

JULY 18-24, 2022 · CCWC2022.COM





# WELCOME

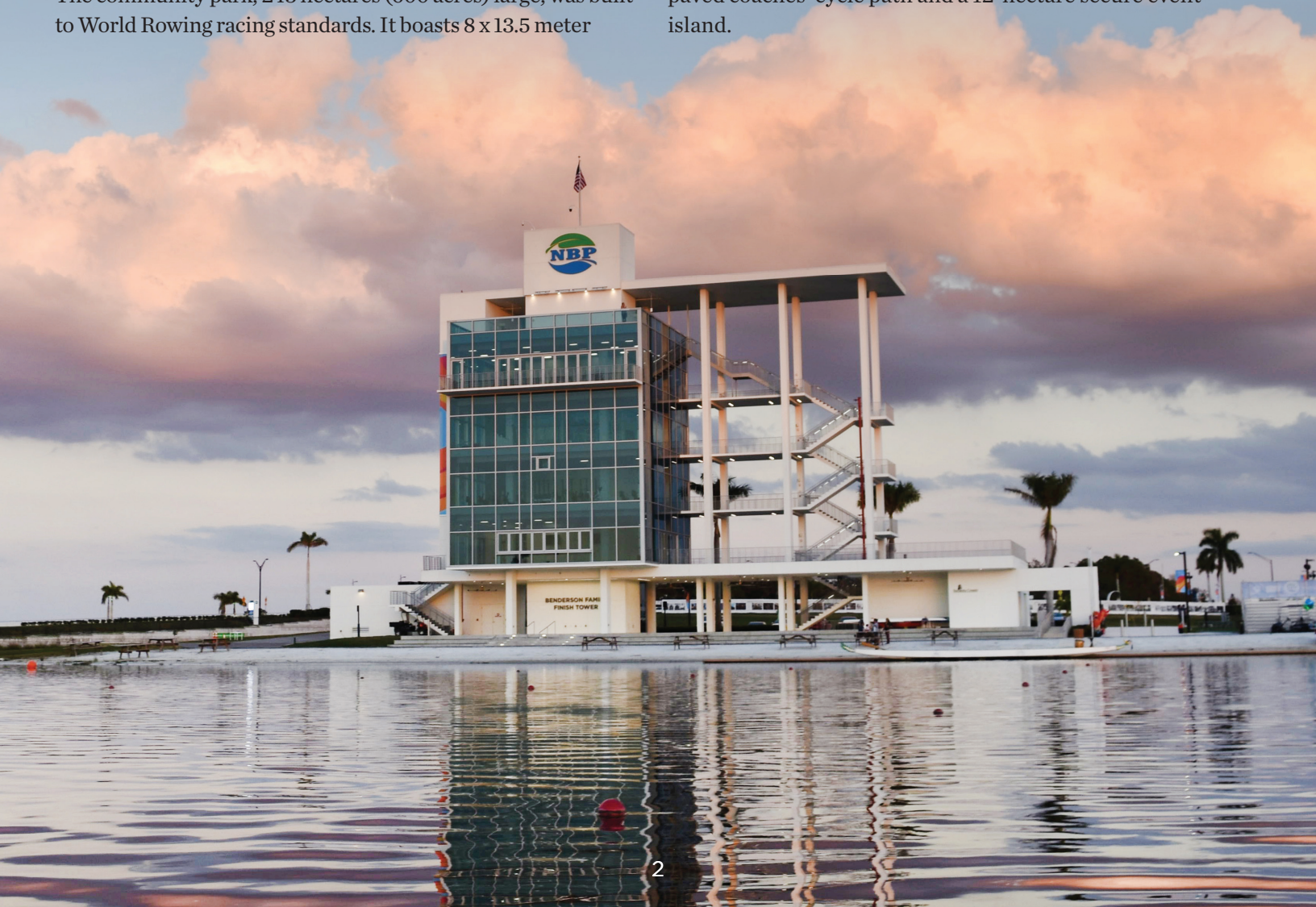
## THE IDEAL LOCATION FOR THESE CHAMPIONSHIPS — NATHAN BENDERSON PARK

Nathan Benderson Park is one of a handful of sites in the United States identified as having all the natural attributes that make up a world-class rowing, paddling and recreational facility. The park was created from a manmade borrow pit, spring fed with additional surface water holding capacity. The 161.8 hectares (400 acres) of water surface were previously used for mining sand and shell. Since then, the pit was filled by the Cooper Creek drainage basin and the underground aquifer system.

The community park, 243 hectares (600 acres) large, was built to World Rowing racing standards. It boasts 8 x 13.5 meter

lanes with 50 meters of clear water between the west shore and the course and 27 meters between the wave attenuator and the course. The course is 2,180 meters long, 630 meters wide and, on average, 6 meters deep. In addition, the course has separate warm-up and cool-down lanes. A secure island 12 hectares large (28 acres) is the nerve center of athletic events.

The completed venue consists of a state-of-the-art floating wave attenuator platform that doubles as a dedicated TV road for broadcast requirements, exclusive 3-meter-wide paved coaches' cycle path and a 12-hectare secure event island.





## SPECTATOR INFORMATION


**Admission:** General viewing is free to the public. Please check the website, [www.ccwc2022.com](http://www.ccwc2022.com), for further details.

**Public Parking:** Public parking is in lots at the south end of Nathan Benderson Park, a short stroll or bike ride from Regatta Island. A shuttle will run between the south lots

and Regatta Island. There is a small parking fee. A SCAT bus to the University Town Center (UTC) transfer station, a short walk or bike ride adjacent to NBP along North Cattlemen Road. A shuttle will also ferry spectators to Regatta Island from the bus station and spots in the UTC area.

## NBP'S FEATURES AT A GLANCE

- World-class course
- Nine-lane protected, buoyed course
- Long-distance training
- Floating wave attenuator
- Coaches lane spans entire course length
- State-of-the-art timing system
- IMAS start system
- Running/biking trail encircling the competition lake
- Picnic areas



Regatta Island will be the home base for boat launch and recovery, team tents, food and more.

Paved and shell paths around the lake's perimeter include the 5.5km (3.4-mile) Bill Robinson Lakeside Loop.

Permanent 2000m sprint course, the only World Rowing Class A course in North America.

It's walking distance to a 250-unit retail, entertainment and lodging development just off our northern edge.





COURTESY TOMMY LEONARDI

Philadelphia Dragon Boat Assn. competitors pose during the 2021 U.S. Dragon Boat Federation Club Crew National Championships at Nathan Benderson Park in October 2021.

# Oldest, and now FIRST

Philadelphia paddlers are America's oldest team, first to register for Club Crew Worlds

By **DOUGLAS E. JESSMER** | Nathan Benderson Park

**S**omehow, it's fitting that the first team to register for the Club Crew World Championships is the oldest team in the host country.

The Philadelphia Dragon Boat Assn. was the first to sign on for this summer's event in Sarasota-Bradenton, Fla.

Tommy Leonardi, the president of the Philadelphia club, said the organization began in 1983 when the Hong Kong Tourist Assn. brought the sport to Boathouse Row along the city's Schuylkill River.

The deal, he said, was that "we'll bring you a dragon boat, and paddles and some instruction. If you can get 20-plus people interested, we'll sponsor a trip to Hong Kong and you can come race. And that's how it started."

Fast-forward to July 2022, when the club will represent the United States in premier, senior-B and senior-C categories in standard and small boats for all three distances.

This year's Club Crew Worlds is not only the first to be held in the United States, but the first after the dust began to settle on a global pandemic.

In 1984, Bob McNamara joined the Philadelphia team, and became its coach in 1985. From there, the club has gone on to multiple national and world championships, both in club crew and world nations competition.

"Our members have participated in more World Nations Championships than Club Crews," Leonardi said. "I think our success has a lot to do with the fact that we're the oldest continuing club, and is especially due to us being coached by Bob McNamara, the premier open and mixed coach for Team USA. As a result, we have a very competitive club."

Based on the other side of the Schuylkill from Boathouse Row, the club and other member clubs in the larger Schuylkill Paddlers Inc. organization are a counterpart to the rowing community that shares the same water. Paddlers from the larger organization's other clubs will also be represented in this year's Club Crew Worlds.



The U.S. Dragon Boat Federation (USDBF) Club Crew National Championships in October 2021 was the first time Leonardi's club laid eyes on the Nathan Benderson Park course. But home-water advantage for American teams isn't really on the water, he said.

"The water itself doesn't really matter, because once you're out there on the race course, next to other boats, you could be anywhere in the world and feel exactly the same," he said. "And the reason why is because you practice for that moment so much that once you're at that moment, if you're in Lane 4 in Sarasota or Lane 4 in Pattaya, Thailand, you're in Lane 4 in a dragon boat race."

He said it's not the location, but the preparation that matters. If anything, the advantage is found in that Philadelphia is in the same time zone as Sarasota, so jetlag isn't a factor.

Leonardi, who's also a board member of the USDBF, pointed out travel to the competition will be far simpler. But when you're at the starting platform, remember that it's time to focus.

"For me, one of the hardest things I had to get used to was focusing on the competition when you're on the water, and not soaking in when you really want to soak in," he said. "When that race starts, and you're surrounded on both sides by multiple boats, when drummers and steers from different countries are all yelling and counting numbers in their native languages, it's pretty cool, but you can't really think about it. You have to make sure you're in your own zone."

Compete as hard as you can, but when you get off the water, walk around and meet people, he said.

"Most people at international races are very friendly," he said. "Stick your head in the tent and say 'hi.' That to me is as good as the racing itself — the opportunities to meet people from other countries. Especially countries that are supposedly your 'enemy.' I can't tell you how many times I've traded jerseys with someone from Iran, China, wherever your enemy is supposed to be. They're all human beings doing the same thing. We might not agree with the leaders of a country, but when you meet the actual people, it really opens your mind to who actually lives in those countries. It's really a beautiful thing."

The first time he went to a Club Crew World Championship, it reminded him of the Walt Disney World ride, "It's A Small World."

"You go from tent to tent and people are wearing all the same colors, different countries, they're speaking different languages, and everyone's typically happy and smiling," he said. "It was like going to Disney World, it was like that ride. And by the way, if they want to ride 'It's A Small World,' it's only a two-hour drive from Sarasota."

As the paddling world convenes at Nathan Benderson Park, it gathers at a place that's friendly for athletes to watch their teams compete.

"The tents are right along the race course," he said. "And that's not always the case. It depends on the layout, like in Pattaya, where the tents were past the finish line. If you wanted to watch the races, you had a long walk. They did have a giant screen that you could watch from the marshalling area, which a lot of people did. In Sarasota, you can just look out your tent and it's all right there."

More important to competition is the design of the course itself. Leonardi said the importance of deep lanes can't be understated — and NBP's course has deep, uniform lanes across the entirety of its competition course.

"Dragon boats are quickly affected by shallow water," he explained. "The boats slow down significantly in water that's too shallow. And unfortunately, there have been races in the past at venues that did not have deep water across every lane. And as a result, some lanes would run faster or slower than the others. The other thing that's important is that the course is so wide open that no lane should have an advantage due to wind."

## The paddling world convenes at a place that's friendly for athletes to watch their teams compete.

All that means paddlers competing at Club Crew Worlds will have a fair experience.

"It's a very fair course, and that's so important," he said. "Think about the amount of time people train in order to get as fast as they can, then the money spent in order to get there. And then if the lanes aren't all the same, it's a real disappointment. That's not something that is a concern at this race course."

As a board member of the United States federation, he says the sport of paddling "has allowed me to live what's really a childhood dream. I get to travel the world while playing a sport. I mean, how many people get to do that?"

"When I'm on some plane going to, say, Thailand to race not only among my teammates but against other countries, it's just an incredible opportunity. And as a result of these amazing experiences, I've always wanted to give back — to my team to my sport. Every year there are always a few new teammates who get to travel to races for the first time. You see the look in their eyes, and it makes you realize to never become too used to this, or too jaded, because it is that special of an opportunity."



# SARASOTA & BRADENTON

## WELCOME TO FLORIDA'S GULF COAST!

Prepare to experience the 2022 IDBF Club Crew World Championships in a sun-soaked, culturally diverse, coastal community. Throughout your stay, we hope you find time to explore! Our area boasts 35 miles of pristine beaches along with world-class dining and arts and culture venues. We have big-city amenities with small-town charm.

**Dining:** Sarasota is home to a number of award winning chefs and 21 Zagat-rated restaurants. To eat like a local, Sarasota-Manatee Originals is a group of more than 60 innovative, independently owned restaurants.

**Outdoor activities:** Visitors can partake in a myriad of activities at Myakka State Park, which is one of Florida's oldest and largest state parks. Canoeing and kayaking alongside alligators and birds are popular activities on the water, while hikers and bicyclists can dig into miles of trails.

Sarasota County has more than 40 golf courses that can accommodate any skill level and price point, from award-winning private oceanfront courses to public courses less than 10 minutes from NBP.

## SHOPPING, DINING AND ENTERTAINMENT

**The Mall at University Town Center:** A world-class indoor fashion and dining destination featuring more than 125 stores and restaurants.

**St. Armands Circle:** An island shopping and dining center, this outdoor shopping and dining district is a continental marketplace with 138 merchants. From trinkets and treasures to high fashion and home décor to savory gourmet snacks and elegant candlelit feasts, the Circle is a graceful blend of past and present.

**Also Check Out:** Siesta Key Village, Downtown Sarasota, Lakewood Ranch Main Street, Venice Main Street, Waterside Place at Lakewood Ranch, Downtown Bradenton/ Riverwalk, Ellenton Premium Outlets, Wellen Park/ CoolToday Park, Olde Englewood Village & West Dearborn Street, Southside Village (Sarasota), Pinecraft (Sarasota)





## ADJACENT TO NBP

**Celery Fields:** This is a flood mitigation zone that consists of open marshlands, deep ponds, shallow pools and canals. It's a great place for walking, biking, fishing, kayaking and wildlife viewing. To date, 246 bird species have been recorded.

**Big Cat Habitat and Gulf Coast Sanctuary:** This nonprofit sanctuary permanently houses dozens of exotic and domestic animals in need and works to educate the public. All income from admission fees goes to feeding and caring for the animals.

**Sun Outdoors:** This scenic resort features indoor and outdoor pools, a mega water slide, a massive health club with a gym and fitness studio, pickleball courts, miniature golf, arts and crafts, and live entertainment. Day passes are available for purchase to use the amenities.

**TreeUmph! Adventure Course:** Southwest's Florida's first treetop adventure park consists of five courses from beginner to extreme, Climb, zipline, swing and freefall while harnessed to safety equipment.

## BEACHES

**Siesta Beach:** Consistently rated one of the top beaches in the world by TripAdvisor reviewers. The Siesta Key beach is known for its 99 percent quartz sand, which feels like a fine sugar and never gets hot.

**Also see:** Blind Pass Beach Park (Englewood), Brohard Beach and Paw Park (Venice), Casperson Beach (Venice), Lido Beach and South Lido Beach (Lido Key), Ted Sperling Nature Park, Nokomis Beach, Turtle Beach (Sarasota), Venice Beach, Longboat Key Public Beach, Anna Maria Island Public Beach





## THE LAY OF THE LAND

World's best beaches are in easy reach, as are many other attractions. Nathan Benderson Park is 12.2 km (7.6 miles) from Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport (SRQ).







WELCOME TO  
THE CENTER  
OF IT ALL

SHOP ♦ DINE ♦ PLAY ♦ STAY

[utcsarasota.com](http://utcsarasota.com)





## #FunInThe941

Be sure to hashtag **#FunInThe941** when sharing your Sarasota County experience on socials, and see how others lived it up while in the 941!

[f /VisitSarasota](#) [@ /visitsarasotacounty](#)



### ARE YOU READY TO HAVE SOME FUN IN THE 941?

Know the best places for happy hour, where to get the best burger, what day museums offer free admission, special shopping discounts and more. For the latest deals and local offerings to stay on top of the local fun, head to [FunInThe941.com](#).

VISIT  
*Sarasota*  
beaches and beyond

## SUNRISE & SUNSET

IN LOCAL TIME (UTC/GMT -4)

SUNRISE	
JULY 18	6:46 a.m. (06:46)
JULY 19	6:47 a.m. (06:47)
JULY 20	6:47 a.m. (06:47)
JULY 21	6:48 a.m. (06:48)
JULY 22	6:48 a.m. (06:48)
JULY 23	6:49 a.m. (06:49)
JULY 24	6:49 a.m. (06:49)

SUNSET	
JULY 18	8:26 p.m. (20:26)
JULY 19	8:25 p.m. (20:25)
JULY 20	8:25 p.m. (20:25)
JULY 21	8:24 p.m. (20:24)
JULY 22	8:24 p.m. (20:24)
JULY 23	8:23 p.m. (20:23)
JULY 24	8:23 p.m. (20:23)

## AVERAGE TEMPS

FOR JULY 18-24

32.2°C/90°F

23.9°C/75°F

## ALTITUDE

ABOVE MEAN SEA LEVEL:  
WATER SURFACE AT NBP IS **4.8 METERS**  
REGATTA ISLAND IS **7 METERS**

Blind Pass Park, Englewood





## NATHAN BENDERSON PARK

5851 Nathan Benderson Circle, Sarasota FL 34235

[nathanbendersonpark.org](http://nathanbendersonpark.org)     **NathanBendersonPark**  
 **@myNBP**   **#myNBP**

