

Welcome

New Member information

Thank you for joining the Pittsburgh Paddlefish Dragon Boat Team. This welcome packet will help you locate important information. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask one of the captains, Kathi Robinson-Dassel or Jim Robertson, or Coach Bob Dassel and/or Assistant Coach, Marie Hirsch. A current roster has been included in your packet so you may contact people on the team; however, any questions or concerns related to your paddling or the team should be directed to the captains and coaches.

Current Steering Committee:

- **Coach:** Bob Robinson-Dassel
- **Captains:** Jim Robertson, Kathi Robinson-Dassel
- **Communication Coordinator:** Bonnie Beswick
- **Equipment Coordinator:** Jeff Felder
- **Logistics Coordinator:** Mina Hare-Rubenstein
- **Membership Coordinators :** Lori Swensson, Sandy Stein
- **Treasurer:** Laurie Butler

The majority of information can be found on our website, Pittsburghpaddlefish.org. It is important to check the website often for updated information and also practice sign-ups and changes. There is a Paddlefish update which is sent to all members on Friday. If you do not receive an update after your first week, please see Bonnie Beswick. The update includes all of the information you need for the upcoming week.

Practice:

Non water practices - winter and early spring - begin at 6:30 p.m. on Monday and Wednesday and 8:00 a.m. on Saturday. Gym workout clothing is recommended. These practices will include time on the paddle erg, weight training and a core workout circuit.

Spring - as soon as the water and river flow are within a safety range, we will be taking the boat on the water. We are on the water promptly at 6:30 p.m. on Monday and Wednesday and 9:00 a.m. on Saturday. It is important to be at the boathouse in plenty of time to get your gear ready and be ready to leave the dock on time. The boat will not wait!!

Clothing for the water: (in the spring and fall, be prepared for either an indoor workout or a water workout)

- layered clothing - you will be chilled when you start paddling and will quickly get warm and will want something you can take off easily
- quick drying clothing - you will get wet!! Cotton shirts absorb water and stay wet; snug fitting shorts (yoga or running shorts) or wind pants
- water bottle
- water shoes or shoes that you do not care if they get wet
- butt pad - many team members use seat pads which are purchased specifically for dragon boating. A garden kneeling mat is very effective.

Personal possessions while on the water:

There is a locker in the boathouse which is locked during practice. Anything which you do not want to take on the water (keys or glasses) can be left in the locker. Items taken in the boat will get wet, so keys with electronic locks should not be taken on the boat unless they are in a waterproof pouch.

Sign ups for water practices:

In an effort to quickly load the boat and assign seats, everyone is asked to sign up for practice early in the day of practice at the latest. The link for practice sign up is:

[Practice sign up](#)

http://pittsburghpaddlefish.org/?page_id=1761

Helpful links:

[Videos of the stroke and race pieces:\(http://pittsburghpaddlefish.org/?page_id=452\)](http://pittsburghpaddlefish.org/?page_id=452)

helpful to watch as you develop your stroke

[Three Rivers Rowing \(TRRA\):\(http://threeriversrowing.org\)](http://threeriversrowing.org) parent organization

[Regatta Central: \(https://www.regattacentral.com/clubs/?org_id=259\)](https://www.regattacentral.com/clubs/?org_id=259) website for signing out an OC

[Paddle Chica: \(http://paddlechica.com\)](http://paddlechica.com) fun and helpful paddling information

Important Terminology:

- **Attention, Please** Command given by race starter to prepare crews for departure, the start gun will follow in approximately 3-5 seconds.
- **Back Paddle** The stroke used to bring a boat backward into or away from a dock or a race start.
- **Catch** The point when the paddle first comes into contact with the water.
- **Check the boat** 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.
- **Draw stroke** Used most often by paddlers in the front or back to line a boat up straight at the start of the race or to turn the boat around. The paddle blade is placed parallel to the side of the boat and 'drawn' (pulled) towards the boat. All paddlers draw in time.
- **Drummer** The person who helps a crew's timing by rhythmically pounding a drum at the rate set by the strokes. The drummer sits in the bow, is usually lightweight, and motivates the team with calls during races.
- **Engine room** Refers to the larger paddlers in the middle to back of the boat.
- **Exit** The point in a stroke, midway between the paddler's knee and hip, in which the paddle leaves the water cleanly, quickly, and powerfully.
- **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. Hitting the catch Driving the paddle forcefully into the water at maximum reach.
- **Gunnel** (or Gunwale)/hips to the gunnel Keeping your hip tightly against the side of the boat.
- **Hold/Hold the boat** Bury the blade in the water perpendicular to the boat to stop the boat.
- **Let it run** Command from drummer/steersperson to stop paddling and let the boat coast with blades out of the water.
- **Paddles up** Position yourself for the catch with arms up and out from the body, waiting for the leads to start at the command of "GO or Take it Away."
- **Port** Left side of the boat.
- **Pull** The phase of the stroke in which the paddle blade is fully buried in the water, perpendicular to the boat, and the paddler pulls straight back close to the side of the boat.
- **Power (Power 10)** A sequence of 10 strokes at 100% of power but maintaining the same stroke rate.
- **Reach/extension** The phase of the stroke in which the paddler maximizes the length of their stroke before hitting the catch.

- **Ready, Ready/Are you 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.
- **Set** Command to place paddles in a position across laps with blades out over the water in preparation for the “Attention please” or “Paddles Up” command
- **Starboard** Right side of the boat.
- **Sit ready** After a rest, this is your caller’s warning to prepare yourself. “Paddles up!” is usually next command.
- **Steersperson** The person located at the stern of the boat responsible for steering and giving the crew commands.
- **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 or benches 1-3 who have a long reach.
- **Stroke rate** The paddling pace, the number of times the paddle goes through the water in a minute.
- **Strokes** First paddler on both sides
- **Take it Away** Command given by drummer/steersperson to begin paddling, usually follows command of Paddles Up.
- **Terminators/Back Six Benches 8-10.** Usually the most athletic since the water is moving fast and often used to position the boat during race line ups.
- **Top Arm Drive** To maximize the catch, the top arm is driven down aggressively burying the paddle blade. The top arm continues to push down until the end of the stroke.