

GLOSSARY OF DRAGON BOAT TERMS and COMMANDS

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 all. These are general terms and commands used by many dragon boat teams. 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.

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.

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

PADDLES UP 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" position.

GO or TAKE-It-AWAY 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 position to start if off and entering with person in front of you.

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 with blades gently feathering back and forth with a slight downward pressure 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 WATER 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.

DRAW (LEFT / RIGHT) 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) 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! (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/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. Paddles 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 with blades gently feathering back and forth with a slight downward pressure 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.

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. Paddles are in the water with the blade running parallel to the boat and the shaft is held against the gunwale.

DRAW (LEFT / RIGHT) 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.

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 lightweight.

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.

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.

FINISH The point near the end of a race (in a 500m race usually the last 100m mark) when a team's drummer/steersperson calls for an increase in power and rate.

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.

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 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.

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

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.

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

LET IT RUN 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: Load from the back seat to the front seat.

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 Floatation Device (please do not refer to them life vests). A Coast Guard approved PFD will be required to be worn by each person on the boat for their own personal safety.

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

POWER This is a call for more power and effort.

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.

PULL The phase of the stroke in which the paddle is fully buried in the water and the paddler pulls the paddle back directly parallel with the boat.

REACH/EXTENSION The phase of the stroke in which the paddler maximizes the

length of their stroke before hitting the catch.

READY, READY Command used by steersperson/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, following the exit, is snapped forward to the catch position.

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

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

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

SERIES This is a call for a prearrange set of strokes often with increased power and tempo

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.

SIT UP Paddlers sit up in a uniform position relaxed but alert ready for the next command

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.

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.

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.

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.

TAKE IT AWAY Command given by drummer/steersperson to begin paddling, usually follows command of 'All Up'. Paddlers start paddling at a gentle pace and effort level.

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 arm is driven down aggressively burying the paddle. The top arm continues to push down until the end of the stroke.

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.

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.

DRAGON BOAT PROTOCOLS

1. DO NOT LET THE BOAT TOUCH THE SHORELINE WITHOUT THE RACE OFFICIAL INSTRUCTION.
2. DO NOT DRAG THE BOAT ON THE SHORE (only carrying or lifting of the boat is permitted).
3. Everyone is expected to assist in carrying the boat to and from the water.

4. Clean the boat of any sand, dirt or other items.
5. Store the boat and equipment properly.
6. Inform HDBA staff of any discrepancies or problems with the boat and/or its equipment.

LOADING THE BOAT

- All personnel on the boat will be required to wear PFD (personal flotation device).
- All PFD will be on the person prior to entering the boat (loading the boat).
- If boat is docked on the shore or dock; make sure that the boat is NOT touching the shoreline before loading the boat.
- Steerperson directs each seat to load. Load from the rear seat positions first.

UNLOADING THE BOAT

- After returning to the shore or dock paddlers stay in place while steers directs each seat to unload.
- Paddlers are reminded to turn around and help their teammates out of the boat.

STEERING and COACHING

- If the steerperson is also coaching, steers will be giving the commands.
- If there are both a coach and a steers in the boat, they work together. The coach is giving the commands to run the practice while, generally, the steers is giving commands for leaving and returning to the dock/shore. Before leaving the shore/dock the steers and coach (from their positions in the boat) let each other know when the boat seems ready to leave. The coach gives the steers the 'go ahead' for leaving the shore/dock. The steers would give the commands that get the boat away from the shore/dock. When practice is ending the coach again puts the boat back in the hands of the steers. Coach might say something like "Take Over Steers". And steers gives the commands for re-docking or bringing the boat to the shore.
- The steers would also give any commands necessary to maintain the safety of the boat.

GENERAL CARE of OUR BOAT

- During the paddling seasons, boats should be cleaned and dried. Do not let standing water accumulate inside the boat. This should be done after each days use.
- The boats should be covered with a cover. This will prevent sun damage to the gunwales and reduce the amount of maintenance needed on the wood.
- Make sure to check the inspection ports on a regular basis to see if there is any water accumulating. If so use a pump to dry this area out.
- If there is a small amount of water, don't worry as this is normal. If there is a large amount of water check the hull for damage.

STORAGE of OUR BOAT

For boats that are not used during the off-paddling season, it is important to properly store the boat.

1. Boats should be cleaned and dried.
2. All wood should be cleaned and varnished, if needed, prior to winter storage.
3. If the boats are stored out in the environment, they should be covered or turned upside down using cradles, with the weight of the boat sitting on the seats at the brace points.
4. Open the inspection ports to allow the boat to completely dry.
5. In areas that are susceptible to freezing weather, care must be taken not to allow moisture to stay between the hulls.