



Corporate Dragon Boat

Captain's Starter Kit

PUTTING TOGETHER A WINNING CORPORATE DRAGON BOAT CREW

Captains Starter Kit contents:

- ❑ This Presentation
- ❑ Introduction to DB / Dragon Boat 101 presentation
- ❑ Crew Health/Fitness Survey (more applicable for a competitive crew)
- ❑ Sample Roster Assignment / Balancing Spreadsheet / Smartphone Apps
- ❑ Sample Team Kick-Off Meeting Agenda
- ❑ Sample Practice Scheduling Spreadsheet (to find optimal date/time)
- ❑ Sample Practice Agenda
- ❑ Sample Race Weekend (final) Team Communications
- ❑ Contact Info for Team Jerseys / Optional Equipment

Note: use what is helpful / disregard the rest – tailor it to your needs
most of it is to just give you ideas!

AZDBA Offer:

- ❑ If your company has never participated in a Festival before and you are planning on registering three (3) or more boats at the Festival
 - ❑ AZDBA can send a representative to your company to go over this material in a face-to-face meeting with you and your team (approximately 1 hour)
 - ❑ AZDBA can also come in to do a Dragon Boat 101 presentation (30-45 mins) at your Team Kick-Off Meeting to talk about the basics of Dragon Boat racing.
 - ❑ We will also assign you a “Captain’s Buddy” to be a consultant to you in case you have any questions or just need to bounce ideas off that person – or just vent!
- ❑ This personalized sessions will allow you and your team to interact and ask questions to go over details
- ❑ Please contact AZDBA at festivalteams@azdba.org for more information

Why Dragon Boat Racing?

- ❑ It's a cool, hip, unique, sport that is exploding in popularity across North America! Be a part of the growing and popular trend
 - ❑ There are typically 30 or so Corporate teams that are entered each year at the AZDBA Dragon Boat Festival – join the fun!
- ❑ It's a great way to keep fit, meet new people, build team unity and camaraderie within your organization without a huge commitment (2 practices, then race weekend)
- ❑ It's incredibly FUN!

AZDBA Dragon Boat Festival

- ❑ The annual AZDBA Dragon Boat Festival is typically held on the last weekend of March each year – over 100 Corporate and Year-Round Club Crews participate
- ❑ Started with 6 companies – has grown to 30 corporate teams!
- ❑ When you register a Corporate Boat – this allows you to compete with all other boats registered in the Corporate Division of the Festival
 - ❑ The Corporate races are all 250m in distance, and roughly takes 1:30 to complete a 250m race.
 - ❑ There will typically be a preliminary seeding race, followed by a Semi-Finals, and a Finals – 3 total races
 - ❑ Corporate Races are from 8am – 4:30pm, on Saturday only
 - ❑ There are medals awarded for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place teams in each division (medal ceremony ~ 5pm Sat)

Why is a Captains Starter Kit needed?

- ❑ The captain is essentially the logistics person who will coordinate the activities of the team. There is a lot to do ...
- ❑ While there is a lot to do, you don't have to do all of it – delegate to people who you trust will be able to help out with the details.
- ❑ The Captain is NOT the Coach – coaching the team is not a part of your responsibility. It is a separate activity, and AZDBA will assign a coach for your team.
- ❑ The rest of this presentation will discuss the role and responsibilities as a Captain for your Corporate Dragon Boat Team.

Are you ready to rock and roll ?

Funding for the Team

- ❑ The major costs for entering a Dragon Boat Crew at the Festival:
 - ❑ **Boat Registration** - Check the website for pricing for a 20-paddler Dragon Boat Crew in the Corporate Division (\$100 discount for early bird registration – by 1/31)
 - ❑ **Team Jerseys** - \$10-\$50 (per jersey) depending on how fancy you want to get. You can do anything from inexpensive T-shirts to full-blown 4-Color Dye-Sublimation racing jerseys w/ your company logo and personal customization. Make it fun by having a design contest!
 - ❑ **Team Tent(s)** – \$99-\$300 most teams use a couple of 10x10 pop-up canopy type tents. AZDBA allows 2 per registered boat. You can find inexpensive ones at Harbor Freight, and more sturdier ones from Costco. See if you can borrow a couple from people on your team to lower costs.
 - ❑ **Food/Snacks/Drinks** – this is highly dependent on what you decide to do. Minimally, you can fill up a large McDonalds cooler with ice water and bring light snacks, or you might decide to do a full-blow grill station. Recommend doing high-energy snacks to fuel your teams performance throughout race day – e.g. fruit, nuts, protein bars, trail mix, etc..

Funding for the Team (cont.)

❑ Sources for funds:

- ❑ **Employee Perk Programs** – most companies will have an Employee Fun/Perks type of program. If you are lucky enough to work at a company that has one, contact the coordinator to see if they would be willing to sponsor the entire budget or possibly even defray some of the larger costs e.g. boat registration and team jerseys.
- ❑ **Immediate Work Group** – if the team you are putting together is from the same work unit, see if the manager of your group/division would be willing to sponsor the team. Tell them it's a great way to do Team Building and to build camaraderie, as Dragon Boat Racing is often called the Ultimate Team Sport.
- ❑ **Do Fundraising as a Team** – there are many ways to raise funds yourself as a group. There are things you guys can sell, or have co-workers who are not participating sponsor some of the crew members. Get creative with it!
- ❑ **Pay your own way** – at the end of the day, it will be approximately \$75 (registration + jerseys) for each paddler to pay their own way. This is close to what you would pay to run in 10k/Marathon/Spartan race/Tough Mudder race.

Recruiting your Team

- ❑ A Corporate Dragon Boat Crew consists of 20 paddlers + up to 5 alternates
 - ❑ Employees of your company and immediate family members are allowed on your team
 - ❑ Each Corporate team is required to have at least 8 females
- ❑ Fun vs Competitive? Determine the “personality” of your crew
 - ❑ Fun does not mean Non-competitive, and Competitive does not mean it won't be Fun
 - ❑ Fun: random drawing for crew, first-come, first-served, fair selection, minimal practices (2)
 - ❑ Competitive: picking the best people physically suited for an anaerobic race, extra practices
- ❑ Recruiting Methods
 - ❑ Work with your Company Employee Perk Group/Program
 - ❑ Company employee newsletter / e-zine
 - ❑ Post notices in company public areas: break room, coffee station, gym, ...
 - ❑ Personal recruiting

Recruiting your Team (cont.)

- ❑ Smaller companies will find it a challenge to even fill the boat (20 paddlers)
- ❑ Larger companies will sometimes have too many – if you this problem...
 - ❑ Look for creative ways to filter out people – e.g. communicate that a firm commitment is expected – 2 (or more) practices, and all day Saturday for races
 - ❑ Consider using extra people as alternates or rotate people through the boat for different races – you are allowed up to 25 paddlers in a crew.

Recruiting your Team (cont.)

*Finding the best people for a **Competitive** Crew*

- ❑ 250m Dragon Boat race is like a 200m sprint in Track and Field
 - ❑ Short and highly anaerobic
 - ❑ ~90-100 strokes to complete
 - ❑ 1:00 – 1:30 to complete
- ❑ Look for strong people – look for the gym rats, weight-lifters, ex-college FB players, ...
- ❑ Look for people in good cardio health – marathon/10K/5K runners, cyclists, tennis players, basketball players, ...
- ❑ Look for a combination of both – Cross-Fit athletes, Spartan / Tough Mudder race runners
- ❑ Consider doing a survey asking for:
 - ❑ Height/Weight – can determine base fitness levels through “BMI”-ish methods
 - ❑ Weekly Workout Regimen – are they currently active and fit?
 - ❑ Dancing/Music skills – timing/sync is key in a DB; Do they have rhythm / Can they hold a beat?

Consider a Team Kick-Off Meeting

- ❑ Important to get everyone on the same page from the beginning
 - ❑ Introduce the sport – Dragon boat 101 (AZDBA can help here by coming into your company to do a 1 hour presentation – just ask!)
 - ❑ Talk through some of the logistics: 2 practices (dates/times), race weekend (all day Saturday).
- ❑ Set the expectations and commitments for being a part of the crew
 - ❑ Practices/commitment, being a team player/attitude, ...
- ❑ Meeting Logistics (will be challenge to get 20-25 people together)
 - ❑ Face-to-Face is best so that crew gets to know each other
 - ❑ Teleconference if you have to
 - ❑ Consider a HH or teambuilder to make it fun!

Team Jerseys

- ❑ Not mandatory, but makes team look sharp, increases cohesiveness/team unity, and strengthens morale
 - ❑ Can be simple t-shirts with company logo and/or an accompanying design, or as complex as 4-color dye-sub Dri-Fit Racing Jersey.
 - ❑ Make sure its Ok with your company's legal dept that its Ok to use their logo for this purpose.
 - ❑ You will need to decide how much money you (and team) are willing to spend
 - ❑ T-shirts will run anywhere from **\$10-\$20** / Racing Jerseys will run **\$25 - \$75** depending on quality/complexity
 - ❑ Allocate about 1-2 weeks to come up with and finalize a design; Start in early Jan, especially if design is complex
- ❑ Consider the Lead Times for manufacturing
 - ❑ Simple T-shirts will take less than **1-2 weeks** or so; Multi-color dye-sub can take up to **3-4 weeks**
 - ❑ This is just the time it takes to make the shirts/jerseys once the order is placed. Shipping is extra time.
 - ❑ Note: if you are ordering from Asia (e.g. Alibaba) for cost savings, consider 2 additional weeks for shipping and note every factory shuts down for Chinese New Years (for 2 weeks): ~end of Jan/ ~beginning Feb
- ❑ Most T-Shirt and Jersey suppliers will have on-line design tools – e.g.
 - ❑ T-Shirts: [Spreadshirt](#) has a pretty [sophisticated on-line designer](#); A ton of other suppliers have similar
 - ❑ Racing Jerseys: [Ascend](#) has [online 3D tools](#) and [ATAC Sportwear](#) has [similar tools](#)
 - ❑ Local Tempe supplier (Eclipse Paddles) also does Custom Team Jerseys – sales@eclipsepaddles.com
 - ❑ You don't have to start from scratch! There are a ton of template designs to start from!

Other Equipment

- ❑ AZDBA will provide all the other essential equipment
 - ❑ Festival paddles are wooden paddles from Grey Owl
 - ❑ PFD (personal floatation device) are required by AZDBA to be worn on/near water
 - ❑ These are supplied free of charge during practices/festival races
- ❑ Competitive teams may consider Carbon Fiber Paddles
 - ❑ CF Paddles are much, much lighter than wooden paddles and give your crew an edge
 - ❑ CF Paddles are expensive - \$150 (Z&J) to \$300 per paddle (ZRE, Burnwater, Hornet, Trivium)

Setting the Roster / Line-up

- ❑ This is the captains role, or you can delegate to the coach
- ❑ You will need to assign people in Rows 1 – 10, two paddlers per row (left and right)
- ❑ Accommodate for injuries and other physical limitations (left/right positions)
- ❑ **Strokes / Pacers / Timing Box – Rows 1, 2, 3**
 - ❑ Great cardio health – runners (marathon / 5k / 10k) – can't stop paddling / sets timing info for rest of boat
 - ❑ Great timing / sync – these paddlers need to have the best sense of rhythm / timing
 - ❑ Smaller in (physical) stature as boat narrows at the front
- ❑ **Engine Room – Rows 4, 5, 6, 7**
 - ❑ Strongest – weightlifters, gym rats, ex-college ballers
 - ❑ Provides most of the power / propulsion / force that moves the boat forward
 - ❑ Largest in (physical stature) as boat is widest in the middle
- ❑ **Terminators – Rows 8, 9, 10**
 - ❑ For an experienced crew – best/strongest/most experienced paddlers (fast moving water)
 - ❑ For a corporate crew – whoever doesn't fit Stroke/Engine room criteria
 - ❑ Smaller in (physical) stature as boat narrows at the rear

Setting the Roster / Line-up (cont.)

- ❑ Balance the weight in the boat
 - ❑ Should be as balanced as possible Left to Right
 - ❑ Up to ~25 lbs. differential is Ok
 - ❑ Experienced AZDBA Steersperson can compensate by shifting their weight
 - ❑ Should be fairly evenly balanced Front to Back (although slightly back loaded is Ok)
- ❑ Balance the “power” in the boat (Advanced)
 - ❑ Having an uneven balance of power in paddlers will cause boat to veer in one direction and cause the steers person to compensate by turning the boat. This effectively puts a brake in the water
 - ❑ Try to match up people's strength on a per-row basis (best effort)
- ❑ Use the sample Roster Spreadsheet or PaddlesUp! App (IOS/Android)
 - ❑ Balances weight Left to Right
 - ❑ Finds center of gravity of boat for Front to Back balance – should be slightly rear loaded

Setting up the Practices

- ❑ You are allowed 2 practices with your Corp Boat Registration
 - ❑ Additional practices can be purchased for \$100 per session
 - ❑ Most practice time slots occur on Saturday and Sundays, although weekdays are available as well
 - ❑ Request / Sign up for 2 time slots – the Festival Corporate Coordinator will allocate based on availability for practice schedule
- ❑ Setting the dates/times will be the most difficult challenge
 - ❑ Dealing with schedules of 20-25 busy people – expect that you won't get 100% participation
 - ❑ Consider using sample Google Sheet to get everyone's schedule in March to find most optimal days
 - ❑ Weekends typically are most convenient day for most, as is beginning/end of day for the time slot
- ❑ Setting practices as close to festival as possible maximizes paddler training / knowledge retention
 - ❑ Last two Saturdays before festival are most popular days for Corporate practices

Setting up the Practices (cont.)

- ❑ The AZDBA coach assigned to your Corporate Boat will provide all the land / water instruction for your crew. They will cover:
 - ❑ Safety and Equipment (Paddle / PFD) Usage
 - ❑ Land / Lake Etiquette
 - ❑ Boat Commands / Basic Paddling Technique
 - ❑ Boat Start Sequence / Timing Drills
- ❑ Some Logistics...
 - ❑ Meet either in Marina Lot where boats are stored or near boat docks / grassy knoll area. Your crew may need to help launch/return boats if necessary.
 - ❑ Feel free to set up team table (water/snacks) on grassy area
 - ❑ Provide the roster to the coach at this time, or let them set the roster for your boat

Before Race Weekend

❑ Team Logistics

- ❑ Figure out food situation (lunch/snacks/water)
 - ❑ Recommend shared responsibility – have sign-up sheet and have everyone bring something
 - ❑ Catering, nearby restaurant take-out, or even BBQ/grill station are options, but make sure there is a point person assigned. You and paddlers will be too busy on race day to do this. Recommend family member or someone not racing
- ❑ Parking is a challenge – assume most people who drive in will be parking at least a mile from race site – allocate 30 mins from parking car to team tent
 - ❑ Use Lot 59 shuttle as an alternative
 - ❑ Recommend to paddlers to carpool or being dropped-off, esp. if have food/snacks/equipment to carry in
- ❑ Don't forget tables, chairs, blankets, sunblock, caps/hats, water bottles
- ❑ Recommend leaving valuables at home; bring at your own risk

Before Race Weekend (cont.)

- ❑ Make sure your Official Roster and all required AZDBA waivers are turned in by the deadlines set by Festival Corporate Coordinator
- ❑ Consider setting up your Team Tent / Tables on Friday before Race to avoid hassles on race day
 - ❑ Team Tent area will be marked out for you (allowed 2 10'x10' pop-up canopy tents per crew/boat)
 - ❑ Festival Corporate Coordinator will send you exact location for your team tent week of festival/race
- ❑ Pick up your Race collateral from Festival Corporate Coordinator on Friday
 - ❑ Crew ID Wrist-Bands
 - ❑ Each paddler will be ID'ed with scanner before each race to insure they are on official roster.
 - ❑ Hand out on race day in morning to prevent them being forgotten/lost/misplaced
 - ❑ If they are not worn by paddler when marshalling, they do not race!
 - ❑ Captain's Parking Pass
 - ❑ allows you to park in VIP TTL Marina parking area close to race site
 - ❑ You should bring all the heavy equipment, food stuffs in your car, as you will be closest to Team Tent
- ❑ Race grids (race times for Saturday) will be sent out the week of the festival/race
- ❑ Send out any last minute reminders, instructions, encouragement, and logistics/info to team

Race Day

- ❑ Set clear expectations on when team should arrive – there are stragglers on every team.
 - ❑ Plan scheduled arrival time based on Race Grid times for your team – earlier you race, earlier you should arrive to Team Tent
 - ❑ Allow time for last minute strategy/pep talk, team pictures, team warm-up exercises, and/or any other activities you plan for your team that morning
- ❑ Captain's meeting at 7:30am for final race instructions – you...mandatory
- ❑ Race (preliminary heat, semi-finals, finals) Logistics
 - ❑ Know exactly when your races are – post next race time in team tent
 - ❑ Post / communicate Roster (if different than practices) before each race
 - ❑ Team should be near Team Tent as next race approaches
 - ❑ Teams are required to show up 30-45 mins to the Marshalling tent. Don't be late!
 - ❑ Communicate that if a team does not have minimum 8 female paddlers for each race when marshalling, they will be DQ'ed

Race Weekend (cont.)

- ❑ Race times / Results
 - ❑ posted on Result Board near boathouse in real-time after each race has concluded
 - ❑ alternatively online with Racelt! – bestwave.com/tempe
- ❑ Stay hydrated and fuel your paddlers with high-energy snacks
- ❑ Stay in the shade – weather should be fantastic, but sun exposure will sap your energy like nothing else
- ❑ ... Most importantly....
 - ❑ **HAVE FUN!**
 - ❑ and possibly WIN SOME BLING!

Post Race

- ❑ If you came in 1st, 2nd, or 3rd in any Corporate Division Finals (A, B, C, or D)
 - ❑ Congratulations! You guys are awesome!
 - ❑ Stick around for Medal Ceremony at end of day– you won some BLING!!
 - ❑ Don't forget to give your coach and drummer a medal – you have 25 to dole out
- ❑ Consider a Celebration HH or Team Dinner
 - ❑ Relax, unwind, and chill out – re-live and recap the day's events
 - ❑ There are some great venue's around TTL / Tempe (some may require reservations)
 - ❑ McFate's Brewery (north of TTL on Scottsdale Road)
 - ❑ The Yard / Culinary Dropout complex (Tempe near ASU)
 - ❑ Minder Binders (South of TTL, east of Scottsdale Road)
 - ❑ Loco Patron / Mill Ave venues
 - ❑ Philly's Sports Bar (Scottsdale Road just North of TTL)
- ❑ Start planning for next year!

Corporate Captain's Time Line

❑ December

- ❑ Decide how you will fund the team, and make arrangements to secure the funding or start the process

❑ January

- ❑ (beginning Jan) - Fund raising should be either secured or in full swing by now
- ❑ (mid-Jan)
 - ❑ Decide what you are going to do for Team Jerseys, especially if a jersey manufacturer requires a longer lead time (note Chinese New Years if supplier in Asia)
 - ❑ Start getting the word out that you are forming a team and start recruiting
- ❑ (late Jan)
 - ❑ Register your team for the Festival by end of Jan to take advantage of the \$100 off for early bird registration.

❑ February

- ❑ (beginning -Feb) Have your full team recruited. Have some alternates in case people drop out.
- ❑ (mid-Feb) Have a Team Kick-Off Meeting to introduce the team to each other, and level-set the expectations of the entire crew. Do a Dragon Boat 101 presentation as most of the people will be new to the sport
- ❑ (late Feb)
 - ❑ Have an idea what your line-up/roster will be. There will be time to tweak after the practices and before race weekend.
 - ❑ The jerseys should be secured by now.
 - ❑ If your roster/lineup is set, submit your roster to AZDBA through their online submission tool.

Corporate Captain's Time Line (cont.)

□ Beginning March

- Determine the best dates/times to schedule your 2 practices and determine if more are desired/needed. Practice slots will start filling up quickly so get this done asap.

□ Mid March

- Have your logistics set (tents and food – including who is responsible for what)
- Submit your final roster to AZDBA
- Complete your 2 practices – ideally they would be the 2 weekends prior to race weekend so that things are fresh in their minds

□ Week of Race Weekend

- Receive Race Grids, Parking info, Team Tent location from AZDBA Corporate Festival Director via email.
- Send out final team communications – logistics (team tent location, parking info, arrival time, food/snack/water assignments if applicable, reminders on what to else to bring)

□ Day Before Race Weekend

- Tent setup at Festival – take a couple of volunteers down to lake to setup your corporate tent at your designated spot
- Pick up your Parking Pass and crew ID wrist bands (your paddlers must be wearing these on race day or they don't paddle)

□ Race Weekend

- As captain, come early to bring rest of equipment, food, etc.. In your car, and do a drop-off at your tent
- Go to Captain's Meeting at 7:30am
- The hay is in the barn – just go out and have some fun!