

Dragon Boat Paddle Sizing and Matrix

A good way to start based on height and experience level.

Paddle Length Selection Chart (Size matrix below)

Factors Affecting Length

1. Arm and Body Length

- If your arms are **longer** than average, then you should **add** one inch to the matrix size
- If your arms are **shorter** than average, then you should **subtract** one inch from the matrix size
- If your torso is **long**, but your arms are average **add** one inch to the matrix size
- If your torso is **short**, but your arms are average **subtract** one inch from the matrix size
- If you have **both long** arms and long torso **add** one to two inches to the matrix size
- If you have **both short** arms and short torso **subtract** one to two inches from the matrix size
- If your arms and torso are average, use the indicated matrix size

2. Boat Type

- If you paddle in an IDBF Certified Standard boat (Swift, Champion, BuK, etc...) then use the indicated matrix size, **no adjustment** is necessary
- If you paddle in a teak dragon boat or a dragon boat with very little freeboard (6-16) (the distance from the top of the gunwale to the water) then you should **subtract** 1 inch from the matrix size
- If you paddle in a Taiwan style (flag grabbing) dragon boat or in a dragon boat with considerable freeboard, then you should **add** 1 to 2 inches to the matrix size. More freeboard means you need a longer paddle.

2. Water Type

- If you paddle in flat, **fresh** water (i.e. lake, calm river, reservoir, etc...) **no adjustment** necessary
- If you paddle in flat, **salt** water (i.e. bay, harbor) your boat may have increased buoyancy. **Add** 0.5 to 1.5 inches to the matrix size
- **Rough** water – such as wakes, waves and windy conditions on a regular basis, **subtract** one inch from the matrix size. **Windy** conditions may require a **heavier** paddle, such as wood versus carbon fiber

3. Position in the boat

- If you **REGULARLY** sit in a particular bench you should adjust for the water height at that bench, for example if you are always the lead stroke or you always are in bench 7 then use the following adjustment factors if you do NOT sit in the same bench regularly or move around do not make the adjustment
 - Bench 1 subtract 1 to 2 inches from matrix size
 - Bench 2 and 3 subtract 1 inch from matrix size
 - Bench 4, no adjustment
 - Bench 5,6,7 add 1 inch from matrix size
 - Bench 8 no adjustment
 - Bench 9 and 10 subtract 0.5 to 1 inch size

Again – ONLY make these adjustments if you sit in one of these benches regularly

4. Crew Composition

- If your boat is **not full** for most practices you may need a longer **PRACTICE** paddle, but a shorter **RACING** paddle.
- If your crew is heavier than average you may need a shorter paddle, subtract 0.5 to 1 inch)
- If you crew is lighter than average (i.e. Junior), add 0.5 to 1 inch

5. Stroke Rate

- If your crew uses a fast stroke rate and you have trouble keeping up (more than 75 strokes per minute) subtract 1 inch
- If your crew uses a slow stroke rate (less than 60 strokes per minute) and you feel you are not getting enough power add 0.5 inches

6. Stroke Set Up

- If your coach has you bring your top hand above your head during recovery or your team uses a “high set up” then you may want a longer paddle. Add 0.5 to 1 inch

7. Personal Preference

- Intermediate to advanced paddlers of average height use paddles that may vary from the matrix size indicated. There are many shorter paddlers who prefer longer paddles and taller paddlers with shorter paddles. The data for the expert paddlers is very

solid, which may indicate that it can take many years to develop into the right size paddle.

8. Try before you Buy

- The best method for selecting a paddle size is to try a paddle of that length during practice. Find someone with a longer and shorter paddle than the one you are using and ask to switch for a few minutes. **If possible, have your coach evaluate your stroke with your normal paddle and then with the size you prefer.**
- If you are not sure what size to purchase go with the longer of the two. A paddle can usually be shortened but not lengthened.
- Ask the company selling you the paddle what their return policy is. A reputable company will take back the wrong sized paddle if there is no visible wear or damage to the paddle.

		*Years Paddling at Level (Rec to Advanced)													
		Novice 1- 2Yrs	Recreational*			Intermediate*			Advanced*			Expert			
			2 Yrs	3 Yrs	4 Yrs	2 Yrs	3 Yrs	4 Yrs	3 Yrs	4 Yrs	5 Yrs	5 Yrs	6 Yrs	7 Yrs	
Height in Inches	60 or less	44	44	44.5	44.5	44.5	45	45	45	45	45.5	45.5	46	46	
	61	44	44	44.5	45	45	45	45	45	45.5	46	46	46	46	
	62	44	44	44.5	45	45	45	45.5	45.5	46	46	46	47	47	
	63	45	45	45	45	46	46	46	46	46	46.5	47	47	47	
	64	45	45	45	45	46	46	46	46	46	47	47	47	47	
	65	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46.5	47	47	47	47	47	
	66	46	46	46	46	46	47	47	47	47	47	47	47.5	48	
	67	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47.5	47.5	47.5	48	
	68	47	47	47	47	47	47	47	47.5	48	48	48	48	48	
	69	47	47.5	47.5	47.5	47.5	47.5	47.5	48	48	48	48	48	49	
	70	48	48	48	48	48	48	48	48	48	48	48	48.5	49	
	71	48	48	48	48	48	48	48	48	48.5	48.5	49	49	49	
	72	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	
	73	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	50	50	50	
	74	49.5	49.5	49.5	49.5	49.5	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	
	75	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50.5	50.5	51	51	51	51	
	76	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	
77*	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51		

Length in Inches: 44 44.5 45 45.5 46 46.5 47 47.5 48 48.5 49 49.5 50 50.5 51

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