

Steel City Dragons

Information Sheet for New Dragon Boaters



Welcome to the Steel City Dragons, the premier dragon boat racing organization in western Pennsylvania!

What we do

We paddle world-champion style dragon boats for recreation and to prepare for regional racing events that occur throughout the summer and fall.

Levels of participation:

You can join us at a level of participation that matches your time, interest, and ability. We have two paddling participation levels: A **recreational program** for occasional paddlers and people who want an easier workout and our **competition program** for people who are interested in a more vigorous training program and who want to race competitively. Whatever the level, having fun is our main goal. We also have a **youth** programs for ages 10-17 and a **breast cancer survivor** program.

When we practice:

- Recreational team: 6:00pm Tues. & Thurs, and 9:00am Sat. (newcomers welcome)
- Competition team: 6:00pm Tues. & Thurs. and 9:00am Sat.
- Breast Cancer Survivors: 6:00pm Wed. & 7:00am Sat.
- Youth team: 6:00pm Mon. & Wed. and 10:30am Sat.

Where we are:

We meet at Fox Chapel Marina at the Fox Chapel Yacht Club, (1366 Old Freeport Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15238).

What it costs:

Newcomers: Free initial session – then the dues are as follows:

Adults (ages 18 and over): \$110 for season. \$95 for 2nd in household. \$75 for 3rd (or more)

Youth (ages 10-17): \$75 for season. \$40 for 2nd (or more) in household

Dues are paid to **Steel City Dragon-Boat Association** and are due by May 15.

Coaching:

Our paddling program is directed by our head coach. He is a regionally recognized expert canoe instructor with certifications in whitewater open canoe and as a level II dragon boat coach. Under our coach's direction, you will quickly learn the simple techniques needed to successfully paddle the dragon boat. How you use your new found skills, whether for recreation, physical workout, or to become a member of the racing team is up to you.

What do dragon boaters do?

The dragon boat is paddled by 20 paddlers sitting two abreast and ten deep. It is steered by our qualified steersman and coxed by our coach or our race-experienced drummer. The key to successful dragon boat paddling is to focus on staying in time with the rest of the crew. Our crew members, a diverse and eclectic group of people from all walks of life, paddle together and party together. There's nothing quite like a cool drink after a hot workout.

Some things to know:

- We try to start practices promptly. When you arrive at practice, report in to the coach. We keep attendance and we seat the boat in the order that people sign in. Practices times range from 60 to 90 minutes from start to finish. Plan to commit for that long per each session.
- Make sure that you tell coach if you are a first timer. If so, you will be directed to the membership coordinator.
- As a newcomer, you will be required to sign a waiver and release from liability form and a membership application. That requires some information that includes your full name, home address, telephone numbers, and email addresses, your age, your weight, your height, and emergency contact information. We will also need to know about all physical restrictions, medical conditions that may be affected by strenuous physical activity, and any medication that you are taking.
- After reporting in and completing the forms, get a lifejacket and a paddle from the equipment bags and standby to warm up.
- When announced, participate in the warm-up drills preparatory to boarding the dragon boat.
- The coach will call out the line up and then direct the crew to board. Boarding is done by seat number. Once assigned, get to know your seat partner and the people around you. They will help you learn the basic maneuvers.
- Once seated in the dragon boat, relax and get ready. Every action throughout the session is performed under the direction of the coach or cox and our steersman. Don't worry that you don't know what to do – just follow directions and you'll pick it up quickly.

Some safety rules that you need to follow:

- No smoking in boathouse, on dock, or in the dragon boat.
- No alcohol in the boathouse, on dock, or in the dragon boat.
- Inebriated persons are not permitted in the dragon boat.
- No running or horseplay is permitted.
- You must wear a lifejacket at all times when you are on the dock and in the dragon boat.
- Once seated, sit with your outside hip planted firmly on the side rail of the dragon boat. Never stand up in the dragon boat unless you are directed to do so by the steersman or the coach.
- Paddles are dangerous devices. They are not batons. Do not twirl them.
- We use the "buddy system" in case of an upset or other mishap. Your seat partner is your buddy. Get to know them because you are responsible for them.

You can learn more about Dragon Boat Operating Safety by reading the On-Water Safety Protocol. Ask a coach for a copy.

For the latest practice schedules and other information, check our website:

www.steelcitydragons.org. Send specific questions to **info@steelcitydragons.org**.