

# Dragon Boat Stroke/Commands

*This is not canoeing; this is not rowing; this is not kayaking; its paddling*

## The phases of the stroke

<b>Catch</b>	The point where the paddler is fully rotated and the paddle first connects with the water. Hands are stacked.
<b>Compression</b>	The phase of the stroke in which the paddle is fully buried in the water and the paddler pushes the paddle down with the top hand and de-rotates the torso, pushing with the legs, moving the paddle backward directly parallel with the boat without bending the arms.
<b>Exit</b>	Begins with water hand at the knee or mid-thigh, at the end of the compression, sitting straight up, flick the paddle back no further than the hip and push the paddle out sideways.
<b>Recovery</b>	Shooting the hand forward using a whip like motion. Brief rest. The paddler maximizes the length of their stroke through body rotation before hitting the catch. Water hand at the outside shoulder of the person in front of them.

## General Commands

<b>Sit up</b>	Paddlers sit up in a uniform position relaxed but alert ready for the next command
<b>Paddles Up</b>	Paddlers lean forward rotating from the lower back paddle extended forward up over the water in the catch position.
<b>Take it away</b>	Paddlers start paddling at a gentle pace and effort level.
<b>Slow the boat</b>	Angle your paddle into the water vertically and horizontally to take off speed.
<b>Hold the boat</b>	Drive your paddle down vertically into the water and hold it firm.
<b>Hold the Boat Hard</b>	Drive your paddle down into the water doing a back stroke and then hold firm vertically in the water.
<b>Back paddle</b>	Put your paddle into the water behind your hips and drive it down and forward opposite to a forward stroke.
<b>Back it Down</b>	Paddlers in the boat paddle backwards in unison. Call is often used when moving the boat away from the dock or at a race start to move your boat back into position.
<b>Let it Run</b>	Stop paddling.

## **Commands given in positioning the boat**

<b>Give me ___ stroke(s)</b>	Last three seats only. Steersperson will call "give me ___ stroke(s)" The number of strokes in the call can vary. This call is used when positioning the boat.
<b>Draw</b>	Paddlers reach out at right angles to the boat plunging the paddle into the water and pulling the boat to the paddle.
<b>Front Left Draw</b>	Front Left 3 paddlers or front left quarter draw.
<b>Front Right Draw</b>	Front right 3 paddlers or front right quarter draw.
<b>Back Left Draw</b>	Back left 3 paddlers or back left quarter draw.
<b>Back Right Draw</b>	Back right 3 paddlers or back left quarter draw.
<b>Left Side Draw</b>	All paddlers on left side draw.
<b>Right Side Draw</b>	All paddlers on right side draw.
<b>Pry</b>	Similar list of calls as draw only the paddle is inserted into the water close to the boat and pushed away or pried away from the boat at right angles often used in conjunction with the call to draw.
<b>Brace the boat</b>	The paddlers put there paddles on the water surface at right angles to the boat moving them back and forth with a slight downward pressure to stabilize the boat.

## **Race Commands**

<b>Ready, Ready or Attention Please</b>	Command given by race starter to prepare crews for departure, the start gun will follow in 3-5 seconds. Paddlers instantly respond by burying the paddles in the water up to the paddle's shoulder.
<b>Go, gun shot, or horn</b>	The start of the race.
<b>Power Series</b>	This is a call for a prearranged set of strokes often with increased power, effort and tempo.
<b>Up</b>	Paddlers increase the speed/tempo of their stroke.
<b>Lengthen</b>	Paddlers extend their reach forward to maximize the stroke length.
<b>Finish</b>	This call lets the paddlers know that they are within a predetermined distance of the finish line. This call tells the paddlers if they have any extra ability/strength to give it NOW.

## **Stroke Rate**

**Strokes Per Minute (SPM)** Quality of the stroke determines speed.

Basic technique training stroke rate is around 45 to 50 spm. Most paddlers can sustain this pace while completing full upper-body rotation at the catch and fully burying the paddle.

Start sequences can range from 60 to 80 spm.

Race pace stroke rate is around 65 spm for novice teams, about 72 to 80 per minute for intermediate teams, and 85+ for advanced teams.

Power stroke rate is the same as your team's race pace, but your coach will incorporate deeper catches and/or more upper body lean to facilitate this power interval.