

Washington DC Dragon Boat Festival

Registration

In order to participate in the Washington DC Dragon Boat Festival, your team must submit a valid team registration and include payment within a timely fashion. All registrations shall be submitted via the festival website. Registration for the 2026 festival will open on February 14th at 10:00 AM. Space is limited and teams will be granted entry on a first come, first served basis. All teams must provide a brief description of their team affiliation and composition as part of the registration form.

Upon submitting a registration, teams will receive a confirmation notice of their acceptance into the festival within 24-48 hours. If you do not receive a confirmation notice in that time frame, please reach out to the festival to ensure your registration was received. All confirmation notices will be sent to the team captain using the email address provided at registration time.

After receiving your confirmation, teams accepted into the festival must submit full payment within 10 days. Failure to receive payment in a timely fashion may result in your team forfeiting its slot in the festival in favor of a team on the waitlist. All payments should be sent to the following address.

2026 DC Dragon Boat Festival
c/o TUSCA
500 N Washington St, #1631
Rockville, MD 20849

Checks shall be made payable to "TUSCA "

The following is the fee schedule for the 2026 festival:

- Corporate/Community - \$1,600
- Premier/Out-of-Town - \$1,400
- Youth / BCS / Paradrageon Teams - \$1,000

Note: The registration fees for 2026 have increased by \$200 for all divisions. This increase reflects the added cost of tent rentals which are required for the Georgetown Waterfront race site. If your team is using a roll-over registration from the postponed 2025 festival, the crew will still be responsible for the additional \$200 tent fee.

Zelle will continue to be a payment option for 2026. If a team wishes to pay their registration fee via Zelle, instructions will be provided.

The DC Dragon Boat Festival reserves the right to remove any team for failure to follow established rules or sportsmanship guidelines.

Crew Composition

The DC Dragon Boat Festival allows a roster of 25 people. All individuals must be listed on your team roster submitted at team check-in.

- Each team should consist of 20 paddlers, 1 drummer and 4 alternates. Rosters may carry up to 25 people total. If a team provides their own steerer, this will count towards your roster of 25. NO EXPERIENCE REQUIRED for paddlers or drummers. Steers must be qualified and may be removed at the race director's discretion.
- Team members must be at least 12 years of age as of their first practice session.
- Mixed teams may have more women than men, but may not have more men than women.
- All youth teams must register and compete as a mixed team, including meeting gender requirements.
- In order to compete in a youth boat, a participant must meet the following three conditions.
 - Be currently enrolled in middle or high school
 - Be 12 years old at the time of the festival
 - Be less than 18 years old as of Sept 1 of the current year
- For an all women's team, the paddlers must be a female, but the drummer or steerer may be either gender.
- A steersperson will be provided to teams who need one, but the festival must be notified in advance of the race of this situation (it is assumed festival level teams will require a steerer).
- Teams must race with a minimum of 16 paddlers in the boat.
- For each person a mixed team is short for the gender requirement a person of the other gender must sit as well (e.g., a mixed team with only 9 women may only race 9 men, even if a 10th man is available).
- If a team does not have the required 20 paddlers, a drummer may be borrowed from another team. If the team has more than 20 paddlers, they must supply their own drummer (regardless of size/weight).

Safety

- PFDs (Personal Flotation Device) will be provided and must be worn in practices and races. Premier teams may use inflatable devices at this festival. A paddler with their own PFD may use it, so long as it meets the requirements laid out in this document. The marshalling official may reject any personal PFD if these requirements are not met. In this case, the paddler will need to use a regatta PFD.
 - Note: A premier paddler racing on a festival level team will still be required to wear a full PFD.
- Shoes must be worn at all times by all paddlers, drummers and steerspersons.
- Each crew member is solely responsible for his or her own safety during practice sessions and the race itself.
- Any participant standing in the boat prior other than the steerer, during, or after each race (other than for either loading or unloading) is subject to team disqualification at the race director's discretion.
- Team Captains are required to participate in the Captain's Meeting and safety briefing prior to the race commencement.
- In case of emergency medical staff will be on site on the festival grounds. Should a major emergency occur, please call 9-1-1 prior to seeking out the on-site doctor.
- No consumption of alcohol is allowed during racing. Should any team member attempt to get in a boat after consuming alcohol, that paddler will be immediately disqualified and the team will face removal from the festival.

Athlete's Village

- Tents will be provided as part of the registration fee. Team locations within the tent village will be provided one week prior to race day. No tents may be erected by teams in addition to the space provided by the festival.
- No advertising; sales; political endorsement, flags or emblems/language on team jerseys; nor offensive material may occur or be distributed in the event area. The organizers reserve the right to take down or remove any material deemed inappropriate.
- No grills, radios, or alcohol are allowed on site.
- The parking lot at Thompson's Boat Center will be closed to paddlers, however, teams may pull in and drop off supplies prior to parking off-site.

Waivers and Identification

- All crew members must sign a waiver stating they have read and understand the risks of injury associated with Dragon Boat racing and knowingly and freely assume all such risks.
- Waivers must be signed by all participants prior to practice sessions and race activities.
- Copies of photo identification must be available on race day but are not required to be submitted with waivers.

Check-in

- Team Captains must check-in the day of the race to provide final team rosters and any waivers from participants who did not attend a practice session.
- Team Captains will receive a full set of wristbands based on the number of crew listed on the roster for each day.
- Only individuals with wristbands are allowed to walk to the boat loading/unloading area and get on a dragon boat.
- No replacement wristbands will be provided to paddlers who take off their wristband.

Cross-Rostering

- Paddlers may race on one and only one mixed team through the day.
- Paddlers on a mixed team may also participate on one additional open or women's crew.
- Paddlers participating on two different boats must sign each individual team's waiver.
- Paddlers participating on two different boats will be issued two different wristbands (one for each team) and both must be worn at all times.
- No boat will be held at the dock to wait for a paddler already on the water with a second team, nor will race schedules be adjusted to accommodate teams racing people on multiple boats. This rule will be strictly enforced so please consider this fact when deciding on multiple team participation.
- Any paddler caught racing for a team in violation of the above will be disqualified from further participation in the event and the violating team will be subject to possible disqualification based on when the issue is identified and at the race directors discretion.

Race Plan

- Check-in, Captain's Meeting, Marshalling and Round 1 Heat start times will be sent to team captains and posted on the website the week prior to race day.

- Race organizers will direct teams on procedures for marshalling, loading, starting procedures during team practices and Captain's meeting.
- Each team will race at least four times on Saturday.
- The pace of the race can be accelerated or delayed based on many external factors. Approximate Marshalling times for Semi-final and Final Rounds will be posted after completion of prior Round but Team Captains should listen for Heat announcements for confirmation.
- Time trials will be run for both the 200m and 500m. So, teams qualifying in the A division in the 200m may not qualify for the A division in the 500m. Finals for each distance will be seeded independently.
- All matters not specifically addressed in the "Rules and Regulations" will be determined by the Event Organizer

Inclement Weather & Cancellation

- The race will proceed rain or shine.
- In the event of lightning in the area, racers will be pulled off the water until it is determined that it is safe to proceed.
- The event organizers will attempt to complete the full race program, but should inclement weather cause delays, the race program will be modified at the organizers discretion to complete racing on time. This may include the elimination of races as needed to get back on schedule.
- *In the unlikely event the race needs to be cancelled in its entirety due to reasons outside the organizers control (e.g., flooded river conditions), no refunds will be provided to teams.*

Award Ceremony

- Award ceremony will follow the last race of the day on Saturday.
- Medals:
 - The top three teams from the each major division championship race will be awarded medals and a trophy.
 - The top one team from each minor division championship race will be awarded medals and a trophy.
 - A cup will be awarded for teams winning challenge races.
 - Additional medals or awards may be distributed based on division composition (e.g., BCS or youth medals may be awarded separately).