

Dragon boat teams are often classified into three categories based on the members' commitment, skill level, and primary objectives: recreational, intermediate, and competitive (or premier/elite).

While the definitions can vary slightly between clubs and events, here is a general breakdown of each team type:

## 1. Recreational Dragon Boat Team

A recreational team's primary focus is on **fun, fitness, and camaraderie** rather than intense competition.

Characteristic	Description
<b>Primary Goal</b>	Socializing, enjoying time on the water, exercising, and building team spirit.
<b>Commitment</b>	Low to moderate. Practices are typically a few hours a week, and attendance is usually more flexible.
<b>Skill &amp; Training</b>	All skill levels are welcome, including complete beginners. The focus is on learning the basics of paddling technique and enjoying the workout.
<b>Racing</b>	Participation in local, non-elite divisions or festivals for fun. Winning is secondary to participation.
<b>Financial Cost</b>	Generally lower fees and fewer equipment or travel costs.
<b>Team Culture</b>	Inclusive, social, and laid-back. Ideal for those who want a good workout and a strong sense of community.

## 2. Intermediate Dragon Boat Team (Club/Developing)

An intermediate team, often referred to as a "club" or "developing" team, serves as a bridge between recreational paddling and high-level competition.

Characteristic	Description
<b>Primary Goal</b>	To improve technique, build fitness, and become competitive at local and regional races. The goal is to consistently perform well.
<b>Commitment</b>	Moderate to high. Requires regular attendance at a set number of on-water practices and may include some supplemental off-water fitness training.
<b>Skill &amp; Training</b>	Paddlers have a solid understanding of basic technique and are actively working to improve power, endurance, and synchronization. Teams may incorporate evaluations or fitness tests to select race rosters.
<b>Racing</b>	Competes more frequently in regional and larger club-level races, often striving for medals within their division.
<b>Financial Cost</b>	Moderate. Higher fees than recreational teams due to more specialized coaching, equipment, and travel to races.
<b>Team Culture</b>	Focused on improvement and performance, but still maintains a strong social and inclusive atmosphere.

### 3. Competitive Dragon Boat Team (Premier/Elite)

A competitive team, sometimes called a Premier or Elite team, is dedicated to **high-performance racing** and consistently winning at the highest levels of the sport.

Characteristic	Description
<b>Primary Goal</b>	To win regional, national, and international races and achieve the fastest possible race times.
<b>Commitment</b>	High and demanding. Requires significant time commitment, often including <b>multiple on-water sessions (3+) and multiple off-water strength and conditioning sessions (2-5) per week</b> . Training is often year-round.
<b>Skill &amp; Training</b>	Members are highly skilled, experienced athletes who must pass performance tests (e.g., paddle ergometer tests, fitness evaluations) to be on the race roster. Technique, synchronization, and individual strength-to-weight ratio are rigorously evaluated.
<b>Racing</b>	Competes in the most elite divisions, such as Premier, striving to qualify for major events like national and world championships.
<b>Financial Cost</b>	High. Significant costs for dues, specialized equipment, training camps, and extensive domestic and international travel for races.
<b>Team Culture</b>	Highly focused and performance-driven.

	<p>Personal sacrifices are often required, and team selection is based strictly on performance to create the "winning boat."</p>
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