HKDBF-NY 2021 Rules and Regulations
Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival in New York - August 7, 2021
Flushing Meadows Corona Park in Queens, New York

RULES AND REGULATIONS

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PART A - Introduction

1. Rule of Construction
The following rules shall be read and interpreted consistently with each other and shall be read and interpreted to foster the purpose of fair competition and sportsmanship in a safe environment.

2. Scope of Application
These rules shall apply to all races in all divisions for the year 2021, including the General Invitation and Special Invitation. Each crew is entirely responsible for its own conduct and for complying with the rules provided herein.

3. Situations not covered
In the event the rules do not adequately cover a situation, race officials are empowered to make such decisions and instructions as are necessary to carry out their responsibilities and to affect the purpose of fair competition and sportsmanship in a safe environment.

4. Violation of the Rules and Regulations
Any crew member or team that fails to observe the Rules and Regulations herein may be disqualified or be assessed a penalty herein described in Rule J(2).

PART B - Definitions
For the purpose of these Rules and Regulations, the following terms will be used:

1. “Chief Race Official” shall mean the race official, appointed by the Event Organizer, who supervises and observes each race, records the order of finish at the finish line for each race, decides all valid protests regarding race conduct, and is the ultimate interpreter of the Rules and Regulations with the advice of the Race Controller whenever necessary.

2. “Club” shall mean an organization that hosts, sponsors, or brands a crew or team. Many crews or teams may belong to the same club.

3. “Crew” shall mean any active group of paddlers, drummer, and steersperson, which has completed a team roster. The term “crew” is used interchangeably with the term “team” in the Rules and Regulations.

4. “ID and Vaccine Check Area” shall mean the area immediately outside of the boat house by the main entrance.
5. “Crew Staging Area” shall mean the area inside the ID Check gate and the Team Coordinator Gate.

6. “Crew Holding Area” shall mean the area for teams to exit the dock. Teams will stage in that area until judges declare the results are final.

7. “Crew member” shall mean any properly registered person affiliated with a crew as a paddler, drummer or steersperson.

8. “Dock Management Team” shall mean the race officials, appointed by the Event Organizer, who controls the conduct of teams, crew members and Event dock staff around the Crew Staging Area and the launching dock area.

9. “Drummer” shall mean a properly registered crew member whose specific task is to beat the drum, has completed a mandatory waiver and is listed on a team roster.

10. “Event” shall mean the Annual Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival in New York, held on August 7th, 2021 in Flushing Meadow Corona Park.

11. “Event Organizer” shall mean the Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival in New York, Inc.

12. “Materially Affects” shall mean situations when the order of finish of a race has been compromised or other conditions which affect the advancement of an aggrieved crew.

13. “Paddler” shall mean a properly registered crew member whose specific task is to propel a boat with a single bladed paddle while seated, and who has completed a mandatory waiver and is listed on a team roster.

14. “Race Controller” shall mean the race official, appointed by the Event Organizer, who hears all protests about race conduct and provides guidance to the Chief Race Official and other race officials whenever necessary.

15. “Race Officials” shall include the Chief Race Official, Umpires, Starter, Dockmaster, and the Race Controller, who are appointed by the Event Organizer.

16. “Starter” shall mean the race official, appointed by the Event Organizer, who controls the conduct of teams and crew members at the start line, brings the teams to the start line, and calls the start of each heat.

17. “Starting Area” shall mean the area between the start line and 50 meters behind the start line.
18. “Steersperson” shall mean a properly registered crew member whose specific task is to steer and maneuver a boat with a steering oar, and who has completed a mandatory waiver and is listed on a team roster.

19. “Umpire” shall mean the race official, appointed by the Event Organizer, who follows the boats down the racing course and records any violations of the Rules and Regulations during the course of the heat.

20. “Unsportsmanlike conduct” shall include, but not limited to, failure to heed the instructions of race officials, use of obscene language or gestures, delaying a race without valid justification, intentional or flagrant disregard of principles of safety and fairness, or abusive behavior toward any race official, crew member, Event Organizer and its employees, or spectator.

PART C – Safety and Fair Conditions

1. General
The Event Organizer and race officials are committed to minimizing risks and maintaining a safe environment for practices and races for all crew members.

2. Swimming Requirement
Crew members must be able to swim at least 100 meters while wearing light clothing. It is the responsibility of the crew to ensure that all crew members comply with this rule.

3. Personal Flotation Device (PFD)
PFDs will be provided to all crew members by Event Staff and must be worn in the proper manner at all times while in the dragon boat.

4. Jumping Off Boat
At no time shall crew members jump off a boat. Such behavior shall result in disqualification of the offending crew.

5. Rescue Procedure
In the event of an accident while on the water, which results in submersion of the boat, affected crew members are required to stay close to the boat and wait for a rescue boat to arrive. No one should attempt to swim ashore. Crew members should attempt to keep the boat from capsizing but only if it could be done safely.

6. Unsafe Weather Conditions
In the event of lightning, all crews on the water must return to the launching dock area and follow the instructions of race officials and Event dock staff. If a race is in progress, the Starter or Umpires will sound the horn twice to signify the stoppage of the race and instruct all competing crews to return to the launching dock area.

7. Waivers (Form C)
(a) All crew members must sign a waiver stating that they have read the conditions of the waiver and are aware of the risks associated with dragon boat racing, and thus accept and waive any right or course of action they may have against the Event Organizer, sponsors, supporters or any organizations and persons connected with the Event for injury or death to person(s) or loss/damage to personal property.

(b) All crew members must sign and return a waiver to the Event Organizer prior to the start of their first at the Event. It is the team manager’s responsibility to ensure that at the time of registration, all crew members’ waivers have been signed and submitted to the Event Organizer.

8. Regulatory Preemption
These rules concerning safety should not be construed as authority over and above requirements necessitated by regulatory agencies.

9. Liability
Crew members are solely responsible for their own safety during official races. The Event Organizer, and organizations and persons connected directly or indirectly with the races, shall not accept responsibility for any death, injury, damage or loss incurred or borne by any individual(s).

PART D – Team and Crew Member Registration

1. Credentials
A limited number of wristbands will be attached by ID check staff for all Teams. These are for the use of the crew members only and are not to be used by other persons. These credentials must be worn at all times during the Event and serve as verification of vaccination.

2. Cross-Roster
Invitational races allow paddlers/drummers to participate in multiple races and divisions. Teams must ensure that there are no conflicts between heats.

3. Team Roster
Each team shall submit a team roster (Form B-1) to the Event Organizer before its scheduled race. Only crew members listed on the team roster and seating chart shall be permitted to enter the upper/lower dock and race on the team. Team Manager is not permitted on the upper/lower dock on race day.

4. Right of Refusal
The Event Organizer reserves the right to refuse entry to any crew in the race at its sole discretion.
PART E – Divisions and Crew Composition

1. Divisions
   (a) Invitational Races: All teams participating in the Special divisions are invited by the Event Organizer.

   i. General / Special Invitation: Each boat may carry up to 10 paddlers and must have a minimum of 8 paddlers. Each boat must also carry at least four (4) female paddlers, one (1) drummer (male or female), and one (1) steersperson (male or female). Each crew member, including steersperson and drummer, must be at least 15 years of age as of January 1, 2021. Crew Members under the age of 18 must have parental consent.

   ii. Each Crewmember including Team Manager must be fully vaccinated with date of 2nd dose in two-dose series or single dose of one-dose series dating no later than July 24th, 2021.

2. Violation of Racing Class Composition
In the event of any violation of Rule E(1), the Chief Race Official reserves the right to disqualify the offending crew members or crew and refuse the crew member or crew’s entry in future races.

4. Team Manager
Each team must have a Team Manager (a non-racing member of the team) be present in the ID Check Area during the time that his or her crew is under the control of the race officials. The Team Manager will be responsible for liaising with race officials, providing proof of identity for his or her crew members, ensuring all crew members are familiar with the Rules and Regulations, marshalling his or her team to the ID Check Area at the appropriate time, verifying his or her team’s registration materials, and representing the crew at ceremonies. Team Managers are not permitted within the boating complex (past the main gate or on the docks); however the Team Manager may wait outside the exit gate for their team.

5. Team Captain
Each team must have a Team Captain. Once ID check is complete, the Team Captain assumes responsibilities of all matters until the team is cleared to exit the Crew Holding Area.

6. Team Uniform
It is recommended that crew members on a team wear identical clothing to differentiate themselves from crew members on other teams.

PART F - Marshaling, Embarking and Proceeding to Start

1. Reporting to the ID and Vaccine Check Area
A crew must assemble in the ID and Vaccine Check Area and be ready to board 20 minutes prior to the time of its race. Government issued photo identification and proof of vaccination (Official CDC vaccine card or photo of card and/or excelsior pass) is required to be verified at this time. Failure to be ready may lead to exclusion of the crew from the specific race. Crews must follow
the directions of the race officials and Event dock staff from the time it is called to the ID and Vaccine Check Area.

1a. ID Check - Checking In
The team manager must check in at ID check and collect their team’s registration packet prior to their race. The team captain or team manager must submit a list of participating crew members team roster and seating chart to the ID Check before each race. The Team Captain (or co-captain) must sign a seating chart to confirm that all team members have submitted the signed waivers.

1b. Vaccine Check
All Crewmembers must provide proof of full vaccination as well as government issued photo identification in order to receive a wristband and proceed on to the boathouse complex for racing. Proofs of vaccination include; official CDC vaccine card or photos of card and/or excelsior pass. Each Crewmember including Team Manager must be fully vaccinated with date of 2nd dose in two-dose series or single dose of one-dose series dating no later than July 24th, 2021.

2. Reporting to Staging Area
Once at the ID and Vaccine Check is complete, The ID check staff will call your team to the Crew Staging Area. When ready, the Team Coordinator will call your team to line up for boat and equipment assignment. From this point, your team will board the boat.

Diagram 1.
3. Lane Assignments
All teams must abide by their assigned lanes on the race schedule unless directed by the Team Coordinator to a different lane.

4. Boarding Procedures
(a) A crew must board the boat in accordance to instructions given by the Dockmaster and Event dock staff.

(b) A crew is not permitted to choose which boat to use and must use the boat assigned by the Team Coordinator authorized by the upper/lower dock supervisor.

(c) Each boat is assigned to a lane in which it is to race. A crew must race in the assigned lane. The lane assignment placard shall be affixed to the back of each drummer seat and placed on the back of the steersperson’s life jacket, prior to boarding the boat, both of which must be returned to the Team Coordinator or event staff after each race.

5. Crew Responsibility
Each crew shall be responsible to check paddles (refer to Part K), oars, drums, drum sticks, water bailers, steering accessories, and overall quality of the boat before its assigned race to ensure that all equipment are fully functional and acceptable for racing conditions. The Event Organizer cannot be held responsible for any boat or equipment failure once a crew has embarked and left the launching dock area. (Read together with Rules F(6), G(10)).

6. Equipment Breakage
(a) At the starting area, a boat with less than three inches of water is acceptable to race by race officials.

(b) In the event of damage to a boat or equipment on the way to the starting area, the affected crew shall alert the Starter or Umpires, and the Starter or Umpire shall have the discretion to (i) send the boat back to the launching dock area, (ii) have the crew repair the damage on the water, or (iii) have the crew continue to race with the damaged boat or equipment.

(c) Race Officials shall note any abuse of Rule F(6) by a crew so as to gain an unfair advantage and are empowered to assign a time penalty (up to 5 seconds), disqualify the offending crew from the race or future races, or a penalty described in Rule J(2).

7. Embarking
After a crew has boarded a boat, it must leave the launching dock area and proceed directly to the starting area, and must refrain from crossing or traveling in the racing lanes, obstructing the path of competing crews or accompanying launches, causing a wash, or otherwise interfering with a race in progress or about to progress.
8. Approaching the Start; Warm-up on the Course
   (a) No crew shall enter the starting area until the previous race has cleared and unless explicitly permitted to do so by the Starter or Umpires.

   (b) No crew shall practice on the course during the time when racing is in progress without permission of the Starter or Umpires.

9. Substitutions of Crew Member
Once a boat has embarked and the seating chart has been submitted, no substitutions or changes to the crew roster may be permitted for the assigned race.

PART G - Starting Procedure
1. General
Crews in the starting area must obey the instructions of the Starter, Umpires, and other race officials under the control of the Starter.

2. Starting Area Conduct
Crews shall enter and remain in the starting area for their assigned race unless for safety reasons or instructed to do so by the Starter or Umpires.

3. Crew Responsibility
Crews must take up their correct positions in the starting area in accordance to their lane assignments. It is the responsibility of the crew and not the Starter, umpires, or other race officials to maintain its correct position before the start. It is the responsibility of the drummer to watch the Starter and Umpire and to instruct the crew to follow the directions of the Starter and Umpire. It is the responsibility of each team captain to make sure that each crew member is familiar with the starting procedure before the start of all races.

4. Starting Line
The starting line will be marked by buoys on the water. Crews should look at the lane numbers marked on the left buoy in order to determine its lane position. The buoy closest to the launching dock area (east side of the lake) is marked as “0” and the buoy farthest from the launching dock area (west side of the lake) is marked as “3.” Thus, by way of example, lane 3 would be in between buoys 2 and 3, with buoy 2 on the right (east) and buoy 3 on the left (west). (See Diagram 2).

5. Held Start for Races
Pontoons will be placed behind the start line affixed with a designated lane number. Teams will approach their assigned lane pontoon slowly from behind and position their boat to the left of the pontoon. Event staff will hold the boat near the rear while waiting for the race to start. Starter may request alignment, at which point teams must align boat according to starter requests. Teams are expected to follow the commands of the starter, as described in Rule G(6).
In the event of strong winds, Event staff may hold the boat from the middle to prevent the boat from drifting too much until starter gives the command to slowly shift the boats forward; it is up to the team to lightly paddle the boat forward per starter instructions.

*Diagram 2. Map not drawn to scale*

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6. Alignment

(a) Before the start, the Starter shall cause the bows of all boats to be aligned with the plane of the starting line.

(b) If wind or other conditions make alignment difficult, the Starter shall use his or her best judgment to determine when alignment is as correct as possible under the circumstances.

(c) When the Starter is satisfied that the crews are correctly aligned, the Starter will alert all crews by giving the verbal warning “All boats hold. We have alignment. Are you ready?, Attention, please!” - (horn)

(d) At the call of “Are you ready?” all movement of paddles in the water must stop. Then at the sound of the horn or dropping of the flag, all crews may commence paddling.

   (1) If a crew is observed by the Starter or the Umpire to have moved paddles after “Are you ready?” has been called and before the sounding of the horn or dropping of the flag, the Starter shall raise a red flag and shall sound the horn twice, at which point, all crews must stop paddling and return to the start line for realignment. The offending crew shall be given a warning for jumping the start.

Note: The phrase “Are you ready?”, is signaling your team to get ready for the horn. It is not intended for you to notify the starter that your team is not ready to paddle. Any issues should be brought up before the boats are aligned.

7. Quick Start

If weather or other conditions prevent use of the normal starting procedure without inordinate delay, the Starter shall announce to the crews that a quick start will be used. The Starter shall count down in regular cadence: “5-4-3-2-1,” and sound the horn to signify the start of the race. It is the sole responsibility of the crews to point their boats while the countdown is in progress.

8. Crew Signals

If a crew is not ready when the Starter warns, “Are you ready?” the drummer and steersperson must fully extend and wave both arms above the drummer’s head to attract the Starter’s attention except when a Quick Start has been called. No crew shall be permitted to take such action in any other circumstance. This is only to be used for equipment trouble related to held start pontoon issues, buoy(s), dragon head/tail or drum.

9. Failure to Start

If a crew fails to leave the starting line after the starting commands have been given, the Starter shall stop the race. If the crew’s failure to start is not justified, the Starter may impose a penalty as described in Rule J(2).

10. False Start

(a) A crew commits a false start when its bow crosses the plane of starting line before the Starter’s horn sounds. More than one crew may be assessed a false start at the same time.
11. Equipment Failure after Start

(a) Within 50 meters - If a crew experiences equipment failure that is not covered by Rule F(5) after the race has started and up to fifty (50) meters from the start line, the race shall be restarted provided that the affected crew stops paddling immediately and both the paddlers and the drummer fully extend their arms above their heads. The Starter or Umpire shall then raise a red flag and sound the horn twice, at which point, all crews must return to the Start line for realignment. If the equipment failure is deemed to have been the result of failure to inspect the equipment and boat as is required by Rule F(5), the offending crew will be assessed a warning.

(b) Beyond 50 meters - In the event that unforeseen circumstances materially affect the outcome of a race, the Chief Race Official, Starter or Umpires may interrupt the race and order a re-race, order a timed run with only the crews affected, or take such action as is necessary to restore the aggrieved crew’s fair opportunity of winning.

(c) EXCEPTION – As provided in Rules F(5) and F(6), in instances where equipment failure was foreseeable, and the equipment failure could have been prevented but for the crew’s failure to reasonably inspect its equipment or boat, the Chief Race Official, Starter or Umpires shall not take any remedial measures.

12. Unfair Advantage; Unsportsmanlike Conduct

Any conduct that gives a crew a material advantage, which in the opinion of the race officials violates the purpose of the Rules and Regulations, may be assessed a time penalty of two (2) to five (5) seconds or a penalty described in Rule J(2).

PART H - Race Conduct

1. A Crew’s Water

The proper course for each boat is a straight line from its starting position to a corresponding point on the finish line with at least two (2) meters of clear water between itself and the adjacent boat(s). Clear water will be measured by the distance between the paddles of adjacent boats.
Each boat must remain in its allocated lane and must not interfere with other boats. Each crew is responsible for its own steering.

(a) Impedance - Crews shall be assessed a two (2) – five (5) second penalty, disqualified, or a penalty described in Rule J(2) if they deviate from their racing lanes or impede other racing crews on the water which materially affects the results of the race. The Chief Race Official may also take such action as is necessary to restore the aggrieved crew’s fair opportunity of winning.

(b) Collision - In the event a lane violation results in a collision between two or more boats and it materially affects the result of the race, the Chief Race Official, Starter, or Umpire may order one or more boats to re-race the race, with or without the offending crew. If, in the opinion of the umpire, a crew could have avoided the collision by following the umpire’s instructions to alter its path (within its assigned lane) or a crew initiated a collision by steering into a boat veering off its path, the Chief Race Official may disqualify the offending crew(s), assess a time penalty on the offending crew(s), or assess a penalty described in Rule J(2). The Chief Race Official may also take such action as is necessary to restore the aggrieved crew’s fair opportunity of winning.

2. Umpires’ Instructions
Umpires shall follow racing crews and warn crews that are not in its assigned racing lane or is impeding the course of another racing crew. Crews shall obey the umpires’ instructions at the risk of penalty or disqualification. If a crew fails to respond to instructions, the Umpires may identify and order the offending crew to stop paddling. Umpires may instruct a non-offending crew to stop paddling if it is necessary to prevent a collision.

3. Interference
Interference shall consist of physical contact with another crew (including clashing of paddles), washing another crew, or failing to observe two meters of clear water between boats. It shall not be interference if a crew is washed or obstructed while paddling outside its own water. A crew that leaves its own water does so at its own risk.

4. Deliberate Swamping or Capsizing
If, in the opinion of the race officials, a boat has been swamped or capsized deliberately by the crew, the Event Organizer reserves the right to disqualify and refuse such crew’s entry in the Event and future Events. A penalty of $500 will also be imposed on the team.

5. Deliberate Destruction of Boat
If, in the opinion of the race officials, a boat is damaged deliberately by the crew, the Event Organizer reserves the right to impose a penalty of $5,000 on the offending crew. The Event Organizer also reserves the right to require the offending crew to pay for the costs of repairs to the damaged boat and the right to disqualify the offending crew from this year’s Event and future Events.
6. Wake Riding/Hang Washing
Any instance of a crew riding the bow wave created by another boat in order to gain an unfair advantage in the 250 meter race will result in a time penalty of two (2) to five (5) second penalty, or a penalty described in Rule J(2).

7. Overtaking
When a crew is overtaking a crew ahead of it, the overtaking crew must provide two (2) meters of clear water between itself and the adjacent boats. When a crew is being overtaken by an advancing boat, it must not block or interfere with the path of the overtaking crew.

8. Drumming
Drummers must be seated in the drum seat at all times during the course of a race. Drumming is an essential part of dragon boat racing. Once beyond 50 meters from the starting line, drummers must continuously beat the drum (leathered top of the drum) with their drum sticks until the end of the race.

9. Paddling Technique
Only a seated paddling technique is permitted during the course of a race. No paddler is permitted to paddle while standing or kneeling.

10. Unsportsmanlike Conduct
A crew that engages in unsportsmanlike conduct on the water may be assessed by a race official with one of the penalties described in Rule J(2). The Chief Race Official may take appropriate action if the outcome of the race was materially affected.

PART I - The Finish
1. Finish Line
Like the starting line, the finish line will be marked by buoys on the water. (Refer to Rule G(4) for further details.)

2. Order of Finish
   (a) A crew has finished the race when the foremost part of its dragon head touches the plane of the finish line. It is recommended that all crews paddle beyond the finish line.

   (b) The finishing order of a race and the time taken by each boat will be determined by the Chief Race Official whose decision shall be final

3. Disembarking
   (a) Once crews have passed the finish line, all crews must return immediately and directly to the launching dock area and disembark promptly.

   (b) Each crew on the water must wait near the launching dock area until Event Dock Staff signals the crew and assigns a launching birth to disembark.
(c) Once disembarked, teams must drop off all festival issued PFDs, paddles and drum sticks and wait in the Crew Holding Area. Teams will be released once judges declare the results final. Team Managers may wait outside the Crew Holding Area to assist the teams, if needed.

**PART J – Penalties**

1. **Matters Subject to Protest**
   Invitational/unpaid divisions shall not be subject to official protest but may incur penalties.

2. **Types of Penalties**
   (a) **Warning** – A crew that receives two warnings applying to the same race shall be disqualified from the race. A false start shall have the same effect as a warning. Warnings applicable to the original race shall apply to a re-race.

   (b) **Disqualification** – A crew that is disqualified shall be removed from the race, which may or may not affect the crew’s ability to advance. Disqualifications may apply to individual crew members as well.

   (c) **Time Penalties** – A crew that is assessed a time penalty shall have time added to its race result. Time penalties can range from 2 seconds to 5 seconds, and apply to race only.

3. **Restoring Opportunity of Winning**
   If the Chief Race Official, after consultation with the race officials, finds that a crew has been deprived of its fair opportunity of winning, placing, or advancing, he or she shall take such measures as are necessary to restore that opportunity. Such measures may include assessing a penalty as described in Rule J(2) on the offending crew, re-racing a race with all or some of its original participants, or advancing the aggrieved crew into an extra lane in a final.

**PART K - Equipment**

1. **Allocation of Equipment**
   All boats, paddles, oars, drums, drum sticks, water bailers, and PFDs used by crew members shall be provided by the Event Organizer. The allocation of boats, paddles, oars, water bailers, and PFDs to crews and its crew members shall be made by the Event Organizer, Dockmaster and the Event dock staff.

2. **Modifications or Alterations**
   No modifications or additions to the boat or equipment may be made by any crew.

3. **Returning Equipment**
   All paddles, drum sticks, PFDs and any other equipment used during the practice sessions and races must be returned to the Event Organizer intact and in full.
4. Drumming Equipment
Only the drum and drum sticks provided shall be used to signal the stroke rate. Whistles, rattles, air horns or any other noise making devices are prohibited from use in practice or races.

5. Paddles
Each team is allowed one extra paddle per boat. Do not remove or take paddles from other boats. Paddlers found to be using paddles that are not issued by the Event Organizer will be given a 2 – 5 second time penalty and if the warning is ignored they will face disqualification from the competition concerned.

6. Water Bailers
The Event Organizer will provide each boat two (2) hand-held bailers with which water within a boat can be removed. No other equipment for removing water from the boat, including but not limited to pumps and foreign bailers, is permitted.

7. Electrical Devices
No electrical, electronic, or radio amplifying equipment of any kind is permitted in the boat.

8. Seating Pads and Knee Pads
Seating pads and knee pads are permitted on a boat provided that they are no more than a quarter inch (0.25 inches) thick.

9. Gloves, Tape and Wax
Crew members may wear gloves. Tape and wax are permitted but must not be affixed to or leave a residue on the paddles.

10. Foreign Substances
Except provided above, no external devices shall be used during the race other than the equipment provided by the Event Organizer.

*If there are any changes to the Rules and Regulations, it will be announced at the Aug, 7th morning Team Meeting*

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