

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL

Official Rules of Racing & Safety Outline • September 19, 2026

Welcome Competitors! Races are held under the strict supervision and control of the **Chief Race Official**, who retains ultimate authority over all racing matters. Let's keep it safe, fair, and fast! 🕒 🏆

RACE DIVISIONS

1. Community Mixed Division

Reserved for local teams with little to no practice or racing experience. ☀️

☀️ **The Ultimate Team Builder:** Dragon boating is the absolute gold standard for corporate and community team building! Because success depends entirely on synchronization rather than individual strength, it forces colleagues to lock into a single rhythm, communicate flawlessly, and pulltogether as one. It is an unforgettable wayto build ironclad trust and morale! 🍷



* Includes 1 practice session the week before the festival with a professional coach to get your team race-ready! 🚣

2. Sport Mixed Division

Reserved for experienced teams who practice and race on a regular basis. 🏆

* Practice slots may be available for traveling teams on Friday evening before the festival.

3. ACS Division

Reserved exclusively for ****All Cancer Survivors****. A division celebrating strength, resilience, and community on the water! 💕

4. Sport Women

Reserved for competitive teams comprised entirely of female paddlers. 🔥

TEAM COMPOSITION RULES

- **Community Mixed:** Max 16 paddlers. Minimum of 6 female paddlers required. 📊
- **Sport Mixed:** Max 20 paddlers. Minimum of 8 female paddlers required. ⚡
- **ACS Division:** Max 20 paddlers. All paddlers must be BCS/ACS survivors. 🎗️
- **Sport Women:** Max 20 paddlers. All paddlers must be female. 👚

- **Roster Notes:** The drummer and steersperson may be male or female for any crew, and do not count toward gender minimums. 🥁🚣
- **Absolute Minimums:** Every single crew must have at least **10 paddlers, 1 drummer, and 1 steersperson** to launch.
- **Age Requirement:** Minimum age for all participants is **12 years old**. 🧑➡️🧑

🕒 RACING & STARTING PROCEDURES

Race Distance: 200 Meters of pure sprint speed! 🏊

The Triple-Race Guarantee: All teams will race exactly **three times** (2 heats + 1 final). Your fastest single heat time dictates your placement. The top 3 times head to the "A" Final, the next 3 to the "B" Final, and so forth. Everyone plays in a final! 🏁

Electronic Timing: All races are tracked with a precise finish line camera. The race officially ends when the **nose of the dragon head** cuts the line! 📷🐉

🚦 The Official Starting Sequence:

1. 🗣️ "We have alignment" — [PAUSE]
2. 🚣 "All paddlers Ready" — [PAUSE]
3. 🛑 "Attention Please" — followed immediately by an **Air Horn Blast!** 📢

⚠️ **Warning: Any team caught jumping the signal with a false start will receive a strict 3-to-5 second time penalty!**

🛡️ SAFETY REGULATIONS

- **PFD Mandate:** Certified Personal Flotation Devices must be worn by all participants. Personal PFDs must be US Coast Guard Approved. If wearing an inflatable PFD, it must be worn properly with the pouch facing front and the belt securely attached. 🧺
- **Valuables Warning:** Leave electronics and jewelry on shore! Organizers are **NOT responsible** for any items lost or water-damaged from paddling or capsizing. 📱❌
- **No Standing:** Paddlers are strictly forbidden from standing up in the boat due to capsize risks—especially at the finish line! 🛑
- **Celebration Penalty:** Over-celebrating elevated capsize risks. Teams capsizing or nearly capsizing due to post-race celebrations will face immediate time penalties or disqualification. 🎉❌

- **Fit to Race:** Staff, volunteers, and committee members reserve the right to sit out any participant deemed unfit (including excessive alcohol consumption, dehydration, injuries, or disrespecting staff). 
- **Medical Issues:** Any illness or injury must be reported to medical staff immediately. Their decisions regarding event restriction are final. 

FESTIVAL ETIQUETTE & SPORTSMANSHIP

All participants are expected to treat officials, volunteers, competitors, and spectators with absolute respect. Any witnessed abuse will be reviewed by the organizing committee and can result in the immediate **expulsion of the participant or the entire crew** from the festival. Respect the rules, respect the judgment of the officials, and keep the spirit of the sport alive! 

 Paddles Up, Hearts Sync'd! Brought to you by CSC & 22Dragons USA!  