



*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

November 1, 2022

New Underwater Capsule Orientation and Training Program

The Southern Drag Boat Racing Association is proud to announce a new racer underwater capsule orientation program beginning with the 2023 Racing season. The purpose of this program is to improve on an already proven and successful Underwater Capsule Orientation Program for those drivers that compete in a class of racing that requires the use of a safety capsule. Also included in this program will be those racers that utilize a capsule in a race boat that by rule, **Does Not** mandate a capsule in that particular class.

The history of the current Underwater Capsule Orientation Program goes back some 25 years when a need arose to assist and train those Racer/Drivers that were moving into a class of boats that at the time required this program to participate. TFH, BAH (now TAH), BAF (now TAF), BGH, etc. were classes of boats that were required to participate in this program prior to competing at a sanctioned event. The program has not changed much since its inception.

Late last year, talks began to see what changes could be made to the program moving forward to make the program more Racer involved and to narrow this program to those racer that truly had intention to compete in a capsule class. We want to eliminate from this program the tire kickers and the dreamers if you will. Many round table discussions and think tank meetings were held and the SDBA has now decided to take on the task of making some positive changes in the program and be the leader in the Safety of the Racer/Drivers across the nation. The hopes are that other racing organizations across the country will seek to make similar changes in their programs and/or adopt the SDBA model so as to align themselves with these positive safety changes.

The changes being made to the program are as follows:

- Mandatory Self Evaluation and Testing of the Racer/Drivers own equipment.
 - Each capsule Racer/Driver will be provided paperwork that relates to this program and will be required to fill out the paperwork and complete the requirements on the form PRIOR to the Racer/Drivers participation in the evaluation/certification portion of the program by the SDBA and the SDBA Safety/Rescue team members.
 - Racer Equipment. The Capsule Racer/Driver MUST PROVIDE his/her own equipment, including but not limited to a Helmet, Regulator, Hoses, Masks, and Air Cylinder/Bottle. No Longer will it be acceptable to “borrow or use” another Racer/Drivers safety equipment to become certified. The whole idea behind this program is to familiarize the Racer/Driver with the equipment he/she intends to use on race day in the event that this equipment becomes necessary to use following an incident. As many of you know, in the past, quite often during the equipment orientation portion of the program, leaks are found, regulators malfunction, neck sleeves/boots do not fit and repairs or adjustments need to be made. To use alternate Racer/Drivers equipment negates the purpose of the equipment orientation portion of

the evaluation. Once again, the Racer/Drivers equipment is the equipment that is going to be tested and then utilized during the event so as to prevent any problems.

- Once presented to the SDBA Safety/Rescue Team for evaluation, the Racer/Driver's helmet will be affixed with a permanent identifying mark or permanent sticker identifying the ONLY person allowed to race with this safety equipment. NO ACCEPTIONS. The Tech department will include a check of this equipment and assigned driver during the inspection at each of the events.
 - Testing of the drivers own safety equipment as it relates to Helmet, Regulator, Hoses, and Air bottle. This equipment safety check is to be completed on your own, at a local or personal pool, lake, river, dive center or any other venue that allows the Racer/Driver to don the equipment, test the equipment underwater and become comfortable with that same equipment "PRIOR" to participating in the actual certification program with SDBA Rescue/Safety Personnel. The Racer/Driver should be able to breathe uninterrupted underwater for no less than 5 minutes for each of these evaluations. Should there be a problem, (leak, malfunction, etc.) during the self-evaluations, the equipment can then be returned to the manufacturer for repair or adjustment and that testing portion of the program will need to be repeated prior to moving on in the process.
 - The Racer/Driver participating in this program will be required to certify that this self-testing has been completed and must do so on three (3) different occasions. A witness signature will also be required on the paperwork. This witness can be a crew chief, close family member, a Dive Instructor or anyone else that is familiar with the Racer/Driver and is comfortable placing a signature on a form that attests that these self-evaluations were completed.
- Racer/Driver certification with SDBA Rescue/Safety personnel.
- On Site Racer/Driver certification will only be completed at an SDBA Sanctioned event. This certification will be completed on the day BEFORE race day. In the event that this is a 3-day race, then the certification program will take place on the Thursday before the event and for a 2-day race, the certification program will take place on the Friday before the event. We will no longer offer this training on the morning of the events race day, or after the race day is over.
 - It will be required that AFTER the Racer/Driver completes his/her self-evaluation, that they will then need to schedule the final portion of the training/Certification. He/she will need to contact the SDBA and schedule this portion of the program. Keep in mind that the purpose of planning the final portion of the program the day before a race day is to allow for the maximum number of Racers/Drivers to participate in the program on that day. Having said that, there are not an unlimited number of training/certification slots available and will be limited to 15 Racers/Drivers on any given training day.
 - Once the Racer/Driver successfully participates and completes the program, their information will be entered into a data base that will be managed by SDBA. A separate participation card will be given to the Racer/Driver for their own records and can be used at events that are not sanctioned by the SDBA but by other racing organizations that require certification in an Underwater Capsule Orientation Program.

- Select Venues for the Underwater Capsule Orientation Program are as follows:
 - Marble Falls Texas, Friday, June 9, 2023
 - To be determined

- Cost of the Program. The SDBA has committed time, money and personnel to this program. Bringing in staff a day early to an event to allow for the implementation of the program comes at a cost. The cost must be recovered for this program and the SDBA will do so by mandating the following cost for the Underwater Capsule Orientation Program.
 - To participate in this program, a \$450.00 cost recovery fee will be implemented to offset some of the costs that will be incurred by the SDBA. The Fee will be collected at the time of the paperwork submittal to the SDBA.

 - Here is the good news. \$350.00 of the \$450.00 fee can be used as a “Credit” towards the Racer/Drivers entry fee into an SDBA Sanctioned event during the same race year. This will create a near net zero cost to the Racer/Drive and help offset some of the costs of the program.

In Summary, the SDBA is excited to offer this new and improved program that is designed SOLEY for the Racer/Driver so as to assist them in the event their safety equipment has to be utilized during an incident. The SDBA takes safety very seriously and spends a great deal of money making sure that the Safety/Rescue portion of each event adheres to the Nothing But Class values that have been part of the SDBA since its inception. The SDBA is staffed with the best personnel and utilizes the best and most updated rescue equipment that money can buy. There are no corners cut when it comes to Safety/Rescue at the SDBA and this program is yet another example of the SDBA being proactive as it relates to Racer/Driver safety and we look forward to implementing this invaluable program in 2023.

Should you have any questions, comments or suggestions regarding this program, please reach out to David Carroll via Email or Phone as well as Jimmy Todd, SDBA Rescue and Safety Director, and Chris Rybarski, The SDBA SCUBA Coordinator and Assistant Rescue Director.

Each of their contact information is listed below.

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