



DRAGON BOAT PADDLING INFO SHEET

SO, YOU WANT TO RACE DRAGON BOATS

If you're thinking about competing at regattas, this Info Sheet contains some important things for you to consider.

COSTS

+/- \$45 per paddler, per regatta

There is a cost per paddler for each regatta. The cost is applied per paddler, regardless of the number of races you end up paddling in. For most NSW regattas, the current fee per paddler is \$45. For community regattas, the fee is charged per team entry, and split between the number of paddlers.

LOCATIONS

Sydney and beyond

Most DBNSW events are located in or around Sydney. The Nationals event (where sporting teams from across Australia, as well as the state teams, compete against each other) is hosted by a different state each year, usually announced at, or shortly after, the previous Nationals event.

OUT-OF-POCKET COSTS

Overnighter or super-early start

Some regional paddlers choose to stay overnight before and/or during a Sydney-based or interstate regatta. Remember to factor in out-of-pocket costs for travel, accommodation and meals if you're thinking of overnighing. Some paddlers share accommodation to keep costs down. For those who plan to travel to Sydney before an event, put your hand up if you're looking for a shared ride with other paddlers who live in Nowra or along the route.

WHAT TO WEAR

The blues

The Nowra uniform is the racing shirt (short sleeve, long sleeve or singlet) and black shorts or leggings, and the Nowra hat. All paddlers are required to wear enclosed footwear (e.g. water shoes, reef shoes, etc.).

CHANGE OF CLOTHES

Dry me a river

You are likely to get wet, and there is always the possibility of a boat tipping over. So, bring a towel and a change of clothes and footwear – you will be much more comfortable on the way home.

STAY SAFE

Slip, slop, slap, seek, slide

Please apply sunscreen if you have exposed skin – and bring more with you to reapply throughout the day. Sunglasses are also recommended to protect your eyes from the sun.

NUTRITION

Arrive prepared

You can enjoy carb-loading the day before (quality carbs, please – beers and soft drinks don't count). On the day, bring quality protein snacks (e.g. nut and seed bar and slices), some carbs for energy (e.g. "snakes" are very popular), as well as something for lunch (e.g. multigrain bread, chicken and avocado might be an option). Many regattas have minimal food options. If you have any restrictions or are at all picky, please bring your own. There are usually coffee vans, but don't rely on these if you absolutely need a hit to operate.

HYDRATION

Be water-wise

You will not be able to take your water bottle into the boat (every ounce counts!), so please ensure you stay hydrated during the event and between races. Consider increasing your water intake a day or two prior to the event, or if the race is particularly long, or if the weather is likely to be particularly warm. Some paddlers add electrolyte tablets to their water bottles if it's going to be a big day.

CHAIR THE SESSION

Bring a folding chair

Pack a folding or camp chair for regatta events. Except when racing at SIRC (Penrith), we usually bring a large gazebo (or two) for shade and shelter. Please arrive a little earlier to assist putting it up, or stay a bit later to help pull it down. On soggy days, consider bringing a rain poncho.

CREW WARMUP

Get into the groove

The coaches will advise the time you're expected to arrive at the venue. The usual practice is for all paddlers to arrive prior to the first event to warm up together and to offer support to team members, regardless of the scheduling of your own event. The benefits of a warmup, which one of the coaches will lead, include:

- Raising your heartrate.
- Increasing oxygen flow through the body
- Loosening joints and warming muscles for easier muscle contraction.
- Mentally preparing you for the first race.

RACE DISTANCES

Are we there yet?

Race distances vary from regatta to regatta. Standard race lengths are 100m, 200m, 500m, 1km and 2km. The Bei Loon community regatta is approximately 8km.

BOAT SIZES

Standard versus small

There are 2 boat sizes: a standard boat and a small boat. DBNSW races are all standard boat (except for Breast Cancer Paddler (BCP) races), and the Australian Nationals races have both boat sizes.

- Standard boat: minimum 16 and maximum 20 paddlers in the boat, up to 4 reserves, plus a sweep and a drummer.
- Small boat: minimum 8 and maximum 10 paddlers in the boat, up to 2 reserves, plus a sweep and a drummer.

AGE CATEGORIES

Know your ABCs

Most NSW and AusDBF races have set age classifications. The categories most relevant to Nowra Waterdragons are:

- Senior A: paddlers 40 years and older
- Senior B: paddlers 50 years and older.
- Senior C: paddlers 60 years and older.

This means that paddlers 60 years and older can race in the Senior A or Senior B categories, for example, but paddlers who are under-60 cannot paddle in the Senior C category. Paddlers in the lower categories are likely to participate in fewer races than the older paddlers.

RACE CLASSIFICATIONS

Mixed, open, women

There are 3 race classifications:

- Mixed: must be an even number of male and female paddlers, i.e. if we only have 9 men to paddle, then we can only have 9 women in a standard boat.
- Women: all paddlers, sweep and stroke, must be women.
- Open: can be any mix of men and women – from all men to all women.

PREPARATION

Team selection

Team selection, particularly for the State (where NSW sporting teams compete) and Nationals events, and for the mixed events, is very competitive. Regular attendance at training, off-water weights and aerobic training are expected to be part of your regular activity. In addition, for Nationals team selection, it is likely that you will be asked to undertake:

- a water trial - paddle a standard boat for 200m, with another person to help balance your weight and a sweep,
- your time recorded for 2km on a rowing machine, set to about 115 to 120 drag factor, and
- your distance recorded for a 2-minute session on a paddle erg, set to about 115 to 120 drag factor.

RACE SCHEDULING

Heats, finals, lanes

The organising body (most usually DBNSW) sends out a proposed race schedule to each club's team officials, with proposed heats, lanes, etc. This provides the club with an opportunity to request changes due to possible scheduling clashes, etc. The final schedule is often only available a day or two before the actual regatta.

SEATING IN THE BOAT

Take your seats

Our coaches will determine the crew and seating in the regatta, and seating arrangements may change between heats and the final. In ideal circumstances, the assigned seats will be sent out at least a day before the regatta. Even then, they may be subject to change on the day, so ensure you know where you should be, and stay updated. Team lists should be available where the club is seated, and with a kept in the bottle-bucket. Focus on the race number, not the estimated time, as regattas have been known to run up to 90 minutes ahead of or behind schedule.

TEAM CAPTAINS

Aye, aye captain

A team captain will be selected by the coaches for each category / team combination. The captain's name will be marked on the team list. Talk to your captain if you have any questions about the regatta.

LINING UP

Get in line

Prior to each race, you will be expected to go to the Marshalling Area, where your name will be ticked off the official list. Take along your paddle and water bottle, and go straight to the boat loading area. You will usually be asked to line up in alphabetical order, with the Sweep at the front. Reserves, Sweep and Drummer need to specifically identify themselves. Reserves carry the bottle-bucket to collect water bottles, but should line up and be prepared to paddle, as they sometimes end up in the boat because of a paddler injury or delay.

RSVP

Via the Team App

Events are added to Stack Team App well in advance, and you should RSVP via the app. There will be a cut-off date for when you can add your name. The cut-off date gives our coaches time to address and resolve any potential issues. So, please respond early – particularly if you are a definite "Yes" or a definite "No".