

MINAMATA PADDLE FESTIVAL Competition Rules

[Competition Rules]

1. Races will generally be held in the rain. However, the organizer reserves the right to change the schedule, events, or cancel races before or during the competition in consideration of participant safety.
2. Classification of each race category and number of crew members per boat shall follow the official tournament guidelines for the corresponding year.
3. For the Kids Class, paddlers must be elementary school students or older (3rd grade and up with basic swimming ability recommended for safety), and up to junior high school students. Adults must serve as the helmsperson and team captain. This does not apply to the bell or drummer positions.
4. All participants must wear life jackets to be permitted on the boat. Alcohol consumption is strictly prohibited. Each team's coach is responsible for ensuring participants' condition and safety.
5. Equipment (drums, bells, rudders, paddles, life jackets) must either be provided by the organizing committee or prepared by the teams themselves. Each team is responsible for checking equipment before boarding. Any damage should be reported to the staff. A total of 12 paddles, including spares, must be brought on board.
6. Boarding the boat must be done barefoot or wearing marine shoes.
7. Races will generally be held with 4 boats. However, depending on circumstances, races may include 3 to 6 boats.
8. Teams must gather at the assembly area at least 3 races prior to their turn. Follow staff instructions to board, and once on board, proceed promptly to the starting area and wait behind the start line.
9. The starting signals will be as follows:
 - Dragon Boat:
 - “Are You Ready?” (Prepare to paddle) → “Attention” (Place paddles in the water) → “Go!!” (Start)
 - Seribune:
 - “KAI-AGE” (Raise paddles and prepare to paddle) → “Go!!” (Start)
10. A false start will result in a race restart. Teams that false start twice will be ranked last in that race.

11. Paddlers must remain seated on the designated paddling bench. Kneeling or standing while paddling is prohibited. Violation will result in the team being ranked last in that race.
12. The rudder must not be detached from the boat body during steering. Violations will result in the team being ranked last.
13. If a boat crosses the buoys marking the lane boundaries, it will be considered out of course and ranked last in that race.
14. Any team committing acts that interfere with other teams' races will be ranked last in that race.
15. The finish is determined by the moment the bow of the boat crosses the finish line.
16. No protests against referee decisions will be accepted. All judgments are final.
17. Any acts of violence between participants, abusive language toward officials, or behavior contrary to public morals will result in a penalty card, disqualification, expulsion, or future ban from the event. Penalties may apply to both individuals and teams.
18. No commercial activities may be conducted at the venue without prior approval from the executive committee. Violators will be warned, and if not corrected, may be disqualified or expelled.
19. The boats used in the event are highly buoyant. In the unlikely event of capsizing, all participants must hold onto the boat and wait for rescue after confirming everyone's safety.
20. If an accident occurs during the race and it cannot continue, most paddlers should raise their paddles overhead to signal the referees. Depending on the situation, teams may be instructed to stop or return to the dock. Ignoring these instructions or continuing the race may lead to disqualification.
21. Teams that intentionally capsize the boat or damage paddles or boats will be immediately expelled and prohibited from further participation. The organizing committee may seek compensation for damages. Penalties may apply to both individuals and teams.
22. The organizers, sponsors, and partners will not be responsible for anything beyond first aid. All participants must take part at their own risk and take care to prevent injury or illness. The organizing committee will not be liable for any damage, loss, or theft at the venue. Please take full responsibility for managing your belongings and valuables.