



Tips for the
47th Annual Buffalo Bayou Partnership Regatta
Presented by Gillman Subaru
Saturday, March 09, 2019

The primary goal for all entrants is to **have an enjoyable and safe trip down Houston's most historic waterway!** Thank you for joining us this year and please let us know how we can improve the Regatta experience. We've put together a handy guide for optimizing your fun day at the Buffalo Bayou Regatta!

RACE MORNING LOGISTICS

Morning Schedule: Arrive at the start area early, 7:00-7:30 am, in order to give yourself plenty of time to park, sign waivers and pick up your Regatta packet, put your race number on your boat, and carry your canoe and gear to the start area on the bayou. Free parking is available in several locations around the area. Get there with plenty of time to spare! Ask questions if you need help or directions, volunteers will be there.

- **If bringing your own boat, please drop your boat off first, then park your car.** (Be prepared to wait in line while others are dropping their boats off ahead of you.) Then head to the sign-in area (in the garage of 7700 San Felipe) where it will take several minutes (or more) to sign in, get your regatta packet, ask pertinent questions, etc., then carry your boat and gear to the start area.
- **If you are renting from a vendor, or are picking up a boat for the Team Sponsor class,** get parked and then head over to the sign-in area in the parking garage. Ask the Registrar to point you in the right direction to pick up your boat and equipment. Once you pick up your boat you'll need to carry it over to the start area.

CHECK-IN PROCEDURES: Regatta packets – which include your boat number, food and drink tickets – will be distributed **alphabetically by last name**. For those with two or more paddlers, your packet will be under the last name of the person who registered as **First Attendee**. In order to receive your packet, you must present a signed waiver form. Blank waiver forms will be available at check-in. Hang on to your Regatta packet, since in addition to your race number, there are food tickets for lunch and drink tickets for St. Arnold beer to be redeemed at the post-race party!

RACE PREPARATION

Nutrition and Hydration: This is a long distance endurance event, which, depending on your paddling speed, may take up to 4 hours or more. Eat a good dinner the night before, get a good night's sleep, and eat a healthy breakfast in the morning. Drink plenty of water the day before the event, and in the morning before the race. You will get thirsty during this event, and keeping hydrated will help you make it to the finish in good shape, so it is recommended that you bring drinking water on the boat with you. One option is bottled water or athletic drinks (Gatorade, etc.), or you can bring a bike bottle from home. Please use bottles with tops that pull open/push close as screw caps get dropped easily. Bringing a few high energy snacks along is recommended, even for pre-race. Place snacks in Ziploc bags, or in your pockets, or secure snacks and drinks in a mesh bag, then secure the bag to the canoe. Lunch and St. Arnold Beer will be provided to paddlers at the finish line!

Clothing: Wear comfortable clothes and closed-toe shoes with a firm sole and good drainage, that you do not mind getting wet and muddy. Running shoes are ideal. Lightweight tech fabrics are superior to cotton for water activities, since cotton

clothing gets heavy when wet and dries slowly. Consider bringing a change of shoes and clothes in a dry bag for the post-race party. Wear a wide brimmed hat, long pants and long sleeved shirt if you're sun sensitive. Wear sunscreen even if it's cloudy. If you have sensitive hand skin, wear gloves to minimize blisters...many sports offer functional gloves (paddle sports, cycling, golf, baseball, etc.), and avoid inexpensive cloth gloves if you can. Use bug spray if you're highly attractive to mosquitoes (a possible problem when standing still at the start, but diminishes once you get on the water).

Equipment: The main things you need for this race are your boat, paddle, and lifejacket. Generally, the less clutter in your boat, the better, and you'll be able to focus on paddling. However, if you're bringing a dry bag or anything else extra, tie everything to the boat with ropes or duct tape! To assist with boat control when launching, or to help manage your boat if you turn over, bring two (2) 15' x 3/8" (min) diameter pieces of polypropylene rope (cheap and it floats), tied to bow and stern with bowline knots. Pull the rope into the boat after you start down the bayou to avoid snagging it on anything. For canoes, a milk jug with the bottom cut out and a 5' light rope, to tie it to the canoe, is great for bailing any excess water that may get into the boat. Ziploc bags work well to keep personal items dry. Small mesh "laundry" bags or the like will hold items together in the boat and saves a lot of "chase" time if you turnover. A roll of Duct tape can help you in many emergencies (i.e., securing items in your canoe.)

RACE START AREA AND RULES

BOAT NUMBERS: At registration, each boat will be given a number which is to be placed on the front of the canoe/kayak high (as far above the water as possible) on the **RIGHT (starboard) side of the bow (front end) of the boat**. Do not put the number on the top deck of a kayak. Your race number needs to be visible to the finish line team! As stated in the rules and regulations, "all old Buffalo Bayou Regatta race numbers from previous years must be removed from boats or competitors will be subject to disqualification." Before placing your 2019 Regatta number on the hull, please make sure your boat surface is clean and dry. Otherwise, your number won't stick, and will fall off in the bayou!

Your race number will be an odd number or even number, which will determine on which side of the bayou you will launch. When you are looking downstream from the start area, the odd numbered boats will be on the left side of the bayou and the even numbered boats will be on the right side of the bayou.

Line your boats up in numerical order; volunteers are there to help. You can choose to line-up in your assigned position, line-up behind all other entrants for your class, or just wait on the bank for a couple minutes and leisurely enter the bayou. If you can see that there are numbers smaller than yours when you are in your assigned position, and there is no canoe in place, leave 4' to 5' or more, depending on trees etc., for each missing canoe (ask race volunteers for assistance.) Upon entering the water prior to the start gun, do your best to maintain your assigned position in the water until the start gun goes off.

Once in position on the bayou banks, all contestants will remain with their boats until further instructions to enter the water, by class, are provided by the Race Director. Do not enter the water until instructed to do so. When entering the water and waiting for the start gun, watch out for other boats and be considerate of your fellow paddlers. The bank is steep and slippery so be careful.

START LINE "DO NOT CROSS PRIOR TO START GUN" RULE: following the race director's instructions to enter the water, competitors in the water during the few minutes prior to their start time, who wish to "warm up" by paddling the bayou, may paddle upstream of the San Felipe bridge for warmup activities. Crossing the start line prior to the start gun, even if the competitor returns back before the start gun goes off, will result in disqualification from all results, no exceptions. (Observers will be at the start line to enforce this rule.)

START SEQUENCE

At approximately 8:50 am, the first start group (Surf ski/ICF K-1 and Unlimited Solo) will be directed to place their boats in the water. At 9:00 am, the first wave will start.

The second start, at 9:10 am, will be the "Unlimited" class. These boats may enter the water when instructed by the race director immediately after the preceding wave clears the start area.

The third start, at 9:20 am, will be the Team Sponsors C-2 and Recreational C-2 classes. NEW THIS YEAR! These classes will start in the water. These boats may enter the water after instructions from the race director, after the preceding wave has cleared the start area.

The fourth start at 9:30 am will be the long and short recreational kayaks. These boats may enter the water when instructed by the race director immediately after the preceding wave clears the start area.

The fifth start at 9:35 am will be the non-competitive fleet and day-of registrants. These boats may enter the water when instructed by the race director immediately after the preceding wave clears the start area.

RACE COURSE

This section of Buffalo Bayou is amazingly scenic, especially considering that is located in the middle of Houston. You will be sharing the water with literally hundreds of other boats. Please be sportsmanlike and considerate of your fellow paddlers.

The bayou scenery sets the stage for our technically challenging race course, featuring many sharp turns, partially submerged logs, overhanging tree limbs, bridge support columns, and various debris. If the water is high, there may be strong current eddies present, which can push you in a direction you don't want to go. Keep your eyes open, pay attention while on the water, and be prepared to react to changing conditions. Do your best to maintain headway in order to maneuver as needed to avoid obstacles.

Even with your best efforts it is sometimes possible to get tangled up on an obstacle...which brings up some paddler's terminology:

"Strainers" are overhanging tree branches that touch all the way down to or extend below the water surface. The water can run through them, both above and below the water, but canoes, kayaks, and paddlers can't. They also collect all manner of other debris, so your best bet is to avoid them!

"Pinnars" (also known as "snags") are obstacles that are rigid and attached to the bottom, and can stop a boat. If you find yourself pinned, a possible solution is to lean SLIGHTLY toward the object and let the water current push your boat around the object, paddle in the direction of the strongest force if you need to and be prepared to stabilize. If this doesn't work, you may need to unweight the boat over the object and try to get free. Best advice, don't get your boat parked sideways on a snag or log – this is where you can get flipped under the object very easily. Keep the boat pointed up or down stream.

"Log jams" occur if a tree is down all the way across the bayou, and debris and other logs have piled up on the upstream side. Take care if encountering one of these, for it is possible to get tangled up and become part of the log jam yourself! The best course of action is often to portage around on the shore, and then get back in the bayou as soon as you have a clear path.

Pace: You will need to paddle in order to make it through this race course in a timely manner. In order to have a reasonable chance of making it to the finish by 2pm, you'll need to clear the Woodway Bridge by noon. Meanwhile, it is very tempting in the first ten miles of strong downstream current to race hard and challenge your competition. But pace yourself and save some strength, since just past Shepherd Drive, several miles from the finish, the Bayou widens, the water slows and the wind picks up. This will require greater paddling effort just to keep your canoe moving forward than was needed in the upper part of the bayou.

If you capsize: first rule, do not panic! Hang on to your paddle and let your lifejacket float you. Swim or wade to your boat and then bring everything to shore when possible. Right your boat, dump out the water, get back in and continue the race.

Support and Spectators: Not including the start and finish areas, there are at least 7 locations to observe the race, with recommended locations including the Woodway bridge and boat launch area (just west of I-610), Bayou Bend park (located at the foot of Westcott), the beach at Shepherd Bridge, Waugh Bridge near the bat colony, Rosemont Bridge at Studemont, Sabine Street Bridge, and the Preston Street Bridge. Like "American Idol" contestants, competitive paddlers bask in the glory of an audience while the novices need all the encouragement they can get. Be a supportive spectator! If you are truly new to the sport, it is very helpful to have friends and loved ones along the way in case you need assistance other than that provided by the Regatta. There is plenty for spectators to do at the finish line while they wait for their heroes.

FINISH LINE AND POST RACE

The Finish Line will be at the upstream edge of the arch of the Main Street bridge (a banner hanging above will also identify the Regatta finish). If the water is running at the normal Regatta speed (approximately 500 CFS) and you are a casual paddler, you can expect to finish in 3 to 4 hours (at around 12:30 pm). The Regatta's fastest boat contestants (ICF K1s, surfskis, solo unlimited, multiman unlimited) generally complete the race in two hours or less. The Awards Ceremony will take place about 1:30 pm. The take out is just past the bridge on the right; there will be volunteers to help you take your boat out of the water. Then take your boat up to a grassy area, grab a lunch and a St. Arnold beer, and enjoy Historic Allen's Landing Park while you bask in the glory of your Buffalo Bayou Regatta accomplishment!

PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION BACK TO START

Drive to the start, paddle to the finish, have fun, and drive home. Free parking is available at the start and paid parking is available throughout the downtown area near the Finish Line at Allen's Landing (1001 Commerce Street at Main Street). View the view the [Downtown Houston](#) interactive parking map [here](#) for options.

Four transportation options are available for you:

- a) Drive to the start, paddle to the finish and have someone meet you at the finish area to drive you back to the start.
- b) Drive to the finish area early in the morning and leave a second car. Then drive to the start, paddle to the finish and pick up the car you dropped off in the morning.
- c) Have a friend drop you and your boat off at the start, and then meet you at the finish.
- d) Drive to the start, paddle to the finish and let The Wave shuttle service drive you (but no canoes) back to the start.

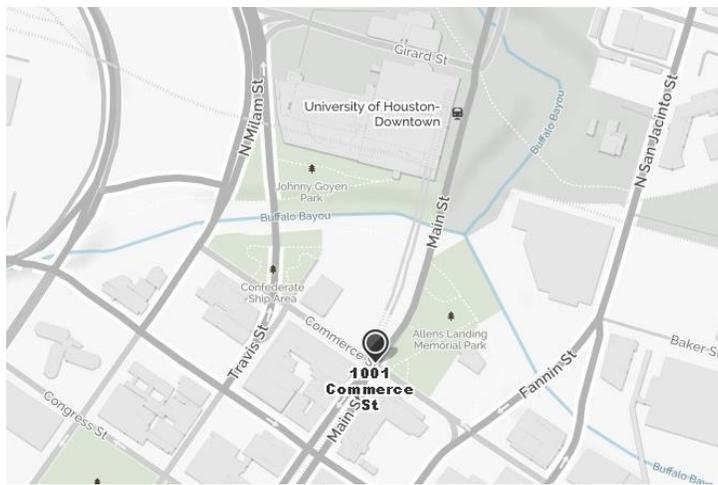
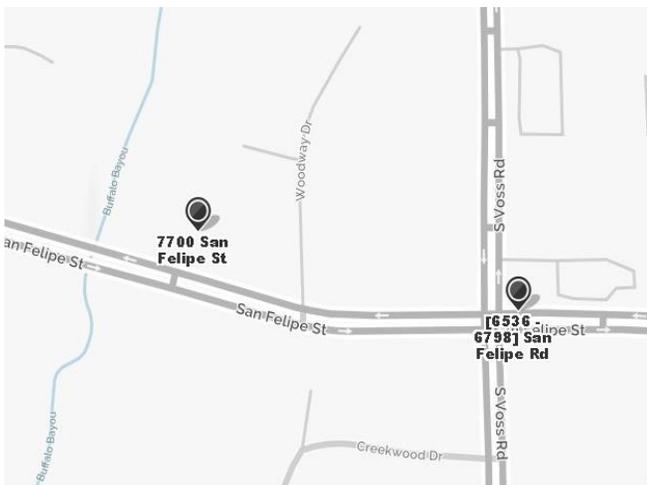
PLEASE NOTE THERE WILL BE FREE SHUTTLE SERVICE PROVIDED BY THE WAVE AVAILABLE FROM 11:30 AM TO 3:30 PM AT ALLEN'S LANDING (at the corner of Fannin and Commerce Streets) TO TRANSPORT PARTICIPANTS FROM THE FINISH LINE TO THE STARTING POINT.

MAPS

LEFT: Starting Point at **7700 San Felipe**, just west of Voss.

RIGHT: Finish Line at Main Street Bridge at Allen's Landing.

[Click here](#) for the race route of the Buffalo Bayou Partnership Regatta.



Buffalo Bayou Partnership is the non-profit organization revitalizing and transforming Buffalo Bayou, Houston's most significant natural resource.

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