

Dragon boat teams battle to the sound of drums and cheers

The teams who competed in the Young Post 6th Inter-school Dragon Boat Championship gained so much more than just medals and prizes

By Wong Tsui-kai | April 20, 2015



Sixty-two teams from 34 schools gathered at Shing Mun River to compete.

Photo: Franke Tsang/SCMP



Teams getting ready for the races.

Photo: Franke Tsang/SCMP

Sixty-two teams from 34 schools gathered at Sha Tin on Sunday to compete in the Young Post 6th Inter-school Dragon Boat Championship.

This year, teams were divided into small and standard boat races, and within that were girls, boys, and mixed teams. Throughout the day, students competed for titles in the Silver or Gold finals in either the Plate or Cup division.

Cognito College (Hong Kong) took gold in the mixed standard boat category, while Hong Kong Sea School (HKSS) Sea Whale house team took the gold in the boys division. In the small boat category, Delia Memorial School (Glee Path) won the gold cup in the mixed category, Tin Shui Wai Methodist College A took gold in the boys division, and Diocesan Girls' School took the gold in the girls' division – a standout accomplishment considering it's DGS's first year competing.

"Team work and the will to win. It's a team effort," says Daniel Cheung Lok-tin of Tsang Pik Shan Secondary School, winner of the Boys Small Boat Silver Cup.

Chan Yin-tung from DGS agrees. "I also play basketball and handball," she says, "and those are also team sports, but there is some room for individual skill. Dragon boat racing is a full team effort."

Yin-tung also says that nothing is over until it's over: "It was in the last 10 metres that we overtook the leading team. Those 10 metres were the most critical."

Outside of those 10 metres, preparation is also very important. The team from Delia Memorial School (Glee Path), winners of the Mixed Small Boat Gold Cup is a well-practiced team, with twice weekly practices lasting two and a half hours. They say their efforts are all worthwhile as they have encouraged others to join the sport. Team member Donna Ng Sze-lam says she hopes this will also persuade more girls to join the team.

Within any team, there is always a leader. With a dragon boat team, there are two members whose roles are vital: helmsman and drummer.

Tam Yu-him of Form 4, helmsman for the HKSS Sea Seal team, winner of the Boys Standard Boat Silver Cup, says the helmsman does more than simply steering the boat, as he needs “to make sure the oars are keeping tempo.” He also likens dragon boat racing to life, saying that, “the people of Hong Kong should cooperate like a dragon boat team.”

Finally, Gary Chan Cheuk-lam, drummer for the Cognitio College (Hong Kong) says the drummer is the soul of the team.

“The most important thing for the drummer is to boost morale and give the team strength,” he says. “It’s my first year as a drummer, and I felt improvement with each race. I think each strike on the drum is important, and so is verbal encouragement for the rowers.”

During half time the crowds were entertained by dragon, lion and hip hop dancers and a marching band. The spirit of the occasion aptly summed up by Lilian Choi Siu-yin a teacher at Tin Shui Wai Methodist, “The competition allows students to experience other places and discover alternative paths beyond academics. Some of our alumni have become sports coaches and lifeguards.”