



Tips for the
43rd Annual Buffalo Bayou Partnership Regatta
Presented by Gillman Subaru
Saturday, March 7, 2015

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.

1. **Schedule:** Arrive at the start area early, 7:30-8:00 am, to beat the morning rush of registration to take place from 7:30-8:45am. The Surf Skis/ICF K-1 and Solo unlimited paddlers (aka the Fast and Furious) are the first to start at 9:00 am, then the race recreational canoes, including the Corporate Class, are the second at 9:10 am. The two additional classes start in 10-minute intervals following this, with the day of registrants beginning at 9:40 am. It takes time to park, sign-in and register, select your canoe, life vests and paddles from the rental agent (if you are renting), get your canoe to the starting line on the correct side (odd or even) and in the correct sequence in your class. Make it a Katz Coffee morning and listen to tunes as you sit back, and enjoy the morning while you watch the late comers panic until starting time.

NOTE: If using your own boat, please drop your boat off first, then park your car. There will be volunteers directing you as well. Then head to the sign-in area (in the garage of 7700 San Felipe) where it will take several minutes to sign in, get your t-shirts, get your food and drink tickets, boat number, trash bags to enter the *Shell Styrofoam Cup* award if you like, ask pertinent questions, etc. Ask the Registrar for directions to pick up your rental canoe. Your 1 food ticket is for lunch and 2 drink tickets for either beer from Saint Arnold, water, or soft drinks (which is redeemed at the finish line). Stay for the awards ceremony and drawing (all Regatta participants will be entered for a chance to win either a 2014 Hobie Revolution 11 kayak, generously donated by Austin Canoe & Kayak or one of four United Airlines tickets) at 1:00 pm.

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 (save time by completing one beforehand). Blank waiver forms will also be available at check-in.

2. **Clothing:** Wear comfortable clothes and old canvas shoes that you do not mind getting wet. Consider bringing an additional change of shoes for the finish line. Cotton clothing gets heavy when wet and dries slowly so consider synthetics. Wear a wide brimmed hat, long pants and long sleeved shirt if you're sun sensitive. Wear sunscreen even if it's cloudy. Wear gloves to minimize blisters, many sports offer functional gloves (paddle sports, cyclists, golf, baseball, etc.) or even inexpensive cloth gloves. Bring pads to protect your knees while paddling in the kneeling position (a popular position where one sits on the edge of the seat with their knees on the canoe floor creating a tripod and a low center of gravity) – basketball/volleyball knee pads worn over the knee work well. (A piece of closed cell foam (no Styrofoam), carpet or a towel duct taped to the canoe floor will also work.) Use bug spray if you're highly attractive to mosquitoes, a problem when standing still at the start but diminishes once you get on the water.
3. **Equipment:** Tie everything to the boat and no Styrofoam! Bring two (2) 15' x 3/8" (min) diameter pieces of polypropylene rope (cheap and it floats) to help control launching the canoe at the start and in case you turn-over during the race. Pull the rope into the boat after you start to avoid snagging it on anything in the bayou. A milk jug with the bottom cut out and a 5' light rope or sting, to tie it to the canoe, is great for bailing. 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.)
4. **Drink and Food:** You will get thirsty and there is no substitute for bottled water or athletic drinks (Gatorade, etc.) Please purchase bottles with tops that pull open/push close as screw caps get dropped easily. High energy snacks are recommended. Place snacks in Ziploc bags, secure snacks and drinks in a mesh bag, then secure the bag to the canoe. Lunch will be provided to paddlers at the finish line.

5. **Transportation:** Drive to the start, paddle to the finish, have fun, and drive home. Free parking is available at the start at 7500 San Felipe and paid parking is available at the Finish line area at Sesquicentennial Park (500 block of Preston between Bagby and Smith streets).

Three transportation options are available for you:

- a) Drive to the start, paddle to the finish and have someone meet you at the finish area.
 - 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) Drive to the start, paddle to the finish and let The Wave shuttle service drive you (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 SESQUICENTENNIAL PARK TO TRANSPORT PARTICIPANTS FROM THE FINISH LINE TO THE STARTING POINT.**
6. **Support and Spectators:** Not including the start and finish areas, there are at least 5 locations to observe the race, please see the brochure for these locations. 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.
 7. **“The Shell Styrofoam Cup”:** If you are a non-competitive canoeist you still have a chance for a trophy by participating in the coveted “Shell Styrofoam Cup.” The winner is chosen by Buffalo Bayou Partnership personnel and Shell representative based on quantity and/or originality of trash picked up. If you wish to participate, pick up trash bags at the registration table. *Please be careful and use caution when picking up trash to avoid any kind of personal injury.*

THE RACE

- **The Start:** At registration, each boat will be given a number which is to be placed on the front of the canoe/kayak high (as far from the water as possible) on the **RIGHT side**. As stated in the rules and regulations, “all old Regatta race numbers from previous years must be removed from boats or competitors will be subject to disqualification.”

The number will be an odd number or even number which will determine on which side of the bayou you will start. When you are looking downstream toward the finish, 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 (closest to Voss Street). Please take your canoe to the side of the bayou that corresponds to your number. Line your canoe 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.)

All contestants will remain with their boats until further instructions are provided by the Race Director. At approximately 8:45 am, the first class (Surf ski/ICF K-1 and Unlimited Solo) will be directed to place their boats in the water. At 9:00 am, the first classes will start. Immediately following the 9:00 am start, the Race Director will direct the Corporate C-2 and Recreational C-2 classes to place their boats in starting position. There is about a 6’ to 8’ vertical drop to the bayou so contestants should be careful when placing your canoes on the slippery slopes of the bayou. Using the ropes that were mentioned earlier, contestants can lower their boats down near the water, **BUT NEITHER THE CANOES NOR THE CONTESTANTS CAN ENTER THE WATER UNTIL THE START.**

It is a *le-Mans* start, where at the starting horn, participants shove their kayak/canoe into the bayou and get into the kayak/canoe. **Please WATCH OUT for other canoes in the water.** If you have a high starting number and are not competitive, park your canoe in the trees out of the way, relax and watch the others start first. Once the Corporate C-2 and Recreational C-2 classes have departed at 9:10 am, the Race Director will instruct the next classes to move to the bayou at 10-minute intervals until all classes have departed.

Because the start is where most people get tipped over, please take it easy! The mob thins out very quickly after the first couple of bends in the bayou. Then it’s just you, the bayou and the helpful sweep boats (paddled by knowledgeable Regatta volunteers.)

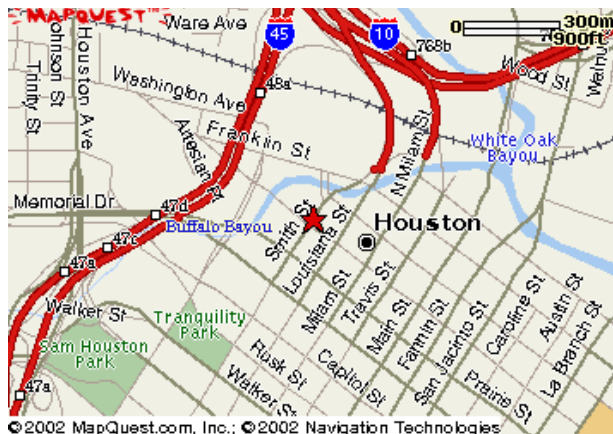
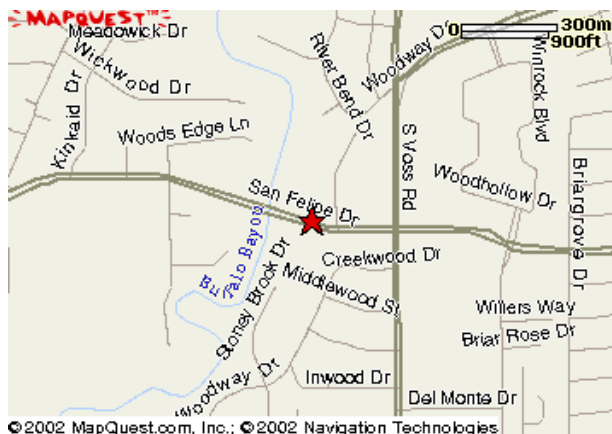
- **The Course:** There was, is, and will be all types of debris in Buffalo Bayou. It is a fact of nature and physics, anything in the hundreds of square miles of the Bayou's watershed can end up in the Bayou after a big rain. Be observant to prepare for and avoid any potential problems and secondly to enjoy your trip and all that is around you. Watch out for snags, branches, logs, bridge pilings, and rebar (called strainers or pinners.) Strainers are branches etc. where the water can run through them, both above and below the water, but canoes and paddlers can't. Pinners are obstacles that are usually rigid and can stop a canoe. If you are pinned kneel in the canoe, lean SLIGHTLY toward the object and let the water current push your canoe around the object, paddle in the direction of the strongest force if you need to and be prepared to stabilize your canoe. Best advice, don't get your canoe parked sideways on a snag or log – this is where your canoe can get flipped under the object very easily. Keep the canoe pointed up or down stream. *Pace yourself – just past Shepherd Drive, several miles from the finish, the Bayou widens, the water slows and the wind picks up. This will require more paddling than the upper part.*
- **The Finish:** If the water is running at the normal Regatta speed (500 CFS) and you are a casual paddler, you can expect to finish in 3 to 3 ½ hours (at around 12:30 pm). The Awards Ceremony will take place about 1:00 pm. The Regatta's most competitive contestants, complete the race in less than an hour and a half. **Preston Street Bridge** is the marker of the finish line (a banner will also identify the Regatta finish). 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 enjoy Sesquicentennial Park.

MAPS

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

RIGHT: Finish Line at Sesquicentennial Park, on Preston between Bagby and Smith Streets, adjacent to the Wortham Center.

[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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