



Frequently Asked Questions

How did this craziness get started?

This is the ORIGINAL event featuring cardboard boats. It originated in 1974 at Southern Illinois University. Now Regattas are enjoyed by more than 1,500 participants and more than 100,000 spectators across the USA each summer, and more communities join the Circuit each year. Family fun, community spirit, and creativity are the key words.

In 1974, Richard Archer, a professor of Art and Design, dreamed up a final examination for students in his freshman design class. Buckminster Fuller, then a Distinguished Professor at SIU, had espoused the principle of "doing the most with the least," and faculty members found it intriguing to apply these principles in their classes. Archer felt it would be a real test of students' creativity and three-dimensional design skills to build human-sized boats made only of cardboard -- and more than 20 years later, it is still happening.

What types of boats are involved?

Around "The Great Cardboard Boat Regatta®" Circuit, you see lots of fun and interesting entries. Kayaks are common; paddlewheelers, barges, pirate ships, riverboats, the Titanic and the Queen Mary, submarines, aircraft carriers, and other "boat-like" boats are seen often. But we've also seen pickup trucks and exotic automobiles, tacos and other foods, islands, space shuttles and airplanes, animals, Elvis on his guitar, a toothbrush, a floating outhouse, giant sports shoes, helicopters, dragons and other sea monsters, beds, jeeps, and much, much more -- all made of cardboard, of course!

"The Great Cardboard Boat Regatta®" events have two classes. Class I boats are propelled by oars or paddles and must be made entirely of corrugated cardboard. Class II boats may use other means of propulsion (paddlewheels, propellers, sails, etc.) and certain other materials for propulsion and steering systems, but these boats also must be made mostly of corrugated cardboard. Personal or group creativity is a crucial ingredient!

What's the basic idea?

Participants strive to meet "The Challenge": ***To design and build a human-powered boat made of corrugated cardboard which is capable of completing at least 3 trips around a 200-yard course.***

People find this both intriguing and challenging. At first, people think it is impossible; they think that a cardboard boat cannot possibly float -- that's the intriguing part. Soon they realize it can be done, and they do it -- that's the challenging part. Awards recognize creative use of cardboard, team spirit, best-dressed team, spectacular designs, and -- most coveted -- the Titanic Award for the most spectacular sinking.



Who can participate?

Anyone and everyone! Male or female, young or old, ages 10 and up! Children, students, adults, grandfathers and grandchildren, aunts and nieces, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, AHG, science clubs, service clubs, junior high and high schools, colleges and universities, churches, sororities/fraternities, non-profit and for-profit organizations and businesses.

What are the rules?

"The Rules " for these Regattas are standard; in fact, they're copyrighted. But the great part about the event is that there is really no one way to build a cardboard boat, so the rules don't limit the creativity of participants. Sure, there are some safety rules: participants have to wear PFDs (lifejackets) and be 10 years or older. Alcohol may only be consumed after racing. And there are some requirements about the use of certain substances and materials for boat construction. But other than those, people are encouraged -- no, expected -- to be creative.

Who sponsors Regattas?

Local organizers sponsor a Regatta for any of the following reasons: fundraising, community spirit, organization visibility -- and just plain fun! Organizers have included park districts, Ronald McDonald Houses, shopping centers, radio stations, youth organizations, community festivals, tourism and visitors bureaus, chambers of commerce and many more. Proceeds have supported a great variety of charitable causes: zoological societies, scholarships, the Children's Miracle Network, youth activities, park development programs, arts centers, etc.

How does the event operate?

Local organizers can obtain "The Rules" and an "Event Producer's Manual" which contains all the information needed to plan, publicize, and organize a Regatta. Interested organizers then sign an agreement with TIPS Foundation (which holds federal copyright, trademark, and service mark protection on the event), then Commodore Terry Mathias comes and announces the Regatta at their site.

Where does the money go?

Proceeds will benefit the MetroParks of Butler County VOA playground fund. All checks and payments will be made to the Community Foundation of West Chester/Liberty.

Where can I learn more?

Visit the MetroParks' website at www.metroparksofbutlercounty.org or call 513.867.5835