



# Wallis Spirit Dragons Inc

## Sweep Training Policy



**Purpose:** to ensure the safety of members through effective training of Sweeps.

**Background:**

WSD is committed to ensuring the safety of members at all times. An important aspect of safety is the skill and knowledge of the Sweep. This procedure is on the WSD website (<http://www.wsdragons.com.au>) for all members to access.

**Responsibilities:**

All qualified Sweeps are responsible for ensuring that every time they take the boat out they have

- a. Sweep must complete the Training/Event Safety Checklist utilising the Safe365 app before each training session
- b. Phone
- c. Emergency contact number
- d. Emergency access point document
- e. Safety bag and tow rope attached securely to the front of the boat
- f. First aid kit
- g. From 1 July 2023 Sweeps must wear a PFD

Sweeps are responsible for regularly reviewing this policy as required.

**Procedures:**

- There must be an L3 or L4 Sweep in the boat directly supervising the trainee, every time they go out on the water. Trainee Sweeps are restricted to the training area of Paling Fence Bay, Wallis Lake and north to the eastern point of Lakeside Reserve, Coomba Park.
- The AusDBF National Sweep Accreditation Scheme (ANSAS) will be used for preparation of the trainee for assessment. Sweep Guidelines and Safety Handbooks are constantly reviewed and all Sweeps should read over the latest information to stay up to date.  
<https://www.ausdbf.com.au/ausdbf-courses/sweep-information>
- DBNSW information for Sweep development can be found at  
<https://www.dbnsw.org.au/resources/sweep-development/>

The guidelines presented here are to assist preparation for the L2 test and to provide a sound basis for the trainee becoming a competent and confident Sweep. The separation of skills into specific modules allows the trainee to focus on a smaller set of skills at any one time, allowing progression at a supervised rate. Individual trainee Sweeps will need more attention on certain specific skills than others. The trainee's progress is monitored or adjusted by the qualified Sweep. Again, this is to support trainees to gain a good level of proficiency and the confidence of the crews.

Trainees need to complete the three units to the satisfaction of the qualified Sweep before they can be recommended for assessment by the relevant DBNSW Sweep Coordinator.

At all times, an L3 or L4 Sweep must be in the boat directly supervising the trainee Sweep. Full responsibility for the boat remains with the L3 or L4 Sweep.

**Off Water Skills** – such as these will need to be addressed:

- Check the boat – ropes, first-aid kit, bailers, etc.
- Check sweep oar and fittings
- Check weather conditions and forecasts
- Watch
- Safety of crew

**Core Requirements** - good practice to use at all sessions. These must be adhered to by trainee Sweep, every time:

- Announce name and title
- Do a head count
- Use the correct terminology
- Do a safety talk
  - Mention buddy system, including provision for lone paddlers, Sweep and drummer
  - Procedure in case of capsizing, emergency stops etc.
- Listen to and take instruction from trainer Sweep. If disagreeing with trainer, discuss on land at the end of the session.

### **Unit 1 – Mastery of the Boat**

The Sweep trainer will call all boat control commands in the boat. The trainee will concentrate on boat control only.

- Feel the balance of the boat
- Take the boat forward in a straight line
- Reverse the boat in a straight line - should be done slowly
- Turn boat right and left
- Slow the boat
- Stop the boat
- Paddles flat, change sides when feeling comfortable and balanced

### **Unit 2 – Intermediate skills and finding your voice**

Begin to call commands for boat control only. The Coach gives coaching/paddling commands.

- Practise voice projection – strong clear calls – think about making calls in the sequence needed
- Remember to use correct terminology
- Load boat and reverse from mooring
- Return boat to shore and unload safely
- Balance boat on water
- Area awareness – i.e. abide by Maritime guidelines
- Wake control
- Stop boat close to marker buoy
- Longer straight runs forward and reversing
- Draw water, drift control, hold water

- Change sides - stationary; on the fly
- Emergency stops

### Unit 3 – Becoming Race ready

#### Making all boat control calls

- Stationary pivot turns – to clockwise and anti-clockwise
- J turn – including reversing to a ‘pontoon’ – firstly a buoy, then a wharf and/or bridge pylon
- Figure 8 turns
- Start line approach including holding boat steady on start in varying conditions
- Race starts – rolling and stationary
- Gaining a starter’s attention if a problem arises
- Race sweeping – whole crew with drummer over 200m distance
- Crew and boat control at the end of a race (straight, wake control, stop the boat etc.)
- Pass other watercraft as per Maritime instructions
- Read DBNSW Sweeps guidelines and Rules of Racing

#### Sweep Notes:

NOTE: These notes are adapted from those originally developed by Julie Dornan, previously of Great Lakes Pearl Dragons. Her document provides an excellent start point.

#### Some facts about dragon boats:

The Champion 20’s dragon boat is approximately 13 metres long and weighs approximately 250 kg and with the addition of 20 paddlers, the total weight is just under 2 tonne. Hence the importance of safety with the Sweep being well prepared and paying attention to what is going on around him/her, both in the boat and on the surrounding water/landscape.

**Boat –about 250 kg**

**20 crew x average 80kg - 1600 kg**

***NB.** A dragon boat is heavy so you need to be aware of paddlers’ backs, shoulders, necks etc, to avoid injury. Also, a Sweep must be aware of where paddlers are when moving the boat to avoid accidents.*

#### Training on Water

Conditions - be aware of winds & conditions before taking to the water.

Meeting Wake - if wake is from the bow of the boat, meet it bow to wake; if from stern of boat, meet stern to wake. The idea of meeting the wake is to slice across diagonally or thereabout so that the boat does not meet it broadside. There is less chance of capsize meeting wake this way.

#### Commands

- **Stop the Boat** - to be use in emergency and also in training to make sure the crew are listening at all times
- **Paddles up** - paddlers lift paddles in preparation for ‘go’ command to begin paddling forward
- **Paddles back/behind** - paddlers lift paddles in preparation for ‘go’ command to begin paddling backward
- **Go** - commence paddling in required direction

- **Let it run** - stop paddling and rest paddles on gunwales
- **Slow the boat** (or 'take the run off') - gently press blades into water to reduce boat speed
- **Paddles flat** - paddlers rest the blade of their paddles on the water surface to help stabilise the boat
- **Release** or **paddles at rest** or **paddles on gunwales** – paddlers rest their paddles on the gunwale of the boat
- **Hold water** or **hold** - paddles in the water in vertical position to keep boat stationary
- **Hold for drift** - as for hold water except that the blade is parallel to the side of the boat

### Common Sweep Manoeuvres

- **Reversing** – paddlers must be in time and looking forward at the strokes. Sweeps need to check both ahead and behind to ensure straight line and no obstacles. Don't turn your head too quickly. Stop the boat before reversing so paddlers don't strain/hurt themselves
  - Oar is usually out, but when needing to adjust position of boat, only use light feathering actions with the oar.
- **Hold position** – at start line or whenever necessary – using rows 8,9 and 10. Pre-warn paddlers in these rows that you may need them to hold position by paddling. Generally you only need to use rows 9 and 10. It is good practice at a regatta to watch prior races to determine what the wind and tide are doing.
- **Figure 8** - be aware of depth of water and space. This is usually only used in L3 testing to prove Sweep can do 180 deg. clockwise and anti-clockwise turns.
- **Pontoon parking** – - use the jetties located at the Coomba Aquatic Club.
- **Tight turns** – instead of feathering all the time, use oar and weight/strength
- **Draw water** – in time and deep under boat, using either or both sides of the boat – as a crew, individual or a few at a time using whatever sides are needed for application.
- **Changing sides** – when crew are changing sides, the deeper the blade of the oar, the more stable it makes the boat.
- **Pivot turns** - these are executed while stationary. Ask all paddlers to hold water while you pivot the boat.
- **Assisted turns** – to help make the turn sharper, ask the paddler in row 10 (and 9 if necessary) on the left (for a left turn) or on the right (for a right turn) to help by 'slowing the boat". Never use paddlers further towards the centre of the boat as that shifts the pivot point and makes the turn harder to execute.
- **Using paddlers** – to hold, turn and manoeuvre the boat when required. Clear, concise directions needed. Remember if you are turned away from paddlers you must ensure your calls are loud and clearly heard.
- **Advanced oar** – twist **away** – boat veers to the right; twist **to** – boat veers to the left.

### EMERGENCY CONTACT

Forster Tuncurry Marine rescue

+61 2 6554 5458

<http://www.marine-rescue.com.au>

Marine Rescue Forster monitors the following radio channels:

VHF Channel 16 Marine Radio; 27Mhz - Channel 88;

Marine Rescue Forster is operational 24 hours, 365 days of the year.

**Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed as necessary but not less frequently than every 2 years

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