

DAILY NEWS

Brooklyn

Gowanus Canal boat race is a toxic treat

Man overboard? Let's hope not. The Gowanus is not known for its pure waters, but the local boating teams would like to change that.

BY PETER MOSKOWITZ AND CORINNE LESTCH / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

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Young Peter Burke (facing camera) of the French-Canadian team La Mer De Brooklyn retrieves the Gowanus Challenge finish-line buoy on Saturday. Peter's father Justin is shown paddling their boat.

It's a good thing no one fell in.

About 30 boaters braved Brooklyn's toxic Gowanus Canal Saturday for its first rowing regatta, a 21/2-mile round-trip race that drew roughly 50 spectators.



About 30 boaters competed for glory in the Gowanus Canal rowing regatta, a 2-and-1/2-mile round-trip race that drew roughly 50 spectators.

The Gowanus Dredgers group hosted the Red Hook Boaters at the regatta.

"This is one of the most exciting events where the elite of New York's boating community come out to advocate for clear water," said event organizer Eymund Diegel.



The red buoy is a helium balloon used to take water-quality-monitoring-and-planting aerial photos for the Gowanus Canal Conservancy's and Dredgers Balloon Mapping Program.

But some adventurous kayakers seemed to appreciate the fouler parts of the race.

"With every stroke of the paddle, you're bumping into feces," said Park Slope resident Elizabeth Royte, who didn't seem fazed by sewer overflow.

Intrepid seafarer [Rob Buchanan](#) won the race with a student he coaches at the Benjamin Banneker High School rowing team in Fort Greene. "I'm not squeamish, but I wouldn't swim in the Gowanus," said Buchanan, 54.

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