

GLOSSARY of DRAGON BOAT TERMINOLOGY

Dragon Boat racing requires a high degree of responsiveness from all members for safety and competitiveness. When a boat needs to make an immediate quick maneuver, responding timely to commands will surely help keep things safe and fun for everyone. These are general terms and commands used by many dragon boat teams throughout the world. Generally, commands are held until the next command is given.

BOAT TERMS

Bow = Front of boat
Stern = Rear of boat
Port = Left side
Starboard = Right side
Gunwale (gunnel) = Sides
Till or Tiller = Steersperson and act of steering
Strokes = First paddler on both sides
Cox = Steersperson

BASIC COMMANDS

LOAD THE BOAT □ Step onto the boats after having put on and buckled your PFD (personal floatation device, Coast Guard approved), with everything ready to go. When getting on the boat, be sure to do so one person at a time, one foot at a time. Start by stepping as close to the middle of the boat as possible, and once both feet are in, keep your profile low --in effect, lower the center of gravity. NOTE: Load from the back seat to the front seat from the shoreline. If from the dock, then load from the middle first and then alternate front and back seat rows.

ATTENTION IN THE BOAT Used to get all paddlers undivided attention.

SIT READY [Ready All] or MA KAU KAU Equivalent to paddlers prepare to start. Sit up straight and hold the paddle shaft across your legs and gunwale, extending the blade out to the water. This is a straight posture but relaxed position, used for reinforcing attention and focus through the entire crew.

PREPARE TO BACK IT DOWN Once clear of the dock or shoreline – paddlers put paddles behind them but out of the water.

PADDLES UP or HOE PAI Equivalent to attention or ready. The command for paddlers to instantly assume the paddling position. Hold the paddle in the A-frame forward ready position. Blade slightly

touching the water surface in front. This commands is to get everyone to start the synchronization for the very first stroke to take the boat away. This is only done in non-race maneuvering. In races, this term may be used by the starter or a different command we "get set & ready" to go position.

PREPARE TO REVERSE or REVERSE POSITION or just REVERSE Command is the opposite of PADDLES UP. Position your paddle in the reversing position and prepare to stroke. On the second command, REVERSE or GO, begin to stroke in unison with the rest of the crew following the rating set by the stroke seat paddlers and/or steersperson.

TAKE IT AWAY or GO or IMUA Simply begin paddling. The command to begin paddling; usually follows the command **Paddles Up**. Commonly used for starting the movement of the boat in a non-race situation. Always waiting for stroke seat position/paddler or the steersperson to start if off and entering your paddle simultaneously with person in front of you. Should be preceded by commands as to whether this is a racing start, a slow and easy effort to get the boat moving, or even just a given number of strokes for maneuvering purposes, for example, "five easy strokes forward."

Or **To back up the boat:** Paddle backwards. The stroke used to bring the boat backward into or away from the dock or a race start.

START this one with "paddles up"...
then "paddles back"...
then "take it away"

BRACE THE BOAT or FLARE THE BOAT To stabilize the boat. Paddle blades flat on the surface of the water, lower or shaft arm over shaft, with blades gently feathering back and forth with a slight downward pressure until entire blade is submerged to stabilize the boat. The shaft of the paddle pressed against the top of the gunwales. Used especially when transferring seat positions or a wake is coming in broadside. This command will steady the boat from rocking side to side. Hold the brace position until you are commanded to release.

HOLD WATER or CHECK or CHECK the BOAT or HOLD THE BOAT or STOP THE BOAT An action to stop the boat from moving to a full stop with the use of the paddle. □Paddler to thrust blade vertically into the water and fully perpendicular to the gunwale and brace with your body to stop the boat at a full halt or from moving forward or back. Hold the paddle firm in the water. Note: An important command used at the start line by the race starter, otherwise the team may get disqualified for drifting and/or for failing to listen to the race starter's instruction.

DRAW (LEFT / RIGHT) Power stroke done perpendicular to keel-line to pull (draw) the boat to the side. The paddlers will lean out to the side and pull water (deep) towards themselves – like having lost an object and they are trying to scoop it back. This is essential on the starting line, or when the boat needs to make quick turns, when winds may drift the boat sideways and the steersperson is trying to line the boat up directly down the course. Often, the steersperson will only call "First Two", or "First Three Draw Left/Right" or "Back Two/Three." The numbers means the seat number. □"First Three Draw Left" means the first three seats draw on the left side (the left-sitting persons only as in this case, we need to draw in from left. If you hear LEFT SIDE DRAW, then all paddlers on left side draw; likewise, if you hear RIGHT SIDE DRAW, then all paddlers on the right side draw.

PUSH or PRY (LEFT/ RIGHT) This command is the exact opposite of DRAW. □Bury the blade deeply below the boat, with the blade's flat surface parallel to the gunwale, and push outward. If you hear LEFT SIDE PRY, then all paddlers on left side pry; likewise, if you hear RIGHT SIDE PRY, then all paddlers on the right side pry.

FOCUS or LISTEN UP Suspend conversation, diversions or distractions, and focus in the boat and on the task at hand. Paddles in the relaxed position, parallel over the water. The crew should be ready to listen to the drummer or the coach or steerer.

LET IT RUN or LET IT RIDE or EASY ALL Stop paddling and hold the paddle in the sit-ready position, blade on top of the water to maintain balance while letting the boat continue to glide. Shaft to rest across legs and gunwale of the boat.

STROKE Refers to one cycle of the paddling motion. Steersperson will call "Give me one stroke." The number of strokes in the call can vary. This call is used when positioning the boat

RACE START-LINE COMMANDS

MOVE UP - "First Three seats, Give Me 3 Strokes" Steerer commands certain seat (always paddler pair in this case) to paddle exactly 1, or 2, or 3 strokes to get the boat to alignment at the start line.

BACK DOWN or BACK IT DOWN - "Last Three seats, Give Me 3 BACK Strokes" The boat has glided across the start line and needs to back down or back it down (reverse course). □Steerer commands certain seat (always paddler pair in this case) to paddle exactly 1, or 2, or 3 back strokes to get the boat to alignment at the start line. Paddles to enter the water at the same time as the person in front of them.

ALL BOATS HOLD Starter referee's call signifying that he/she is getting alignment of all boats. □Be ready and focus on your team only to respond, the race is starting any second.

WE HAVE ALIGNMENT - ARE YOU READY! Starter referee's call signifying that he/she HAS EXACT ALIGNMENT. □You should be hearing **ATTENTION** from your steerer at this time.

ATTENTION! Your steerer's command to get into **READY! READY!** position. This term is used to indicate that the race is about to begin in a few seconds!

PADDLES UP or GET SET & READY! Get ready to paddle. Paddles are poised above the water ready to take a stroke. Commonly used for starting the movement of the boat in a non-race situation. The paddles are paused in the catch position until the command to start paddling is given.

GO! or IMUA (HORN or GUN sound) Your steerer's command to begin the race --take off on your start sequence.

FINISH This call lets the paddlers know that they are within a predetermined distance of the finish line. This call tells the paddlers if they have any extra ability/strength to give it NOW.

GLOSSARY of COMMANDS and TERMS

ALL BOATS HOLD Starter referee's call signifying that he/she is getting alignment of all boats. □Be ready and focus on your team only to respond, the race is starting any second.

ALL DOWN! Command from drummer or steersperson to stop paddling and rest with paddles on laps.

ALL UP! Command from drummer/steersperson to ensure everyone begins to paddle in unison. Paddles are paused in the catch position until command to start paddling is given.

ATTENTION! Your steerer's command to get into **READY! READY!** position. This term is used to indicate that the race is about to begin in a few seconds!

ATTENTION, PLEASE Command given by race starter to prepare crews for departure, the start gun will follow in approximately 3-5 seconds.

BACK DOWN or BACK IT DOWN - "Last Three seats, Give Me 3 BACK Strokes" The boat has glided across the start line and needs to back down or back it down (reverse course). □ Steerer commands certain seat (always paddler pair in this case) to paddle exactly 1, or 2, or 3 back strokes to get the boat to alignment at the start line. Paddlers to enter the water at the same time as the person in front of them. Usually, this command is given after PREPARE TO BACK DOWN command.

BACK PADDLING The stroke used to bring a boat backward into or away from a dock or a race start.

BRACE THE BOAT or FLARE THE BOAT To stabilize the boat. Paddle blades flat on the surface of the water, lower or shaft arm over shaft, with blades gently feathering back and forth with a slight downward pressure until entire blade is submerged to stabilize the boat. The shaft of the paddle pressed against the top of the gunwales. Used especially when transferring seat positions or a wake is coming in broadside. This command will steady the boat from rocking side to side. Hold the brace position until you are commanded to release.

BUDDY Your seat mate.

CAPSIZE or HULI When the boat turns over.

CATCH The point when the paddle first comes into contact with the water.

CHECK "Check the boat" or stopping the boat's momentum whether in a forward or backward motion i.e. if moving forward a 'check' would be accomplished by back paddling.

CHECK FOR DRIFT To prevent the boat from drifting from side to side. Paddlers are in the water with the blade running parallel to the boat and the shaft is held against the gunwale.

COLLISION When the boat strikes another object like another dragon boat in a race. Very bad event.

COXSWAIN (pronounced: koks'n) Steersperson of the boat and often incorrectly referred to a coxman. In this area commonly called the "cox".

CREW The paddlers, drummer, flag catcher, and steersperson who occupy the boat.

DOGGING IT Slow, lackadaisical tempo usually reflected during recovery phase.

DRAGON FLIGHT The experience of being in a fast moving Dragon Boat.

DRAGON SONG The poems, stories, and songs

about Dragon Boats, Boat Crews and Dragon Flight.

DRAW (LEFT / RIGHT) Power stroke done perpendicular to keel-line to pull (draw) the boat to the side. The paddlers will lean out to the side and pull water (deep) towards themselves – like having lost an object and they are trying to scoop it back. This is essential on the starting line, or when the boat needs to make quick turns, when winds may drift the boat sideways and the steersperson is trying to line the boat up directly down the course. Often, the steersperson will only call "First Two", or "First Three Draw Left/Right" or "Back Two/Three." The numbers means the seat number. □ "First Three Draw Left" means the first three seats draw on the left side (the left-sitting persons only as in this case, we need to draw in from left.

If you hear LEFT SIDE DRAW, then all paddlers on left side draw; likewise, if you hear RIGHT SIDE DRAW, then all paddlers on the right side draw.

DRILL Any series of repetitive motions used in training to develop form, synchronization, endurance, power and speed.

DRUM Large round percussion instrument mounted in front of drum seat that Drummer strikes to announce cadence.

DRUMMER The person who sets a crew's timing by rhythmically pounding a drum or calling stroke rates. The drummer sits in the bow and is usually a lightweight person.

DRUM SEAT Where the drummer sits.

DRUM STICK Wood instrument used to strike drum.

DRUM STICK COLLISION What happens when you do not do what the drummer wants the crew to do.

ENGINE ROOM Refers to the larger paddlers in the middle to back of the boat.

EXIT The point in a stroke in which the paddle leaves the water cleanly and quickly midway between the paddler's knee and hip. Act of pulling blade from water.

EXIT THE BOAT Disembark from the boat at the Steersperson instruction.

EXTENSION Reach or reaching forward with your paddle to get the maximum stroke.

FALL OUT The optional act of ceasing to paddle while the rest of the crew continues to paddle. It will be directed to a seat position. If you hear the command for your seat, simple "ship your paddle" and rest until you are ready to come back in. Not a

command or option for a paddler during a race.

FEATHERING Bad habit of swinging paddle blade to outside while pulling top hand-in-board during recovery phase.

FINISH or PAU The command to stop paddling immediately.

FINISH LINE The point where it is the end of a race.

FLAGCATCHER The person responsible for catching the flag. If the flag is not pulled and held for at least 1 sec or thereabouts, then the flag is not considered caught.

FLYING THE BOAT The Dragon Boat running at a high rating and extreme power.

FOCUS or LISTEN UP Suspend conversation, diversions or distractions, and focus in the boat and on the task at hand. Paddles in the relaxed position, parallel over the water. The crew should be ready to listen to the drummer or the coach or steerer.

GO! (HORN or GUN sound) Your steerer's command to begin the race --take off on your start sequence.

GUNWALE Top edge of the sides of the boat.

HEADS IN THE BOAT Frequently used just before leaving the dock or at the start line – meaning for everyone to look forward and focus (basically bring attention into the boat and wait for next command)

HITTING THE CATCH Driving the paddle forcefully into the water at maximum reach.

HOLD THE BOAT HARD Drive your paddle down into the water doing a back stroke and then hold firm vertically in the water

HOLD THE DOCK (LEFT / RIGHT SIDE) At the dock before leaving left or right side is asked to put a hand on the dock (with reminder to not place fingers between dock and boat).

HOLD WATER or CHECK or CHECK the BOAT or HOLD THE BOAT or STOP THE BOAT

An action to stop the boat from moving to a full stop with the use of the paddle. □Paddler to thrust blade vertically into the water and fully perpendicular to the gunwale and brace with your body to stop the boat at a full halt or from moving forward or back. Note: An important command used at the start line by the race starter, otherwise the team may get disqualified for drifting and/or for failing to listen to the race starter's instruction.

IGNITION Refers to the paddlers at the front of the boat who set the pace.

INBOARD Inside the gunwale of the boat.

KEEL-LINE Center line of boat from bow to stern.

LAGGING Occurs when paddler is behind synchronization with the rest of the crew.

LEAN OUT Stabilizing position within the boat where the upper body is shifted so that 70% of the body weight is on the gunwale leg. The shaft of the paddle is resting on the gunwale.

LEG DRIVE Pushing on foot brace with legs to initiate power phase at catch.

LENGTHEN Paddlers extend their reach forward to maximize the stroke length.

LET IT RUN or EASY ALL Command from drummer/steersperson to stop paddling and let the boat coast with blades out of the water.

LISTEN UP Paddles in the relaxed position, parallel over the water and gunwale. The crew should be ready to listen to the drummer or the coach or steerer.

LOAD THE BOAT Step onto the boats after having put on and buckled your PFD, with everything ready to go. When getting on the boat, be sure to do so one person at a time, one foot at a time. Start by stepping as close to the middle of the boat as possible, and once both feet are in, keep your profile low --in effect, lower the center of gravity. NOTE: If boat is docked on shore, then load from the back seat to the front seat. If docked at a pier, then load from the middle and alternated loading front and back seats.

OUTBOARD Outside the gunwale / boat.

PACERS Refers to paddlers who sit in front of the boat who set the pace of the stroke. Also, referred to as strokers.

PADDLE Short canoe paddler used by crew members to propel boat. Note: Only approved paddles will be permitted to be used in a race.

PADDLER You

PADDLES IN THE BOAT All paddles completely in the boat.

PADDLES UP or GET SET & READY! Get ready to paddle. Paddles are poised above the water ready to take a stroke. Commonly used for starting the movement of the boat in a non-race situation. The paddles are paused in the catch position until the

command to start paddling is given. Paddles in prep or recovery position / 5 inches off the water and 1 inch away from the boat

PFD Personal Flotation Device. A Coast Guard approved PFD will be required to be worn by each person on the boat for their own personal safety. Type III personal flotation device is recommended.

PREPARE TO BACK IT DOWN Once clear of the dock or shoreline – paddlers put paddles behind them but out of the water

PREPARE TO REVERSE or REVERSE POSITION or just REVERSE Command is the opposite of PADDLES UP. Position your paddle in the reversing position and prepare to stroke. On the second command, REVERSE or GO, begin to stroke in unison with the rest of the crew following the rating set by the stroke seat paddlers and/or steersperson.

POWER This is a call for more power and effort.

POWER STROKE The only forward stroke that is done in the Dragon Boat.

POWER SYNCHRONIZATION What makes the boat go fast.

PULL Phase of the power stroke when the paddle blade is fully submerged in a downward drive and the paddler begins to pull the paddle back parallel to the keel line of the boat by simultaneously counter-rotating and sitting up.

PUSH or PRY (LEFT/ RIGHT) This command is the exact opposite of DRAW. □ Bury the blade deeply below the boat, with the blade's flat surface parallel to the gunwale, and push outward. If you hear LEFT SIDE PRY, then all paddlers on left side pry; likewise, if you hear RIGHT SIDE PRY, then all paddlers on the right side pry.

RACE RATE Stroke rate used during mid-part of race.

RATING Same as stroke rate. Expressed as "strokes per minute."

REACH/EXTENSION The phase of the stroke in which the paddler maximizes the length of their stroke, by reaching forward with their lower hand/arm/shoulder by bending forward and rotation their torso, before hitting the catch.

READY, READY Command used by steersperson or drummer to prepare crew for race start - paddles buried in water at beginning of stroke phase.

RECOVERY The final phase of the stroke in which

the paddle blade has exited the water and paddler snaps forward to the set position by lifting paddle with top hand, driving bottom hand forward, bending forward slightly and rotating torso; following the exit, is snapped forward to the catch position.

REVERSE POSITION or REVERSE Command is the opposite of PADDLES UP. Position your paddle in the reversing position and prepare to stroke when you hear PREPARE TO REVERSE or REVERSE POSITION. On the second command, REVERSE or GO, begin to stroke in unison with the rest of the crew following the rating set by the stroke seat paddlers and/or steersperson.

ROCKET Strong paddlers in rear of boat who must catch water very aggressively because it is moving faster than at the forward positions.

ROTATION The stroke phase that involves trunk rotation in order to maximize reach.

ROWING Rowers use oars, therefore they are rowers. Dragon boaters use paddles therefore they are paddlers. You do not row a Dragon Boat!

RUDDER THE BOAT Holding the boat in position by placing paddle straight down in water with flat of blade facing out side.

RUNNING THE BOAT When every paddler is in synchronization.

RUSHING Occurs when a paddler's timing is ahead of and out of synchronization with the rest of the crew.

SERIES This is a call for a prearrange set of strokes often with increased power and tempo. A race strategy that calls for 5, 10, or more longer, deeper, harder stroke.

SET Command to place paddles in a position across laps with blades out over the water in preparation for the 'All-up' command

SIT READY [Ready All] Sit up straight and hold the paddle shaft across your legs and gunwale, extending the blade out to the water. This is a straight posture but relaxed position, used for reinforcing attention and focus through the entire crew.

SITTING CREW Maximum number of people in the boat; includes drummer, steersperson & flagcatcher.

SIT UP Command from cox or steersperson to stop motion and rest, sitting erect or up in a uniformed position relaxed but alert ready for the next comment. Paddles shafts resting on lap and blades outboard over the water pointed at 90 degrees to side of boat.

SIX-SIXTEEN SERIES A common race start technique consisting of six hard strokes followed by sixteen faster strokes. Race strategy whereby crew pulls harder for 10-20 strokes.

SORE BUTT or BUTT SORE A quarter sized sore resulting from constant abrasion on the seat. Can be avoided by using a seat pad or padded paddling shorts.

SPEED Stroke rate developed by fast recovery.

SPLASH The result of improper technique during catch, pull or exit phase of power stroke.

STEERSPERSON The person located at the stern of the boat responsible for steering and giving the crew commands, preferably someone with sailing or boating experience. A minimum of three dragon boat practice sessions are required to acquire the skills necessary to steer the boat.

STERN Rear of the boat.

STOP Very seldom used --Signs of panic in a novice Steersperson. This call is not a good command as it does not indicate what to stop or when to stop.

STROKE Refers to one cycle of the paddling motion. Also refers to the first two paddlers in the front seats who set the pace for team.

STROKE RATE The paddling pace, the number of times the paddle goes through the water in a minute. Rates can vary from 40 to over 80 depending on the intensity of effort. The crew's optimum rate for racing is determined by the coach.

STROKER or STROKES Refers to the first two paddlers in the front seats who set the pace for team.

SWAMP When boat fills up with water to the point where it cannot be paddled – gunwales probably submerged. Also, a place where alligators live.

SWEEP Large oar used by steersperson. Also, a term used to clean the boat.

SWING When all paddles are hitting each motion together and the boat is running well – the “stroke” gets real easy and very powerful. *Not the same term as SWINGING.*

SWINGING The bad habit of dropping the top hand into the boat on the recovery phase thus causing the bladed to swing out over the water. This inefficient technique prevents the achievement of higher stroke rates necessary for racing. *Opposite of SWING.*

TAKE IT AWAY Command given by drummer/steersperson to begin paddling, usually follows command of PADDLES UP or ALL UP. Paddlers start paddling at a gentle pace and effort level. Always waiting for stroke seat position/paddler or the steersperson to start if off and entering your paddle simultaneously with person in front of you.

TEAM All of the members of the entire racing team.

TEMPO Cadence of the stroke motion.

TIME IT UP To get the paddlers back into synchronization so the paddles enter the water at the same time.

TOP ARM DRIVE To maximize the catch, the top hand/arm structure is driven down aggressively burying the paddle into the water. The top arm continues to push down until the end of the stroke.

TORSO DRIVE Act of bearing down on paddle with upper body to initiate catch phase.

TURBO Refers to paddlers at back of the boat. Paddlers in the back seats must catch the water very aggressively because the water is moving faster and is harder to get a good hold.

TURN Rotate.

UP! Command to tell the paddlers to increase the speed/tempo of their stroke. Very important not to push the team's stroke rate up to the point it starts to lose sync. Also very important to project your voice to the paddlers at the front of the boat so they bring the stroke rate up or you may find the back of the boat rushing the stroke causing the team to lose synchronization and power.

WALK IT BACK (LEFT / RIGHT SIDE) Leaving dock by having the one side back the boat down dock with hands. Be careful to not place fingers between dock and boat.

WE HAVE ALIGNMENT - ARE YOU READY! Starter referee's call signifying that he/she HAS EXACT ALIGNMENT. You should be hearing: **“ATTENTION”** from your steerer at this time.

WIN What occurs when the crew flies the boat faster than all of the other boats in a race.