

Introduction to Dragon Boating



Agenda

- Introductory Video
- About Dragon Boating
- Anatomy of a Dragon Boat
- Dragon Boat Sections / Roles
- Dragon Boat Safety
- Dragon Boat Etiquette
- Basic Dragon Boat Commands
- Dragon Boat Seating Position / Body Posture
- Dragon Boat Paddling Technique (Stroke Breakdown)

2014 AZDBA Festival Video



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t85wUMUcdNg>

About Dragon Boating

- Originated in Southern China over 2000 years ago, as a part of religious and folk ritual ceremonies
- Has emerged in modern times as an international sport, beginning in Hong-Kong in the 70's
- Today, it is one of the fastest growing team sports in North America, incredibly popular as a recreational and highly competitive sport.
- There are currently two major governing bodies for Dragon Boating that hold annual world-wide competitions/championships
 - International Dragon Boat Federation (IDBF)
 - International Canoe Federation (ICF)

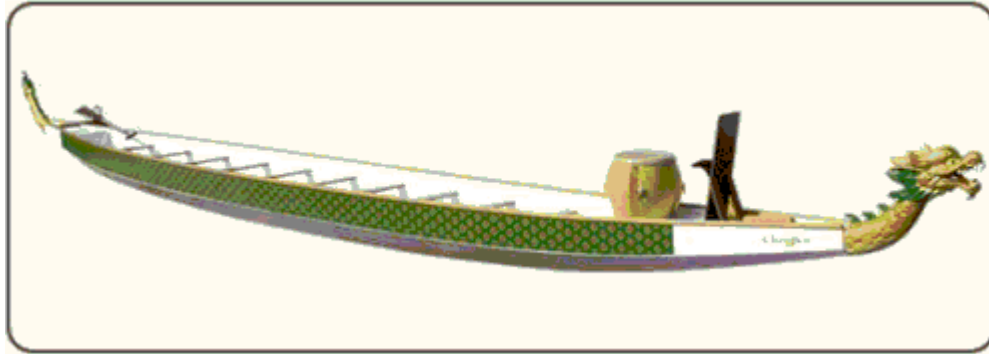
The Ultimate Team Sport

Dragon Boating has been called the “ultimate team sport” and it draws a lot of parallels from the corporate world in terms of a team working together to achieve a common goal.

- Within the boat, there are sub-teams with different roles and responsibilities.
- Each section has a unique role, and no section / role is more important than the others. Each does their job to work towards the common goal of winning the race together.
- Timing and synchronization of the paddlers is the most important part of Dragon Boat paddling. Above all, the team must synchronize and paddle in unison.
- Effective communications is fostered within the team to insure everyone is on the same page and executing to the best of their abilities.
- Any one person not doing their job will reduce the overall ability of the rest of the team to execute to their best.

Anatomy of a Dragon Boat

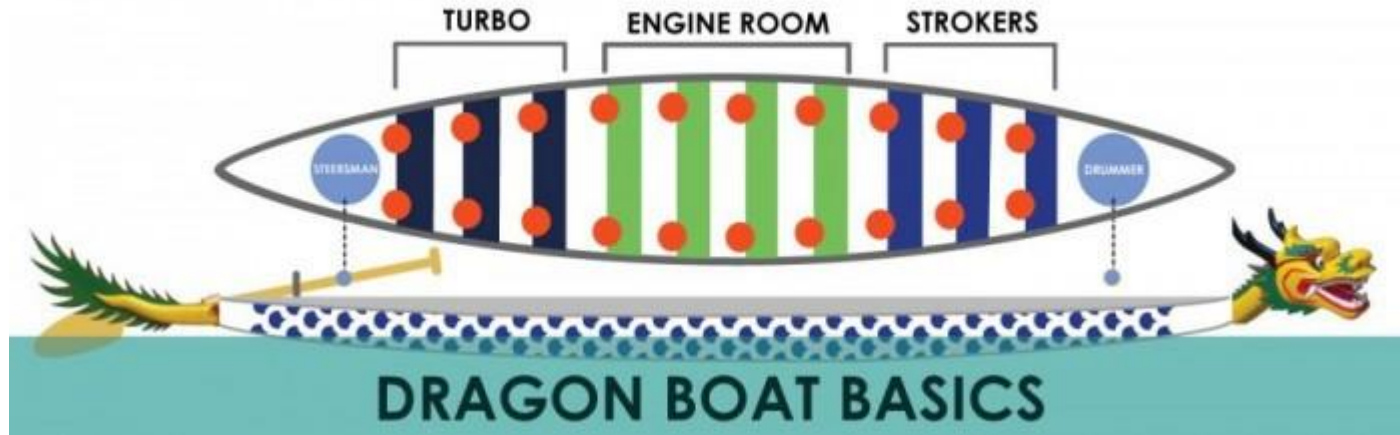
- The Dragon Boat you will be racing in has room for 20 paddlers (2 paddlers sit side-by-side in a row w/ 10 rows of benches), a steersperson (steer is 100% responsible for the safety of the crew) in the back, and the drummer sitting in a small chair in the front providing a beat for timing/synchronization
- The boat looks like this:



- Its Paddling, not Rowing – they are completely different!

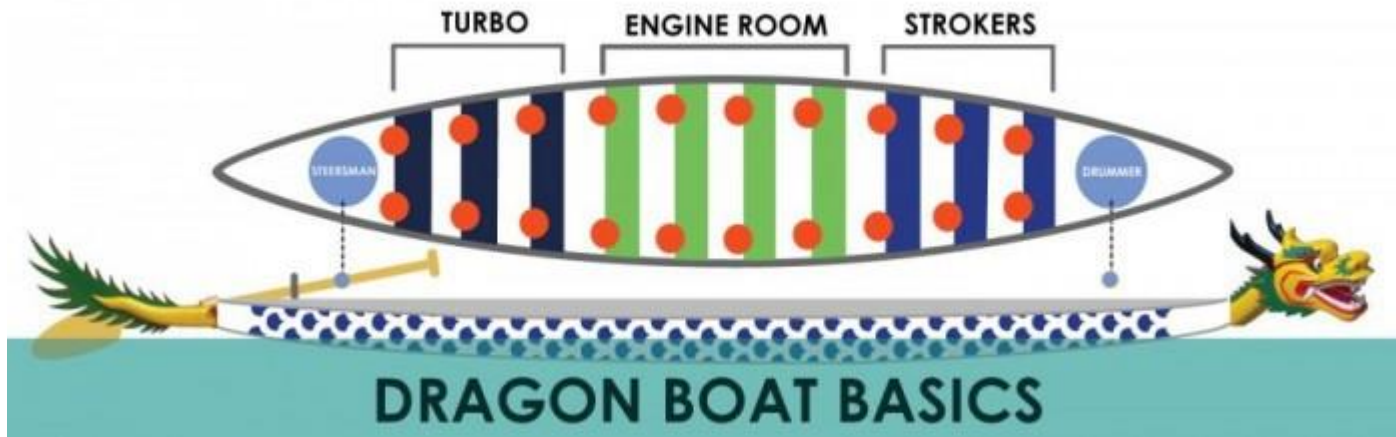
Dragon Boat Sections / Roles

- 20-seat boat is 46 ft long, 3.5 ft wide, and 550 lbs
- 1 Drummer, 1 Steersperson, and 20 paddlers
- Paddling seats are broken up into 3 sections
- Every section is crucial to the success of the team



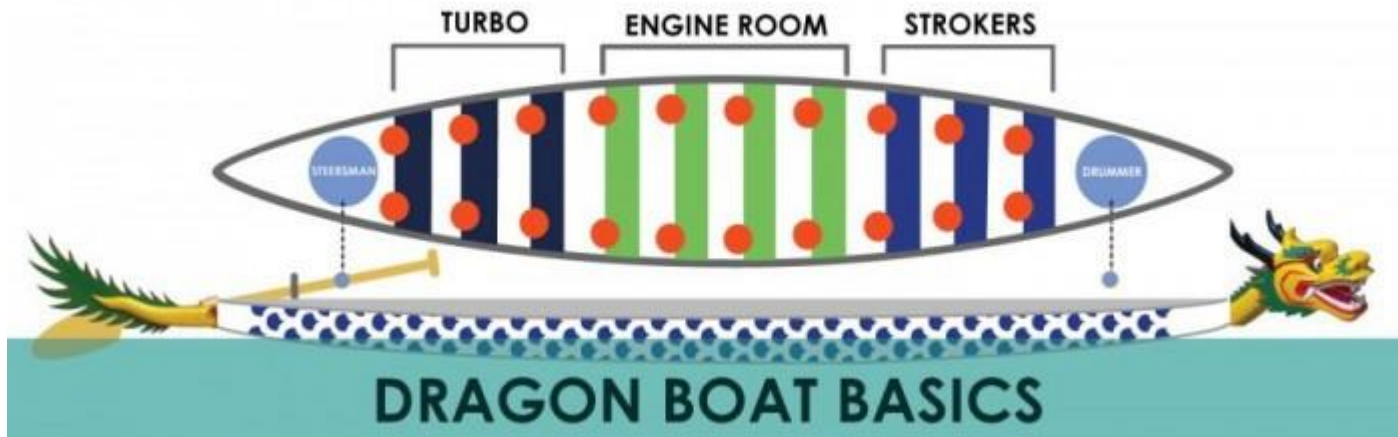
Dragonboat Sections / Roles

- Rows 1-3 (6 paddlers) - **Pacers** or **Strokers**. They provide the timing/synchronization for the rest of the boat, and need to have good cardio endurance.
- Rows 4-7 (8 paddlers) - **Engine Room**. Usually, they are the heavier, stronger paddlers, and provide the most muscle and power to propel the boat forward.
- Rows 8-10 (6 paddlers) - **Turbo** or **Terminators**. They need to be pound-for-pound, the strongest and most cerebral paddlers in the boat.



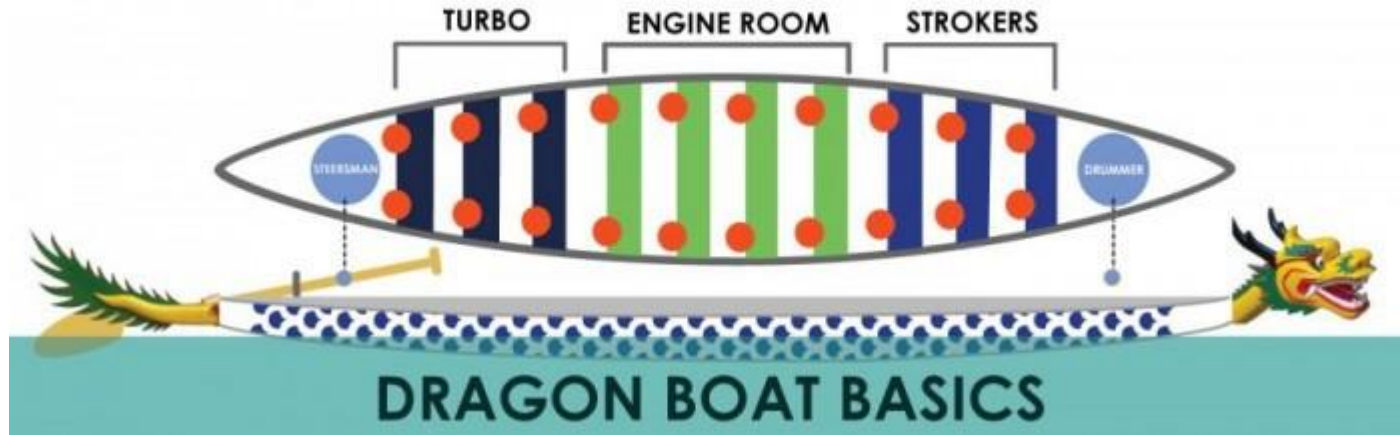
Dragonboat Sections / Roles

- **Drummer** - provides the beat that synchronizes the paddlers to paddle in unison
- **Steersperson** - steers the boat. The steersperson is also 100% responsible for the safety of the crew, and as such, they are the final authority in the boat.
- Every section and every paddler is crucial to the success of the team. There is no one person, paddler, or section that is more significant than the others. Each has a role to play, and the crew will not experience success unless everyone is fulfilling their role to the overall team goals.



Dragon Boat Sections / Roles

- Paddlers are assigned a role in the boat based on:
 - Weight / size
 - Strength
 - Cardio fitness



Dragon Boat Safety

In case of an emergency (boat capsizes and paddlers go into water)

1. Know the Defensive Safety Position - to protect your head
 - Cover your head with both your arms
 - Prevents injury to your head (from boat) as you come up out of the water
2. Find your seat partner
 - You are responsible for knowing where your row mate is at all times
 - Introduce yourself if you don't know them after you find your seat.
3. Find (and stay with) the boat
 - Do not attempt to swim for shore / best scenario is to stay with the boat
 - Hold onto the boat - it will still float regardless of how swamped it is
4. Wait
 - The steersperson will guide the crew as to the next steps
 - Marina patrol will be called or a nearby boat will be flagged down to assist

Dragon Boat Etiquette

- Dragon Boats in general are not the most stable watercraft. With a lot of lateral movement in the boat, they can easily overturn / capsize
 - Avoid excessive weight shifting (side-to-side) in the boat
 - Your butt should always be up against the gunwale, and otherwise fixed in the same spot on the bench (no sliding around)
 - If you are the only person in a row, never suddenly slide over from one side to the other - we balance the boat - any shift will break that.
 - Do not celebrate when we cross the finish line (wait till we get back to the dock)
- When getting into the boat, step onto the floor of the boat and not the seat
- Steersperson will direct you in and out of the boat in an orderly fashion

Dragon Boat Commands

- ***“Paddles Up!”*** - all paddlers hold paddles up in “A-frame” position to prepare to start paddling - the ready position



Dragon Boat Commands

- ***“Take It Away!”*** / ***“Go”*** - start paddling!



Dragon Boat Commands

- ***“Let It Ride!”*** - stop paddling and rest paddles in your lap
 - or equivalently -
- ***“Rest Easy”*** - resting position with paddles in your lap



Dragon Boat Commands



- ***“Stop the Boat” / “Hold Hard”*** - hold paddle vertical in water with enough strength to keep it immobile - will stop the boat quickly
- ***“Slow the Boat”*** - drag the paddle behind you with the blade flat against water causing the boat to slow down.

Dragon Boat Commands

- ***“Flare the Boat”*** - extend and hold the paddle directly out the side of the boat w/ blade flat on surface of water (just under)
 - steadies the boat so that people can move around in the boat in a stable fashion
 - Used when we change sides half-way through the practice (to give both sides of your body an equal workout)
- ***“Prepare to Back” / “Back Paddle”*** - used to propel the boat in reverse
 - Hold paddle behind you, then draw water forward
 - Paddling in reverse - stay in sync with everyone else
 - Very short stints - usually only needed for dock maneuvering

Dragon Boat Seating Position



- ***Butts against gunnel*** - outer hip should be pressed up against / connected to side of boat at all times
- ***Outside foot forward***
braced against forward foot hold, just under forward seat
- ***Inside foot tucked under seat***

This posture allows you brace yourself and provides you the maximum reach - to extend your paddle blade as far forward as possible

Dragon Boat Stroke Phases

- **Setup (#1) - initial (Paddles Up) position**
 - *Rotate (Twisting of Torso at Hip) / Turn your back to the water*
 - *Reach forward*
- **Catch - paddle entry into water (setting up for pull)**
 - *Begin - moment when blade first bites into the water*
 - *End - setting up for the pull - paddle is vertical (#2)*
- **Pull - explosive power phase of paddle stroke**
 - *Begin - rotated torso, body leaning forward, arm straight*
 - *End - untwisted torso, body sitting back up, arm straight (#3)*
- **Exit (#4) - removing the paddle from the water**
- **Recovery - recreate “A-Frame” at beginning of every stroke**

Dragonboat Paddle Technique



Slow-motion Full Stroke (00:18 - 00:35)

#1 - Setup - 00:23

#2 - Catch - 00:26

#3 - Pull - 00:30

#4 - Exit - 00:31

Recovery - 00:31-00:35

Dragonboat Paddle Phases

- **Setup (#1) - initial (Paddles Up) position**



- **“A-Frame” position**
- **Body Rotated** - torso twisted at hip
 - Back should be facing water
 - Chest facing seat partner
- **Reach** - torso and shoulder should lean forward
 - Paddle blade should be 2-3 inches above the water

Dragonboat Paddle Phases

- **Setup (#1) - initial (Paddles Up) position**



- **“A-Frame” position**
- **Body Rotated** - torso twisted at hip
 - Back should be facing water
 - Chest facing seat partner
- **Reach** - torso and shoulder should lean forward
 - Paddle blade should be 2-3 inches above the water

Dragonboat Paddle Phases

- ***Catch - paddle entry into water***



- **Paddle entry should be at thigh of paddler in front of you**
- **Entry angle into water is ~ 60 deg**
- **Torso should be fully rotated, and body should be leaning forward**
 - Your back should be to water
 - Your front should be facing row mate

Dragonboat Paddle Phases

- *Catch (#2) - setting up for the stroke/pull*



- **#2** - when the paddle is now vertical
- Torso should still be fully rotated, and body should be leaning forward
- The “Pull” should be the untwisting (de-rotation) of the torso, and body sitting back up
- Outer arm should be fully straight while pulling back (no bent elbows!)

Dragonboat Paddle Phases

- ***Pull (end #3)** - the explosive power phase of stroke*



- The pull should be parallel with boat with blade “scraping paint”
- **Start of Pull:**
 - Front facing row mate
 - Back facing water
 - Body should be leaning/reached forward
 - Outer arm should be straight
- **End of Pull:**
 - Front facing paddler in front
 - Back facing paddler in the rear of you.
 - Body should be fully upright
 - Outer arm should be straight

Dragonboat Paddle Phases

- **Exit (#3)** - *removing the paddle from the water*



- **Paddle exit from water**
 - Start exit around mid-thigh
 - End exit (completely out of water) by hip
- **Rule-of-thumb: paddle shaft at**
 - 2 o'clock position (sitting left)
 - 10 o'clock position (sitting right)
- **Think about drawing a “sword” out from your hip with your top hand.**

Dragonboat Paddle Phases

- ***Recovery / Return - return to the “Setup” (#1)***



- Paddle blade should cleanly exit the water
- No part of paddle should catch water on the way back to Setup position
- This is the time where you get to breathe and recover

Paddling Etiquette

- When in the boat (in general), eyes should always be trained on coach
- When actively paddling
 - Eyes should always be on the Strokes (Row 1 paddlers) for timing info
 - If your view of Strokes is obscured, look as far forward toward front of boat as possible
 - Eyes should NOT be on your paddle or on the water, or looking down
- Only outer hand holding paddle shaft should be outside of boat
 - Head should be inside boat (inside the gunnel)
 - Inner hand holding paddle handle should be aligned (on top of) with gunnel
- If someone is bumping into you from behind, they are trying to reach forward more, and it is a signal that you need reach farther forward as well
- If your paddle is clacking with someone else - one (or both) are out of sync
 - Both of you should look forward for timing/stroke information
 - Get back in sync with rest of boat