

THE FUTURE OF DRAGON BOAT RACING

BY SHARON ALI AZIZ



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Although he has a day job, Darren Joseph still finds time to promote dragon boat racing. Now in his second term as president of the Trinidad and Tobago Dragon Boat Federation (TTDBF), Joseph has set his sights on growing the sport into a national sport—one that unites schools, communities, and corporate teams.

Joseph's journey into dragon boating started with his daughters who attended Holy Name Convent. What began as his support in a parental role gradually deepened. He first assisted the land fitness coach, then stepped in temporarily when the coach was injured. "Eventually, I ended up being a full-time land coach," he recalls. Within two years he was helping manage the Holy Name team before branching out to form his own club, the Dragon Warriors, in 2023. Soon after, he assumed the presidency of the Federation.

Forming a dragon boat team requires commitment but is not an insurmountable task; "it's quite a straightforward process", he pointed out. Administrative requirements include an

Application form and the minutes of the club's founding meeting or meeting in which the executive body was selected (president, vice-president, and secretary). The board of the Dragon Boat Federation would then decide on the application. Joseph added, "Clubs pay a modest annual fee of \$800 to the Federation".

As president, Joseph balances administration with advocacy. "It's fun - and stressful at times," he admits. "I like interacting with the clubs, with the people, and hearing how they think about how things are going. On the planning side, it's a lot sometimes because we're still putting things in place and looking ahead to build the sport and get it out there. Many people are not even aware that dragon boating exists."

