**"Paddles Up"** Drummer of each crew signifies "ready" by raising a hand,

**“Attention”**      Pause of a few seconds,

An air Horn blast or similar signal will start the race (1-5 seconds after the "Attention" command)

## 16.7 False Starts

(a) It shall be considered a False Start when, as the air horn sounds:

- i Any boat is out ahead of the rest of the start Line,
- ii Any boat is already moving ahead and/or being paddled ahead,
- iii Any other condition arises that, in the opinion of the Referees or the Starter, compromises a fair start.

(b) If a team(s) causes a false start and no safety provisions are compromised, the referee will allow the race to continue and the offending team will receive a time penalty. **No restart** will be called. Any Team that has caused two false starts may be subject to disqualification.

(c) Should a false start be declared, and in the opinion of the referee, constitutes a safety hazard, the Starter and Referee will employ whatever means necessary to stop all crews from paddling, including:

- i Displaying a red flag,
- ii REPEATED blasts from horns, whistles or other noise makers,
- iii Giving verbal instructions through megaphone,
- iv Making hand signals; throat cutting gesture with a flat palm,
- v. Crossing the course ahead of the bows of the dragon boats; or coming alongside.

## 17.0 Race Conduct

### 17.1 Race Underway – Proper Lane

The correct course for each boat is a straight line from its starting position to the finish. Each boat must remain in its correct lane, keep clear of and not interfere with the other boats in the race, and generally keep their distance from boats in the adjacent lanes, subject to the instructions of the Referees.

Any boat failing to keep its proper course or heading off course will be warned by the Referee and must comply immediately with the Referee's orders to take corrective action to move to a satisfactory position e.g. "Go left/right," "Turn hard left/right," "Straighten out," "Stop paddling," "Hold your boat," "Go forward," etc.

The Drummer is encouraged to beat the drum from the start of the race entirely through to the finish. Drumming is a very essential part of dragon boat racing.

It is forbidden for a crew to "wash hang" or "ride wash," that is, to gain advantage from the wash of another boat by paddling across the angle of its bow wave or stern wake to gain advantage by riding the forward face of the wave or wake. The referee following the field shall decide if wash hanging is taking place, signifying a foul and calling the offending crew.

When one boat is in a position to overtake another boat during a race, it is the duty of the boat overtaking to keep clear of the boat being overtaken at all times; similarly, the boat being overtaken must not alter course to make difficulties for the overtaking boat.

Crews shall be responsible for taking all action necessary to avoid colliding and minimizing impact with other boats and crews. Steerspersons, who are facing forward, must be able to command the boat effectively and send effective signals to their drummers, who are facing rearwards; they must remain vigilant and maintain a proper constant lookout for impending collisions, reacting as follows:

- i stop the paddling (“stop paddling” or “Let her run”) to lose speed
- ii stop the boat from ramming another (“Stop/Hold the boat”) to QUICKLY lose speed
- iii start back paddling the boat astern (“Back up” or “Back her down”) as in a “crash stop”
- iv quickly pulling ahead and maneuvering out of harms way if this can be done safely.

## **17.2 Proper Finish or DNF**

Each boat must finish in her assigned lane, within the defined boundaries of the course, with the crew fully intact. The boat is deemed to have completed the race only when the entire boat travels across the finish line, with all the crew it started with aboard. The crew must remain aboard for the full duration of the race and through to the return to the dock.

The time of the boat’s finish area will be taken at the instant that the nose of the Dragon Head reaches the finish line and a visual recording will be taken to provide an official record of the order of finish of each race.

Failure to finish within the proper finish can result either in relegation of the team to last place in the round or in being assigned a race result of DNF (Did Not Finish).

Once the boat passes over the finish line into the Run Out area, the steersperson MUST remain in their lane, slow down and not turn or accidentally swerve into any adjacent lane(s), possible cutting off other boats arriving from behind.

## **17.3 Return to Base**

Upon completion of their race, crews must remain in their boats, and the boats must be brought back to the dock without delay since all boats are needed immediately for use in the next race; lingering before the spectators and crowds is prohibited for this reason.

Returning crews may have to wait their turn to secure a place to berth at the dock, and should take up a holding position where directed by the boat marshals.

Crews shall be directed to a berth by a Dock Official and must disembark in an orderly manner; all paddles/PFD’s are to be returned promptly.

## **18. Race Officiating**

### **18.1 Refereeing and Disqualification**

Referee(s) will follow each race to observe the course taken by each boat. Above all other matters the Referee shall first be concerned with the safety of all participants. The jurisdiction of the Referee extends over the race and all matters connected with it, from the time of the directing of boats to the start through to the finish.

The Referee shall have equal power to judge, stop the race, caution or disqualify any crew or competitor, and is the sole judge of a boat's own water and proper course during the race. His/her decisions in all cases shall be final.

Failure by a crew to comply with the Referee's instructions may result in further disciplinary action, including disqualification from the remaining competition. A Referee may, at his or her discretion, disqualify a team without stopping the race.

Whenever it is deemed appropriate to disqualify a crew arising from an infraction of the rules governing the race underway, the crew shall be advised at the time of the infraction/disqualification.

If, in the opinion of the Referee, an outside boat interferes with a boat racing on the course and this interference would affect the standings in the race, the Referee can order the race to be rerun.

It shall be considered a Foul when, after the race has commenced, any competitor by his paddle, boat or person comes in contact with the paddle, boat or person of another competitor; or deliberately steers into another boat – whether such boat is or is not on its correct course and lane – unless such contact is so slight as to not interfere with the race, in the Referee's estimation.

In the event of a Foul or an impending collision or any other infractions of the rules during a race, a Referee shall be empowered to:

- i Instruct crews to stop paddling; continuation of the race and resumption of paddling the affected crews will be at the discretion of the Referee; this option may be used in the event of an impending collision, for example.
- ii Disqualify the offending team(s)—in which case the crews must cease paddling and not complete the race – yet allow the rest of the race to continue uninterrupted at his or her discretion in spite of the disqualification.
- iii Stop the race and, at his /her discretion, disqualify the offending crew; teams other than any which have been disqualified shall then be directed back to the Start Line to start the race over.

The Finish Line Judge shall declare the official order and time of finish results for each boat that properly crosses over the Finish Line, whose decision is final. Unsolicited videos, photos or verbal accounts pertaining to any disputed finish(es), course fouls or other matters have no official status or bearing on the adjudication.

## **19. Safety Considerations**

- 19.1** Each Team Member is solely responsible for his or her own safety at all times while engaging in activity relating to practicing in and racing dragon boats. Crew members, particularly the drummer and steersperson, must be aware that they have responsibilities for the safe control of their dragon boat and should never head out on the water if they are in any way impaired by spirits, drugs or other substances that adversely affect and impair their perception, judgment, balance, reaction time, hearing and vision. Both the Team manager and Team Captain will ensure that all their competitors are:

Wearing a proper Personal Flotation Device (PFD) for every Crew Member at all times on board dragon boats.

Suitably dressed for the weather, water and race conditions and that they are not wearing anything (such as personal accessories or jewelry) which may impede their ability to escape from a capsized boat or swim unaided once in the water. Must be water competent and, ideally, able to swim at least 50 meters while wearing a PFD and in wet competition clothes, unaided.

Paddlers with physical restrictions (disabilities) are not restricted from racing on a team of more able bodied paddlers and are not restricted from competing alongside other teams in their division as part of integrated crew, subject to prior consultation with the registrar and a review by the Race Committee to ensure that the nature of the disability and any adaptive procedures, appliances or supporting devices can be accommodated within the facility, safety and operational standards of the Event.

- 19.2** Distress Signal. In the event of a crew being in distress, for example, a crew member lost overboard, the Drummer, Steersperson or other crew members shall alert the Rescue Boats and Race Officials by waving vigorously, above head height.
- 19.3** Any injuries sustained as a result of participating in the practices or races must be reported immediately to the Dock master, and the Team Manager must submit an injury report to the VDBFS immediately following the injury. Incident Report forms are available at the dock.
- 19.4** Overloading  
If rough water conditions and/or the weight of the normal crew complement result in the dragon boat taking on water (i.e. being overloaded for the marine conditions), then the Crew Captain or Steersperson must decide whether to race with only 16 to 18 Paddlers (to decrease the weight of the boat load, raise the margin of safety and minimize the risk of swamping and sinking.) It is the responsibility of the Team Captain to ensure that the crew always complies with the minimum and maximum crew loads.
- 19.5** Capsizing and Collisions
- (a) Should a boat(s) capsize, the crew must remain with their boat, check for their buddies, await rescue and take a head count, then repeat same every 30 seconds until all are recovered and accounted for:
    - i Confirm that PFD's are properly fastened and stay all together with the boat,
    - ii Do not attempt to swim to shore,
    - iii Minimize body heat loss by holding still and huddling close together,
    - iv Reassure panicking crew,
    - v Arrest severe bleeding, support injured crew,
    - vi Provide weak swimmers with additional buoyancy. e.g. handful of paddles.
  - (b) Other boats must stay clear of the area and allow motorized rescue and recovery craft room to maneuver; crews must not take any actions which could result in their also capsizing and complicating the accident situation.
  - (c) Should a collision occur between a boat and any fixed, floating or hard object, crews must quickly determine whether any participant has sustained a serious injury and alert Referee by signaling with their paddles held vertically, high up in the air.

**19.6** Person Overboard

- (a) In the event that any crew member goes overboard or falls off the drum seat, the dragon boat should be stopped immediately and NOT TURNED INTO THE PATH of any oncoming boats in adjacent lanes; should the steersperson go over the side, the drummer must take command of the boat and bring it to an immediate stop.

**19.7** Loss of Steering or Boat Control

- (a) If the Steersperson loses control of the boat and the boat starts to swerve out of its lane and/or into oncoming traffic, the Drummer and Steersperson must work together to stop the paddling, if it is safe to stop and the stopped boat won't cause difficulties to other oncoming boats.

**20.0 Festival House Rules**

**20.1** Teams are not permitted to sell or distribute any items or services for sale or complementary on or near the Festival.

**20.2** The VDBFS, its staff and volunteers will not be responsible for lost or stolen articles left in any area of the site.

**20.3** Teams are strongly encouraged to have a team first aid kit made up and available, with such supplies as Band-Aids, treatment for blisters and other common paddling ailments, sunscreen and sunburn lotions, etc.

**20.4** Please report any vendors or persons claiming to be affiliated with the VDBFS and authorized to sell products, services, plans or other solicitations.

For example: Individuals who claim to be authorized to take videos of teams racing in order to sell to team members. Solicitation and other unauthorized activities are not permitted at the Festival.

**20.5** Crew members, particularly, Drummers and Steerspersons must be aware that they have responsibilities for the safe control of their dragon boat and SHOULD NEVER HEAD OUT ON THE WATER IF THEY ARE IN ANY WAY IMPAIRED BY SPIRITS, DRUGS, OR OTHER SUBSTANCES that adversely affect and impair their perception, judgment, balance, reaction time, hearing and vision. It is the responsibility of the Team Captain, the Team Manager and the Steersperson to ensure that no person boards the dragon boat that is unfit for their duties and responsibilities. No person who is not wearing an assigned wristband will be permitted to enter the paddlers' village.

Only designated dock crew and scheduled paddlers will be permitted on the dock at any time.