

TIM HORTONS OTTAWA DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL 2026 RULES AND REGULATIONS

**It is the responsibility of the Team Captain to read and understand
all rules and regulations contained in this document.**

Please note, rules are subject to change.

Overall Management

1. The overall management of the Tim Hortons Ottawa Dragon Boat Festival (hereinafter called the "Festival") rests with the Board of Directors of the Festival.
2. The overall management of the Racing Program for the Tim Hortons Ottawa Dragon Boat Festival (hereinafter called the "Races") rests with the Race Committee of the Festival.
3. The Race Committee of the Festival is the final authority with respect to all matters pertaining in any way to the Races and its decisions and rulings shall be final and binding on all persons, groups and organizations, incorporated or unincorporated, concerned with the decision or ruling.
4. The Dragon Boat Races shall be under the supervision and control of the Chief Race Official of the Races. The Chief Race Official shall have the power to appoint such on-water and off-water officials as (s)he deems appropriate for the proper control and management of the races and results.
5. Team Captains may file a protest at the Team Services Tent. Refer to Rule 73 for details regarding protests.

Eligibility

6. To be eligible to compete or participate in any way in the Races a team and all of its members must conform to the Rules and Regulations of the Races.
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7. The number of teams participating in the Races shall be at the discretion of the Race Committee of the Festival.
8. The Race Committee of the Festival has the right to accept or reject any entry submitted for any reason the Race Committee considers appropriate.

Registration

9. Each team must complete the on-line registration process accompanied with the appropriate registration fee. The Race Committee reserves the right to accept or reject late entries.
10. Current registration fees can be found [here](#).
11. There are NO REFUNDS of registration fees after April 30th.
 - A team wishing to withdraw from the Festival can do so by submitting a written notice requesting a refund to the Festival office no later than 4:00pm on April 30th. In this case only will there be a reimbursement of the registration payment minus an administrative fee of 25% (+HST).
12. In the event of cancellation or postponement of this event due to circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the Ottawa Dragon Boat Festival, including but not limited to, safety,

weather, government mandated public health restrictions, or similar concerns, registration fees will be fully refunded or carried forward for future Ottawa Dragon Boat Festival races.

13. A completed team roster of members giving the names and gender of each team member must be completed online, or in the case of manual registration/waiver, emailed to the Team Services Dept no later than 4:00pm on June 19th. Refer to Rule 38 for team composition details.

PLEASE NOTE: Roster changes are not permitted after 6:00pm on Saturday, June 20.

Team Categories and Groupings

14. In order to be eligible to be a team member a person must be a minimum of 13 years of age at the time of registration.

15. There are three team categories: Women, Mixed and Open.

16. Women's teams must race with all female paddlers, but can have a male drummer and/or steersperson. Women's teams who are using the festival as a qualifier must comply with DBC rules.

17. Mixed teams must race with a minimum of 8 female paddlers (not including steersperson and drummer). Mixed teams who are using the festival as a qualifier must comply with DBC rules.

18. Open teams have no restrictions. Often composed of primarily male paddlers, but females may also paddle on the team as well. Open teams can have a drummer and/or steersperson of either gender. Please note: Open teams may only participate in select Challenge Cups. Open teams who are using the festival as a qualifier must comply with DBC rules.

19. The Race Committee of the Festival may, at its discretion, group teams together such as financial groups, professional firms etc. to provide group competition.

20. The manner of grouping teams together for each race event during race day shall be as determined by the Race Committee of the Festival.

21. The Chief Race Official shall have full authority to carry out the directions of the Race Committee on race day with respect to race event groupings and team advancement. Team Captains shall deal exclusively with the Chief Race Official with respect to any questions regarding team advancement.

Safety

22. Each team member is solely responsible for his or her own safety at all times while engaging in activities related to practicing and racing in the dragon boats (or other craft that may be provided for the purpose of practice) and must have signed a Festival waiver during the registration process (see Rules 27-29).

23. Each team member must be a competent swimmer (able to swim 100 metres while wearing light clothing) and it is the responsibility of the Team Captain to ensure that all members of the crew are competent swimmers.

24. Personal Floatation Devices (PFDs – Life Jackets) will be provided to all team members and must be properly worn at all times while in the dragon boats, in both practice and competition. Other PFDs may be worn provided they are Government approved and, in the opinion of the Chief Race Official, provide equivalent safety to the festival supplied PFDs. PFD's must bear a

mark of certification from the Canadian Coast Guard, US Coast Guard or Transport Canada. Self-inflating PFDs are NOT permitted.

A) Dragon Boat Canada registered teams competing in the Sue Holloway division on Saturday, June 20 and teams who are competing in the "A" and "B" divisions on Sunday, June 21 (applies to mixed, women and open divisions) do not have to wear PFDs while racing. The correct number of PFDs must be in the boat during the races, but do not have to be worn by paddlers.

B) Drummers and Steerspeople are required to wear PFDs.

C) PFD's must be worn by all festival participants (who are not exempt in Rule 24A) on Saturday, June 20.

25. A dragon boat team showing up at the race start line with any member of its crew not properly wearing a PFD in compliance with Rule No. 23 will not be allowed to start the race.

26. A Steersperson shall stand at all times at the helm of the boat. Due to safety constraints, any participant that is unable to stand to steer a boat is not permitted to enter a Festival boat.

A) If a steersperson is deemed incompetent by the officials (ie. boat leaves assigned lane during race) then the team will be required to find an experienced steersperson from another team or hire one as a replacement for their consequent races.

Waivers

27. All persons practicing or racing in a dragon boat (or other craft that may be provided for the purpose of practice) must sign a waiver, and in the case of persons under the age of 18 also signed by their parent(s) or guardian(s), accepting the risks associated with their participation in the Festival (including preparation and practice as well as actual competition) and waiving any rights they may have to any cause of action against any person, corporation or organization in any way associated with the Festival.

28. No person shall be permitted to engage in any practice session or competition unless (s)he has completed an online waiver or delivered a signed waiver to the Festival Office.

29. If a person is unable to complete an online waiver, a signed manual waiver must be delivered to the Festival office by 4:00pm on June 15.

Dragon Boats and Equipment

30. Only the boats, steering oar and drums supplied by the Festival may be used in the coaching sessions and in the Festival races. There can be no alternation to boats in any manner whatsoever.

31. The Race Committee of the Festival may in its sole and absolute discretion permit any team to use paddles or other equipment necessary to reasonably accommodate its special needs. Paddles, which have been authorized by the Race Committee of the Festival, may be used.

32. Each team is responsible for any damage to festival equipment for which they are responsible, as determined by the festival, including but not limited to, any damage caused to the boat (including head and tail), to paddles or loss of paddles, drums, related boat equipment and PFDs while being used by the team.

2026 costs for replacing broken equipment:

Basic Repair dragon head mounting plate \$40.00
Basic Repair dragon tail mounting plate \$40.00
Replace broken steering arm \$80.00
Replace 41' dragon boat \$12,250.00
Replace 44' dragon boat \$18,000.00
Replace dragon head \$894.00
Replace dragon tail \$450.00
Drum \$358.00
Missing or broken Apex Durablade \$80.00
Missing or broken wood paddle \$46.00
PFD \$30.00
Boat Fender \$20.00
Steering Oar \$275.00
Drummers Seat \$140.00

33. Paddles supplied by the Festival are not to be altered in any way including but not limited to, sanding of grip areas, application of any material with adhesive properties, scoring or other methods.

34. Electronic devices, signalling devices, bilge pumps or any other bailing devices shall not be used by a team during races and are prohibited from being in the dragon boat at any time during the race.

A) Approved VOX systems may be used in the boats. Teams must request approval from the Race Committee by June 1st.

35. Only the drum and drumstick provided (or the steersperson's voice) shall be used to signal the stroke rate. Whistles, rattles, air horns, noise making devices or other means of enhancing the drummer's voice or cadence are prohibited from use and are prohibited from being in the dragon boat at the start of the race.

36. Paddlers shall be permitted to use their own paddles provided that they conform to the IDBF specifications.

Teams

37. Only persons who have been registered as team members as provided in Rules 9 through 13 above, may race for a team.

38. A PERSON MAY BE A MEMBER OF AND RACE FOR ONLY ONE TEAM PER CATEGORY.

- The categories are WOMEN, MIXED and OPEN.
- A steersperson/drummer may paddle for one team and may steer/drum for more than one team.

PLEASE NOTE: It is each team's responsibility to manage conflicts that arise from paddlers racing on two teams. No delays in the race schedule will be allowed to accommodate paddlers or steerspersons in transit between team boats and/or races.

39. A team that races shall be composed of its drummer, 20 paddlers and its steersperson (22 team members in all). A boat with 16 paddlers may choose to participate in a race and their time for the race will be recorded and used for calculation for advancement, sprint or challenge cup

results. In no circumstances may a team race with fewer than 16 paddlers, or without a drummer or steersperson.

40. Team rosters are limited to a maximum 30 including the Team Captain. The 22 actual participants in any race must be selected by the team from those it has duly registered.

41. Each individual team member is required to comply with the Festival Rules and Regulations and is responsible to act, on and off the water in a manner that is fair and respectful of him or herself, and all other race participants and the officials, volunteers, spectators and all other persons associated with the Festival.

42. Any team that allows a person not registered with that team to participate, as a crewmember shall be subject to immediate disqualification from the race and from further participation in the Festival.

43. Each Team Captain shall be responsible for (but not limited to) team conduct, securing and delivering waivers, liaising with the Chief Race Official, and attending the Team Captain's Meeting prior to the commencement of races on Festival weekend.

44. Any on-water or off-water official, including the Dock Marshall and his or her designates, may at any time require a dragon boat team to identify the names, genders and ages of its members. Wristbands provided by the Festival must be worn at all times. Failure to do so may result in team disqualification.

Rights, Sponsorship, Etc.

45. The Ottawa Dragon Boat Festival owns all rights relating to the Festival, in particular and without limitation, the rights relating to its organization, use of the name, exploitation, advertising, sponsorship, commercial representation, broadcasting and reproduction by any means whatsoever.

46. Representation of the organization responsible for a team and its sponsor(s) shall be limited to: competition and/or warm-up uniform; one team flag not exceeding six feet in any direction - team flags are not permitted to be flown in the boats during races; any other items as deemed appropriate and approved by the Race Committee of the Festival.

Practices

47. All teams shall be entitled to two practice sessions (approximately one hour in length each) as shall be arranged through the auspices of the Festival office. Teams that fail to show up for a booked practice session forfeit their entitlement to that practice session. Teams whose members are not located in the Ottawa area are entitled to two practice sessions when they arrive, time permitting.

Races

48. All races will be held on Mooney's Bay on Riverside Drive.

49. Dragon boats shall proceed to the start line by a route outside of the actual racing lanes on the day of competition except while engaged in an actual race event.

50. Crews must embark and disembark the dragon boats as directed by the Dock Marshall or his/her designate.

51. Crews must race the entire length of the racecourse in the allocated lane.

52. Following each race, the crews must proceed IMMEDIATELY to the docking area to disembark.

53. The racecourse is 500 metres in length, from a line pre-set at the southern end of Mooney's Bay beach down to a finish line located in front of the Judges Stand at the northern tip of Mooney's Bay beach. Saturday's races will be 500m in length. Sunday will include one(1) 100m final, one(1) 200m final and one(1) 500m final.

54. The Race Committee of the Festival may provide for one or more races over a course length of 100 metres with the same finish as the 500m races.

55. Each lane is 11 metres in width and will be marked with buoys as will the start and finish line. A crew's lane is the lane immediately to the left of the buoy marker with that crew's lane number. Your numbered buoy marker, which corresponds to the number on the boat, will be to the right of the boat's dragonhead.

56. The finish line is reached when the furthest point forward at the bow of the boat, typically the nose of the dragon's head if attached, but excluding any unattached items such as paddles, breaks the plane of the finish line. In the event the dragonhead is not attached to the front of the boat at the finish, the furthest point forward at the bow of the boat shall be the determining point for that boat's finishing time. All crew members must be aboard at the completion of the race or the crew will be recorded as DNF (Did Not Finish).

57. Except for the Saturday preliminary races, the starting order for all teams shall be determined by ranking. For the Sunday Finals, the team lane assignments shall be seeded from the centre lanes out.

58. The first race of each team shall be printed in the Saturday race schedule. Times of second or subsequent races will be announced and posted on race day at the race site.

Start of Races

59. It is the responsibility of each team to be at the start for its races.

60. The objective is to give all teams a dead even start on the defined start line. The nose of the dragon of each boat shall be the starting point of reference.

61. The procedure to be followed by the Referee(s) and Starter is as follows:

- The Starter shall announce to the teams in the race "3 minutes to start";
- The Referee(s) shall space the teams behind the start line in their respective lanes;
- The starter shall announce to the teams in the race "1 minute to start";
- When the Referee(s) is (are) satisfied the teams are properly spaced and aligned behind the start line he or she will hand the race over to the Starter with the words "Mister/Madam Starter the race is yours";
- No boat may allow the nose of its dragon to cross the start line before the start of the race but shall draw up to the start line as directed by the Starter;
- When the Starter is satisfied that the teams are in dead even line for the start he or she shall announce to the teams "Ready-Set" and within 3 seconds either fire a gun or sound an air horn signalling the start of the race;

- False starts are not permitted. The Starter shall disqualify any teams that start to paddle after the "Ready-Set" and before the start of the race;
- The Starter may call back any race for a re-start provided (s)he does so immediately after the start of the race and only in the event that the Starter is of the opinion the start was not a dead even start with the teams properly spaced and aligned. The Starter will signal a re-start by a second shot of the gun or second sound of the air horn whatever was used to start the race;
- At any time after the Referee(s) hands the race over to the Starter, but before the "Ready-Set" is given to the teams, the Referee(s) may, in the event of improper alignment or spacing of teams, take the race back from the Starter by announcing "Mister/Madam Starter I have the race".

Conduct of Races

62. Teams and team members shall immediately follow and comply with all instructions of the Starter and Referee before, during and after a race while on the water. Any failure to do so may result in disqualification of the team from the race by the Starter or Referee, as applicable, and in the event of flagrant disregard of such instructions may result in disqualification from further participation in races by the Chief Race Official.

63. Each team shall keep to the centre of its own lane and avoid contact or interference with other teams.

64. When a boat is in a position to overtake another boat during a race, it is the duty of the boat overtaking to keep clear, at all times of the boat overtaken. Equally, the boat being overtaken is not allowed to alter course to make difficulties for the overtaking boat.

65. Any team that leaves its own lane and contacts or otherwise interferes with any other team may be disqualified by the Referee.

66. A Referee may stop any race after its start by firing a shot or sounding an air horn, and order the race re-started if the Referee is of the opinion to do so is necessary to ensure a fair race and result. Any team or teams committing fouls that give rise to the re-start of the race may be disqualified from the re-start of the race.

67. Upon disqualification during the course of a race a team shall be told by the Referee to stop paddling and shall immediately stop paddling until the race passes the team by. Notwithstanding, a Referee may tell a team to stop paddling without disqualifying the team for the purpose of race control and the team shall stop paddling until advised by the Referee to start up paddling once again.

68. Each boat must cross the finish line by its bow and in its proper lane in order to count as having finished the race. Any boat crossing the finish line out of its lane is automatically disqualified.

69. A race shall be officially completed when the Referee(s) raises either a white flag signalling the race was "o.k. as run", or a red flag, signalling that a foul was committed by a team during the course of the race. The Referee(s) shall raise the appropriate flag as soon as all boats still in the race have crossed the finish line.

70. A Starter may disqualify any team on the water prior to the start of a race or on the start of a race for failure to abide by the Festival Rules and Regulations.

71. A Referee may disqualify any team on the water prior to the start of a race, during the course of a race, or on the finish of a race for failure to abide by the Festival Rules and Regulations.

72. The Chief Race Official may disqualify any team at any time, on or off the water, from the competition for failure to abide by the Festival Rules and Regulations.

Protests

73. A team may protest any decision of a Starter or Referee in respect of a race provided the Team Captain notifies the Protest Official verbally within 10 minutes of the race of the protest and files particulars of the protest in writing with the Protest Official together with a Protest fee of \$20.00 within 20 minutes of the completion of the race. The Protest Official shall consider the protest and allow or disallow the protest as (s)he considers appropriate. If the Protest Official allows the protest (s)he may order a race re-run or take such other corrective action as (s)he considers appropriate. If the protest is allowed the protest fee of \$20.00 shall be refunded to the team.

Scoring and Prizes

74. The Chief Race Official is responsible to confirm and announce the order of finish in each race and to record the race time of each boat in the race.

75. The awards and prizes to be awarded shall be as determined by the Race Committee of the Festival.

76. All large team trophies are the permanent property of the Festival. A trophy winning team may keep the trophy for one year provided it is returned in good condition to the festival office no later than May 15th of the following year.