



# 龍舟 LONGZHOU

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF  
THE INTERNATIONAL DRAGON BOAT FEDERATION



Cover photo: The Philippine Adaptive Paddlers (PADs) Paradrakon Elite team during water practice . Credit: PADs.

## MESSAGE FROM MIKE

Covid19 has had a dramatic effect on dragon boating with numerous championships and festivals cancelled. This may well continue into the early part of 2021 whilst travel restrictions and the spread of the virus continues.

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## NEW RULEBOOK - PARADRAGON RACING!

Nigel Bedford explains the new Paradrakon Rules of Racing and answers commonly asked questions.

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## SPORT FOR ALL - PADS

PADs founder John Paul 'JP' Ecarma Maunes recounts how the discovery of dragon boating became a game changer for the Philippine disability sports and how it led to the formation of PADs Adaptive Dragon Boat Racing Programme.

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## IDBF - 39TH COUNCIL MEETING

Although this year has been a season of cancellations with many dragon boat events and training sessions around the world severely impacted, the IDBF Executive Committee and Council used their time wisely and have been productive behind the scenes.

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## WEBINAR SUCCESS - PARADRAGON RACING

The IDBF broke new ground on 19 October by holding its first ever webinar, two in fact!

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## PROFILE - IDBF RACE OFFICIALS

We asked some of our IDBF Race Officials from around the world to tell us how they got into dragon boating and what motivated them to become officials.

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# UPDATES - IDBF RACE RULES

## IDBF Race Plans version 2.0

IDBF has recently updated its [Race Plans](#) to accommodate for the increase in participation numbers as seen at IDBF Championships in the last five years. The updates include new and revised versions of the current race plans (repechage and tail plans).

Enquiries: Melanie Cantwell, Chair, Competition & Technical Commission.  
Email: [chair-ctc@dragonboat.sport](mailto:chair-ctc@dragonboat.sport)

## IDBF Paradrugon Rules of Racing Edition 1.0

IDBF seeks to provide maximum opportunities for Paradrugons to participate in the sport of dragon boating through its provision of specific Paradrugon racing. Paradrugons is the term used by IDBF to describe paddlers who have some form of physical, psychological, neurological, sensory, developmental or intellectual impairment. These [IDBF Rules for Paradrugon Racing](#) set out the way in which Paradrugon racing is to be conducted at IDBF events. The IDBF Para Athlete Commission (IDBF-PAC) is responsible for the development of the rules relating to, and the management of, Paradrugon racing at IDBF competitions.

Enquiries: Nigel Bedford, Chair, IDBF Para Athletes Commission.  
Email: [chair-para@dragonboat.sport](mailto:chair-para@dragonboat.sport)

More IDBF Rules and Regulations are available from <https://www.dragonboat.sport/rules-and-regulations>



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## MESSAGE FROM MIKE



I hope that you all are able to remain safe and well in these extraordinary and challenging times. The Coronavirus seems to be following a second wave currently and let us all hope and pray that the world's scientists will find a vaccine soon.

Covid19 has had a dramatic effect on the whole world of sport and on dragon boating with numerous championships and festivals cancelled. This may well continue into the early part of 2021 whilst travel restrictions and the spread of the virus continues. We remain optimistic that our next Championships scheduled for November 2021 will be able to proceed as planned.

In the northern hemisphere winter is rapidly approaching which leads to the end of the traditional time for dragon boating. As summer approaches in the southern hemisphere and you begin your season, it would be wonderful to see some photos and videos of your activities if you are able to get afloat.

I would like to offer a warm welcome to the new Ordinary Members for Argentina and Brazil who were recently approved by the IDBF Council in their meeting earlier this month. These two new organisations will take responsibility for the development of the sport in their large countries. We all wish them the best of luck and they are fully supported by the Pan American Continental Federation.

Congratulations also to Mary Lai and Ehab Gupta who have just received permission from the Egyptian Olympic Committee to officially establish the Dragon Boat Federation of Egypt. They have had a long struggle against the kayakers in Egypt but their persistence has eventually been rewarded and recognised.

Whilst we have been inactive on the water, we have been busy in meetings and updating documents and developing new policies and procedures. The Executive Committee have met almost 40 times in 2020 and the Council has met twice, all these meetings have taken place virtually. A central and continual theme in the Executive meetings has been the continued attempts to solve the outstanding financial issues regarding the deposits paid to the Organising Committee and to hotels due to the cancellation of the World Club Crew Championships which should have been held in Aix les Bains last August. I have had three meetings this week with representatives of the Organising Committee and the City in striving to find ways for the deposits to be returned.

The report of the recent Council meeting, in this newsletter, highlights the work done in recent months to various documents and updating and improving where necessary.

The Para Athletes Commission has recently presented two webinars to introduce the new rules that have been approved. It is worth highlighting that the way in which the IDBF provides opportunities for athletes with impairments is breaking boundaries. The rules established by Nigel Bedford and his team in the Para Athletes Commission are enabling people with a whole range of different impairments to get in the same boat and race. These rules truly embrace the theme Sport for All in making the sport of dragon boat racing accessible to everyone at the highest level of competition.

The Youth Commission are promoting, on behalf of the IDBF, participation in a virtual competition created by United Through Sports. This is a virtual competition for young people from all around the world and promotes exciting opportunities for your young people to take part in competition when access to normal competition is not available.

Further information is available at

<https://unitedthroughsports.com/2020/08/17/uts-launches-the-virtual-youth-festival-2020/>

With details of how to take part through the IDBF on our website at

<https://www.dragonboat.sport/single-post/uts-international-virtual-youth-festival>

I would urge you all to encourage your young people to become involved in this exciting opportunity.

## MESSAGE FROM MIKE

In December we will be planning to hold an Extra Ordinary Congress, so that we can all meet and catch on the current situation in our members countries and share information. The agenda for this EO Congress is being prepared and the date and time will shortly be announced with the provisional agenda.

In closing we should all make every effort to comply with any restrictions recommended by our governments and all play our part individually and collectively to stop the spread of the virus.

Best wishes

*Mike Thomas*

President IDBF

# IDBF - 39TH COUNCIL MEETING

Although this year has been a season of cancellations for many dragon boat events and training around the world has been severely impacted, the IDBF Executive Committee and Council have used their time wisely and have been very productive behind the scenes.

Below is a summary from the latest Council Meeting held on 26 September.

## Administration

- IDBF Limited is now formally re-registered as a UK company. This was due to the Isle of Man Government forcing the closure of our company there.
- The IDBF website is undergoing an upgrade and information is now being regularly updated by our Administrator ([www.dragonboat.sport](http://www.dragonboat.sport)).
- The Executive Committee are actively updating and writing new documents in preparation for the announcement of the new recognition process for the IOC.
- A new Safeguarding Policy has been written and approved.
- A new Championship Contract which the IDBF event organisers are required to sign is currently in development.
- A new Gender Diversity Policy has been written and is currently being reviewed.
- Discussion is still ongoing with the Organising Committee for Aix les Bains regarding the refunding of deposits to clubs.
- Brazil and Argentina have now been accepted as new members of the IDBF – welcome aboard!
- Mongolia joined the Asian Dragon Boat Federation (ADBF).
- Romania and Fiji joined the International Breast Cancer Paddlers Commission (IBCPC).

## Events

- Planning for the 15th IDBF WDBRC in Hong Kong is now underway with the event scheduled to take place at the Kwun Tong Promenade in Kowloon between 1st – 7th November 2021. Finishing the event on the Sunday night will be the IDBF's 30th Anniversary Celebration Dinner.
- Organisation for the 12th IDBF CCWC which will be held at Nathan Benderson Park, Sarasota, USA in July 2022 is in its early stages.



*The 39th IDBF Council Meeting was held online this year with members from across the world.*

## Commissions

### Para Dragons Commission

- A new rule book for Paradrugon racing has been written and approved.
- A Return to Paddling in a COVID Environment was produced and published in June 2020.
- Proposed an amendment to the rules of racing for paddle size and a rule change to CR13.1.

### Athletes Commission

- A new athletes survey has been produced and went live earlier in the month. Survey closes 31 October.
- Gender Diversity Policy - draft under review.

### Competition & Technical Commission

- The Recognised Festival Program - launched in January 2020.
- The Tail Race Plans have been revamped and approved with the new title - Race Plans. The main changes are:
  - Race plans expanded for eight lane racing
  - All finals will be full lane finals
  - Plate finals and some minor finals have been removed
  - Lane seeding has been changed to reflect a fair process and now resembles how many other sports seed their events
- Other document updates and revisions
  - Paddle and Boat Manufacturers Schemes - final stage of reviews.
  - The Championship bid document - in progress.
  - The International Race Officials Handbook - in progress.

### Medical & Sports Science Commission

- A new mandatory World Anti-Doping Code comes into play from the 1st January 2021, which has meant the IDBF Anti-Doping Rules have had to be revamped. The final version is almost ready for submission to WADA for final sign off.
- A new contract has been taken out with the International Testing Agency (ITA), which has been necessary to have some professional support in order for the IDBF to be WADA compliant. The ITA will be responsible for our Out of Competition Testing.

### Marketing & Media Commission

- Have been busy with all the communications in relation to COVID-19 and the cancellation of the CCWC 2020.
- The production of the bi-monthly Longzhou Newsletter.
- The Commission is working on the following for the IDBF's 30th Anniversary in 2021:
  - Photo Competition
  - Hall of Fame
  - Limited Edition Merchandise
  - 30th Anniversary Commemorative Book
  - 30th Anniversary Dinner Celebrations

### Protocol, Cultural and Heritage

- Miluo in Hunan was named the Chinese City of Dragon Boats in 2010 and the Cultural and Heritage Commission together with the Chinese Dragon Boat Association are working on building the city into an international dragon boat cultural base.

### Youth Commission

- The Youth Commission was re-constituted in 2020 with new acting Chair – Matt Smith. Their first job has been to evaluate the best location for the U16s, U18s and U24 as it was felt that they could not compete in the 15th WNC in Hong Kong due to the date and conflict with school. Responses from 30 nations were received and it has been concluded that these race categories will race alongside the premier and senior categories in Hong Kong in November 2021.

# PADDLERS, HAVE YOUR SAY!

The IDBF Athletes Commission wants to hear from you!

Please take a few minutes to complete the [online survey](#). The results of this survey will identify the priority issues for the Athlete's Commission to tackle – our agenda is driven by athletes and we are very keen to ensure that we work on the issues that are important to you. The survey will close at the end of October.

### About the Athletes Commission

Sue Holloway was appointed in 2018 to chair the inaugural IDBF Athlete's Commission. The purpose of the Commission is to place athletes at the centre of the IDBF decision-making process. The Chair of the Athlete's Commission attends all IDBF Executive, Commission and Congress meetings and votes on initiatives at Executive meetings.

Sue is thrilled to be in the role and is working with the team to establish a truly representative and high functioning commission. Sue has worked extensively in this area as an athlete representative for canoe/kayak and subsequently as a staff member with the Canadian Olympic Committee.

Enquiries: Sue Holloway, Chair IDBF Athletes Commission  
Email: [chair-athletes@dragonboat.sport](mailto:chair-athletes@dragonboat.sport)



## GET INVOLVED

# UTS INTERNATIONAL VIRTUAL YOUTH FESTIVAL



The United Through Sports (UTS) is hosting the 2020 Virtual Youth Festival (VYF) to bring young athletes around the world to compete together during this time of the COVID pandemic.

The IDBF's participation will be organised by the IDBF's Youth Commission.

Enquiries: contact Victoria Chang via [admin@dragonboat.sport](mailto:admin@dragonboat.sport)

### Details

- Entries close Wednesday 28 October 2020
- Email your entries to: [admin@dragonboat.sport](mailto:admin@dragonboat.sport)

### More information

- [UTS Virtual Youth Festival - Press Release Updated Oct 20](#) (PDF)
- [UTS Virtual Youth Festival - FAQ Updated Oct 20](#) (PDF)



## IDBF RELEASES BRAND NEW RULEBOOK FOR PARADRAGON RACING!

**NIGEL BEDFORD, CHAIR PARA ATHLETES COMMISSION**

Sharp-eyed visitors to the IDBF recently will have noticed that there is a new set of race rules for Paradrakon racing. Longzhou met with Nigel Bedford, Chair of the IDBF Para Athletes Commission, to get a better understanding of what this new rulebook is about and also for an update on Paradrakons.



### **First of all, tell us about the new rulebook**

The new rulebook was developed by the IDBF Para Athletes Commission and adopted by IDBF as the official rules for Paradrakon racing. It is based on the framework rules that were introduced a few years ago to test the concepts that IDBF had in mind. These earlier 'framework' rules were built on the ideas of opening our sport to people of any age and gender who were living with an impairment that prevented them paddling as an unimpaired person might. Following successful trial implementation (most notably at the 2019 European Club Crew Championships), IDBF decided that it was time for a formal rulebook.

### **Your commission is called the 'Para Athletes Commission', but your rulebook refers to 'Paradrakons'. What's the difference?**

'Para Athletes' is a term readily recognised across international sport, whether that be basketball, skiing, swimming, or rowing etc. Having this formal name for the Commission means its purpose is easily understood even by those with no real insights into the sport of dragon boating. We consider it therefore as a descriptor that is mainly used for non-dragon boat audiences.

'Paradrakons' on the other hand is an intimate term used within our sport to refer to the race category, and to the paddlers, involved in Paradrakon racing. It differentiates without being pejorative or judgemental. Within IDBF, we prefer to use 'Paradrakons' every time.

### **So, why the need for the rulebook?**

Many sports have event categories for specific impairments. For example, in the Paralympics, paracanoe recognises three distinct impairments and rowing eight; if you don't have one of these rigorously defined impairments, you cannot compete. IDBF wants anyone with an impairment to be able to race at an international level. This brings huge challenges though. First of all, few sports require so many athletes in a team. Then there is the need somehow to accommodate varying types of impairment within teams and make racing as fair as possible. Finally, we want to encourage people of all age groups and genders to feel included. IDBF's rulebook sets out how teams with very different mixes of ages, impairments etc can compete against each other.

What it does is to score each paddler based on their age, gender and impairment. In essence the older you are, and the greater your impairment, the lower your 'score'. Females are generally not as strong as males of the same age and this is taken into account too. Individual scores are then added together to give a team score, and the rulebook details the maximum score a team is allowed. By setting a team 'maximum', a crew has great flexibility in deciding who can be in the boat.

### **How does the rulebook differ from other IDBF race rules and regulations?**

The rules for Paradrakon racing supplement the existing race rules, they do not replace them, nor are they a 'stand-alone' document. Paradrakon racing has complexities not present in other racing (for example the scoring system, allowed paddles sizes, seat adaptations etc) and the rulebook only covers those matters where there are necessary differences.



## **Is the approach the IDBF has adopted unique?**

We aren't aware of any other sport that has tried to develop competition rules that allow for athletes with a wide range of impairments and of varying ages to be able to compete against each other. One international water sport federation has shown interest in basing their rules on ours, and we do know that there is interest generally in what we are doing in IDBF.

As Chair of the Para Athletes Commission, I'm very proud of the work the Commission members have achieved so far – we have created a unique approach to inclusion, and we have done so in a relatively short time period. For example, paracanoe took about 10 years to get their rules to a 'steady state', and those rules covered only three types of impairment! Although I am absolutely certain our rules for Paradrakon racing will continue to evolve as we learn from experience, we have already done something that no one else that we know of has attempted.

## **Looking ahead to Club Crew World Championships (CCWC) in 2022, how can clubs prepare now, especially if they don't currently have sufficient Paradrakons to make up a team?**

As for this year's (sadly cancelled) CCWC, IDBF has decided it will not enforce the normal requirements around what constitutes a 'club'. Instead, IDBF will welcome entries from 'virtual' clubs formed solely for the purposes of participating in CCWC. In this way, Paradrakons who are normally members of an established club can combine with Paradrakons from other established clubs (within the same country) and form a new club just to race at CCWC. We've done this to encourage participation and to ensure that Paradrakons who might otherwise not be able to race with a team at CCWC can have the opportunity to do so.

## **The rulebook talks about PD1 and PD2 race categories – can you briefly explain these?**

PD1 refers to a race category where all of the paddlers need to have an impairment. PD2 allows for about half the paddlers to be unimpaired. For PD2, the unimpaired paddlers can be of any age or gender and, at CCWC, can also be members of another club competing in non-Paradrakon racing without this affecting their entry.

Note that both standard and small boat racing will be offered and that the helm and drummer do not have to be Paradrakons themselves. Indeed, in most cases for safety reasons, it is probably a good idea to have unimpaired helms and drummers.

## **And what about the 2021 World Nations Championships (WNC)?**

IDBF is committed to offering Paradrakon racing at the event. It is hoped that as many national teams as possible will include Paradrakon teams. Most international sporting events are for either unimpaired or impaired athletes, few are open to both. The 2021 WNC will offer the world the opportunity to see a sport that fully embraces inclusivity. Furthermore, based on what we have already seen at the European Club Crew Championships last year, Paradrakon crews will show their serious competitiveness in a way that will be inspirational to all who see them.

## **Finally, what else is your Commission working on at the moment?**

The Coronavirus pandemic has fundamentally affected how, and even if, dragon boating can take place. These are very challenging times for our sport because of the numbers involved and the close proximity that team members have to be of each other when in a boat.

In June, my Commission developed and published a guide to how Paradrakon teams and individuals might want to think about a return to dragon boating. It is not prescriptive – it can't be due to the differing national and local situations – but it is intended to provoke thought and discussion about the issues. As the way in which the world is dealing with the pandemic evolves, so must our approach and my Commission will soon start work on a revised edition of our guide. We also want to raise awareness generally about Paradrakons and hope to be able to start to harness social media to help enable this. Longzhou will be among the first to know when we are ready to launch!

# PARADRAGON RACING


The IDBF broke new ground on 19 October by holding its first ever webinar, two in fact!

Nigel Bedford, Chair of the IDBF Para Athletes Commission delivered two very inspirational webinars on the new rules and philosophy behind paradrragon racing, catering for our worldwide audience.

Mike Thomas, IDBF President introduced the webinars by saying "Paradragons crystallise what the IDBF want to achieve with dragon boating in making the sport totally inclusive. No one is excluded whether on background, impairments, gender or age".



Dragon boating is now totally unique in the world of sport, by being a sport for all and leading the way!

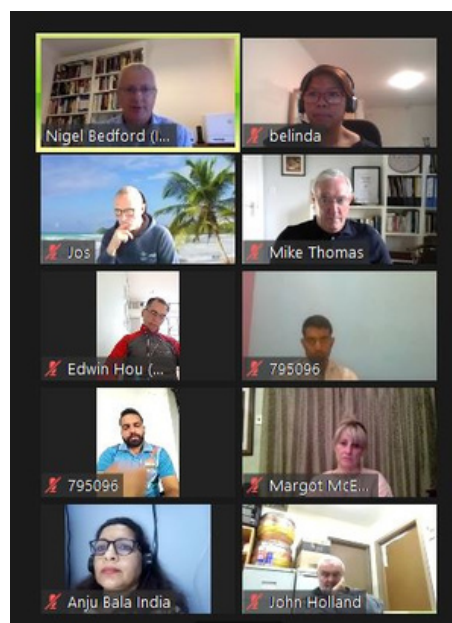



International Dragon Boat Federation  
Para Athletes Commission

## The philosophy behind the rules

- Open to anyone with any 'impairment'
- Open to any age
- Open to any gender

The rulebook integrates all three aspects so as to provide a way in which disparate groups of paddlers can race, fairly, against each other.

International Dragon Boat Federation  
Para Athletes Commission

### Example team – PD2 small boat crew

Impairment	Age	Gender	Impairment	Age	Gender	Score
Blind	15	F	18	-1	-2	15
MS	18	M	10	-2	0	8
Schizophrenia	15	M	18	-1	0	17
PTSD	35	M	18	0	0	18
Loss of one hand	41	F	16	-1	-2	13
Partially deaf	22	M	19	0	0	19
<b>82</b>						

Maximum allowable score for PD2 small boat with 5 impaired paddlers is 80

# PADS ADAPTIVE DRAGON BOAT RACING PROGRAMME

## A GAME CHANGER IN THE PHILIPPINE DISABILITY SPORTS

BY JOHN PAUL “JP” ECARMA MAUNES (FOUNDER)

**Motto: Our Combined Disabilities are Our Greatest Strength.**

In 2016, I had an opportunity to visit the USA as part of the Global Sports Mentoring Programme sponsored by the US State Department in partnership with the University of Tennessee Center for Sports Peace and Society. This gave me great insights into the power of sport and I was determined to use my new understanding on my return to the Philippines to help empower people with disabilities (PWDs) in achieving the vision of a disability-inclusive Filipino society.



In August 2016, I tried out dragon boating for the very first time! I was fascinated by the potential of a team sport to help with my idea. As a seated sport it meant that it could involve people with a wide range of disabilities – ideal for what I wanted to do since disability sports equipment was not accessible and was very expensive during that time.

I was working then in Cebu with The Philippine Accessible Disability Services (PADS), a non-profit organisation I founded a few years ago and I persuaded one of the PWDs, Daisy Omega, a 23 year old girl, who was born with a congenital deformity of her lower limb to accompany me to try paddling for the first time together with some volunteers. The paddlers at the local club were so accommodating. They oriented us about the paddling techniques and basic commands, and they themselves got acquainted with a diverse group of paddlers. I had a “Eureka moment” as I scanned their faces. I remember saying to myself “This is the sport we’ve been looking for. Dragon boat is going to be a powerful instrument to break a lot of societal barriers and change a lot of lives.” It is a sport that does not discriminate. It does not differentiate if you are able-bodied or have a disability. It knows no gender, age, or social status. We are ONE; a sport that unites everyone. If you are watching from a distance, you can never tell who has a disability or is able-bodied. Dragon boating is the greatest equaliser.

I can still remember when Daisy lost grip of her paddle in the middle of the training, and everyone stopped paddling and enthusiastically turned the boat back to get her paddle floating on the water. This gesture was so meaningful if you apply this to our society right now.

We had a great laugh about it together with everyone at the end of the training. High fives, fist bumps to everyone. We had so much fun! But Daisy and I both sensed that this ancient sport could really help many of clients of PADS.

I was also delighted to meet Arnold Balais (a Paralympian swimmer and powerlifter who was the first amputee to ever reach Mt. Apo, the highest mountain in the Philippines) and Enrique Sanchez (an amputee and a sports buff who previously worked as a banker). Both were already paddling for other dragon boat teams but offered to join a PADS team. Over the next few weeks, more and more PWDs joined the training sessions and very quickly we had more than 20. They took ownership of the sport.

The dragon boat community of Cebu was really helpful, the able-bodied paddlers allowed us to borrow their equipment and dragon boats. They were very generous in sharing their extra time to train us since none of us had a background in dragon boat, and were soon letting us run our own sessions.



*PADS Captain Arnold Balais.  
Photo credit: PADS*

So the PADS Adaptive Dragon Boat Racing team was formed a few months after. We were the first cross-disability dragon boat team in the country with Arnold as our team captain and Enrique as our trainer. To begin with, our paddlers composed of blind, deaf, amputees and wheelchair users but we encouraged any PWD to give the sport a go. Indeed, we now have polio survivors, people suffering mental illness or developmental disabilities, those recovering from substance abuse, and those with physical deformities. Previously, none of these PWDs would have had much of a life – now they are making waves in society and discovering that they are better people themselves as well.

We had to develop hand signs for each command during training for the deaf and our deaf paddlers themselves started helping the rest of us to communicate in sign language – we were already breaking down barriers within our own team. Dragon boat was our universal language in the team.

We quickly noticed that the attendance and performance of our paddlers was improving fast and their approach to other elements of the PADS programme also developed.



*Left: PADs at training.  
Photo credit: PADs*



*Right: Don't let anybody tell you, you can't!*

In October that year, just two months after we started, we were invited to race in a local festival... against able-bodied teams. We opened people's eyes and minds to the idea that PWDs could actually do something previously unimaginable. We may not have won during the race, but we won the hearts and minds of those present that time. We proved we could race side by side with athletes who had no disabilities, and showed in this way that our paddlers could be valuable members of society, and not to be discarded or ignored.

We gave ourselves a battle cry: "Bugsay hangtod mabuang!" ("Paddle until you lose yourself!"), a phrase with deep meaning to us. It is a key line from our team chant, but it is more than just a chant. For our PWDs, dragon boating is a lifestyle. It is a commitment to each other to be better individuals; it is an answer to their own prayers to break free of their 'disabilities', and it is a statement of intent that they will live life to the fullest.

In 2017, the PADS team raced in an international festival in Hong Kong and won the paradragon event in closely fought races against a local blind team from Hong Kong and the UK's Purple Warriors. People who a year ago were shunned by society were now champions! Champions shown on national television in Hong Kong and back in the Philippines. Champions who had made a statement – PWDs are a force to be reckoned with!

Back in the Philippines, we then entered the BakuNaga Races in Naga City, Cebu and went head-to-head with able-bodied teams and won our first championship trophy! It was monumental for our team since we were able to prove that nothing is impossible in sports. It was a dream come true.

PADS was fast becoming one of the strongest teams in Cebu with the guidance of our esteemed team of coaches and sports scientist and rehab specialist Headed by Coach Ailene Padrones of the Philippine Dragon Boat Federation and Dr. Lohindren Adorable of the Southwestern University.

## SPORT FOR ALL

The following year, 2018, we returned to Hong Kong and again won the Paradrragon category. Other successes followed but our proudest moment (so far!) was to be asked to be the national team representing the Philippines at the 2019 World Championships!

We normally train twice a day, four days a week. Our first session starts at 4:30am! And word is spreading. We now have five other teams across the Philippines that are modelling themselves on PADS. The President of the Philippines invited the whole team to a reception at the Presidential Palace and told the paddlers that he will be rewarding them with a brand new set of prosthetics. A dream thought to be impossible to most of our amputees was going to be a reality!



*PADs with Mike Thomas, IDBF President at the 2019 14th IDBF World Nations Dragon Boat Championships in Thailand.  
Photo credit: PADs*

In May 2019, we were asked to run a national dragon boat festival which attracted 27 teams from all over the country, including five other paradrragon teams. At this event, we inaugurated the first ever National Paradrragon Category races.

Our elite paddlers are now asked to run corporate training events and to mentor school children. We are slowly but surely breaking down barriers. We are changing attitudes. Our paddlers are benefitting personally too. The physical exercise is assisting many to deal with their disabilities. The team spirit, the camaraderie, gives them all huge lifts. But, at the end of the day, knowing that society now respects them counts for the most.

All being well, PADS will be there at the next IDBF Club Crew World Championships. We also hope to contribute again to our National team at the World Championships. We are proud athletes in a proud country and together we are changing things one race at a time, one island after another.

Please check out the following links for more insights into this special group of people:

- [PADS Facebook Page](#)
- [One of the strongest teams in the Philippines is powered by PWDs](#)
- [The dragon boat team breaking every stereotype](#)
- [PADS - the stuff of movies!](#)



*PADs Power Ladies. Photo credit: PADs*

# AKKO DOLPHINS PADDLES THE SEA-OF-GALILEE

The Akko Dolphins (Israel) team recently completed a two day paddle around the lake of the Sea-of-Galilee, completing a full circuit of about 60km.

The idea was put together after the team could not participate in this year's European championships due to the coronavirus.

"It was an amazing experience we will never forget, working together in body and spirit under such intense and special moments to achieve our goal." said Gal Indyk of Akko Dolphins. "Beyond the fact that we completed the mission we had a great time as a family of friends. Laughing, eating, swimming and just enjoying time and sharing the beautiful nature together".

The team decked out the dragon boats with a set of drums at the front with waterproof speakers to play music to keep them going for the many hours of paddling they would undertake. "At certain moments it felt as if we were dancing together in the boat, paddling to rhythm and music".

Gal explains that the Sea-of-Galilee is an amazing place from a natural, historic and religious location point of view. "All around the lake there are very important Christian historic sights, as it was the place where Jesus lived and had influenced the world. During the journey we saw these locations from within the lake's view, and these moments were fantastic and special. We visited along the way the city of Tibirias and on the second morning during sun rise, we managed to paddle up the of the Jordan river, where the river feeds its clear and cool water into the lake, creating a unique nature point".

They are thankful for the support received from their local municipality of the Jordan Valley and its Sports Department.



**Akko Dolphins**  
all different but all the same



Akko Dragons successfully completed their challenge and plan to do it again next year in the beginning of July 2021, inviting all paddlers in Israel to join in. They hope from mid 2022 international paddlers can also participate, however if any one is keen to join next year, they can reach out to Akko Dolphins on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/akkodolphins>) for details.

Watch a [video of Akko Dolphins paddle around the Sea-of-Galilee](#).



*Akko Dolphins paddling the Sea-of-Galilee. Photo credit: Gal Indyk*

We asked some of our IDBF Race Officials from around the world to tell us how they got into dragon boating and what motivated them to become officials.

# AUSTRALIA

## GEORGIA PARRY

### How did you first get into dragon boating?

Mum was paddling with our local Dragons Abreast club. We would go and support her at regattas and it seemed like a great sport to be involved in. Inspired by mum, I joined a new club that was founded in my town, and my dragon boat adventures began.



### How long have you been an IDBF race official for?

I became an IDBF Official in 2017, and attended my first Championship in Szeged, Hungary in 2018.

### What motivated you to become an IDBF race official?

The opportunity to be a part of world class events, to meet officials and athletes from across the globe, to opportunity to learn from more experienced officials and to bring that knowledge home to our local and national regattas.

### What is your favourite race official role and why?

I don't have a favourite role yet. I've enjoyed each role I've done for different reasons, but each role has its own set of challenges.

### Do you still paddle?

I do. I'm heavily involved with my local club. My parents also paddle, so it's great to be able to do something with them. I spend most of my time steering rather than paddling, which I love.

### Can you tell us one fun fact about yourself?

I play and teach numerous musical instruments and conduct five ensembles at the two schools where I work.

### Three words to describe your officiating experience at IDBF championships.

Fun, exhausting, social.

### Any advice for aspiring officials?

- Get to know your fellow officials.
- Ask questions and seek knowledge.
- Work hard and be nice!

# PUERTO RICO

**CARLOS RIVERA**

### **How did you first get into dragon boating?**

My wife and I discovered dragon boat racing in 2007 when we moved to the US and joined a corporate team (IBM Big Blue Dragons). We immediately fell in love with the sport and sometime later joined a competitive club - Tampa Bay Dragon Boat Club (The Blade Runners). We had the idea to introduce it to our native country Puerto Rico, where no one knew or heard about it before. The following years and for a long time, we learned, trained and participated in a multitude of events.



We continually travelled to Puerto Rico and kept visiting local radio stations and TV shows to get the word out about dragon boats coming to Puerto Rico. On March 11, 2011, we finally were able to bring the first two boats into Puerto Rico. From that moment on I coached the first local club for about six years and took three Puerto Rican delegations to the World Dragon Boat Racing Championships including Tampa 2011, Hungary 2013 and Canada 2015.

### **How long have you been an IDBF race official for?**

I became a Grade 1 IDBF official during the 2017 Pan American Club Crew Championships which was held in our beautiful island Puerto Rico.

### **What motivated you to become an IDBF race official?**

Firstly, on the personal side since 2011 when my wife and I introduced dragon boating to Puerto Rico we've been organizing all dragon boat events on the island. I love to learn, and every event we worked on provided me with new challenges and new learning experiences, so wanting to expand my knowledge and experience I became an IDBF official. Secondly, as the Coaching and Technical Director of the Puerto Rico Dragon Boat Federation it is my responsibility to make sure that our local officials are properly trained and gain the necessary experience for when they also want to become IDBF officials, so I felt that by becoming an IDBF official would greatly help me in doing that.

### **What is your favourite race official role and why?**

I work in technology (a geek), so I tend to like being at the finish line tower for our local events, but I have to say that Marshalling is a close second. My experience in the Marshalling area during the last World Dragon Boat Racing Championships held in Thailand was my first time in that role at an event of that magnitude and it was a very enriching experience. The Marshalling team was awesome, and I really enjoyed being able to work closely with the athletes.

### **Three words to describe your officiating experience at IDBF championships.**

Enriching, fun, and family.

### **Any advice for aspiring officials?**

Above all, make sure you have fun and enjoy your journey to becoming an IDBF official. As officials sometimes we have to make quick decisions based on the specific context we are working in at the time, so make sure you get plenty of practical experience as that will guarantee you will make the best possible decision at that time. Apart from that I would suggest these three things:

- Always keep learning
- Always be fair, but keep an open mind
- Always listen to your chief official!



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