

GUIDELINES FOR PUTTING ON A PADDLE SPORTS RACE:

1. Select a date for your race, preferably a date that doesn't conflict with an existing local races. Check out the race schedules from local paddling clubs and regional racing organizations by going to <http://www.paddlesportsracing.org>.

2. Get permission to hold the race from who owns the property where you are launching your boats/starting the race/finishing the race; and get permission from property owners for the race participants to park on their property.

3. Fill out any City/County/Park/Marine permits needed to hold the event, and pay any associated permit fees if required.

4. The race organizer needs to obtain liability insurance for the event! This can be from any liability insurance company; however if this is a USCA sanctioned race, you must obtain liability insurance from the USCA or provide a *Certificate of Insurance* to the USCA Liability Insurance Coordinator with the same liability amounts/coverage as provided by USCA liability insurance. First join the USCA as a Race Sponsor (\$30) at <http://www.uscanoer.com> (a USCA liability insurance request will not be processed without proof of *USCA Race Sponsor* membership). For USCA liability insurance you need to fill out the *USCA Insurance Request Form* and mail it, along with a minimum \$60 deposit, to *USCA Liability Insurance Coordinator*, Joan Theiss, 12802 Lake Jovita Blvd, Dade City, FL 33525-8264; postmarked at least 14 days before the event. "Download All Insurance Forms" at <http://www.uscanoer.com>. USCA liability insurance for races costs \$3.75 per paddler. Race participants are encouraged to be a USCA member <http://www.uscanoer.com>, but it is not required to be a USCA member to race in a USCA sanctioned race. "*Competition Events USCA Sanctioning Guidelines*" are contained in the "Download All Insurance Forms" - if these guidelines are not adhered to, "then the USCA coverage is null and void". If the race organizer wants ACA liability insurance, a race official must join ACA at https://aca.site-ym.com/general/register_member_type.asp? either as an ACA's *Paddle Club America* (\$100 for less than 50 members) or as an *ACA Affiliate Organization* (\$125), agree to conduct the race in accordance with ACA's *Risk Management Requirements*, and submit an online *Request for Insurance for Sanctioned Events* at http://www.americancanoer.org/?page=Insurance_Request. Each participant in an ACA sanctioned race must be a ACA member, either as a full ACA member, a \$15 introductory *ACA membership*, or an *ACA Event Membership* at \$5 per person. Clubs may purchase in advance Event Memberships in bulk for \$4 each (minimum order 25). *ACA Paddle America Club (PAC) Insurance Program* information can be found at http://www.americancanoer.org/?page=Insurance_PAC

5. On races insured by the USCA liability Insurance provider, a *Certificate of Insurance* will be provided with the Race Organization's name or the name of the Race Organizer on it. For \$10 an additional insurance certificate can be attained, for example: with the name of the property owner on it.

6. Have a thought-out *Emergency Rescue Plan* prior to the start of the race which is discussed with the race officials, helpers, and safety boaters; and discussed with the racers at the pre-race meeting. Need to have enough safety boats to cover the race course and able to perform a rescue. Safety boat operators need to carry a mobile phone to call 911 if necessary. If it is a USCA sanctioned race, the race organizer shall prominently post the *USCA Competition Events Sanctioning Guidelines* at the start of the race for competitors, officials, helpers, and safety boaters to read. The *USCA Competition Events Sanctioning Guidelines* are contained in the "Download All Insurance Forms" at <http://www.uscanoer.com>. If it is a ACA sanctioned race the ACA's *Risk Management Requirements* must be followed - go to http://www.americancanoer.org/?page=Insurance_PAC and click on "ACA's Risk Management Requirements" at the bottom of the page.

7. Notify the authorities (e.g. police departments) in the localities where the race goes through, to let them know about the race as a courtesy (mandatory if there are portages across public roads or parking of participant's vehicles on public streets; and especially if there might be a location where capsizes could occur which could lead to contacting local emergency personnel.

8. Bring enough *Race Organizer Registration Forms* (prepared by the race organizer) for every paddler to fill out and sign [see attached sample *Race Organizer Registration Form*].

9. Bring a blank *Race Registration Master Sheet* (attach to a clip board) - enter the racer's boat number and name on the race registration sheet taken off the registration form [see attached sample *Race Registration Master Sheet*].

10. Bring a blank *Timing Sheet* (attach to a clip board) - as a boat cross the finish line, mark down the boat number and the finishing time on this sheet [see attached sample *Timing Sheet*]. At the conclusion of the race, place the *Timing Sheet* next to the *Race Registration Master Sheet*. Take the paddler's name and assigned boat number from the *Race Registration Master Sheet* and enter it next to the boat number on the *Timing Sheet* and "whala!" you have race results you can read at the awards ceremony.

11. If you are using USCA liability insurance, each competitor must fill out and sign a *USCA Liability Waiver Form*. These completely filled out and signed liability waiver forms must be sent to the *USCA Liability Insurance Coordinator* within 14 days of the completion of the race along with any insurance payments owed above the \$60 deposit. A *USCA Liability Waiver Form* for the participants to sign will be sent to the *USCA Race Sponsor* by the *USCA Liability Insurance Coordinator* after the race application forms are received and approved by the *USCA Liability Insurance Coordinator*. If you are using ACA liability insurance an *ACA Waiver & Release of Liability Form* must be signed by each participant. ACA liability insurance waivers can be obtained by going to <http://www.americancanoe.org/?page=OnlineWaivers> and e-mailing ACA Department Membership-Insurance Coordinator Shannon Green sgreen@americancanoe.org. If you are obtaining liability insurance from other than the USCA or ACA, it still is a good idea to have liability waivers signed by all paddlers.

12. Draw up a course route on a map and include it with information sent to the competitors or posted online, plus have this course map displayed at the race site at the registration table.

13. If applicable, post the tide tables for the date of the race.

14. Get at least two people to volunteer to man the registration table.

15. Get one person to volunteer to give the starting signal at the start line.

16. Get two people to volunteer to time the racers at the finish line - one to call out the boat number as the boat crosses the finish line as the other volunteer records the finishing time next to the boat number (the same volunteers can do both registration and timing).

17. Obtain a couple of safety boats. First choice – power boat(s). Second choice – canoes & kayaks. Safety boats should carry a rescue throw bag.

18. Just before the race start a pre-race meeting must be held for all participants and organizers to review the course, potential hazards, medical emergencies, communications, and safety procedures; and depending on the air/water temperature discuss potential hyperthermia, hypothermia, hyperhydraton/hyponatremia. According to medical studies, heat-induced dehydration rarely causes athletes to collapse during competition; however, hyperhydration (too much water and not enough

electrolytes) can be fatal. Information on these topics can be found at <http://www.paddlesportsracing.org> under "Safety Afloat".

19. Assure that all the racers are in compliance with USCG regulations and State regulations including the carrying of a PFD for each person in a boat (an inflatable PFD must be worn to be in compliance with USCG carriage rules). Some States mandate the wearing of a PFD during certain cold weather months of the year. The race organizer has the authority to require the wearing of a lifejacket by all participants. If the water conditions are calm, water temperature warm, and air temperature is hot; the race organizer should consider, in order to prevent overheating (hyperthermia), not requiring paddlers to wear a life jacket (except for those who cannot swim or who are under 13 years of age), but to only have the PFDs readily accessible and easily available (not duct-taped to the boat).

21. If it is an ocean race and/or the water temperature is 50°F or less, and/or there is rough/windy conditions, and/or high water/swift current conditions, assure that all racers wear their PFDs (lifejackets). Note: The USCA does not insure ocean races.

22. To comply with *U.S. Coast Guard Navigation Rules* and for distress signaling all boats must carry a sound producing device (whistle, horn, siren, etc.) capable of a 4-second blast audible for ½ mile. Sound producing devices are discussed at <http://www.paddlesportsracing.org> under "Safety Afloat".

23. Before a race has started: If thunder is heard and/or lightning seen, or a lightning detector indicates an approaching thunderstorm, the racers, paddlers, helpers, and spectators shall take proper shelter on shore and wait at least 30 minutes after hearing the last thunder. Once a race has started: If lightning is seen, count the time until you hear thunder. If this time is 30 seconds (6 miles) or less, or if you do not see the lightning but hear loud thunder; get off the water immediately and seek proper shelter. The race is considered officially stopped at that moment in time, and the order of the paddlers on the race course at that instance will be considered their placement in the finishing order, based upon discussion with the racers and race officials at the finishing area. Thirty minutes after hearing the last thunder, the racers may proceed down the race course, and safety boaters may retake their posts. See the topics on lightning on <http://www.paddlesportsracing.org> under "Safety Afloat".

24. If USCA liability insurance is obtained and there are 12-person or 22-person dragon boats, or 4-person or 6-person outrigger canoes participating, there are additional requirements (e.g. "chase boats"). See *Outrigger Canoe/Dragon Boat Event Insurance Certification Requirement* in the "Download All Insurance Forms" at <http://www.uscanoe.com>. Note: The USCA does not insure ocean races.

25. If the race starts before sunrise or continues past sunset (ultra-marathon races) U.S. Coast Guard Regulations on Visual Distress Signals apply to nighttime operation in coastal waters. See the topic on light signaling at <http://www.paddlesportsracing.org> under "Safety Afloat".

26. Consider handing out a copy of the U.S. Coast Guard's "*Operation Paddle Smart*" pamphlet to each competitor. See: http://flotilla87.d11nr.info/paddle_smart.html. Copies of this pamphlet can be obtained by writing to Dennis.M.Sens@uscg.mil.

27. Are there enough bathroom facilities at the race start and/or finish line, or do you need to rent port-a-potties?

28. Publicize your race: Post your race on the *Paddlesports Racing Association (PRA)* website <http://paddlesportsracing.org> by contacting chairman@paddlesportsracing.org. On the ACA "Paddlesports Event Calendars" go to <http://tinyurl.com/ntl9ro> and fill out the "ACA Event Calendar

Submission" at http://www.americancanoe.org/?page=Calendar_Submission. Contact local clubs/regional race organizations and ask them to post your race.

29 Race start: If the river/bay/lake is wide enough, a "mass start" is always the easiest race to time since it only requires one stop watch. Line up the boats between the starting buoys. If there are different classes in the race, a second row (or more) can be used to line up a different class, and still just have one mass start. To prevent paddlers from "jumping-the-gun", the starting official could announce that the starting signal will be given at random in the next 30 seconds, and also tell them that anyone anticipating the countdown and "jumping-the-gun" will be assessed a 30 second time penalty. This usually discourages paddlers from starting before the signal is given, and also means you don't have to stop and restart the race if someone "jumps the gun". Restarting a race is time consuming and irritates many of the paddlers.

30. Starting signal: A whistle or megaphone siren might be useful if you don't think a verbal "Go" would be heard by all the competitors.

31. Turn-around-buoys: If it is not a point A to point B race, but a loop course or an up-and-back course, you will need some turnaround points. Of course the easiest turnaround points would be a fixed location like turning around a bridge abutment. If it is a bridge abutment check to make sure that the tides or river flow is not such that when turning around the bridge abutment a boat is not likely to broadside the bridge abutment so that the current would wrap the boat around the abutment and possibly trapping the boats occupant. Check for debris that may be logged against the abutment creating a snagging hazard. If you are placing a buoy as a turn-around-point, make sure that it is easily visible (e.g. orange laundry detergent gallon bottle), that the anchor (e.g. bricks, stones, lead weights) is heavy enough to hold the buoy in place, and the connecting rope is strong enough. Nothing is more upsetting to competitor than to find the buoy not where it should be because it floated somewhere else. Also, make sure the rope from the anchor to the buoy is long enough so that a rising tide or a rising river will not carry it the buoy away.

32. Stopwatch: Make sure that the race starting official has a stopwatch for the start the race, which then can be passed to the timing official at the finish line (or the starting time phoned ahead if it is a point A to B race).

33. Clip board: A clip board to hold the *Timing Sheet* at the start/finish line. A clear plastic sheet to put over the numbers helps keep the papers dry if it is raining. As a racer crosses the finish line write on the timing sheet the boat number and his/her finishing time. After the last competitor has crossed the finish line, place the timing sheet next to the registration sheet - from the registration sheet take the name next to the boat number and write this name next to the boat number on the timing sheet. During the awards ceremony you can use the completed timing sheet to announce the winners and their times. When the last competitor crosses the finish line, make sure that all the paddlers who filled out the registration forms and are on the registration sheet, have finished the race, or that they are otherwise accounted for.

34. Bring a folding table for the registrars, folding chairs for the registration table and for the race timers, and a large umbrella or portable awning to cover the registration table and one for the timers if rain is predicted or to protect them from the sun.

35. Race Numbers for boats: Buy a roll of contact paper (with peel off backing) from HomeDepot or Lowes - don't get the cheap contact paper from the dollar store. (Removing cheap contact paper from a boat after the race leaves the adhesive on the boat which is almost impossible to get off.) Following the

hatch marks on the back of the contact paper, cut them into 6 inch X 9 inch rectangles. Take a large black Magic Marker, and before the day of the race, write the numbers 1 through XX on these contact paper rectangles. You can write the numbers of the boats on the contact paper at the registration table as the racers turn in their registration forms, but if you do it on the spot, you are in a hurry and the race numbers are sometimes sloppy and hard to read by the timing officials. If you have different class, you can designate a class by putting an assigned "letter" before the number. Give one of these race numbers to each boat after they register on the race on race day. Instruct the competitors to put the number on the deck of their boat so that it is on the side of the boat facing the timing official as the boat crosses the finish line. Preprinted sequential numbers (with or without adhesive backing) can be purchased from a commercial vendor. For example: <http://bluefootedtiming.com/racenumbers.html>

36. Snacks: Competitors really appreciate snacks after a race (e.g. oranges, apples, grapes, watermelon, cookies, pretzels). At some races, the organizers includes in the entry fee enough money to purchase hoagies or pizza from a local fast-food place. They first see how many paddlers register for the race, then right after the race starts, the food order is called in to a place that makes delivery. By the time the last racer crosses the finish line, the food is delivered to the race site.

37. Prizes: That is up to the race organizer. Can be cash or gift certificates (recommend money prizes be equal for both men and women). Can be trophies/medals for the first three finishers, or for the first three finishers in each class. Most local races charge \$15 to \$25 per paddler. If you charge more than that for a race, it might reduce the number of paddlers who attend, unless you are offering great prizes or a post-race banquet. Don't forget competitors are spending money to pay for the gasoline and highway tolls to drive to the race. If you shop around on the Internet and buy in quantity you can usually get a good price on prizes related to boating that you can give to every finisher, then everyone gets something and goes away happy. For example: you can get in quantity for a good price stopwatches, waterproof flashlights, boating lights, fisherman's knives, monoculars, waterproof cases, a CoolMax® Jerseys, sunglasses, lightweight sleeping bags, compasses, crank radios, LED headlights. It is a breakeven proposition: \$10 prize + \$3.75 liability insurance + \$1.25 towards snacks = \$15 entry fee.

38. At the conclusion of the race - within 14 days of the completion of the race the *USCA Race Sponsor* must fill out *Post Event Processing Form* found in the "Download All Insurance Forms" at <http://www.uscanoe.com>, and mail it along with any balance of the liability insurance fee due (by check), along with completely filled out and signed *USCA Liability Waiver Forms* by all racers to the *USCA Liability Insurance Coordinator*, Joan Theiss, 12802 Lake Jovita Blvd, Dade City, FL 33525-8264 . On ACA sanctioned races an ACA member must fill out an *Event Final Report* online at http://www.americancanoe.org/?page=Final_Report and attach a "Final Event Report".

39. After your race has been held, in order to create publicity for next year's race, suggest writing an article with accompanying photographs of the race, and submit the article to the editor of the *USCA Canoe News*. See: <http://www.uscanoe.com>, and send an article and photos to local newspapers or newsletters.

40. Have Fun!