

WELCOME!

TO THE MOV'n DRAGON 2016 ORIENTATION

WHO ARE WE?

More than anything else we are a team! - A group of motivated women who come together to promote physical and mental wellness. We vary in age, background, and boating experience. Some of us paddle for fun or to get fit. Others of us look forward to participating in competitive races. Some are cancer survivors and others have been closely touched by the loss of a loved one to cancer. You DO NOT need to be a cancer survivor to join! If you just want to be a casual paddler, or you want to kick some Dragon butt, come join us. Our goal is to join together for fun, fitness, and friendship, while never losing sight of our need to rise up and fight against cancer.



THE FOUNDING OF THE MID-OHIO VALLEY DRAGON BOAT

Before her death in 2006, from breast cancer, Gretchen Feldmaier, an educator and mentor, recruited a core of her friends to help her vision come true - that of seeing dragon boats on the Mid-Ohio Valley's waterways. Her founding gift established the MOV'n Dragons. The first boat was named Gretchen's Phoenix. A second boat, a smaller 10-seater named Dragonfly, was purchased by the team in 2015.

WHAT IS DRAGON BOATING?

Originating in China more than 2000 years ago, dragon boating was part of a celebration of the revered dragon which people believed would ensure them with bountiful crops and good health. The benefits of dragon boating are so valuable that it is now being suggested as a physical regimen for breast cancer survivors to overcome the side effects of surgery, to provide emotional support and friendship, and to turn survivors into “thrivers”.

Dragon Boating is the mass participation paddle sport of today. Not yet an Olympic sport but heading that way fast, Dragon Boat Racing is a 'team sport'; a very social sport and great fun too! Attractive to the corporate market and as a 'community activity' it is also a high performance sport for elite standard athletes. This ability range in a team sport full of tradition, culture and social interaction is highly desirable in today's world. Dragon Boating is a sport and recreational activity that can be pursued by everyone and anyone of all abilities and at every level of competition. That is the greatness of Dragon Boating.

TEAMWORK

People join teams for all different reasons. Fitness may be your goal for joining our group, or racing with us in some of our planned races may be inspiring to you. However, if you are a recovering cancer patient, have some other physical condition that limits your participation, or just want to practice for recreation, our practices are planned with you in mind. We are a team and will support your goals.

As a team, we work together in many ways. There are duties such as preparing the boat for practice, caring for the equipment, donating time on committees or fund raising, organizing races, supporting our cancer “thrivers”, etc...and coming to our parties! Remember, we have fun and fellowship on and off the boat. By supporting each teammate to reach her goals, (paddling goals or life goals), we are maximizing teamwork.



ANATOMY OF A DRAGON BOAT



#1a #2 #5 #4 #3 #1b

1a and 1b. **The Dragon Head & Tail** – The head and tail of the dragon are part of the tradition of dragon boating. They are removable from the boat. Rarely used in practice but always used when racing in Festivals and competitions.

2. **The Drummer** – The drummer issues commands to the paddlers in the boat or relays the commands from the steerer to the front half of the boat. The drummer does not set the stroke rate and rhythm of the paddlers but follows the rate set by the two front paddlers. During practice, the coach usually takes the seat.

3. **The Steersperson (Sweep)** – The steersperson controls the direction of travel and gives commands to the paddlers during competition. During practices, the steersperson is essential as the lookout for other boat traffic, water debris, and other obstacles. They stand in the back of the boat and use a long wooden sweep oar for steering.

4. **The Paddlers** – A full boat has 20 paddlers sitting in 10 rows of bench seats, 2 per seat. It is the job of the paddlers to power the boat through the water with their paddles. The rate of the stroke is set by the 2 paddlers in row 1. They are called “the strokes”. The 10 rows of seats are also grouped into 3 categories: **Rows 1-3 are Stroke; Rows 4-7 are Engine; Rows 8-10 are Turbo**. This allows the boat to be powered by a smaller number of people for more intricate maneuvers.

5. **The Strokes** – The strokes are the front pair of paddlers and set the rate when paddling. It is essential that all the paddlers follow the front strokes by keeping in time with the rate they set.

The dragon boats were traditionally made of wood, but now modern boats are generally fiberglass, usually 11.5 meters long and 1.16 meters wide (approximately 38 ft X 4 ft). The sides of the boat, called the gunnel, are often adorned with “scales” as part of the dragon look.

Safety Guidelines for Orientation

Swimming Ability

If you are a non-swimmer you need to inform the coach and your seat buddy before pulling away from the dock.

Life Jackets and Paddles

Lifejackets and paddles are available in the boathouse. All paddlers should wear an approved PFD at all times while on the water. (PFD stands for Personal Floatation Device.) Many teammates use their own PFDs and paddles. All team equipment needs to be returned for storage after each practice.

Loading Procedure

Seating positions will be determined by the coach before getting into the boat. The steersperson should ensure that the dragon boat is well balanced, meaning that each pair of paddlers is of similar weight or height and that, generally, the taller pairs are seated in the middle section of the dragon boat.

1. Loading should be done row by row beginning at one end or the other.
2. Only one person should be getting in or out of the boat at a time.
3. When the full team is in the boat, the steersperson will call for a head count. This starts with the drummer or the right stroke, then number off down the boat. Repeat until everyone knows their number.
4. All paddlers should take note of their buddy who will be the person sitting next to them. The 'stroke pair' in the boat are responsible for the Coach/Drummer and the 'rear pair' for the steersperson. Your buddy is the person you will look out for if the boat capsizes. Your buddy's safety depends on you.
5. The boat should be balanced left and right before leaving shore.

In Case of Capsize

Although a rare occurrence, dragon boats can capsize. Familiarize yourself with these few simple guidelines.

1. If the boat gets swamped or capsizes the shell will float. Try to remain calm. Unless otherwise instructed, paddlers should stay with the boat.
2. Use The Buddy System:

- The crew should be numbered off from the front of the boat
- Make sure YOU are ok. Get your head above water. If you come up under the boat, swim under and to the side of the boat, then surface. Hold onto it.
- Find your buddy. Call out to them as they might be on the other side of the boat. If you cannot find your buddy, alert the people around you. Then search for your buddy.
- The steersperson or second in command will do a head count twice. If people are missing, search for them.

And if your crew is practicing without other boats nearby:

1. Distribute yourselves around the boat and hold onto it to stop it from rolling over. Do not swim under the boat to get to the other side, swim around it.
2. Carefully turn the boat right side up, and swim it to the nearest accessible bank. The whole team should move with the boat. Paddlers should not swim on ahead or be left behind. Do several head counts as you swim the boat to shore.
3. When on shore do another head count. If paddlers are missing, call "911" for emergency services.



The Basics – Paddle Grip and Seating Position

The starting point for every paddler should be a good grip on the paddle.



#1

#2

#3

#4

1. T-Bar
2. Shaft
3. Neck
4. Blade

Proper grip on the paddle

Bottom hand – if you are seated on the right side of the boat the bottom hand is your right hand, and vice versa

- Grip the paddle 2-3 fingers above the neck of the paddle.
- The thumb should be wrapped around the opposite side from the fingers
- The grip should be firm but not tight with all fingers around the shaft

Top hand -

- The hand is loosely placed on top of the T-grip
- The thumb is under the T-grip

AND a good seating position

Proper seating position - suggested

- The torso is slightly forward, chin over mid-thigh region
- Gunnel leg is braced against the seat in front or extended forward to push with
- The inside leg is braced for stability against the seat you are sitting on with the knee pointing towards the center of the boat
- Hips are slightly turned with the gunnel hip forward

Each paddler will need to experiment with leg positions to find what works best for their body. Having the feet firmly planted to allow maximum push with the legs is important for powering the stroke of the paddle.

TERMINOLOGY FREQUENTLY USED IN DRAGON BOATING

1. **Quiet in the Boat** – Does this really need definition? Stop talking and pay attention!
2. **Paddlers Ready** – A seated position in which the paddler is ready for action. The torso is angled slightly forward, chin over mid-thigh region. Both legs in paddling position. The paddle rests across the legs and gunnel with the flat blade parallel to the water, at a 45 degree angle to the gunnel.
3. **Attention Please** – In a competitive race it is the starter's call just before "GO!".
4. **Paddles Up** – Position yourself for the drive of the paddle into the water.
5. **Take it Away** – The caller's command to begin paddling.
6. **Let It Run** – Cease paddling and return to Paddlers Ready position
7. **Hold the Boat** – Bury the blade in the water, straight down, to stop the boat.
8. **Back Paddle** – Paddling the boat backwards but continue to watch stroke to retain unison.
9. **Brace the Boat** – Rest the shaft of your paddle on the gunnel and the blade flat on the water to give the boat extra stability.
10. **Draw** – Pull the paddle through water towards the boat at a 45 degree angle.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Who can join the MOV'n Dragons Dragon Boat Team? Is experience necessary? Is there an age limit?

Any female over the age of 18 is welcome to join us and there is no upper age limit. While we impose no health restriction on paddlers, one should be in physical condition to safely get into and out of the boat, and to actively participate in a moderately strenuous level of physical exercise. We leave this decision to your good judgment and that of your health care provider.

2. Must you be a cancer survivor or cancer patient to be a member of the Dragon Boat Team?

No! Any motivated woman with a desire to participate is welcome. We do encourage survivors of all types of cancer to join us as the exercise is a boost to healthier living for everyone.

3. How much does it cost to be a member of the MOV'n Dragons?

The annual membership is just \$35.00. If you happen to be a cancer survivor then the team will waive that cost. The memberships, along with other fundraising activities, is used to keep our equipment in safe repair. It entitles you to participate in any and all activities and vote on member concerns. You are welcome to try some paddling practices before committing.

4. Do I need special clothing or equipment?

You will need clothing suitable for water sports -you will get wet! Most people wear t-shirts and loose fitting shorts. We recommend supportive shoes with grip – no flip flops. An old pair of tennis shoes will definitely get you started. Since we are often in direct sun, make sure to use sun screen and wear a hat and sun glasses. A water bottle is a must for hydration. All paddles and PFD's (personal flotation devices, i.e. safety jackets) are provided and kept at the boathouse.

5. Are there other activities in which the team participates?

Yes! But extra activities are NOT mandatory.

- Dragon Boat teams have sprung up all over the world in the last couple of decades and are great team building experiences for all kinds of groups. We like to participate in some races for fun and competition. The team may provide part or all of the race entrance fee, but all other expenses associated with participation are our own responsibility. That would include hotel rooms, food, gasoline sharing, etc. We try to select destinations that will be closer to home so expenses are limited.

- We have “socials” throughout the year, mostly in the summer, and welcome all spouses/partners/significant others, friends, and families to join us. It is a good way to get to know people better.
- Our annual Pasta Dinner and Silent Auction is usually held in March each year. The spaghetti sauces are made from scratch so many hands are needed for cooking. It is our one big fundraiser each year and helps cover our expenses and community outreach.
- In order to make ourselves known to the community we try to participate in several local events or at least have a presence. These include Relay for Life; maintenance of a patch of the Marietta River Trail Walking & Biking Path; the River Raft Race; The Rails, Trails, & Ales Festival; and the Labor Day Parade. We also have a Thriver Fund in which we provide area cancer survivors \$50 towards an exercise program in the Mid-Ohio Valley.

6. What is the practice schedule for the 2016 season?

This year we will have 2 scheduled practices each week for the entire team on Mondays and Thursdays.

The boathouse will be open at 5:30pm. We arrive, gather and prepare our equipment, and participate in a brief group warm-up at 5:45pm. We are in the boat and pulling from the dock at 6:00pm. Since we will have both beginners and experienced paddlers together we will devote the first 45 minutes to the basics. New people will learn and experienced people will have time to work on their technique.

New folks will be dropped at the dock at 6:45pm and the more experienced paddlers will do a short stretch and continue a more strenuous workout until 7:30pm.

Other practices can be called on Saturday mornings if additional work is needed just before a race. Or there might be a group of people who want to work out on Saturday mornings who can make their own arrangements with each other. That would be in addition to the regular 2 practices.

Weather is always a factor!

Safety is always our top priority. A little light rain may not be cause to cancel practice. Storms, high water, fast current, river debris are another matter. Our coaches carefully monitor weather prior to every practice, and will cancel practice, in advance if possible, with notification to you via email and Facebook announcements. If practice is cancelled you will receive the “Paddles Down” notification. Otherwise, come to the boathouse and perhaps utilize the rowing machines or do some stretches together to make good use of the time.

You can visit our website at www.movndragons.org, our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/MovnDragons/> and our Friends of the Mov’n Dragons FB page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/103012611073/>