



## COMPETITION - MYTHS & FACTS

We often hear it quoted that *"it is not the Dragons Abreast way to be competitive"*. It appears there is considerable confusion around this area and we have prepared this document to offer some clarity on the topic.

### THE FACTS

1) Dragons Abreast is about participation and inclusiveness.

Inclusiveness means:

- never denying survivors the opportunity to race
- nurturing individual paddling ambitions
- allowing all survivors to develop at their own pace **to whatever level they aspire**
- nurturing those who prefer a more social paddling experience

2) Dragons Abreast *is not, and will never be, about competition* but becoming more competitive is often a natural progression based on an increase in fitness.

3) Dragons Abreast has no problem with groups that wish to field a competitive team **provided** no survivors are denied the paddling and racing experience.

4) Strong Dragons Abreast teams have a key role in demonstrating the scope and effectiveness of what the Dragons Abreast experience can bring to survivors.

5) Failure to cater for and retain competitive survivor paddlers will mean the institutional memory of the group is lost.

6) Preventing fitter, stronger, more competitive survivors from training harder and competing as part of Dragons Abreast is denying them the inclusiveness of being a part of our organization.

7) It is acceptable for a Dragons Abreast member group to select a strong team from among their members **provided** there is a place in another team for those who are not quite so strong or just want to race for fun.

8) All Dragons Abreast survivor teams have the right to be included in the Dragons Abreast races.

## THE MYTHS

- 1) Dragons Abreast must accept all survivors that want to be a part of our organization.
  - We are not a one size fits all - Dragons Abreast is not for everyone. It is our right to refuse membership with no reasons being given
  
- 2) Dragons Abreast groups must include all local members in their own teams at events.
  - It is the right of the local group committee to organize teams as they see fit, ***provided*** all members are placed in a Dragons Abreast boat.
  - Placements may be within other Dragons Abreast teams at the same event. This is the Dragons Abreast way – to help each other out and ensure all members can get on the water.

## CONCLUSION

Survivor members with a more competitive bent try for nationals and worlds etc and that is wonderful. It is yet another powerful statement for breast cancer survivors – we can do anything! Strong Dragons Abreast teams demonstrate that we do not have to remain as victims of breast cancer.

The day there is a **full survivor team** that places in the top 3 at Nationals we will yell it from the roof tops and tell the world what women with breast cancer have achieved – and this falls right in line with our not being competitive **because that was never the focus** when these individuals began to paddle – **but it was the outcome** – and as long as that was achieved by Dragons Abreast members while also catering to other levels of paddlers (not necessarily in the same boat) then we are true to the message – awareness and education.

**Issue Date: 1 May 2009**