



UW Oshkosh in partnership with YMCA.



## Oshkosh Community Dragon Boat Race and Festival

Riverside Park 8AM–5PM  
Saturday, Sept. 26, 2009  
Oshkosh, WI

## 2009 Oshkosh Community Dragon Boat Race and Festival FAQs

### Did you know?

- Dragon Boat racing is the fastest growing water sport activity in the world today.
- More than 2,000,000 people world-wide participate in Dragon Boat Festivals.
- Dragon Boat participants are 60 percent men, 40 percent women and include teams from corporations of all sizes, community groups, financial institutions, utilities, service clubs, youth groups, and even retirement homes.

### What is a dragon boat race?

The most popular dragon boat set-up consists of 10 rows of seats for 20 paddlers sitting side-by-side, a drummer (caller) in the front and a steersman (sweep) in the back. The drummer controls the stroke pace and makes sure that all the paddlers are in sync with each other while the steersman navigates the boat. The dragon head and tail are attached to the boat only for races. During the inaugural ceremony of a dragon boat race, the eye of the dragon is painted with a red dot—a symbolic gesture to bring the dragon to life. For the rest of the year, the head and tail are put away and the boat looks like a long canoe.

### What is a dragon boat?

A modern dragon boat is usually 40 feet long and weighs more than 500 pounds. Modern boats are made of fiberglass or a composite of other materials.

### Is it as easy as it looks?

Dragon boat racing is a flat-water, sprint paddling sport with paddling style similar to sprint canoes and single-blade paddles. The challenge lies in the synchronizing with 19 other paddlers. The challenge increases for mixed teams of paddlers of difference sizes and strength levels. Dragon boat races range from 250–500m.

### How did dragon boat races begin?

Also known as Poet's Day, it commemorates the death of Qu Yuan, a poet and Minister of State during the Chou Dynasty. Qu had protested against the corrupt government and was stripped of his office as Minister of State. He wandered about the countryside, unhappy and dejected. When local fishermen realized Qu had disappeared into the river, they raced out in their boats to save him, beating drums to scare off the fish that they thought would eat his body. They also dropped rice dumplings in the water as a sacrifice to his spirit. The scene of the fishermen racing out to save Qu Yuan is reenacted every year in the form of dragon boat races.

### How safe is a dragon boat?

Because of their size, the boats are very stable which make racing suitable for all levels.