



INFORMATION SHEET

March 2025

Welcome to the amaBele Belles Dragon Boat Paddling Club! The club was started in 2006 for breast cancer survivors and has been going ever since. We also welcome non-breast cancer survivors as supporters, friends or partners, so come along if you are interested in this wonderful sport.

PRACTICES

Club practices are on a Tuesday evening 17.30 for 18.00 to 19.00 pm, and a Saturday morning 7.45 for 8.00 to 9.30 am. We paddle at the Marina at the V&A Waterfront or in the canal at the back of the Canal Walk shopping centre. You will know in good time which venue is being used.

A poll goes out beforehand on WhatsApp to check who is coming to practice. Please mark to confirm your availability as we need to know numbers. We also ask that you arrive punctually so that we can load the boat and set off on time.

Practices are only cancelled when there is a strong wind. You don't have to ask before the practice about the weather; you will be informed via WhatsApp of any cancellations.

PADDLES

A few spare club paddles are available at practices. There are also some paddles available for purchase from individuals or other clubs. Paddles cannot be purchased in stores in South Africa, but are ordered online or brought in from other countries like Australia, Singapore, etc. Examples of firms are Merlin (www.merlin.gear.com) or Grey Owl (www.greyowlpaddles.com). There are also other sites on the web – just check that they are IDBF approved.

Please ask one of the members to assist you if you are not sure of the size, need advice or wish to purchase a paddle.

PADDLING GEAR

You can wear anything comfortable that can get wet. Most of us wear black Lycra pants, a pink top and water friendly shoes that grip well. We do have special Belles kit and recommend that you purchase this as soon as you are sure you wish to join the club.

Remember to bring a cap and a water bottle, and to use sunblock in summer.

The boat does not have a lot of space so keep bags and jackets to a minimum or store your keys in a small dry bag at your feet. We also have a general waterproof bag for keys if needed.

Although we have never capsized, we recommend that you wear a lifejacket if you cannot swim. Please ask a club member if you need to borrow one.

SAFETY

Safety is of the utmost importance! We have compiled a set of safety guidelines which we give to every paddler. Remember that the helm (the person who is steering the boat from the back) is responsible for the safety of the boat. While dragon boat paddling is exciting and sociable, please keep chatting to a minimum and listen carefully to all instructions from the helm.

COMMUNICATION

Our email address is amabelebelles@outlook.com but most of our communication happens on WhatsApp.

There are two WhatsApp groups. One has the poll which lets everyone know if you are coming to practice or not. The second one (Belles Social Chatter) is used for fun or social messages e.g. birthday greetings, photos, achievements, etc.

As soon as you have decided to become a regular paddler, and completed the application form, you will be invited to join these groups.

MEMBERSHIP AND FEES

Everyone must complete an indemnity form before getting on the boat for the first time. This can be found at <https://forms.office.com/r/6nG3TT4KQK>

One month of paddling is open to potential new members at no charge. After that, you should decide whether you wish to formally join the club. You should then complete the application form and start paying the fees. The application form can be found at <https://forms.office.com/r/10qqnp8VT8>

There is an annual fee as well as a monthly fee. The monthly fee can be paid in a lump sum for the year, quarterly or monthly. Bank details are available on the application form. Please make payments via EFT using “your name” and “fees” as the depositor’s identification otherwise it is difficult to track the payer.

SOCIAL MEDIA

You can follow us on Facebook and Instagram. We also have a website: <https://www.amabelebelles.org/>

If you want to know about dragon boating in Cape Town more broadly, you can also follow the Cape Town Dragon Boat Association Facebook and Instagram.

KEY TERMS

You will learn a whole new vocabulary on the boat! To get you started, here are some key terms to learn and remember:

Stop the Boat/ Hold Water/Brace/ Stroke/ Rate up/ Power up/ Twist/ Helm/ Sweep Oar ...

Come along and have fun!