

**Eastern Region Dragon Boat Association  
Festival Committee  
Meeting Summary/February 8, 2016**

Members Attending: John Dyer (Chairperson), Peter Lew, Matt Robert, Josh Rubinstein, Jessica Hirschhorn, Chris Wetzel.

Members invited but unable to attend: Ken Wong, Susan Troupe

**I. Review of Existing Standards for ERDBA Festivals**

**A. Standard Race Distances**

The current ERDBA application form identifies 200m, 500m and 2K as the standard race distances. The consensus of the Committee is that 1000m should be added to the “standard” race distances.

**B. Utilization of Finish Line Cameras/Utilization of Electronic Race Timing Technology**

All participants acknowledged that these two standards can likely be added together. The electronic technology most often utilized actually combines video and race timing. In the unlikely event, however, that this is not the case, it is suggested that BOTH a finish line camera AND electronic timing be required.

**C. Racing Lanes**

Much of the discussion revolved around the four standards affecting racing lanes: (a) “Identifiably Marked Lanes”; (b) “Lanes of even water depth”; (3) “Fair Lanes”; and (4) “Lane width a minimum of 9m.”

All agree that the current standard of a marker buoy every 100 meters should be retained and that lane width ought to be a minimum of 9 meters. The discussion centered upon the challenging issues of requiring a minimum water depth and insuring no competitive disadvantage due to uneven water depth .

All acknowledged that water depth is often (and likely) beyond the control of the organizer. Three regulatory concepts were offered that could enhance “fair racing”:

(1) If all racing lanes have a minimum depth of 3 meters, and one lane is deeper than other, then the course should be deemed fair to all concerned notwithstanding the variation in depth.

(2) Where water depth in any lane is less than 2 meters, then only lanes that have a water depth equal to 80% of the deepest lane should be used for racing.

**D. Race Officials**

The current application reads: “Utilization of USDBF/IDBF qualified race officials  
\*\*(some are DBC qualified)”

The Committee recognizes the urgent need for more trained USDBF/IDBF officials. Committee members also agreed that the best way to train officials is with on-water experience. It is suggested that every sanctioned ERDBA Festival be used as a “training ground” for additional officials. All clubs should encourage members to become certified in order to expand the class of available officials.

Recognizing this dearth of qualified officials, the Committee suggests a rule that:  
(1) Requires two (2) officials at ERDBA sanctioned events; and  
(2) Expands the definition of “qualified official” to mean an official certified by IDBF, USDBF, or DBC.

Finally, the Committee recommends that, in order to supplement the number of trained officials, ERDBA should consider implementing its own ERDBA training course and should use all ERDBA Festivals as training opportunities.

**E. Utilization of like quality dragon boats (same manufacturer) so that there is no competitive disadvantage.**

The consensus of the Committee members is that this requirement should be maintained. Some members noted that the only time they had encountered mixed brands of dragon boats in competition, the mix included BuK and Kahlua, which are, essentially, the same mold. Peter Lew commented that there isn’t much that can be said as long as all boats meet IDBF specification. The end consensus is that, as a practical matter, Festival operators should work to abide by the rule as stated since this is the best way to ensure no competitive disadvantage.

**F. Emergency First Responder Team Readily Available**

The consensus is that this should read “on site AND readily available.”

**G. Safety Boats in the water with effective rescue plan in place.**

- Festivals with multiple lane races should be prepared with water evacuation plans for up to a three boat capsized event—especially where course depth is in deep.
- Rescue boats should be equipped with devices that can supplement the number of paddler that can be brought on board (i.e. floating rafts; inner tubes; throw ropes with handles, etc.)
- Various options that can enhance a Festival’s Safety Boat operation should be catalogued and provided to ERDBA member festivals.

**H. Evacuation Plan in the event of weather emergency.**

- This is generally a requirement of the local governing body.
- If there is no local requirement, Festivals should take care to make this part of the overall safety planning.
- One suggestion that will be revisited is a proposed requirement that each Festival submit an overall Safety Plan that should be pre-approved by ERDBA

in order to gain ERDBA sanctioning. The Safety Plan would include the Festival's on-water safety plan, evacuation plan, and emergency medical intervention plan. In order to facilitate this operation, the elements for a successful Safety Plan could be included in a checklist on the ERDBA Festival application.

**I. Advance filing of rosters for sport crews of at least one week before the event.**

- Several members suggested that they did not need an entire week.
- Most members acknowledged that, since most registrations are now done electronically, this is not as critical an element as it used to be.
- The general consensus is that the rule should remain in force.

**J. Employ roster checks for sport crews throughout the day.**

- Consensus is to keep this rule in place.

**K. 2K races**

The Festival Committee recommended two years ago that participating Festivals that offer a 2K race should be required to adhere to USDBF/IDBF rules of racing applicable to the 2K event. This condition is NOT contained in the current ERDBA application.

The Committee consensus is that all Festivals should adhere to the current IDBF Rules of Racing.

One very good suggestion made during the meeting is that Festivals should hold a steerspersons' meeting prior to the 2K event where each steersperson personally signs a form that contains the basic 2K rules and warrants his/her understanding and intent to comply. This practice has been used successfully at certain events. It is worth discussing further whether this should be a an ERDBA condition.

All members firmly agreed that IDBF rules should be followed.

**II. Safety Concerns**

**The Committee** addressed various ways to handle capsize events; implementing an appropriate emergency response and evacuation plan; and developing a Safety Plan Check List. The results of the discussion of this part of the agenda are reported in Section I, above.

**III. Creation of a Best Practices Manual**

The Committee resolved to address this issue in more detail at a future meeting. It was suggested, however, that it would be highly beneficial to poll the various Festival Managers concerning programs employed at their respective events that

enhance either safety, competitive balance, and profitability. These suggestions could be reduced to a manual and shared with the membership.

The Committee will also consider implementation of a Festival Advisory Committee to assist new Festivals.

Finally, the Committee discussed the possibility of filming a panel discussion among experienced Festival organizers that covers all the basic planning elements. This could be used as a working tool for existing festivals and new festivals alike.

#### **IV. Adjournment**

The committee adjourned after a session of 1 hr. and 20 minutes. The Committee resolved to meet again in three weeks.