



2010 Team FAQs

General Team Information:

When is the festival? The Tim Hortons Ottawa Dragon Boat Festival (THODBF) is traditionally held in late June at Mooney's Bay Park. The 2010 festival will take place on the weekend of June 18th-20th.

Do I need to be an experienced "paddler" to participate? No, all levels of paddlers are welcome. Majority of teams are recreational, but there is a competitive division for those wishing to compete at a higher level. Two team practices with qualified coaches are included in the team registration fee.

How many people do we need to form a dragon boat team? 22 are required (20 paddlers, one steersperson, and one drummer). There are 28 spots available on your roster so that teams can also register up to six spare paddlers.

How can I register a team? We offer a convenient online registration system through our website (www.dragonboat.net). Click on the "Register Online" button under our logo on the home page and then select "Register a Team". The registration process will only take a few minutes to complete.

What information will I need before registering my team? You will need your team name, team division (mixed or women) and the name and contact information for your Team Organizer, Team Captain and Pledge Captain (one person can fill all of these roles and they may be re-assigned after your initial registration is complete). Your team roster may be completed online through the registration system by using the login information your Team Organizer will receive by email.

How much is the entry fee? \$1,225 (+ GST) for the first 75 teams to register and pay in full by the deadline of January 31st, 2010. Regular rate is \$1,325 (+ GST) after the early bird spots have been filled and/or after January 31st, 2010.

Who pays the entry fee? Teams may assign one person to pay one payment and then forward individual payments to reimburse that person. Individual payments can be accommodated.

How can we pay? Payment may be done online through our registration system by credit card. Cheques are made payable to "Ottawa Dragon Boat Festival" and mailed or dropped off at our office. PLEASE NOTE: Teams are not officially registered until full payment is received.

How much money must I pay myself? Depending on how many paddlers you have on your team will determine how much money you need to pay for your registration. Teams may also order team shirts which may be an additional cost, but many teams try to acquire a t-shirt sponsor to cover the expense.

Do we need a team t-shirt? All teams are encouraged to wear a team t-shirt or outfit at the festival, but it is not required. Many teams also wear team caps, war paint, temporary tattoos and themed costumes. An award will be presented for the most creative team t-shirt/outfit. The winning team will be announced during the Final Awards Ceremony held on Sunday.

How can I register if I don't have a team? If you would like to join a team please contact our office and we will assist you with finding a team. We also have a facebook group (Ottawa Dragon Boat Festival) where teams/individuals will connect as well.

Is there a registration/refund deadline? Registration is complete when we reach 190 teams or April 30th, 2010. The refund deadline is 4:30pm on May 21st, 2010. Refunds include an administration charge of \$50.00 (+GST).

Do I need to sign a waiver? Yes, all team members are required to submit a completed waiver. Waivers may be submitted electronically through the online registration system or manually to the THODBF office.

Who can we contact for more information? Team Services Manager, Shelley Freake, at (613) 238-7711, x 226 or team@dragonboat.net.

Dragon Boat History:

What is a dragon boat? A very long and narrow human powered boat used in the team paddling sport of dragon boat racing which originated in China.

Where did dragon boating begin? The Tim Hortons Ottawa Dragon Boat Festival is part of a larger Chinese cultural tradition that goes back 2,400 years. It began on the life-sustaining riverbanks in the valleys of southern China as a fertility rite performed to ensure bountiful crops. The first participants held their celebration on the fifth day of the lunar month of the Chinese calendar. The race was held to avert misfortune and encourage the rains needed for prosperity. The object of their worship was the dragon. Also known as Poet's Day, it commemorates the death of Qu Yuan, a poet and Minister of State during the Chou Dynasty. Qu had protested against the corrupt government and was stripped of his office as Minister of State. He wandered about the countryside, unhappy and dejected. When local fishermen realized Qu had disappeared into the river, they raced out in their boats to save him, beating drums to scare off the fish that they thought would eat his body. They also dropped rice dumplings in the water as a sacrifice to his spirit. The scene of the fishermen racing out to save Qu Yuan is re-enacted every year in the form of dragon boat races.

When did the Ottawa Festival begin? The festival began in 1993 with the assistance of the Hong Kong Canada Business Association. The first event only lasted half a day as there were only 25 teams participating. This little known sport has grown to be one of the hottest sporting events in the Nation's Capital and the largest Dragon Boat Festival in North America.

What are dragon boats made of? The traditional wooden boats are wide and heavy, typically weighing in at approximately 1,750 pounds, and the head and tail are all part of the boat itself. As the sport of dragon boating has increased in popularity and spread to countries outside of Asia, many countries have switched to using the newer fiberglass dragon boats, which are cheaper, narrower, significantly lighter, and usually have a separate, detachable piece for the dragon's head and tail.

Why do we need a drummer? The drummer or caller may be considered the "heartbeat" of the dragon boat, and leads the crew throughout a race with the rhythmic beating of a drum to indicate the timing and frequency of paddling strokes (that is, the cadence, picking up the pace, slowing the rate, etc.) The caller may issue commands to the crew through a combination of hand signals and voice calls, and also generally exhorts the crew to perform at their peak.

Is a dragon boat different from a war canoe? A war canoe is a type of flat water racing canoe. War canoe is a largely Canadian sport, with some teams coming from the northern United States as well; it is not sanctioned by the International Canoe Federation. It does not enjoy the massive popularity of dragon boating, but is nonetheless an important part of most Canadian canoe club racing programs.

Festival Weekend - Race Information:

Where will everything take place? All races will be held at Mooney's Bay Park (across the water from the Rideau Canoe Club). The Tim Hortons Team Area will be set up near the docks for teams to set up tents, etc. A Staging Tent will be available, as teams get ready for their races; teams are asked to be in the staging area at least half an hour before their race time.

What should I bring? Many teams bring water and snacks to have throughout the day. Food vendors will be on site with various types of food and beverages. You may also want to bring a dry set of clothes, raincoat, sunscreen, hat and a lawn chair.

Where can I park? The Tim Hortons Ottawa Dragon Boat Festival offers free parking and uses OC Transpo buses. The shuttle stops are at the Rideau Centre/Mackenzie King Bridge Upper Deck, with stops at Metcalfe & Albert, Bronson & Somerset, and at Carleton University Lot #7 (Bronson & University). Free parking is available at Carleton University Lot #7 and Canada Post Headquarters (Riverside & Heron). On festival weekend visit www.octranspo.com or phone 613-741-4390 for full schedule details. PLEASE NOTE: There is no public parking available on site.

Can I park my bicycle on site? Yes. Supervised parking is available on site from Wheels Up Bicycle Parking. For more information contact David Ashton at 613-858-1118 or visit www.wheelup.ca.

Will there be food and refreshments available on site? Yes, numerous food vendors offer a variety of food and beverages throughout the weekend. A Beer Garden is also set up next to the Main Tent. Patrons must be 19 years of age or older to access this area. Proof of ID is required.

When do we race? The Saturday morning race schedule will be available on our website the week prior to the festival. It was emailed to Team Organizers as well. The schedule will show the staging time for your first race and the actual race time.

How many races will we compete in? All teams are guaranteed two races on Saturday. The top 75 mixed and top 24 women's teams will advance to Sunday. Sunday's schedule will include three races.

How long is the racing distance? Both Saturday races are 500m in length. Teams advancing to Sunday will race one 500m race and two 200m races.

When is our 2nd race? Your team's second race will be held in the afternoon, in the same "block" as your morning race. The afternoon schedule will group teams within the same block against teams with a similar time from the morning races. The time of your 2nd race will be listed in the Race Results Tent once your morning block is complete.

Where can my team "hang-out"? Can we bring a tent or shelter? The Tim Hortons Team Area will be marked off at the site for the exclusive use of the participants. Space for tents or tarps will be assigned based on order of registration/payment. Team site size is 12 x 20. Teams will be contacted to select their Tim Hortons Team Area site (in order of payment) and teams will be allowed to set up starting at 8:00am on Friday, June 18th. Please note that City of Ottawa regulations dictate that nothing may be tied to the trees. Items left in this area are done so at your own risk. Note: The Tim Hortons Team Area does not include the spectator area – no tents or tarps are permitted in the spectator area. Barbecues are not allowed on site and there are strict no alcohol and no smoking policies.

Can we display our company banner? Yes, company banners may be displayed on your Team Area site, but may not interfere with another team's site. Banners are not permitted on boats.

Where is the best view of the races? Bleachers will be available on the beach area near the finish line to allow spectators an opportunity to view the entire race from start to finish.

If you have any questions or comments please contact Shelley at team@dragonboat.net or 613-238-7711, x226.