

Glossary of Dragon Boat Commands & Terms

At the Rest

Sit up straight with paddle **at the rest**. The paddle is on your lap, with the flat portion of the blade parallel to the water.

Attention Please!

Command issued by the race start official, immediately after “We have alignment” indicating that the race is about to commence within seconds! **ABSOLUTE SILENCE IN THE BOAT!** On the command, be braced in your seat, listen for gun, horn, bell or verbal command to go!

Catch

The point when the paddle first comes into contact with the water.

Draw

Stroke used most often by front or back paddlers to line a boat up straight at the start of the race or to turn the boat around. The paddle is placed perpendicular to the side of the boat and “drawn” towards the boat. Paddlers will pull water towards the boat in order to move boat sideways.

Dry start

Paddles up position, a relaxed “A” frame position, ready to begin paddling, but not in the water.

Drummer

The person who sets the timing by rhythmically pounding a drum or calling stroke rates. The drummer sits in the bow (front of the boat) and is usually lightweight.

Fast Pace Stroke

Called at a specific point in a race when a speed surge is required with a given number of strokes or towards the very end of the race with no number of strokes specified. Used to pass or maintain lead at the end. Sit up straighter, make quicker and more powerful strokes for the count ordered. (Much higher cadence than normal race pace is required) The trick here is to listen to the number of strokes specified. After the count ordered, return to normal race pace.

Gunnel

The top edge of the side of the boat. Edge is usually reinforced with wood, plastic or aluminum.

Hip to the Gunnel!

Command given to paddlers to position themselves with their outside hip against the side of the boat.

Hold the boat!

Command given when the boat must be stopped. Paddles are thrust into the water, going in with the blade perpendicular to the boat and holding with force.

Let it ride!

Command given to stop paddling and return to the “at rest” position. Boat will continue to glide.

Listen Up! or Heads in the Boat!

Command given to get your attention. Suspend conversation, diversions or distractions and focus in the boat and on the task at hand. There is a command or information coming up.

Pace, Race Pace or Sweep Stroke

It follows a race start or in the middle of the race or at the end. Long powerful (not fast) strokes keeping with the cadence of the drummer, steer or crew count and performed for as long as no other command is ordered.

Flare the boat!/ Paddles on the water!/ Feather the boat!

Command called to stabilize the boat in anticipation of boat wakes, waves or during the exchanging of paddler positions. The flat side of the paddle is pressed onto the surface of the water. Maintain shallow depth, this will help stabilize the boat like an outrigger.

Paddles up!

Command given to get into a paddle-ready position. Snap to the “A” frame position on the “up” part of the command. Reach forward and out, paddle perpendicular (straight) to the water, close to the side of the boat. Paddle blade just above (out of) the water. (Dry start is the normal start position as opposed to wet start at races or as called for by the steer).

PFD (Personal Flotation Device)

A Coast Guard approved PFD is required to be worn by each person on the boat for their own personal safety.

Power Power Now! or Power 10 now!

Command given to paddle long, deep and hard and can be called with the number of strokes used to power the boat back up to race speeds. Stretch your reach forward over the side of the boat as much as you can, bury the paddle in the water up to your hand

and pull straight and as hard as you can (hard not fast). Number of strokes is decided by the steer. Must pay close attention to commands when called.

10 on 3! = 10 powerful strokes on the end of the three count. 3 on 3! = 3 powerful strokes on the end of the three count.

Race start stroke sequence

The predetermined race start sequence executed at the beginning of a race. The steer will have instructed the crew as to the predetermined race start sequence required for a given race. Sequence may be any variation of 5-10-10-10 or 8-10-10-10 or 6-10-10, etc. Once again the trick is to listen to the commands. The first number ordered (4, 5, 7 etc.) are long, deep and hard strokes, followed by ramping up strokes. Then smoothly transitioning into the predetermined race pace or as dictated by the steer's, stokers' or drummer's count.

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Reach

The phase of the stroke in which the paddler maximizes the length of their stroke before hitting the catch. This phase involves trunk rotation in order to maximize reach.

Rudder the Boat!/Skeg the boat!

Command given to hold the boat in position by placing paddle straight down in water with flat of blade facing outside.

Steersperson

The only person who stands on the boat with a steering oar, located at the stern (rear) of the boat. Responsible for steering and giving commands.

Sit ready (while at start line)

After the boats have paddled to the start line and have basically gotten into position, it is important to be ready for the race to start. **ABSOLUTE SILENCE IN THE BOAT!** Paddles at rest position, but angled towards the person in front of you, easy to slip into the water on the "We have alignment" command.

Stokers

Refers to the first two paddlers in the front seats who set the pace for the team.

Take it away! or Go!

Command given to begin paddling. Paddlers start paddling at a gentle pace and effort level. Commonly used for starting the movement of the boat in a non-race situation. Maintain cadence with the stokers, drummer, steer or team count.

Top Hand Pressure

To maximize the catch, the top arm is driven down aggressively burying the paddle. The top arm continues to push down until the end of the stroke.

Twist

The stroke phase that involves trunk rotation in order to maximize reach.

We have alignment!

Warning issued by race start official indicating that the field is ready.

ABSOLUTE SILENCE IN THE BOAT!

Wet start

Paddles up position, "A" frame, but blade is fully submerged in the water. This start is more common.