**ACT REPRESENTATIVE STATE TEAM SELECTION POLICY**

**Season Goals:**

* Enter competitive crews in the 2022-2023 Australian Dragon Boat Championships (Aus Champs), including Premier, Open, Women and Mixed boats.
* Make crew selection in Aus Champs an aspirational goal for DBACT members

**PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT:**

* Provide members with the selection process for Aus Champs
* Inform members of personal responsibilities for crew selection
* Provide a framework for DBACT to build competitive crews for Aus Champs

**IMPORTANT POINTS:**

* Members are accountable for ensuring they have read and understood this selection policy
* Members are encouraged to approach the coaches with any feedback, concerns or queries (not during a training session or the selection camp)
* Coaches will select crew members for all competitive teams based on this policy. Coaches will also consider additional factors such as, weight distribution, paddling side preferences, individual technique impact on seat position, overall paddler numbers, gender mix, number of races per individual, and competition crew constraints.
* Crew members will be able to see the bench-marking results (without names) of all other crew members
* Benchmarking only provides the quantitative basis for selection decisions. Qualitative criteria being, performance, technique, fitness, attitude, respect and team player, are equally as important
* An essential element is coaches’ observations that are made in the boat and with video reviews. Coaches are looking for crew members that can easily integrate into a crew and can make modifications if required. If, for example, a paddler’s stroke interferes with another, they are clearly not a good fit for that crew, regardless of how strong they may be. If a crew member is very strong, however shifts their weight whilst paddling, this will clearly negate their strength and be detrimental to the crew and their chances of success
* Attitude of member is always noted; a poor attitude may well mean that you are not selected in a crew
* **Side preference** is an important factor for coaches to consider. Whilst twenty (20) paddlers may be needed in a standard boat, there are only ten (10) spots on each side. If you cannot paddle both sides efficiently and effectively, or you have a strong preference for one side, you will need to be in the top paddlers of your preferred paddling side in order to be selected. If you can paddle strongly on both sides, your chances of selection are increased
* **Weight** has to be factored in. For most crew members there are positions in the boat they are well suited to and others they are not. Remember that selection may not be determined strictly by weight as much as your weight relative to the rest of the crew. In a competitive crew, boat weight matters. Coaches may select a light crew for some races and a heavier crew for others.
* Avoid comparing data from bench marking directly as well as between left and right-side paddlers. Coaches need to select appropriate paddlers for left- and right-hand sides of the boat

**DISCRETION OF COACHES:**

Guiding principles applied by coaches are:

* To give the crews their best chance of success.
* Individual crew member’s current performance, technique, fitness, attitude and team player impact.
* Coaches shall be entitled to make both objective and subjective assessments in making their decisions and may weigh each such assessment on a case-by-case basis at their discretion.

***The following is a guide on how selections are made for drummers, sweeps and paddlers.***

DRUMMERS

* Drummers are selected based on their ability to work with the sweep and team, their weight, balance and confidence to be on the drummer seat. Drummers must be able to conduct the boat, motivate the crew and strategise the race if required. Drummers must have good voice projection and must be able to take full command of the boat if the sweep is unable to.
* Drummers must be able to keep time with the strokes and relay the pace/rate to the entire crew via the sounding of the drum.
* Drummers must have effective communication (verbal and non-verbal) with the sweep.
* Drummers must be a team player and have respect for and from the team. Their weight must be commensurate with the configuration/race strategy/race distance. An ideal drummer is a smaller, lighter, energetic, assertive person with a big voice.

SWEEPS

* Sweeps are selected on their ability to sweep the boat and conduct the team safely in different weather and water conditions. They must be able to read the water, understand currents and pay attention to the wind. They must be able to balance the boat (left/right) if needed by shifting position and be flexible enough to move into positions to make it easier for the crew to paddle.
* Sweeps must be able to adapt to a boat with small imbalances, have technical ability when turning, be able to interpret team needs via calls and have effective communication (verbal and non-verbal) with the drummer.
* Sweeps must show confidence and knowledge of commands and tactics for different distances and teams. Sweeps must be able to manoeuvre the boat without needlessly tiring the crew. They must be able to interpret the start-line judge’s call and know how to bring the boat up correctly, while keeping their paddlers from doing much in the way of boat movements. Of paramount importance, sweeps must be team players who have respect for and from the team.
* Crews must feel confident with the sweep’s abilities. Sweeps must maintain a level of fitness and weight commensurate with the configuration/race strategy/race distance. They must be able to sweep strategically whilst motivating the crew. Sweeps must know how to turn a boat in tight situations and understand 1km and 2km races which involve crucial turns and are loaded with strategy. Sweeps are ultimately responsible for the safety of the boat and must never jeopardise the safety of crew members. The ideal sweep is assertive, physically strong and confident with a loud commanding voice.

**PADDLERS**

Paddlers are selected through the following criteria:

* **Performance**: Your individual performance in the boat as a paddler. Selection is also based on knowing some individuals perform better over certain race distances.
* **Technique**: Personal technique and ability to adjust to team technique. This includes your ability to be open-minded and your willingness/ability to act on feedback from coaches.
* **Fitness**: The level of individual fitness, which includes strength, power and endurance.
* **Team Player**: Ability to bond with the team, understanding and supporting team members. Paddlers must have a positive attitude and commitment to the team. ***(Please note that unsolicited coaching of other paddlers when you are not a coach is not allowed)***
* **Land Tests/Solo Paddle**: Coaches will determine what tests will be conducted e.g., solo paddle/erg. NB: you can be fit on land, but you must be able to perform in the boat.
* **Coach discretion**: Unquantifiable qualities that make a good paddler include timing, assisting with preparing/cleaning boats, team-oriented, positive attitude etc. There are many things that coaches look at during training. A boat of the 20 ‘strongest’ paddlers is not our fastest crew if they can’t work together. It’s important to pay attention to these unquantifiable details when working towards being a better paddler.
* One of the most critical performance criteria is **power for weight** (how much sustained power is required for your weight over required distance and time). It is a simple fact that the heavier the boat, the more it sinks in the water, which significantly increases drag and reduces boat speed.

**SELECTION CRITERIA EXPLANATION:**

**Performance**

Performance is a combination of technique and fitness. A member can prove to be very fit and have good technique in drills and at a low speed, however when asked to perform at a higher rate (race speed) their technique may deteriorate, their timing may go, they may lack endurance or they could obstruct other paddlers. Performance is visually assessed by the coaches.

Paddlers must focus on becoming strong, efficient paddlers with the power and endurance to move a boat quickly over varying distances.

Coaches recognise that paddlers may be good at paddling sprints and/or longer distances. Your selection will be affected by your ability to perform during the various distances.

Side preference and weight are important factors for coaches to consider. Whilst twenty (20) paddlers may be needed there are only ten (10) spots on each side. If you can paddle strongly on both sides, your chances of selection are increased. Conversely, if you have a strong preference for one side, you are competing with many people for a smaller number of spots on your preferred side.

Weight has to be factored in. For most crew members there are positions in the boat they are well suited to and others they are not. Remember that selection may not be determined strictly by weight as much as your weight relative to the rest of the crew. In a competitive crew, boat weight matters. Coaches may select a light crew for some races and a heavier crew for others. As is evident, it is not simply about being in the top twenty (20) or twenty-two (22).

**TECHNIQUE:**

Technique is an essential element that coaches consider when selecting crews. All else being equal, a technically superior paddler is able to move the boat further, faster, more consistently and with less effort, while minimising the risk of injury. Technique will be monitored by visual observation and video recording.

Whilst coaches will provide feedback, it is the responsibility of the individual paddler to ask the coaches if you want to receive specific feedback. Please ask the coaches before a session if you wish this to occur, this will ensure that the coaches pay attention to how you are performing.

**FITNESS:**

Fitness assessments may be conducted throughout the season. Assessments will be made by coach observations and ‘bench-marking’ tests.

**BENCHMARKING:**

Benchmarking is one of the tools coaches use to select crews. We bench-mark to:

* Provide members with a benchmark to help show improvement over the season
* Provide members an idea of how they stand in relation to their teammates
* Provide coaches with a tool to justify crew selection

**If a member is unable to benchmark for a valid reason, as determined by the Head Coach, selection will be based on coaches’ decisions re: technique, fitness, performance, team player, attendance, attitude and commitment.**

**Benchmarking is only *one-tool* coaches use to select crews.**

**Benchmarking will only occur on the nominated dates.**

The following fitness tests may be conducted. Tests to be performed will be chosen by the coaches and may change season to season.

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| **Solo Dragon Boat Paddle** | This test will be undertaken in a standard boat with a sweep. To ensure fairness, weights will be added to the back of the boat, if needed, to ensure the weight of the sweep is consistent throughout the benchmarking.  This Test will be for a two (2) minute duration with the distance paddled measured by the sweep.  The paddler is to sit in Bench 3, however can chose what side they prefer to paddle.  To assist in the selection process, the paddler may be videoed. This will assist with coaches providing timely feedback to the paddler. Coaches will also be able to assess how the paddler maintains an efficient and effective stroke over a measured distance.  Rationale:   * Allows coaches to see how you perform, from a fitness perspective, over a measured distance. Do you start off hard and lag off at the end or do you paddle consistently throughout? * Mirrors what is required of paddlers in competitive situations. * Allows coaches to see your ‘intestinal fortitude’ how far **you** are willing to push yourself. * Provides a common platform for comparing one paddler to another on some criteria. * Provides a quantitative metric for measuring development. |
| **Erg** | This test will be conducted in the DBACT erg shed. The test will be a 500m dragon boat ergometer time trial with the stroke rate recorded at approximately 300m. The erg will be set at the lowest resistance setting.  Rationale:   * Allows coaches to get a close-up view of your stroke from all angles * Provides data that can be analysed to produce stroke length, power outputs, distance per stroke, power to weight etc * Allows coaches to see your ‘intestinal fortitude’ how far **you** are willing to push yourself. * Allows coaches to compare self-determined stroke rates across crew members. |

**Test Weightings**

* The weightings are based on applicability to on-water paddling and difficulty of the test.
* The fitness tests are weighted with the solo paddle carrying the most weight (75%) and erg weighted at 25%.

**Physical Capability:**

For the 2022 season all members (paddlers, drummers and sweeps) will be asked to submit the following self-reported exercise results:

* Upper body horizontal pushing strength exercise of choice (suggestions include, however not limited to, bench press, pushups, bar dips)
* Upper body horizontal pulling strength exercise of choice (suggestions include, however not limited to, dumbbell rows, ring rows, seated row or bench pull).

Both sets of exercises are to be performed with a weight allowing no more than eight (8) repetitions. Whilst these exercises are self-reported, members should hold themselves to a high standard when performing these exercises. There should be minimal use of momentum to complete reps and all repetitions should be completed with a full range of motion (e.g., chest touching ground for pushups, bar touching chest/bench for bench press/pull etc/. Partial repetitions are not counted.

**TEAM PLAYER**

A good team player will exhibit many qualities including:

* Punctuality
* Attendance and commitment at training
* Supporting members
* Encouraging and motivating other members
* Celebrating crew success, regardless of selection
* Being positive
* Accepting feedback
* Never being critical of the coaches or other members
* Contributing to squad activities, on and off the water
* Treating others with respect
* Assisting with boat preparation
* Being a good role model

All members, regardless of experience or ability, will be required at times to be a reserve in a crew. No member should expect to paddle every race in every crew.

**Regardless of a members’ paddling ability, fitness and benchmarking results, no member will be selected in a crew if their continued negative attitude or behaviour, is judged by the coaches to have a negative impact on the squad.**

**ATTENDANCE:**

Regular and consistent attendance is necessary for improvement. If you do not attend training, coaches will not be able to assess your performance as per the selection criteria.

Lack of attendance also impacts on the rest of the team by signalling a lack of care and respect for team mates. It also creates difficulties with integrating different paddling styles and creating the best performance boat. Show up for your team.

**GRIEVANCES:**

In the first instance please refer to the [AusDBF Complaints Guidance](https://cdn.revolutionise.com.au/cups/ausdbf/files/tzundbivmgr33byo.pdf) the [AusDBF Member Protection Policy](https://cdn.revolutionise.com.au/cups/ausdbf/files/fnt3dovrimznkh4q.pdf), DBACT will utilise these documents to manage and resolve disputes.

Paddlers and other team members should approach the person they feel most comfortable to discuss the matter with for example:

* Member Protection Information Officer
* Club President
* Team Manager, Coach or Captain
* DBACT Development Officer

A DBACT subcommittee will initially discuss any escalated matters and determine the required course of action to resolve the matter – Note any conflicts of interest must be declared by DBACT committee members/paddlers involved in dispute resolution.

DBACT may call on the expertise of an external agency/contractor to resolve issues where required – this action will be decided by DBACT after consulting the above mentioned documents or by agreement at a committee level.