

2026 CHICAGO DRAGON BOAT RACE FOR LITERACY



Organized by Chicago Chinatown Chamber of Commerce

Ping Tom Memorial Park, 300 West 19th Street
Saturday, June 20, 2026 | 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.



COMPETITION RULES

RACE COMMITTEE

The top management of the competition shall be in the hands of a Race Committee, which shall consist of:
Chairman
Race Director
Assistant Director(s)

The Race Committee shall:

1. Hear any protest that may be made and settle any disputes that may arise.
2. Decide matters concerning disqualification in cases where the regulations have been broken during the competition. The decision of the Committee shall be based on the Pan American Dragon Boat Association dragon boat rules.

The Race Committee may disqualify any competitor who behaves improperly or who by his/her conduct or speech shows contempt toward the officials, other competitors or onlookers.

A member of the Race Committee may not participate in a judgment connected with his/her team.

OFFICIAL TIMING PROCEDURE

The starter shall be equipped with a radio, which shall be audible to the timers at the finish. At the starter's horn, the clocks will be started. Each lane's clock will be stopped after its boat crosses its finish line. There shall be one backup manual timer for each lane.

1. GENERAL RULES

- **1.1:** Strictly NO VEHICLES ARE ALLOWED ONTO PARK PROPERTY on Friday, June 19, 2026 (Practice Day) and on Saturday, June 20, 2026 (Race Day). The Chicago Chinatown Chamber of Commerce reserves the right to issue a penalty of \$500 and disqualify your team from the boat tournament. Exceptions may be made for teams with disabilities.
- **1.2:** The Team Captain from each team must address all questions and concerns about the event prior to the race day. A grievance may be filed by the team captain only within fifteen (15) minutes of the occurrence. The Race Director will decide what action to take within the rules set forth for that particular event.
- **1.3:** Each team will receive a copy of these and all race rules.
- **1.4:** The Pan American Dragon Boat Association will provide all boats, paddles, life vests, and steersmen. The allocation of boats and paddles shall be at the discretion of Race Officials. No team may choose its boat or equipment, except that the Pan American Dragon Boat Association representatives may allow teams to use their own life vests and steersmen, but not paddles, in their discretion. The officials will not be responsible for any failure of equipment during a race and each team is advised to carefully check the boat and paddles allocated to them before racing. Race Officials will replace damaged equipment at the request of a team before the team leaves the dock or between heats.

- **1.5:** For those athletes demonstrating physical disabilities altering their ability to either grip/hold/use a paddle, they may use an adaptive paddle for use of one upper extremity. For those athletes demonstrating physical disabilities altering their ability to safely sit unsupported in the boat, they may use an adaptive seat to safely support their spine and prevent injury to others.
- **1.6:** Once in the marshaling area or on the race course, teams must obey any reasonable instructions given them by the Race Officials and/or the steersmen.
- **1.7:** Any team that fails to observe these rules may be disqualified.
- **1.8:** The Race Officials reserve the right to refuse any team entry into a race if the team does not comply with the race rules and conduct.
- **1.9:** All competitors **MUST** complete and sign a Team Athletic Waiver and Release of Liability Form in order to qualify in the boat tournament. All competitors must be at least fourteen (14) years of age before race date to compete. All competitors under the age of eighteen (18) must have a parent or legal guardian sign their Team Athletic Waiver and Release of Liability Form.

2. SAFETY

- **2.1:** Each competitor will be required to wear a life jacket while on the loading dock and in a Dragon Boat.
- **2.2:** All team members must wear rubber soled shoes, sandals with back straps, or water shoes. (Bare feet, flip-flops, work boots, cowboy boots, and hard soled shoes are not allowed)
- **2.3:** ALL Team Captains **MUST** attend a Safety and Orientation briefing before the race starts. Your team will not qualify in the boat tournament if Team Captains are absent from this briefing. Exact time will be advised closer to the date.
- **2.4:** It is assumed that all team members and race crew members will at all times conduct themselves in a prudent and safe manner so as to avoid endangering themselves and others either on shore or in a Dragon Boat.
- **2.5:** All paddlers must attend on-shore training prior to entering the boats for racing or practice.

3. THE TEAM

- **3.1:** For each race, each boat requires a minimum of fifteen (15) team members: fourteen (14) paddlers, one (1) drummer.
- **3.2:** For each race, each boat is allowed a maximum of twenty-one (21) team members: twenty (20) paddlers, one (1) drummer.
- **3.3:** A team may have up to twenty-five (25) members on its team roster. Only persons listed on the team roster may participate. The team roster must be turned in prior to the tournament.
- **3.4:** For each race: a) for boats with 20 paddlers, each boat must have no fewer than eight (8) team members of a single biological gender; b) for boats with between 14-19 paddlers, each boat must have no fewer than seven (7) team members of a single biological gender (this includes the drummer).
- **3.5:** Any team member observed by a Race Official to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be removed from racing and cannot be replaced.
- **3.6** Except for the club division, all teams must use our supplied equipment including the paddles. The Pan American Dragon Boat Association may allow the use of paddler-owned life jackets in their discretion. Inflatable PFDs are not allowed. The club division may use their own paddles as long as they are IDBF and USCG approved.

4. MARSHALING

- **4.1:** All teams must be assembled in the Team Marshaling Area and be ready to board thirty (30) minutes before the time of their race.
- **4.2:** Each team's captain must be present in the Team Marshaling Area during the time his/her team is under the control of Race Officials, as a team liaison to officials.
- **4.3:** All teams are under the control of Race Officials from the time they are called to the Team Marshaling Area, or thirty (30) minutes before their next race, whichever is first, and will remain under the control of Race Officials until they have left the Team Marshaling Area after their race.

5. THE RACE

- **5.1:** Each team will participate in three races overall:

Race #1: time trial to determine seeding in the three subdivisions for the recreational division (Dragon, Phoenix, Tiger)

Race #2: a timed heat to determine who advances to the medal round

Race #3: medal round for qualifying teams or timed heat for all others

- **5.2:** Teams will paddle the boat assigned to them by Race Officials and in the lane assigned. In the finals, race lanes will be decided by a flip of a coin.
- **5.3:** If a paddle is dropped during a race, or is broken, the boat continues and the heat counts. If the stern paddle breaks or is dropped, the team may rerun that heat due to an equipment failure. Paddles of team members may be replaced between heats.
- **5.4:** After seeding, teams must follow seeded bracket order. **THIS CANNOT BE CHANGED.**

6. THE START

- **6.1:** Once in the starting area, all racing comes under the control of the starter. Each team must obey commands given by the starter and by Race Officials under the direction of the starter, including the steersmen. Failure to do so may result in disqualification.
- **6.2:** Approximately one (1) minute before the start, a warning will be given, followed by a second warning, then a start signal or command.
- **6.3:** In the event of a false start, a second signal will be given to stop the race or a chase boat will signal to stop. Boats will line up again in the same lanes and the heat will be restarted. If the race is not stopped by the time the boats reach the half way marker, then the race will be re-run within one (1) hour.
- **6.4:** When a team causes a false start, a warning will be given. If a second false start occurs, the race will continue but the team at fault will receive a five (5) second penalty.

7. RACE CONDUCT

- **7.1:** Each boat must remain in its correct lane and must not interfere with the other boat. Any boat interfering with the progress of the other boat will be warned. If such interference warrants, then the offending boat may be disqualified.
- **7.2:** In the event of a "spin out", an equipment failure will be declared and that team may, in the discretion of the Race Officials rerun that heat or use the best time from prior heats. If there is a collision due to a "spin out" by

another boat or interference from a third-party boat, the team may rerun the heat at the discretion of the Race Officials or use the best time from prior heats.

- **7.3:** If in the opinion of the Race Officials, a team appears to have swamped or capsized a boat intentionally or interfered with the other boat, to the same effect, then the offending team will be disqualified from all further event racing, and may be prevented from entering future racing.

8. THE FINISH

- **8.1:** The finishing order of a race and the time taken by each boat will be determined by the official timekeeper and by the Race Officials whose determinations will be in all cases, final.
- **8.2:** Any protest relating to race results must be brought to the attention of the Race Director by the Team Captain within fifteen (15) minutes after disembarking from the boat at the end of that race, including any issues regarding the opposing team or the race conduct.

9. FOOTNOTES/AMENDMENTS

- **9.1:** Pan American Dragon Boat Association Boat is the sanctioning body.
- **9.2:** These rules are adapted from the Official Pan American Dragon Boat Association Racing Rules. In instances of ambiguity over the meaning or application of these rules, or where a situation is not covered by a rule herein, the Pan American Dragon Boat Association rules will govern.
- **9.3:** In all instances, the term 'Race Committee' is interchangeable with 'Race Officials'.
- **9.4:** All communication between Race Officials and teams will be conducted through the Team Captains. Team Captains will be responsible for communicating all necessary information to their respective teams.