SARASOTA’S NATHAN BENDERSON PARK CHOSEN TO BE HOST FOR 2022 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

International Dragon Boat Federation Club Crew World Championships makes its American debut in 2022;
U.S. Dragon Boat Federation National Championships comes to NBP in 2021

EMBARGO UNTIL 7:35 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 12, 2019

SARASOTA, Fla., and MONTGOMERY, Ala.: When the International Dragon Boat Federation Club Crew World Championships makes its debut in the United States in 2022, it will be at Sarasota County’s Nathan Benderson Park.

The International Dragon Boat Federation (IDBF) held its world congress in late August, during its World Dragon Boat Racing Championships in Pattaya, Thailand. During the meetings, the Sarasota 2022 bid was presented by representatives of the U.S. Dragon Boat Federation, Visit Sarasota County and Nathan Benderson Park’s manager, Suncoast Aquatic Nature Center Associates (SANCA).

Along with the 2022 championship event, NBP will play host to the 2021 U.S. Dragon Boat Federation (USDBF) National Championships.

“NBP continues to prove to be a successful sport attraction that impacts not only our community, but Florida and the United States,” SANCA President and CEO Stephen V. Rodriguez said.

The Sarasota event will be the 13th club crew world championships. The 12th will be in Aix-les-Bains, France, in 2020, and the 2018 club crews was in Szeged, Hungary. More than 6,200 athletes were at the Hungary championships.

The IDBF Club Crew World Championships includes representative clubs from around the world. From four regions of the United States, clubs will send winning crews to the world event. Unlike the World Championships, where athletes are selected for the national teams from multiple clubs across the nation, entire winning crews are entered for the club crew regatta. The world championships are also held biennially, in alternate years from the club crew worlds.

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“Hosting this world championship has an impact that goes beyond just economic benefit,” Rodriguez said. “This will impact the sport of dragon boat racing in our state and nationwide. We are prepared to invest more resources into our local dragon boat programming to prepare for this event. We thank IDBF for their confidence in awarding this event to Sarasota County.”

Mike Thomas, the IDBF’s president, said “members of the International Dragon Boat Federation are all looking forward to racing in Nathan Benderson Park, with its superb facilities.”

In the 2020 regatta in France, NBP Survivors In Sync will send its winning crew from the Sarasota International Dragon Boat Festival, which was held at Nathan Benderson Park in May.

“Teams are going to come from around the world,” said Beth Turconi, a Team USA dragon boat paddler who won two bronze medals during the World Championships, and who’s a member of the NBP Dragons team. “And I’ll tell you, there is no water anywhere in the world that rivals the water I get to paddle on every single day.”

Andrew Szymanski, the USDBF’s president, said the national federation is “thrilled” to host the world’s best teams in Sarasota.

“This world-class venue and its facilities are ideally suited for these championships, and we are confident Nathan Benderson Park will exceed expectations in every category,” he said. “We are excited to begin the next phase of planning for this incredible event.”

“Thrilled” is also a word Visit Sarasota County Sports Director Shelby Connett used.

“We are absolutely thrilled to have been selected,” she said. “This selection was a huge win for Sarasota County.”

Connett said Visit Sarasota County aims to welcome the thousands of athletes and fans in a big way.

“In addition to offering amazing racing conditions through Nathan Benderson Park’s superb course, we look forward to providing competitors with a destination-wide event experience by engaging the local community in a variety of ways,” she said.

Rodriguez, Connett, Turconi and SANCA’s director of operations, Bob Whitford, presented the Sarasota bid to the world federation in its Thailand meetings.

“Sarasota County is very excited that Nathan Benderson Park has been selected to host another world championship,” said Nicole Rissler, the director of Sarasota County Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources. “This demonstrates Sarasota County’s dedication to providing a world-class park experience for our residents and visitors, and its commitment to sports tourism.”
About Nathan Benderson Park and Suncoast Aquatic Nature Center Associates
Suncoast Aquatic Nature Center Associates Inc. (SANCA), is a not-for-profit 501c3 business created to manage Nathan Benderson Park, a community/public asset and world-class, multi-use sports venue. Our mission is to improve the quality of life for our community and be an economic generator for our region. SANCA’s primary purpose is to develop and promote NBP as a world class event center, team training site and Sarasota County park, while providing outreach programs through recreation, safety training, education and volunteering as a service to our community. For more information, see nathanbendersonpark.org/about-us/sanca-mission.

About Visit Sarasota County
Visit Sarasota County leads and supports the tourism industry in Sarasota County by providing the highest quality, and most innovative, marketing programs and promotions to ensure the continued growth of tourism and travel from visitors around the world. It is the mission of VSC is to make Sarasota County the must experience destination on Florida’s Gulf Coast. To learn more, visit www.visitsarasota.com.

About the International Dragon Boat Federation
The International Dragon Boat Federation is an international non-governmental, non-profit world organization for dragon boating and other paddle sport activities. With the objects of encouraging the development of the sport of Dragon Boat Racing and of maintaining its Asian cultural, historical and religious traditions and of strengthening the bonds of friendship that unite those who practice it, the IDBF was founded on June 24, 1991, in Hong Kong by the Governing Associations of Australia, the People’s Republic of China, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Italy, Malaysia, Norway, the Republic of Philippines, Singapore, the United Kingdom and the United States. The IDBF is recognized by the Global Association of International Sport Federations, formerly SportAccord, as the full-member international sports federation specifically governing dragon boating on a worldwide basis.

About the U.S. Dragon Boat Federation
The U.S. Dragon Boat Federation (USDBF) is the governing body of dragon boating in the United States and a member of the International Dragon Boat Federation. The mission of the USDBF is to promote the growth and development of dragon boating in the U.S. for fitness, recreation, and team building at all levels of competition. The organization offers training, clinics and certification for dragon boating officials, coaches, paddlers and festival organizers.

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