

DAWSON COMMUNITY COLLEGE 10th ANNUAL BUCCANEER REGATTA

The Cardboard Boat Regatta challenges amateur boat builders to design, build, and navigate boats made entirely of corrugated cardboard. Come and enjoy the fun as you watch the masterful maneuvers of boats braving the waves at Hollecker Lake. All boats must be built of corrugated cardboard. Other acceptable materials include duct tape, glue, caulking, and paint; however, no cardboard and wood, no cardboard and plastic, no cardboard and metal. The only exceptions are the oars. These exceptions are not considered part of the boat and can be made of materials other than cardboard. All boats must be human-powered (no motors).

Goals:

The Dawson Community College Buccaneer Regatta is a fun, enjoy yourself, have a good time race. Therefore, no matter how fast, slow, big, small, sensible, or outrageous your boat is, the first rule is that the boat designers, builders, racers, and supporters have fun. The race is open to everyone.

How to Enter; It's Easy!!!

Fill out and return the enclosed entry form, go online to dawson.edu, or register the day of the event (pre-registration is encouraged).

When: Saturday, August 22, 2026

Registration : 9:00 am - 9:30 am

Concourse de Cardboard: 9:30 am – 10:00 am (Voting for Awards occurs during this time)

Race time : 10:00 am

Where: Hollecker Lake Park in Glendive, MT

Entries:

Race Divisions

- DCC Student Race
- Community Race
 - Youth (ages 5-11)
 - Adult (age 12 and older)

Voting for the best boat design will also be awarded.

Registration forms: Are available online at dawson.edu or you may pick up registration forms at the main office at Dawson Community College, 300 College Drive. You may also register at the event.

Boat Parking: Location will be along the shore across from the picnic area. Turn left as you come in to the Hollecker entrance to unload your boat. Parking will not be allowed on the shore side where boats are unloaded. Signs will be posted. The site will be open at 8:30 am. Voting for Best Boat will start at 9:30 am. First race will begin at approximately 10:00 am.

Registration: Participants are encouraged to register online ahead of time, however you will be allowed to register that morning, from 9:00 am-9:30 am at the Registration Table. All contestants are required to sign the safety waiver prior to competing in the boat race. Minors must have responsible parent/guardian sign the waiver. Each boat must have a designated Captain. The Captain must check in at the registration area on the day of the race.

The Day of the Race...

Boat unloading will begin at 8:30 am, Saturday, September 6th, and must be completed by 9:15 am. Our Boat Unloading Crew will assist you. In order to create a safe and orderly area, all vehicles and trailers will be removed from the loading area to adjacent parking areas. Also, remember we must leave lanes clear for safety vehicles.

At 9:30 am, the Concourse de Cardboard, will be open for public display and voting. Please feel free to decorate your area and display your boat so that the public can view your boat in all its glory. Bribing the public is not only allowed but encouraged.

Life jackets must be worn by all crew members when in boat. **You should bring your own.** Please remember everything you bring in must be taken back out and your loading area must be left clean. After the regatta, you must remove all pieces of your boat from the water.

Please note that photographs taken during the festival may be used in promotional materials.

Rules for the 10th Annual Dawson Community College Buccaneer Regatta, September 6, 2025.

Boats propelled by any kind of rowing oars or single blade canoe type paddles or other propulsion methods such as sails, paddlewheels, etc. (no motors allowed) will compete for the trophy.

A. The hull:

1. The hull construction material must be corrugated paper more commonly known as “cardboard”.
2. Non-corrugated cardboard may not be used.
3. Any type of corrugated paper/cardboard may be used, i.e., waxed, waterproofed, etc.
4. Any weight or thickness of corrugated paper/cardboard is permitted.
5. All major and minor supports for the hull must be corrugated. No other material may be used to give the hull support.
6. Corrugated cardboard cannot be bonded to any other substance. This means vinyl coating like Saran Wrap, plastic sheets or covering the hull entirely with tape is not permitted.
7. Any tape can be used on seams, but may not extend more than three (3) inches from a seam, edge or stress points.
8. You must be in or on the boat at the time of finish to qualify for a trophy.

B. Other boat parts:

1. Materials other than corrugated cardboard can be used for boat parts that are added to the hull. For example—wood, metal, or non-corrugated cardboard can be used for oar locks, rudder, centerboard, support area for the mast, etc. However, *(and here is the catch)* they may not contribute to the overall structural makeup of the boat in any but a minor way. So, if you have a 10 foot boat with 5 foot long oar locks that make the boat stiffen, it isn’t going to fly (or float) in the regatta. Sheet metal is not permitted.
2. Oars, paddles, paddle wheels and other propulsion devices, steering systems, masts, booms, and/or sails need not be corrugated cardboard.
3. Seating need not be corrugated cardboard. Corrugated seats need not be removable and thus can be part of the boat structure. Non-corrugated seats must be removable and cannot be attached to the hull structure. Be careful here. If it’s too large, the judges can consider it contributing to the hull structure and will not be allowed.
4. Any long, rigid supports other than corrugated cardboard, whether attached to the hull or not, that significantly contribute to the rigidity and strength of the hull may not be used.
5. Materials that provide extra floatability or buoyancy are not permitted (ex. Styrofoam).

C. Waterproofing:

1. Hulls can be waterproofed with any one-part substance. There are many commercial preparations available. Several coats of varnish, shellac, polyurethane, or some house paints have worked well. SECRET HINT—don't forget to waterproof the inside where water can splash in. No tar paper is allowed.
2. Two part waterproofing substances are not allowed. These include epoxy, fiberglass paints, and varnishes that require the addition of a catalyst.
3. The hull may not be wrapped in plastic or any other substance. The hull may not be covered entirely by tape. Use of tape: see rule **A7**.

D. Other Materials:

1. Sailboats: Materials other than corrugated cardboard may be used for sailboat masts and sails. See rule **B1**.

E. Safety:

1. All participants are required to wear Coast Guard approved PFDs (life jackets).
2. For safety's sake, boat should be constructed with easy entry and exit.
3. Participants must remove all potentially dangerous objects from their pockets, such as sharp objects, knives, pens, etc.
4. Hulls may not contain sharp or pointed objects, sharp edges, or anything else that may pose a danger.
5. Children 5 -11 years old may participate in the boats with an adult.
6. Unsportsmanlike conduct will disqualify you.
7. The use of pyrotechnics (fireworks, smoke bombs, sparklers, etc.) of any kind is not allowed and will result in disqualification.
8. All participants will be responsible for removing their boat debris from the lake and beach area.
9. Consumption of alcoholic beverages or other substances that might impair a participant's judgment will not be permitted before or during the race. No alcohol is permitted.
10. All participants must be able to swim.
11. The passenger area of the boat must not be permanently enclosed above the shoulders of the occupants.
- 12 Each occupant must be visible while the boat is in the water.

D. Boat appearance/names:

1. INDIVIDUAL ENTRIES

Anything goes—boat names, sayings, marriage proposals, or your Uncle Ralph's seldom used nickname, but please refrain from profanity. After all, this event is a family fun event.

2. GROUP ORGANIZATION

Anything goes but please remember, this is a family fun event.

E. Boat size:

Boats must be somewhere in between a doll's bathtub and the Queen Mary in size. **All crew members must be in or on the boat at the time of finish.**

Boat Classes

Buccaneers:

- Those participants who follow all the rules and make their mothers proud. These participants will compete for the 2025 Hollecker Lake Cardboard Cup.

Renegades:

- Those participants who can't seem to follow the rules will compete for the 2023 Hollecker Lake Cardboard Cheaters Chalice.

Swashbucklers:

- Kids aged 5 through 11 years will participate on a special shortened, shallow-water course. Participation rather than competition will be emphasized, with a small prize for each contestant.

The Race:

- To give everyone a fair chance, we will try to run as few boats in each heat as practical. Your craft must be propelled by crew either inside the hull or on top of the deck attached to the hull of the boat to qualify.
- Everything is based on finish position, not time.
- The Captain can remain in the boat for the start. Navigating crews must start the race out of the boat.
- Any boat and/or crew not ready to race at the designated time will be disqualified.
- Participants must retrieve their boats – or their wreckage – from the water.
- The Captain must be in the boat at the time of finish and the crew must be in or on the boat at the time of finish to qualify.
- To qualify as a finalist, participants must correctly navigate the race course around the bobbers.
- Boats will advance to the semifinals and/or finals based on finish position.

The Race Course:

- The adult course is approximately 100 yards long. Boats will sail toward a specified bobber, round the bobber and return to shore.
- Participants must correctly navigate the race course.
- Any boat and/or crew not ready to race at the designated time will be disqualified.
- Minor repairs are allowed following each heat, however all ships will need to be at the starting line when called or they will be disqualified. Minor repairs should not include complete redesign.
- The kids' course is a short, straight course in shallow water.
- Children 11 and younger may have one adult (age 18 or over) in the boat.
- Adult Category is for one to 999 participants (ages 12 and over).
- All boats that survive the first go around are eligible to participate in the Soggy Bottom Battle race to determine who has the most resilient unsinkable ship! This race may include some contact between boats as they battle for the finish line. Victors walk away as Soggy Bottom Battle champions.

Judges' Awards

Best Pirate Ship

Best-Dressed Team Award

Hollecker Lake Cardboard Cup

Best time of the day earns the fame and glory of being named on the Cardboard Cup.

Most Spectacular Sinking Award

Sink and look good! Chances are you will!

Most Creative Boat Theme Award

The boat that most creatively expresses a specific idea, an expression, a title, story or incident including movies, TV shows, books, poems, or children's stories.

Most Attractive Boat Award

It just has to look good!

Most Enthusiastic Crew Award

This can include boat crew and pit crew.

The Kiddie Cup

Every kid gets a prize ribbon!

People's Choice – Youth

People's Choice - Adult

Clean Up:

- Make sure you have enough crew members to remove your boat from the water at the finish line. Wet cardboard is very heavy. Dumpsters are provided.
- If your boat comes apart at the seams make sure to remove all boat materials from the lake before you leave and clean your boat display area.
- Safety comes first with no exceptions to this rule. Cardboard boat races are for recreational entertainment, creativity and amusement for spectators and boaters alike. To remain safe and qualify for the race and prizes, participants must wear a proper life jacket, remain in the boat and stay visible to judges throughout the duration of the race. No cover is permitted on the boat as it blocks passengers from view. Strive for safety and creativity in designing and constructing your cardboard boat. Follow the competition rules and guidelines. Most importantly, have fun!

Sources for Cardboard:

To make your cardboard boat, you will need large pieces of cardboard. You can pick up cardboard at local businesses including:

- Barnick's Hometown Brand Center – 126 North Merrill – 377-2388
- Boss Office Supply – 123 W. Towne, 377-2374
- Builders FirstSource-23 Hwy 16, 365-3511
- Glendive Coca-Cola – 220 S Douglas Street – 377-2653
- Koch Furniture – 320 N. Kendrick Avenue – 365-3665
- Guelff Lumber – 221 Clough Street - 365-3121

Tips and Ideas for building your cardboard boat: Taken from: www.gcbr.com/tips.html

Feel free to search the following: [Cardboard Boat Building](#), [Cape Coral Cardboard Boat Building](#), [The Great Cardboard Boat Regatta Photo Album](#)

**BUILD A PERSON-POWERED CARDBOARD BOAT THAT IS CAPABLE OF
COMPLETING THREE TRIPS AROUND A 100-YARD COURSE.**

Along the way, you will enjoy encountering and dealing with many small details. But look ahead to the satisfaction of knowing you accomplished something that most people won't even try -- building a boat made of corrugated cardboard.

First things first . . . start with some objective in mind. Maybe you want to build the fastest boat at the Regatta. Perhaps you are more interested in one of the Judges Awards for design or eye appeal. Maybe you want to win the Best-Dressed Team Award or the Team Spirit Award. Perhaps you want to get on television or be the featured photo in the newspaper. Or just maybe you want to take home the Titanic Award for the most spectacular sinking.

Next . . . start with a **design idea**, a vision of what you want your cardboard creation to look like. But consider this first -- it doesn't have to be a boat at all! It can be any design you like or want to try out. We've had jeeps, exotic cars, full-scale pickup trucks, school busses, fire trucks, and other vehicles. We've seen space shuttles, Elvis on his guitar, beds, foldout soft drink cans, personal computers (with a mouse that trailed in the water), a raft with a trailing shark fin, a floating outhouse, a taco, a bratwurst, a giant Tootsie Roll, Tessie the Loch Ness Monster, Deidra the Dragonfly, the Statue of Liberty hand (from "Planet of the Apes"), and so much more. Oh, sure, we've had lots of boats too: submarines, aircraft carriers, PT boats, lake freighters, pirate ships, the Exxon Valdez (with simulated oil slick), and so on.

Try this to **save time** . . . **build a model** using a manila folder or other heavy paper or lightweight cardboard. That way, you can fold, re-fold, and fold again to your heart's content. You can cut it up, glue it together, and try out your design idea in small scale before working on a full-sized creation. Or you can throw out an idea that sounded great, but just won't work, then try something else before you have wasted any cardboard.

How about a **little science**? If you want, you can toss in a little physics or other sciences. Maybe you will choose to calculate the **displacement** of your design idea so that you will have some certainty about the buoyancy of your design. Here's the basic number: a cubic foot of water weighs about 62 pounds. That means that a 180-pound man will float in a boat that is 1 foot by 1 foot by 3 feet -- of course, that could be a bit uncomfortable! But at least you would know just how much boat you will need for you (and your crew) so you don't overdesign it and add unnecessary weight.

Then again, **how about some art**? Perhaps you have a really creative idea, maybe something that nobody has done before. Unless you get your kicks from putting in lots of hours and making discoveries along the way -- hey, sometimes that can be great fun -- you may want to at least try out that unique or innovative idea in model form. If you want to put a palm tree in the middle of your "desert island," be sure you won't make the whole thing top-heavy -- unless, of course, you are trying for the Titanic Award.

Now, go full-scale . . . but first, think about this: make sure your creation will be able to get out the door of wherever you choose to build it. We have many tales of woe about boats that had to be dismantled -- or even trashed and rebuilt -- just because no one thought about the size of the boat and the size of the door.

Hmmm, where to get cardboard? At some Regatta sites, the local organizers bring in a truckload of cardboard so that boat builders can buy it. You might get cardboard from appliance stores. The shipping boxes for refrigerators and big freezers can be good possibilities. Maybe you can get boxes for TVs, bedding, bookcases, or other furniture. Of course, you can also use smaller sheets and glue them or fasten them together.

Creative problem-solving is the name of the game. Whether you get your creative insights from methodical effort or from wide-ranging trail-and-error, building a cardboard boat can be -- no, make that, will be -- both fun and challenging.

FYI -- there are no plans, no pre-set designs, no step-by-step instructions here . . . no recipe cards, no fill-in-the-blank formats. The first ingredient in cardboard boat-building is creativity. The second important ingredient is problem-solving. Then there is cardboard, of course -- and it has to be corrugated.

Hey, maybe you are more the "**wing it**" type -- okay, get some cardboard, fold it a little, cut out any excess here and there, add a little glue or duct tape, maybe some paint or water sealant, and presto-chango, you have a boat for the Regatta.

Let's see, **other materials** . . . you can use glue and tape. You can use paint and water sealant and other stuff. But first, take a look at "The Rules" to find a short list of substances that are not to be used. We're not trying to make it tough on you, but we are steering you away from stuff that is toxic, either for you or for the environment. There is also a difference in the materials that are allowed in the Class II cardboard creations, so be sure to check out that section of "The Rules."

Handling cardboard -- you will find it easier and more fun if you keep in mind a few tips.

- You can have strength and still keep your boat light if you laminate layers of cardboard. In fact, try placing one layer so that the corrugations run in one direction, then placing the second layer so that the corrugations run at a 90-degree angle to the first layer.
- To fold cardboard across the corrugations, consider scoring the line of the fold with the butt end of your utility knife or other rounded edge of a tool.
- Don't step on your cardboard! If you break the corrugations -- well, think about it.
- To keep your cardboard dry, don't forget to seal the edges with caulk or silicone. If water gets into your corrugations, you can have great fun watching it get drawn through the corrugation just like in a drinking straw. That may be okay when you have time to do something about it, but if you see this happen in the middle of a race . . . !!

Here's a bunch of other items to think about:

- A flat bottom is recommended. A V-shaped bottom is likely to tip over unless the V is very gentle.
- The lowest center of gravity is the most stable; kneeling or standing will cause you to tip over.
- Longer boats go faster, but they are harder to turn.
- Boats shorter than 10 feet are difficult to steer.
- For height, allow about 18 inches for you to sit and paddle effectively without the edge of your boat blocking your arms.
- For width, figure about 18 inches for a kayak, about 23-24 inches for a canoe. Figure about 30 inches maximum for 1 person, 48 inches for two people.
- Paint all the surfaces before gluing, caulk the edges, then glue (carpenter's glue works great as long as it's not epoxy glue).
- Avoid oil-based stains, caulk, and glue because the oil soaks into the cardboard, may never dry, and this weakens the cardboard.
- Duct tape shrinks when it is painted.
- Clear tape melts when it is painted.
- Reinforced paper tape works well over caulked edges and seams.
- Forget about "glue guns" because that type of glue melts on hot days.

Hey, some of the fun is in the discovery. So that's it for tips. Now go for it! Keep in mind the other lessons you learn along the way. That will make building your next boat just that much easier.

Have fun! Be creative! If you can dream it, you can do it!

**Dawson Community College
10th Annual Cardboard Cup Regatta
Official Registration Form**

Boat Name: _____

Captain Name: _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

E-mail _____

Names and Ages of Crew (Include Adult Guardian for youth races)

_____ # of Crew _____

Each Crew member has a Coast Guard approved PFDs (life jackets) Yes No

Race Divisions

____ DCC Student

____ Youth (Age 5-11) (one person over 18 required if the child cannot swim)

____ Adult (Age 12 - 99)

Additional registration forms available on line at <https://www.dawson.edu/news-events/>

Where and When:

Hollecker Lake

Saturday, August 22, 2026

8:30 am – 9:30 am: Registration

9:30 am – 10:00 am: Concourse de Cardboard

10:00 am – Start of Races

All contestants are required to sign the safety waiver prior to competing in the boat race. Minors must have responsible parent/guardian sign the waiver. Each boat must have a designated Captain. The Captain must check in at the registration area on the day of the race.

Registration Fee:

Checks can be written to Dawson College Foundation. Fees for DCC students are waived.

\$25.00 race day

DCC Use Only:

Boat #: _____ Registration Fee Received: _____

Waivers Signed and Receive: _____ Number of Waivers _____

Life Jackets for each Crew member: _____