

2023

Kootenay Rhythm Dragons Paddler Handbook





New Paddler Information

Practice is held at the dock down the ramp to the left from the Gazebo at the end of Hall Street.

Practice is from 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm. Paddlers should be ready at 5:25 pm for warm-up. This means that if we have extra paddlers, we can leave the dock at 5:45 pm and can switch paddlers in and out several times. Be sure to visit the bathroom before leaving for practice, there are no facilities at the dock, and none on the water.

Sign in when you arrive. There will be a sign-in sheet in plain sight (This is for numbers and safety) You should be dressed in water resistant clothing, gloves and footwear. Bring a water bottle, a hat and sunscreen, depending on the weather. **Please put your name on your gear, clothing and bottles.** We always have leftovers and no way to identify owners. Make sure you have allergy medicine with you on the water and make others aware of any potential problems.

Always show up to practice, we go out in all weather, we do not go out in lightning and severe water. However, we call the "cancellation" on the dock.

Let the **Captain** know when you will be away. Remember that you may be the seat that decides if we go out.

The decision to go out is made by the steersperson and the coach and is made when we are on the dock and ready to go.

You will need to wear a life jacket or pfd to be allowed on the boat (safety issue) If you do not have a life jacket and are unsure of your commitment to paddling, the club has some life jackets and paddles to borrow. New paddlers can use club equipment for **one month** and then you should purchase your own equipment. We can assist anyone needing help to purchase their own equipment by having the club do the purchase and the paddler can pay in installments. Hellman's gives paddlers a 10% discount at the store, just tell them that you are a member.

Membership refunds will be offered up to June 1st. After June 1st, refunds will be considered only in special circumstances.

All of our safety policies are listed on a separate sheet.

Before going out on the water, safety issues will be reviewed and will be presented at the first team meeting.

If your swimming ability is not good and you might panic in the water, please let us know. We recommend that you wear your personal flotation device to the pool and try it out. On the water the coach is in charge, but the steersperson can override for safety. **Paddlers are expected to be quiet and listen to the coach and the**

steersperson. You are expected to sit where you are placed and not to question the coach about seat plan. Remember that you are more useful as a paddler if you can paddle any seat.

Jobs that need to be done every day:

Check to see if there is water in the boat. Bail the water, dry the seats, including the drummers seat. We have mats to wipe your feet on, that need to be put at the bottom of the ramp and returned to the box after practice. We have towels to be washed and returned to the box. We sweep the dock and clean up litter.

The team chooses a captain for each group of paddlers, this is up to each group to decide. As a team you will also vote on festivals for the year.

A warm up person for each practice will be needed. If you have any experience please let the coach know. There is one coach per practice and she will know who and what she wants at each practice.

The coach is responsible for seating and practice on the water and the beach. The steersperson is responsible for safety at practice on the water. The steersperson can override the coach if the paddlers and boat is in danger.

If you might panic in the water, please let us know. We recommend that you wear your personal flotation device to the pool and try it out. On the water the coach is in charge, but the steersperson can override for safety.

Registration

Club registration usually takes place in March. There will be a notice sent out in various papers, or you can ask a member if you don't find it. If you miss the initial registration day, our website will have copies of the three forms that you need to fill out. The actual registration day is good for information. There will be a lot of paddlers to talk to.

You will have to decide if you want to be a competitive paddler or a recreational one. Competitive costs \$175.00 and recreational is \$85.00 for the season. The season runs from the beginning of May to the end of September.

New competitive paddlers are requested to paddle for the first month on Saturdays. Saturday's paddle is from 8:30 am to 9:30 am with coffee after at Finley's 10 am.

After the first month a paddler can switch to a weekday practice and join the more experienced paddlers.

If it is not possible to practice on Saturdays, speak to the coach of the practice group that you want to practice with and let her know if you are a new paddler.

If you discover that your schedule does not work or (not possible) that you don't like paddling, refunds are available until June 1st or in special circumstances talk to our Treasurer.

There are 2 groups of competitive practices. Monday/Wednesdays and Tuesday/Thursdays. Practice is from 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm. We are on the water from 5:45

pm to 7:00 pm. In the middle of practice we switch sides so that we work on both sides and not just one.

Dry land Training

Dry land training takes place in April at the Central School Gym. The evening depends on their schedule. We recommend that all new paddlers do take this training. We will give new paddlers the information that will help them to paddle. All the commands used on the boat as well as paddling techniques are given. Information on how a practice is run as well as meeting coaches, steerspersons and other paddlers is available.

If the boat is in the water the last practice might happen at the dock where the boat is kept. This depends on water and weather conditions.

Communications

Club communications are sent out by email.

Please read the whole email and not just the beginning.

Some activities have short notice, like waxing the boat or cancelling an activity because of weather or other considerations.

Boat Maintenance

The boat is left on land upside down over the winter.

Every year the bottom of the boat needs to be waxed. This activity requires a semi warm, partly cloudy day before we launch the boat. There will be a notice go out by email to announce this activity, and will probably be only a days notice.

We launch the boat at the end of April or early May depending on weather conditions. The boat is 48 ft. long and needs a large part of the dock floating.

To launch the boat we need a lot of bodies to lift the boat and get it to the water. The boat weighs 800 lbs. and takes a lot of bodies to turn over and move to the water. We fill the storage box with pfd's and paddles. We attach the coach chair and steering oarlock.

This process gets reversed at the end of the season.

Financials

KRD has a policy of making it easier for anyone to paddle. If you would like to pay your registration in installments, contact the club Treasurer, who is also the Membership person and let her know your wishes. She will keep any arrangements private.

Anyone who wishes to buy a life jacket or a paddle on installments can also do so through the club Treasurer.

FYI Hellman's on the North Shore gives any dragon boater a **10% discount** on any item. Just identify yourself as a paddler and they will give you the discount.

The club has some used equipment on occasion that can be purchased at the beginning of the season.

Paddlers Assistance Fund

KRD has a specific fund for anyone who needs assistance to go to a festival. **KRD will help with 50% of accommodations and 50% of race fees at one festival per season.** The paddler is on their own for food, your portion of the gas and meals and other expenses. Going to a festival requires a registration fee, gas expenses and hotel charges. Each team manager can be approached in private about accessing funds. Included in this booklet is an example of the form (see next page).

KRD PADDLER'S ASSISTANCE FUND

Date: _____

Paddler: _____

<u>Festival Budget:</u>	Cost
Festival Registration	_____
Accommodation-paddler's %	_____
<u>Total</u>	_____

Paddler's Assistance Fund will cover up to **50%** of accommodation and **50%** of race fees for **ONE** Festival cost per season.

Paddler Expectations

Please read the new paddler information.

Show up to practice. If you can't, please let the designated person know. Each practice team has a captain or manager (or even the coach) who has to know if you will be there. At the very least the coach will want to know as they set up the seating plan for the practice. If there is an unavoidable reason that you can't be there at the last minute, do let the captain/coach know so they won't worry.

There are cloths inside the box to clean out the boat. We clean the boat before every practice. There is sometimes water to bail out, but usually there is dirt in the bottom. This will act like sandpaper if not removed regularly. If there are enough people cleaning the boat, the dock can be swept.

We put out a sign in sheet for every practice and have mat to put at the bottom of the ramp to keep as much dirt out of the boat as possible.

If you have some expertise at stretching or exercising let the coach know. She may need some back up or someone to do it regularly. We stretch before going out and after practice.

The club has several paddles and life jackets or pfd's that are available to use to practice. Once you have decided that you will be a paddler and want to continue for the year, the club will expect you to get your own equipment.

Hellman's will give you a 10% discount towards life jackets and outerwear. A wooden practice paddle can be purchased through the club. If you would like to purchase equipment on time, the club can get your equipment and pay the club in installments. Contact the equipment manager for information on this.

As a club we volunteer at various community events. We put out the information for the events and if possible let the sender know if you can help.

If you have any questions about the club, expectations or dragon boating ask a board member not your seat mate. There are always board members at coffee on Saturday mornings. Currently this is at Finley's at 10 am. We do this all year round and it's a good place to ask questions.

Club Expectations

When you become a paddler, you are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct and our Privacy Policy.

Copies are included in this booklet.

Policies are in place to cover disputes, communications, safety and equipment.

When you become a paddler, you are expected to purchase your own equipment. We can purchase the equipment for you and you can pay in installments. Contact the equipment board member and she will put the process in place.

You are expected at practices. If you cannot be there, communicate to the coach or captain. Each team will have a process in place. If you are expected and something happens that you can't be there, please let the coach or captain know so she doesn't worry. Courtesy applies.

As a club, we are involved in a lot of community events. As paddlers, we are all expected to volunteer and help on these occasions. We also run the Terry Fox Run as a club.

There are a lot of jobs involved in running the club; board members, committee chairs, committee members, coaches, steerswomen, captains, managers, boat cleaners, videographers and planners. We need people to volunteer to cover all these positions.

If you have a particular area of expertise and can help in this capacity, let the club know.

Any questions that you don't know who to ask, ask the club president who can direct you in the right direction.

Every Saturday morning, we currently meet at Finley's at 10 am for coffee, breakfast or just conversation. We do this all year round. This is the best place to ask questions about the club and paddling. Someone will know the answer.

Festivals

Every year the racing teams decide what festivals to go to.

If you are a competitive paddler you can vote for the team festival.

If you would like to compete at a festival put your name on the list to go. The boat needs to have 20 paddlers, a drummer/coach and a steers person.

Every festival list has spares and the numbers depend on the festival and the coach.

The coach is in charge at the festival.

The coach is in charge of seating on the boat and who will sit where.

We can take up to 4 spares per festival but some boats accommodate 18 paddlers better than 20.

If a race team needs a sub(s) for any given festival, the following will be the order subs will be invited:

- Race paddlers not able to attend their own teams festivals will be invited to sub first
- Rec paddlers that are wanting to race will be invited to sub second
- Race paddlers in general will be asked to sub if no subs are found in 1 & 2 as above

The requirement of subs will be communicated by an email being sent out to all club members

Spares are dressed and ready to paddle right up to loading the boat just in case. Paddlers have had medical issues in the marshalling area.

The team manager is responsible for booking hotel rooms and collecting festival fees. Each team will meet several times to plan who will share rooms, who needs a ride and who has seats available. The ones who share rooms share the cost. If you are getting a ride with someone you share the gas costs.

Some expenses are covered by the club. Coaches and steers persons rooms, gas and registrations are covered. Coaches and steers usually share a room and vehicle to make expenses easier.

The equipment is transported by someone where the gas is covered. If you are travelling with the equipment you are still expected to contribute to the gas. Everyone at the festival is expected to help set up the tents, paddle holders, tables, notice board and clock. Everyone brings munchies to share between the races.

Paddlers and spares need to stay close to the tents. Festival schedules can speed up as well as slow down depending on weather. Do not go off shopping until racing is over or your seat may be filled by a spare. If you have to go to the bathroom at the last minute, make sure someone knows but try and plan ahead.

Anyone paddling at a festival should have their own equipment so that the club equipment is left for our recreational practice. The club has enough race jerseys and racing paddles to equip a team and can be signed out for festivals. You are required to have your own pfd for races.

Anyone going to a festival are expected to show up for all the practices (unless extenuating circumstances). Paddlers are expected to be in the best shape possible to compete and be prepared for as many races a day as necessary.

We eat as a team and dinners are voted on as a team at each festival.

Borrowed equipment may be collected at the end of the festival or when we get back. You are responsible for any club equipment that you have signed out. Do not make ANY changes to the racing paddles.

Code of Conduct

The Kootenay Rhythm Dragon's Club is committed to fairness, equity and good sportsmanship, and aims to provide the best possible environment in which its members can excel. The Code of Conduct is designed to ensure that appropriate forms of behavior are adopted and remain the norm for all persons associated with the club. Every member of the KRD has a responsibility to ensure their own behavior is in accordance with the conduct outlined hereunder, and any breach of the Code will be subject to disciplinary action.

1 Be subject to the management and direction of the team captain or coach or any other person appointed by either of them.

2 Observe and comply with all reasonable directions and orders given by the team captain or coach or any other officiating person.

3 Conduct themselves in a proper manner so as not to bring themselves or the club into public disrespect or censure.

4 Not to make, comment, issue, authorize, offer or endorse any public criticism or statement designed to have an effect prejudicial to the best interest of the club.

5 Respect the law and customs at all times and in all places including in foreign countries.

6 Respect the rights, dignity, privacy and worth of all participants and officials regardless of their ability, gender,

sexual orientation or cultural background. Abusive or violent conduct of any nature toward any paddler, club, race official or spectator will not be tolerated.

7 Perform all duties and responsibilities in a mature, fair and professional manner.

8 Demonstrate and ensure a positive commitment to the KRD club and its programs and policies.

9 Not disclose to any unauthorized person or organization, information which is of a confidential or privileged nature.

10 Not to defame or injure any person.

11 Not to consume alcohol to excess nor to encourage other persons to use or consume alcohol to excess while participating in a KRD activity.

12 To act in all times in a manner beyond reproach and in such a way as to ensure good relations within club and between teams.

SAFETY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

THESE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES WERE DEVELOPED TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF KOOTENAY RHYTHM DRAGONS TEAM MEMBERS AND GUESTS PADDLING WITH THE TEAM.

Policies

- The Kootenay Rhythm Dragons will have an Emergency Plan in place.
- At the beginning of each season the Nelson City Police, Nelson Fire Department, Nelson Ambulance and Nelson RCMP will be informed of the paddling schedule of the Kootenay Rhythm Dragons.
- KRД will establish a Safety Committee for review of the procedures annually.
- Safety Committee members will take Pleasure Craft Certification course.
- Safety Committee members will review safety measures with team members at the beginning of each season and provide copies of safety procedures to each member.
- Each team member and guest will sign a waiver prior to the paddling.
- Each team member and guest is required to wear proper pfd during paddling practices and races.
- h. There is a minimum of 16 paddlers in the boat each time it is taken out.

Procedures

Administration

- Safety Committee will ensure each member has signed a waiver of responsibility prior to paddling in the boat.

At the Dock

- Safety Committee will ensure each paddler has proper pfd.
- Each team member and guest will sign roster sheet, to be left on the dock
- Each paddler will know their seat partner
- Row 10 is responsible for steersperson

- Row 1 is responsible for drummer/coach
- Count off rows and number of team members in the boat before leaving the dock.
- Non swimmers will be identified prior to leaving the dock
- Coach is responsible to ensure boat is properly loaded

SAFETY EQUIPMENT

- Sound signaling devices - recommend everyone carry a pea-less whistle
- Bailers - minimum of 2
- Buoyant weighted throw rope 25 ft
- Two extra paddles

BOAT COMMANDS

Each team member must learn and understand the basic commands of the boat. The steersperson is in charge of the boat and his/her commands must be obeyed to ensure everyone's safety.

Emergency Back Up Plan

In case of capsize or collision, the following measures will be taken:

- **STAY CALM**
- **ALWAYS LISTEN TO YOUR STEERSPERSON FOR DIRECTION**
- **Buddy System** - Each paddler will ensure location of their seat partner. The first and last seats in the boat must check for the Coach and Steersperson
- **If the Boat Rolls Over** - It cannot stop once it starts to turn. Paddlers on the higher side of the boat when it begins to go over try to jump clear of your seat partner to avoid injury. If a paddler comes up under the boat there will be an air pocket available to catch a breath, get bearings and feel the way to the side of the

boat and then surface on the outside. Immediately call out to your buddy to let them know where you are.

- **Stay With the Boat** - Paddlers will hold onto the boat spread out even around both sides of the capsized boat holding onto the top edge (gunwale). The boat has the capacity to support a full crew even when fully submerged. If the dragon boat is upside down after capsizing spread evenly around the outside and gently roll it over. Look out or call out to your "buddy" and obey the instruction of the rescue Boat. Once the Rescue Boat has arrived, they are in charge. If other paddlers are injured or having difficulty reaching the boat give them assistance and make the rescue boat aware of the situation.

Listen to Instructions from the Rescue Boat - rescue boat will help you right the boat and get it bailed enough to paddle it back to shore. In the event the boat must be towed, listen to instructions from the rescue boat as to where to proceed. Do not go elsewhere or valuable time may be wasted looking for you even though you are safe.

OTHER BASICS TO HELP MAKE DRAGON BOATING SAFE AND ENJOYABLE

- Always carry a bottle of water with you. Dehydration can happen quickly while paddling.
- Dress appropriately. Dress in layers to insulate your body. Water repellent or waterproof clothing is best - cotton is not a good choice.
- Apply proper sun protection. Sunburn can happen quickly on the water and a hat for sunstroke protection is advisable on hot days.
- Keep a spare paddle on board in the event of a break

Have a fun and safe Dragon Boating season, Kootenay Rhythm Dragons Safety Committee