



## PRESS RELEASE

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# Rocketts Landing named site of Richmond's first-ever Dragon Boat Festival on July 31

## Sports Backers partners with GWN Dragon Boat to bring new sport to Richmond

TORONTO, ON –GWN Dragon Boat is excited to announce its partnership with Sports Backers to host the first annual Richmond International Dragon Boat Festival on July 31st, 2010 on the James River. This ancient Chinese sport has been gaining popularity in North America over the past twenty years and has become the world's fastest growing water sport.



"The Richmond Chinese community is very pleased to be taking part in the region's first Dragon Boat race, and would like to thank Sports Backers for giving us this opportunity to share our culture with our fellow Richmonders," said John Kang, the outgoing president of the Organization of Chinese Americans Central Virginia Chapter and head of the Richmond Chinese Network.

Dragon boats are 40-foot human-powered canoes decorated with ornate Chinese dragon heads. Led by the rhythmic beat of a drum, teams consisting of 20 synchronized paddlers, one drummer, and one steersperson race the canoes 500m down the river. Social groups and businesses alike embrace the sport of dragon boating because it builds camaraderie and a sense of "team" through participation in the sport.

"This is an exciting time for the global sport of dragon boating. We believe that partnering with Sports Backers will enable us to create a dragon boat festival experience second to none," said Aaron Soroka, COO of GWN Dragon Boat.

The Richmond International Dragon Boat Festival will be the sixth event of the Major League Dragon Boat Series. Not only is the event expected to draw in experienced participants from across the continent and overseas, but it should also attract first-time racers from right here in Richmond.

"We are so pleased that this ancient sport is coming to Richmond and Rocketts Landing. The James River is Richmond's greatest resource, and I can think of no better way to show it off than this spectacular event," said Jason Vickers-Smith, COO of The WVS Companies, the developer of Rocketts Landing. "It is especially exciting that the competition engages our local community and organizations."

The Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation is the official charity of the Richmond International Dragon Boat Festival. For more information or to register a team, visit [www.gwndragonboat.com](http://www.gwndragonboat.com).

**ABOUT GREAT WHITE NORTH** – GWN Dragon Boat is North America's largest full service dragon boat event marketing company producing over 45 festivals annually. Additional activities include training camps, dragon boat equipment sales and corporate events. [www.gwndragonboat.com](http://www.gwndragonboat.com).

**ABOUT SPORTS BACKERS** – Sports Backers own, manage or partner with 40 different sporting events in the Richmond region that help drive over \$50 million in economic impact. These events and programs strengthen the local economy, provide health benefits to participants and make the region a better place to live. [www.sportsbackers.org](http://www.sportsbackers.org)

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