bayfront maritime center

40 Holland Street, Erie, PA 16507 | bayfrontcenter.org | 814-456-4077

13th Annual Cardboard Boat Regatta Guidelines

Saturday, September 13, 2025

Thank you for your interest in entering the Bayfront Maritime Center's 13th Annual Cardboard Boat Regatta! As one of our main fundraisers, the Regatta supports the Bayfront Maritime Center as we work to create opportunities for the community to connect with the water, learn valuable skills, and experience the joys of the maritime world – regardless of ability, background, or financial means. We are so grateful for your support in achieving these goals!

Please read below for more information on the Regatta, including the Regatta Guidelines. If you have any questions or concerns, we're happy to hear from you at info@bayfrontcenter.org or (814) 456-4077.

Overview

The Regatta will take place on Saturday, September 13, 2025. Your cardboard boat will be put to the test in the East Canal Basin, off the Bayfront Maritime Center's docks. Boats will race in heats based on the age of the crew and length of the boat from the east side of the basin to a buoy and back. There are four age divisions in the Regatta:

- Kids Crew (12 and under)
- Teens Crew (13-18)
- Adult Crew (19 and up)
- Mixed Ages (rowers from more than one age group)

The registration fee is $50 and includes one boat entry and two t-shirts. Additional shirts may be ordered in advance or purchased at the merchandise tent on the day of the event. Each boat will have the opportunity to participate in two races: their age division race and the redemption race (against all age divisions). Awards are given for the following categories:

- Fastest Time in each age division
- Redemption Race winner
- Most Creative Boat
- Most Dramatic Sinking
- Crowd Favorite (determined by the boat with the most donations in their voting bucket)

Don't forget to bring your cheer section – spectators are welcome at the event for free! It is suggested that spectators bring a chair if they would like to sit and watch. Food, drinks, and merchandise will be available for purchase, and there will be a cash-only 50/50.

We believe boating is for everyone - registration scholarships are available! Please contact us at info@bayfrontcenter.org for more information.

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Regatta Guidelines

1. **Have fun and always be safe!** All crew members must wear life jackets. We will provide life jackets for each crew member prior to the race. You may bring your own, but they will be checked for proper use before racing. You may also bring your own paddle, but we will have paddles available for those who need to borrow them.
2. **Motors are not permitted**, so bring your best paddlers!
3. The boat's hull must be made of **corrugated cardboard** and should be constructed and sealed with any of the following: **tape, caulk, glue, latex paint, or varnish**.
4. Above the hull, the boat may include additional decorative materials **as long as they don't aid in the boat's flotation**. Be creative, and have fun designing!
5. **We do not have requirements for the length and width of your boat**. We will ask this on the check-in form to help match competitors in each division as fairly as possible.
6. **We do not have requirements for the number of crew/paddlers in each boat**. You can participate as a crew of one or more. We will ask this on the check-in form to help match competitors as fairly as possible in each division. Please note that your registration fee covers the cost of two t-shirts for your crew. Additional shirts may be purchased in advance or at the merchandise tent.

Suggested Supplies

- Corrugated cardboard (required)
- Acrylic latex caulk
- Glue
- Paper package tape
- Duct tape
- Measuring tape
- Straight edge
- Utility knife
- Scissors
- Clamps
- Paint (latex preferred)
- Varnish
- Paint brush or roller

Prohibited Hull Materials

- 2-part glues (e.g., epoxy or polyester resin)
- Styrofoam
- Metal or metal foils
- Plastic
- Pasteboard/chipboard
- Wood

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Construction Tips

1. Use multiple layers of cardboard, alternating the direction of the corrugations for the most strength.
2. Score your cardboard along the line of folds for the straightest bends.
3. Seal the edges of your cardboard with caulk or paper tape to keep water out.
4. Consider building a few model boats to test for the most stability and buoyancy.
5. Don't make the sides of your boat too tall for the crew to reach over and paddle.
6. Paint the inside of your boat – this will help prevent sinking!

How to Sign-Up for the Event

Visit https://bayfrontcenter.org/news-events/cardboard-boat-regatta/ for an overview of the event, registration information, and more!

Day of the Event

Parking

Participants and supporters may park in the public lot on Holland Street, the Intermodal Building, the Erie County Public Library, or any other unrestricted parking available nearby.

Schedule

- **Check-In**: 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. at the registration table. After checking in, you will be directed to take your boat to the staging area, where volunteers will show you where to place your boat. Your boat will remain here until the parade and return to the staging area after your race.
- **Parade of Boats**: 10:00 a.m. line-up; 10:30 a.m. parade. You will be directed to line up on the sidewalk next to the staging area. The parade will follow along the sidewalk, around the Bayfront Maritime Center, and back to the staging area. This is a great opportunity to try to get votes for the Crowd Favorite award!
- **Regatta Begins**: 11:00 a.m. for the first race. Race groupings and times will be announced and displayed at the event.