



Survivors Abreast Steersperson Guidelines¹

1 Purpose

This document outlines 2 options available to Survivors Abreast (SA) paddlers who want to pursue the position of Steersperson. These 2 options are summarized in Section 3.1 (Recreational/Practice Steers) and Section 3.2 (Race Steers).

2 Steersperson Role per Dragon Boat Canada

Dragon Boat Canada (DBC) states in its Steer Training Manual that a Steersperson's *"primary role is to ensure the safety of the crew in the boat at all times. They are the voice of authority in the boat and the link between the coach and crew members. A Steersman has ultimate authority and responsibility of the boat and all persons on board."*

In DBC's Safety Guidelines, it is further notes that *"Clubs/Crews should treat the coaching of Steersmen and their education in watermanship and good safety procedures as being as important as coaching paddlers. Steersmen should receive a full education in safety procedures and boat handling."* DBC recommends Steersmen have as much practice as possible. *"Steering skills require practice and experience as with any other position in the boat. A good Steersman instills confidence in the paddlers and helps to win or lose any race"*. Therefore, ongoing practice to develop skills, confidence, and experience is important for Steerspersons.

3 SA Steersperson Opportunities

SA recognizes Steerspersons as valuable assets to both SA and the Peterborough paddling community. A variety of Steersperson opportunities exist in both recreational/practice settings (i.e., steering boats at SA and/or community practices and community events) and race settings (i.e., steering the SA boat during regattas).

Steersperson opportunities include, but are not limited to:

- In International Festivals, the Race Steer must be a breast cancer survivor (eg, Italy 2018 and New Zealand 2022).
- If the Coach is unavailable for practice, a Recreational/Practice Steer or Race Steer will be needed to steer so the team can practice technique, increase strength and endurance, and practice specific racing components (e.g., starts, finishes, turns, and race pace paddling).
- If the Coach is unavailable for a regatta, a Race Steer will be needed to steer the SA dragon boat and will be identified in advance by the Coach and Team Captain.

¹ For purposes of this document, 'Steersperson', "Steersman", and "Steer" are interchangeable.



- If the Coach chooses to coach from the Drummer position or from the Safety Boat instead of the Steersperson position at SA practices, a Steersperson other than the Coach will be needed.
- At practices, an extra Steersperson (either a qualified Recreational/Practice Steer or a Race Steer) may be required to take out a second boat due to our increasing number of members (and in light of potential limitations in the numbers of paddlers allowed in a dragon boat due to Covid-19 safe practice guidelines).
- Steerspersons are required leading up to the annual Peterborough's Dragon Boat Festival to assist with community practices and in the Steers pool on Festival Day.
- Steerspersons are also needed for community and fundraising events such as the Lakefield College School Orientation Day or the Mission School Training Day.

3.1 Recreational/Practice Steers

A Recreational/Practice Steer will be eligible to steer dragon boats in SA practices, community practices, and other community events following informal training by the Coach and his or her determination that the potential Steersperson has adequate safety knowledge and steering skills to steer a dragon boat in these settings.

- To gain experience, Steerspersons are encouraged to steer for community practices leading up to the annual Peterborough's Dragon Boat Festival, as well as any other community opportunities (e.g., fundraiser events such as the Lakefield College Day) to further their steering skills and experience.
- Opportunities for standby Steerspersons to steer at SA practice(s) will be determined by the Coach and are meant to help the Steersperson(s) advance the skills and to gain experience in all components of steering.
- Steering requirements for Recreational/Practice Steers are less rigorous than those for Race Steers. In recreational/practice settings, the boat will not generally be in close proximity to other boats, the speed of the boat will not be as fast for as long a time, and the Peterborough practice course is well known to the team unlike other race venues where the course may be more difficult or unknown.

3.2 Race Steers

A Race Steer will be eligible to steer SA dragon boats during regattas following
1) Successful completion of an accredited Steersperson course from DBC, including practice hours; 2) Successful steering in at least 3 community races at the Peterborough Dragon Boat Festival; 3) Steering for at least 6 SA or community practices; and 4) Determination by the Coach that the Steersperson has adequate safety knowledge and steering skills to steer a SA dragon boat in a race setting.

Opportunities to steer at regattas will be determined by the Coach and based on factors such as weather, water conditions at the venue, need for a competitive edge, regatta



requirement for Steer to be a breast cancer survivor, Steersperson's experience and credentials, etc.

Race Steer opportunities include:

- International Festivals or other races that require the Steersperson be a breast cancer survivor.
- At the discretion of the Coach (in attendance at the regatta), a Race Steersperson may be assigned to steer a particular race(s) at a particular regatta(s).
- In the absence of the Coach at a regatta. If the Coach cannot attend a race or a regatta, the Coach and Team Captain will discuss steering *prior to* the regatta and have a Steersperson plan in place. In the event of an unforeseen circumstance that the Coach cannot attend a race or regatta, the Team Captain "*may be required to act as Coach in the event the Head Coach is unavailable*" (from SA Election of Directors Document) and will determine any changes necessary to the Steersman plan decided on by the Coach and Team Captain prior to the regatta.

4 How to Become a Steersperson for SA

SA encourages and will assist any team member who wants to pursue a Recreational/Practice Steer and/or a Race Steer position. SA members have the option to become a Recreational/Practice Steer and/or a Race Steer; they may choose to stay a Recreational/Practice Steer or they may choose to continue on to a Race Steer after being a Recreational/Practice Steer for a while. SA will support both types of Steerspersons as best it can.

4.1 Getting Started as a Steersperson

1. Potential Steerspersons: Let the Team Captain know of your interest in learning to steer. An introduction to steering can be made available for any member who has never steered before. The Team Captain, in conjunction with the Coach, will coordinate Steersperson training (per approved Team Captain description).

Learning to steer a dragon boat involves a lot of time and practice. Each Steersperson will learn at different rates; therefore, there is no set timeline for learning this skill.

4.2 Continuing as a Steersperson

1. Returning Steerspersons: Let the Team Captain know of your interest in continuing to steer and if you want to be a Recreational/Practice Steer or a Race Steer. Also let the Team Captain know if you have completed any accredited Steersperson training courses. The Team Captain, in conjunction with the Coach, will coordinate Steersperson training (per approved Team Captain description).
2. Potential and Returning Steerspersons: The Coach, Team Captain, and interested Steerspersons will meet at the beginning of each paddling season to identify a



training plan, including practice opportunities, that best meets the goals of each interested Steersperson. Additional meetings will be held as needed, and individual training plans will also be revised, as needed. For example, the Coach may determine that the potential Steersperson must complete a basic steers course before steering a SA dragon boat.

Note that the DBC states, “Coaches are responsible for those in their charge and should ensure that they are informed of safety procedures and abide by them.” The Coach will implement the training during practice sessions in whatever way he/she deems appropriate. DBC also states that *“Inexperienced Steerspersons should be allowed out in boats only if accompanied by an experienced coach.”*

3. **Financial Impact:** While all paddlers are insured through Dragon Boat Canada when they are a member of SA, it is strongly recommended by the SA Board that certified Steerspersons obtain separate Steersperson insurance through DBC. This is advisable since the Steersperson is responsible for the safety of all people in the boat when steering the boat.

After a paddler has received her Steersperson accreditation, she can purchase additional insurance through DBC at an estimated of \$80 to \$85 per year. SA will reimburse the certified Steersperson for this additional insurance. Please note that only accredited Steerspersons can apply for this additional insurance.

History:		
Date of Original Guideline :	September 2020	This is not a policy and is intended as a guideline for the coach and team captain to follow. These guidelines were approved online by the majority of the team in September 2020
Date of Amendment:		
Date of Amendment:		