



Golden Paddle Requirements

(Last Updated 8/6/2025)

Introduction

ORS (Online Reporting System) has come a long way in 2023 thanks to our partnership with the University of Maryland Hackers for Good program. You will see several new reports that should make it easier to manage your chapter programs. Several data entry enhancements were also implemented. National also tightened up the rules for Golden Paddle Chapter requirements to help us compete more successfully for grants and make it easier to respond to a wide variety of data calls from our sponsors. Finally, National also maintains metrics pulled from ORS and Resmark (waivers) and shares these metrics monthly to all the Chapter Coordinators.

Golden Paddle Chapters

Here are the current requirements:

- 15 or more Unique Veterans
- 26 or more Golden Paddle Qualifying events
- Mandatory Chapter Safety Stand Down to be completed prior to **May 31 with core Chapter Leadership.**
- **Signed Chapter Affiliation Agreement to be completed prior to March 31**

Golden Paddle Qualifying Events

We have also outlined new requirements for what constitutes a qualifying Golden Paddle Event. In general, we concentrate on water-based events, Safety Stand Down and Training. The new requirements are based on the Event Type:

Event Type	GP Qualifying Type	Min Vets	Min Attendees
Family Day	Y	2	2
Flat Water	Y	2	2
Kayak Football	Y	2	2
Kayak Polo	Y	2	2
Movie Night/Other (Off Water)	N	1	1

Outreach/Training (Off Water)	N	1	1
Pool	Y	2	2
River	Y	2	2
Surf	Y	2	2
Training/Admin (On Water)	Y	2	5
TRR Competition	Y	2	2
Annual Safety Stand Down	Y	2	5
ACA Training	Y	2	5
SWR Training	Y	2	5
First Aid Training	Y	2	5

Lifestyle Chapters

Some chapters have a much smaller number of veterans or limited volunteers making it difficult to reach Golden Paddle Status. The next tier “Lifestyle Chapter” addresses the requirements of these valuable chapters.

- 10 or more Unique Veterans
- 12 or more Golden Paddle Qualifying events
- Mandatory Chapter Safety Stand Down prior to **May 31 with core Chapter Leadership.**
- **Signed Chapter Affiliation Agreement prior to March 31**

New Chapters

TRR seeks to expand our reach in helping veterans and their families. Each year, we add a few new chapters to our family. New chapter coordinators sign a special Chapter Affiliation Agreement in Resmark. New chapters will receive a 6 Month and a one-year review by National to help guide them into becoming a regular chapter. New chapters will be outfitted with suitable boats and gear for 5 paddlers. The gear allotment may be adjusted during each 6-month review based on ORS reporting and needs.

- 6 or more Unique Veterans within their first year
- 8 or more Golden Paddle Qualifying events within their first year
- **NOTE:** The New Chapter Affiliation Agreement is signed at startup

Fundraising

Chapters are also expected to perform some local fundraising. TRR National provides monthly reporting on chapter balances to the chapter coordinators. All chapters should raise a minimum of \$800 annually which is used to defer travel costs for sending veterans to National events; pay local transportation costs of leadership; or other costs of Chapters. Support from the **National Development Director** is always available for support in Chapter fundraising efforts.

Monthly Chapter Coordinator Calls

Chapters are expected to attend the monthly Chapter Coordinator Zoom Calls. These Zoom Calls are important for:

- Sharing program changes (like the new Golden Paddle Requirements, DIVVY, Waivers, etc.)
- Announce new National events.
- Introduce new chapters & coordinators.
- Share new Safety issues.

The Chapter Coordinator can choose any member from their chapter to attend.

Lifestyle Paddlers

Another set of numbers we maintain are Lifestyle Veteran Paddlers. To qualify, the veteran must attend 15 or more events in a year. At present, 10% of TRR veterans qualify as Lifestyle Paddlers – a number we can certainly improve upon. Active veterans can often be recruited for:

- Chapter Leadership
- Instruction
- Regional & National events

Waivers

The Resmark system is separate from ORS. Liability waivers are valuable for providing the information needed to perform ORS data entry. Waivers are the backbone of our liability protection as well. The ORS Metrics help identify attendees that may be lacking a signed waiver. Only one signed waiver a year is required (some events also insist on a signed waiver). The hosting chapter is responsible for ensuring everyone has signed a waiver even for members from other chapters that attend your events.

Conclusions/Recommendation

The Golden Paddle Award is \$500 and is deposited in the chapter balance annually. Metrics are crucial to the success of any program and that goes double for non-profits. Sponsors often ask for some sort of evidence their donations are making an impact. ORS metrics are used for our VA Grant responses showing we clearly achieved the goals we set out. ORS also helps us identify unique populations for special events like Women Veteran Clinics. Finally, solid numbers can be very valuable in drafting flyers and raising local donations.