



Gateway Dragon Boat Festival Suggestions for Paddler Layout on the Boat

While coaches from the Dragon Boat company will work with teams at practice on location of individual team members on the boat, it helps to think about this in advance. The following are some suggestions:

- **Largest people should be in the middle, if only because the boat is wider there.**
- **The front two paddlers are called the “stokers” and for most teams should be considered as the people that set the pace.** Usually it’s two of the smaller women that can focus on a rhythm and work well together.
- **The back of the boat is best for those that might think they would not be as good at staying in rhythm.** Keeping all paddlers together in synch is a main goal and people depend on each other, particularly those in the row ahead of them, for the proper rhythm as you go from back to front on the boat.
- **At the front, the water is “clean” or “hard” because it’s still.** At the back of the boat, there’s a lot of bubbles and for that water, it’s harder to find hard or clean water. So paddles don’t have enough good water to grip on to in order to propel the boat forward. For this reason, you often want stronger paddlers towards the back.
- **Another important issue is weight.** You would want no more of a difference than approximately 80lbs on the left vs. right or else the boat rides too much on one side down the race course. Ideally, you also want fairly even weight distribution between the front and back of the boat.

