



2023 Canadian National Para Dragon Boat Team

DRAGON BOAT CANADA

PARA NATIONAL TEAM ORIENTATION



2023 Canadian National Para Dragon Boat Team racing in Thailand

Welcome to the Para Program Orientation

Informations en Français

Une version française de cette présentation sera disponible sur la page d'équipe nationale de Dragon Boat Canada (<https://dragonboat.ca/national-team/>)

Ou vous pouvez m'envoyer un e-mail pour l'obtenir

Nous avons des traducteurs disponibles si vous souhaitez poser une question en français



2023 Canadian National Para Dragon Boat Team racing in Thailand

Para Program Director – Katy Milne

Dragon boat and outrigger paddler since 2001

Coach since 2002

2019 Cycle – Mentee coach in DBC NT Coaching Mentorship program with Senior C under Kamini Jain & Andrea Dillon

2021 Cycle – assistant coach Senior C NT under Andrew Milner (except COVID happened!)

2023 Cycle – Program Director/Head Coach for Para National Team, continuing for 2025 cycle

Strongly values solid technique, inclusivity and creative problem-solving in creating team blend



Introduction to the Para Program

2nd cycle for Canada's para national team, 2023 was a highly successful debut!

Next Competition - 17th World Nations Championship – Brandenburg an der Havel, Germany - July 16-20, 2025

Para is an open, premier division

Last cycle - small PD1, small PD2 & standard PD2 boat in 200m (all), 500m (all), 1000m (std) and 2000m (std and small PD1) distances

I am actively pushing for a standard PD1 option for 2025 – depends on how many countries could field it

Program Athlete Composition - TBD



2023 Canadian National Para Dragon Boat Team racing in Thailand

What is Para Dragon Boat?

International Dragon Boat Federation (IDBF) – a disability is any diagnosed physical, psychological, sensory, neurological and/or developmental impairment that affects the way in which a paddler participates in the sport of dragon boating

Examples:

Psychological – ADHD, PTSD, Depression, Anxiety, Bipolar Disorder

Sensory – Vision or Hearing Impairment (partial or full)

Physical – Paraplegia, Limb Loss, Mobility Restriction, Muscle Weakness

Neurological – Multiple Sclerosis, Stroke, Parkinson's

Developmental – Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy

Intellectual – various impairments in cognitive or adaptive functioning

Para Dragon Crew Classifications

There are 3 Paradrakon Crew Classifications according to the IDBF:

PD1 – Full Paradrakon

All paddlers have different types and/or levels of disability

PD2 – Partial Paradrakon

Half of the paddlers have disabilities

PD3 – Specific Paradrakon – not currently offered at IDBF events

All paddlers have a specific type of disability

There are also small and standard boats

How Does it Work?

Para operates as a “premier, open” division – all ages (above 12 yrs), all genders

There is a point system to balance out age, gender and impairments

Each boat has a maximum point cap

Para-eligible paddlers fill in a declaration form with their health care provider in advance of the competition and are assigned points

Paddlers may also be assessed on site if the extent of impairment is unclear – cerebral palsy would be an example of a condition they would likely assess in person

Points may be reassessed as appropriate

When the crew races, there are no time adjustments

Point System

Point system starts with male athlete age 20-40, this athlete has 20 points

Female athletes lose 2 points (18/20)

Athletes over 40 lose an additional point, another point for over 50 and one more for over 60

A female in her 60s would score 15/20 before any impairment is considered

Non-para athletes in a PD2 boat are not considered in the point total, nor are drummer or steersperson

Point caps are an average of 16 points per person

Boat Size	Division	Point Cap
Small	PD1 (10 para athletes)	160
Small	PD2 (5 para athletes)	80
Standard	PD1 (20 para athletes)	320
Standard	PD2 (10 para athletes)	160

Points by Impairment

Impairment	Remarks	Points
BASELINE	An unimpaired male paddler who is over 20 years of age and under 40 years of age	20
Minor physical and/or some loss of vision or hearing	<p>Covers a range of minor physical impairments that inhibit or prevent a person from exercising the normal range of movements and application of power that would normally be expected of someone of a similar age. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some loss of vision that impacts ability to train or race; • loss of thumb OR two fingers; • arthrodesis of an elbow; • incomplete hearing loss 	19
Psychological	Covers a range of mental disorders or conditions that influence emotions, cognitions, and/or behaviours. Includes PTSD, depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder	18
Visual – full blindness	Race officials may order wearing of blindfolds	
Hearing – fully deaf		
Hand	Impairment of thumb AND two fingers on same hand (due to amputation, dysmelia, or other cause of loss of power and range of movement)	
Passive range of movement – lower limbs excluding hips	Restriction or a lack of passive movement in one or more joints caused by chronic joint immobilisation or trauma affecting a joint	
Hand	Loss of, or loss of use of, all digits on one hand	16

Points by Impairment

Impairment	Remarks	Points
Limb deficiency - loss of lower limb(s)	Use of prostheses permissible	17
Intellectual impairment	Straight line races up to 1km	17
	Longer distance races (>1km) and turn races (over any distance)	16
Passive range of movement – hips		16
Passive range of movement – upper limbs	Where athlete cannot raise arm >90deg or has lack of hand grip or missing digits	15
Incomplete paraplegia	The athlete still has some active muscle control around the hips. This could be active hip flexion on both sides, or hip flexion and knee extension on one side	14
Limb deficiency – lower limb(s) – no stump on one or both sides	Use of prostheses permissible	13
Muscle power - paraplegia		12
Elbow / upper limbs	Loss of an elbow, example a through or above elbow amputation, OR loss of both upper limbs below the elbow (prostheses assumed)	
Neurological	Ataxia, spasticity, athetosis, stroke and multiple sclerosis	10

Points by Impairment

Impairment	Remarks	Points
Limited use of one upper limb	One whole arm is affected by loss of power and range of movement, for example by an Erbs palsy.	10
Loss of use of both upper limbs	Where one is affected below the elbow and the other above the elbow (prostheses assumed)	8
	Where both limbs are affected above the elbow (prostheses assumed)	6
Limb deficiency - loss of one upper limb	From a disarticulation through the shoulder joint or a nerve injury such as a brachial plexus lesion	4
Muscle power - tetraplegia		2

If an athlete has more than one impairment, the one that has the greater impact on participation is used to assess points

Example – 50 year old female with partial hearing loss (-1 point) and anxiety (-2 points)

$20 - 2(\text{female}) - 2(\text{over } 50) - 2(\text{anxiety}) = 14/20$

Coaching Philosophy

The aim is to build on skills already developed under the athlete's individual & club training plan

We will focus on taking the strongest candidates and blend them into a cohesive, high performing crew

We will use a collaborative approach to building and blending the team. As an experienced coach I know what I'm looking for in a boat; however, I am by no means an expert in any disabilities that prospective athletes may be living with and will rely on a partnership with the athlete to provide the best blend

We are committed to providing an inclusive, safe training environment for all athletes based on mutual respect for all involved

Team training will focus more on technical and team blend than strength and fitness development which will be assessed as part of the selection process

Race strategies will be developed based on experiences and abilities of the team rather than imposing predirected strategy

To ensure a cohesive technical approach we will follow the DBC Technical fundamentals

DBC Technical Fundamentals



Stroke Phase	Basic – Position/Motion	Advanced - Load	High Performance - Speed
Overall Positioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good posture, back straight, shoulders down • Solid but relaxed grip • Spine straight, no sideways curve • Head and eyes forward • Body Weight to paddling side • Shoulder lightly in front of hips 		
Set-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core/torso posture • Stable seated position • Hip to shoulder rotation at set-up • Shoulder down and engaged not stretched forward or up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong open extended top arm • Bottom arm extended, not locked • Lower body load – loaded leg and rotated hips • Tall body, hinge to entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective reach vs absolute reach • Complete set up before moving to water
Catch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move body to water • Paddle positive or neutral at bury • Held rotation through hips to shoulders • Fully buried blade before pull 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying weight to the water • Finding support from the water • Dropping bottom shoulder/lat to catch • Loading top arm through body • Finding load through body, not through arms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick engagement to support • Clean entry • Establishing load immediately at entry

DBC Technical Fundamentals



Stroke Phase	Basic – Position/Motion	Advanced - Load	High Performance - Speed
Pull	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower body as force generator • Hip-core-shoulder sequence of motion • Constant depth of pull • Even distribution of movements throughout stroke • Top hand over water from catch to exit • Paddle path tight to boat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lift (sit-up) and de-rotate at the same time as soon as load is established • Lower (paddle-side) lat engaging • Lift torso through downward pressure on support from the water • Downward pressure on blade • Top arm pressure tracks down the paddle shaft • Maintain pressure and connection to the boat through contact points (feet and seat) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constant load on paddle, acceleration through the stroke • Body at pace with hands/paddle through stroke
Exit/Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body always slightly forward, athlete tall at exit • Top arm not dropping below sternum • Body movements in control through recovery • Exit position at or just before hip with bottom hand (high variability between crews) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain load and pressure to exit • Use load on water to initiate exit and recovery • Reset body through recovery • Body leads movement forward to the next set-up • Bodyweight stays toward the paddle side 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick disengagement from water – minimum time from load to paddle out of water • Controlled recovery at speed – complete reload quickly to set-up • Efficient recovery – minimum extraneous motion during recovery

Para Program Goals

2023 World Nations Championship:

Gold Medals - 3

Silver Medals - 4

Bronze Medals – 2



3 of our athletes taking a gold medal stroll

Our gold medals came at the 1000m and 2000m distances, the goal would be to maintain our strength at the longer distances while building more power for the shorter distances currently dominated by the Philippines

In addition to performance goals, we would like to increase the diversity in athletes representing Canada on the world stage and maintain an inclusive and supportive team atmosphere

We also hope to serve as inspiration to further grow the para dragon racing community across Canada to provide national team athletes for years to come

Testing

The testing protocols for the athletes are as follows:

Dec & Feb Indoor Testing

2:00 Paddle Erg

4:00 Paddle Erg

Bench Press 50% body weight, min 1 rep/sec

Bench Pull 50% body weight, min 1 rep/sec

Perg settings are currently drag = 60, kg = 45 women, 68 men

NT Testing Protocol to be posted online by Nov

Final Selection Camp Testing

2:00 Paddle Erg

4:00 Paddle Erg

Other tests at discretion of coach at that time

OC1 testing is not required for the para program

Note that test results are only one part of the equation. Perhaps more important is your technical ability, coachability and commitment to the team and process



Heading off to race

Para Program Selection Process

Phase 1 - Initial Selection

Part 1 - Program Orientation and Talent
Showcase Camps

Part 2 - December Indoor Testing - P Erg and
Bench Press and Bench Pull

Part 3 - February Indoor Testing - P Erg and
Bench Press and Bench Pull Costs

Tests to be completed at specific Certified
Testing Centres

Date: TBD, various locations across Canada

Costs - Phase 1 fee + travel/accommodation,
possible facility fee for individualized testing



Para team prospects at selection camp in Montreal

Talent Showcase Camps

Welland (senior cohorts and para)– Oct 4-6 – para will aim for Oct 5-6

Vancouver (FCRCC) (all cohorts except Juniors) – Oct 12-14 – para will aim for Oct 13-14

Whether we can hold a 2 day camp will be contingent on the number of non-overlapping athletes (those only registered for para, not other age groups)

If we can get enough for an independent boat, we'll aim for 2 dragon boat practices the first day. The second day will likely include perg testing along with another dragon boat practice with all interested in the para program as soon as the overlapping athletes are released from their age groups around noon

For athletes that indicated a para preference along with another group as secondary, we'll see if we can get you in the dragon boat with us without conflicting with testing for the other group and then while para only athletes are doing perg you can aim for dragon boat time with the other program

Camp planning is still underway so things are subject to change as it involves lots of coordination with the coaches – more details to follow!

Para Program Selection Process

Phase 2 - Final Selection

Dragon Boat Practice and possibly
P-Erg Testing

Location: Tampa, Florida

Date: First week of April (exact
dates to be announced upon
further planning)

Costs: Phase 2 Fee, travel and
accommodation



Para Program Selection Process

Phase 3 - Crew Preparation

Slight possibility of a regional camp across the senior/para cohort in late June – would be optional

Worlds Training Camp

Location – Brandenburg an der Havel

Likely Dates – 13Jul2025-15Jul2025 (TBD!)

Estimated Costs - National Team fee, uniform + travel and accommodations

National Team Fee Schedule

The fee schedule for the National Team is as follows:

PHASE 1 - \$345 (Aug - Dec)

Due: September 30

PHASE 2 –\$420 (Jan to May)

Due: Winter 2025

PHASE 3 - \$300 (May to end of WDBRC)

Due: After selection



Celebrating gold medals!

How will the team be selected/notified?

P-Erg and strength results (bench pull/press) will be considered

Para will not conduct its own OC1 testing but available data from paddlers enrolled with other programs may be considered

Technical ability and team blend are critical

General attitude, dedication and coachability are also important in building a team; drama is nothing but disruptive and won't be tolerated; feedback from local coaches may be sought

Ratio of para to non para athletes for a PD-2 boat will also be considered in final team composition

If athletes are successful in applying to another national team this may also be considered as we want to try to minimize cross-rostering as much as possible

Successful candidates will be notified by email as soon as possible – we need to wait for all other programs to complete selection

2023 Canadian National Para Dragon Boat Team chilling at the hotel pool in Thailand



Next Steps

If you haven't already registered, you will need to register your intent to tryout for the Para Program

Registration will close September 30, 2024

Complete Registration at
<https://register.dragonboat.ca/event/NationalTeam>

Certificates of Diagnosis are not required until after selection



2023 Canadian National Para Dragon Boat Team at Opening Ceremonies

Contact with the National Team for athletes through the selection process will be through their respective Program Director. This information will be shared at the Program Orientation

Contact Information

Program Director: Katy Milne

email: nationalparateam@dragonboat.ca

Program Manager: TBA

Communication will be largely via email to avoid excluding anyone not on Facebook