

Happy *Racing*

Festival 101
2025

Agenda

- 
- Festival Schedule
 - Signing up
 - Training
 - Waivers
 - Hotel
 - Carpooling

At the Venue

- Team Details
- Paddler Details
- Race Details

Equipment and Clothing

- Paddle
- PFD
- Tent/table/chair
- Water & Food

Divisions

- ☐ Women's
- ☐ Survivors
- ☐ Mixed
- ☐ Masters
- ☐ Open



Race Coaches

Head Coach, Terri and her assistant coaches, Burt and Francy will lead this years race season. Each brings their own expertise and enthusiasm to the boat. Together they hope to make this year's racing experience fun, educational and inclusive.

Race Festival Jobs

It takes an entire team to have a successful race experience. Everyone is encouraged to sign up for a job. Many paddlers make light work, and just like in the boat, we work together to get it done.

- Race Coordinator: TLC position - person who sets up the races on TeamSnap, works with the treasurer to register, sends off bio and oversees all the pieces required to participate.
- Coach/Manager - Usually Terri, Francy or Burt if they are attending the race festival. Person in-charge at the festival.
- Team & Division Captains - Works with coach to seat the boat. One festival may have one or more captains depending on how the coach has set it up.
- Travel Coordinator - provides information on hotels. Everyone reserves their own room once travel coordinator has selected the hotel. TC may help coordinate carpooling and roommates.

Race Festival Jobs

- Waiver Organizer - Once race coordinator receives information about waivers, the waiver organizer informs paddlers and keeps track of waivers.
- Equipment Organizer arrangers for the equipment to be transported to the race venue.
Equipment includes
 - Tents and Tables
 - Food and Water coolers
 - Paddles, PFDs and Chairs if there is enough room
- Team Dinner organizer schedules the team dinner either on the first or last night, informs paddlers and collects the RSVPs for an accurate head count.
- Festival Food organizer makes sure there is food at the festival - we paddle and eat then eat and paddle, and we need provisions.
- Photographer/Historian makes sure we get a team photo with all our medals, and smiles, and good times and posts them on TeamSnaps.
- Newbie Mentor makes sure the first time paddlers are sufficiently embarrassed and included - no Gatorade Shower

Steers and Drummer

Steers

Just like in practice, if we haven't a steers we can't race. It's always nice to have our own steers, however, many festivals have the option of borrowing the steers from a pool of certified steers. We are very fortunate to have highly qualified steers on our team. Burt, Sean, Patrice, Lynn and Mezz have all steered festival races.

Drummer/Caller

While the steers is in the back of the boat, the drummer is at the bow. Each festival have different rules for the drummer. For example, in Long Beach, we can't drum until 10:00 am then there has to be active drumming. A team can be penalized if the drummer isn't beating the drum. The coach, drummer and steers along with the pacers (or stroke) work together during a race.

Festival Set-Up

The Terminology

Divisions - A class within an event where teams are divided by gender, age, ability or other criteria, such as Breast Cancer Survivors. We usually sign up for Women's, Survivors, Masters and/or Open.

Heat: A race within the same round of competition for a particular Division. Initial rounds are usually called heats or seeding; later rounds are typically called semi-finals and finals.

Marshalling or Staging : Area where teams assemble before they go down to load for a race. In larger festivals this area is usually controlled, cordoned off, and restricted to those racing. In addition, officials often count paddlers and check wrist-band IDs before allowing a team on the dock to load.



Paddlers are the engine! During a race, paddlers are focused, quiet, and together (one beat, one boat). We are always listening to the steers and drummer. The steers get us lined up and the drummer brings us down the course watching for timing and the other boats on the course.





The Distance

500 meter

This is the gold standard for dragon boat racing. This is the distance that will get paid the most attention when a festival have multiple distances.

200/250 meter

A lot of festivals have a short course sprint of 200 - 250 meters. This is a fast pace race that is over before you know you've begun.

1000 or 2000 meter

Though still considered at sprint these longer distances offer turns and continuous starts. These allow the boat to get into a rhythm to stay strong for the entire distance.

The Steps of a Race

Coach and Captain will ask paddlers to be at the tent well before their first race. Coach, Captain and Steers attend the coach's meeting to learn the particulars of the festival. The coach and captain will share that information with the paddlers at the tent's morning meeting. Coach, Captain, Drummer and Steers will walk the course to look for landmarks and buoys that set the lanes. They'll assess the wind and how it will affect the line up. The coach will go over the schedule for the day - we have a whiteboard where we will write the next two heats and the seating. The captain will call out the seating - it's important you remember your seat number and side. Once we leave the tent, it's difficult for the captain to give out that information again.

About 45 minutes before the race, we head down to marshalling as a team - again know the schedule and be sure to be at the tent at requested time. Once in marshalling, we line up back to front (usually the boat is loaded from the back to the front). Sometimes we load from the sand and sometimes from a dock - make sure you have water shoes.

The Steps of a Race

Usually in marshalling, we will warm up moving our joints and bringing our heart rate up to avoid injuries. Any paddler may lead the warm-up. Photographer is snapping away. Everyone should have all equipment when heading down to marshalling including the alternate. Anyone not going out on the boat supports the paddlers by gathering water bottles, paddle tips and other things that won't go in the boat during the race. Equipment includes paddle, seat pad, gloves, foot spacers etc . . .

We listen to the volunteers on how to load the boat - all side conversations should stop, so that loading is efficient and safe. Steers is first one in the boat and drummer the last. Once in the boat, everyone scoots to the gunwales. Steers will bring us off the beach or dock, and will check the balance. Please do not change sides without alerting the captain. As we head to start line, we may practice a race start. We pause if a race is taking place until all boats in the heat passes us.



The Steps of a Race

Once we are at the start line, the steers has the boat to line us up in our lane. It's important to listen to assist when necessary. Again, know your seat number and side. Look to see the lane markers. Be aware. Our focus is in our boat. Do not get distracted no matter how friendly the other boats may seem - it's a ruse - they want us to lose our focus so they can win - don't let them!!

The Start

- We have alignment
- Attention Please
- Go/beep/obnoxious horn

Dig deep - head up - our start is 4/20 - 4 get up and go strokes followed by 20 short fast strokes - all strokes are strong at the catch. At 20, the boat counts down 3 -2-1 where your pacers will lead you into a slower rate to allow a long stroke.



The Steps of a Race

The drummer will be shouting out words of encouragement: “Leg drive, downward pressure, head up, focus”. They may ask for more - you have to find more to give it to them.

The finish

- Focus for ten
- Finish it now (pay attention to the pacers - they may or may not increase the rate)
- Up - caller will call up only if they see that the boat has more to give or we are so close to beating another boat.

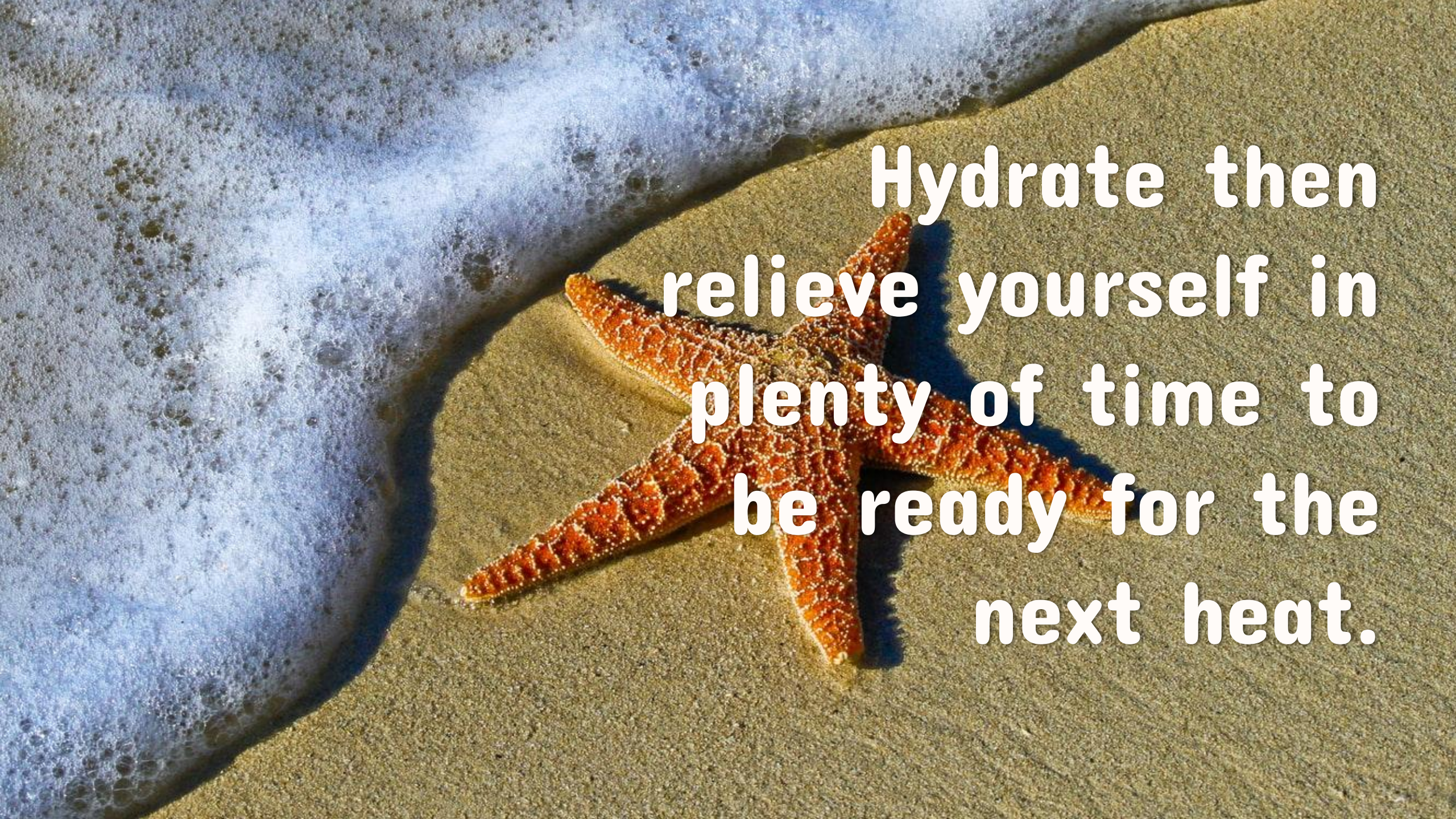
Only when the drummer or the steers call let it ride do we stop paddling. Often time the finish line doesn't line up with the end buoys - so don't stop until you hear the sweet sound of “Let it ride!” Once we let it ride - brace the boat whether you are told to or not. It's an exhilarating time and our tendency is to celebrate, but we have to wait until we are back at the loading zone



Debrief

After each heat, the team will gather. The coach will ask how it felt in the back, middle and front. It's important to be honest - how was the rate? Was it too fast or too slow? Was there a rock? Everyone will have an opportunity to process the race. The goal is to improve. Supporters and paddlers that were not in the boat will provide their input. After the debrief, we usually head back to the tent to eat - it's amazing how hungry we get after paddling hard for 2 - 3 minutes.



A close-up photograph of a sandy beach. In the foreground, a bright orange starfish with white speckles lies on the sand. To the left, a wave with white foam is breaking onto the shore. The background shows the ocean and a clear sky.

**Hydrate then
relieve yourself in
plenty of time to
be ready for the
next heat.**

Thank you!

Now let's go race! We have many race opportunities. Alex, our Race Coordinator, will list them on TeamSnap. Sign up for races you can attend. When we have close to a boat load, we will move forward to register for the race.