

Challenge Activities

More challenge activities geared towards the Scout level.

Challenge Activities for Camporees

Ken Lee, The Leader, April 1988

Annual camporees provide many good learning and social opportunities for both Scouts and their leaders. Scouts enjoy getting together with other Scouts and comparing their troop to others by watching them tackle various activities, checking out the different gadgets they make, and seeing how they apply their Scouting skills. Scouters can seek out new ideas pioneered by other troops and check out the different types of tents and equipment in use.

If you make the camporee program available to participating troops a couple of months in advance, the Scouts can use the time to train and practise to meet the various challenges. It's a good way to improve their Scouting skills.

This article provides a series of challenge activities that have been very successful at camporees over the years. Some of them sharpen pioneering and outdoor skills and some are just good fun. Get together with your patrol leaders so that they can review each activity and plan how best to go about it. Brainstorming is a good approach. Challenge the patrol leaders to find better and faster ways to perform the various projects with their Scouts.

Giant Knot: Six Scout team; judged on time. Given a 10 metre rope, tie a clove hitch to a post in the middle of a 7 metre circle. You may not enter the circle.

At your Court of Honour, place a pencil in a block of wood and give the PLs a piece of string with which to work out the best method. Then have them try their solutions in full scale.

The Giant Knot might be a round turn and two half hitches. Or it might challenge Scouts to secure two 10 m ropes to the pole. Look up the fisherman's knot.

Log Hoist: One Scout; judged on time. Throw a 10 m rope over a 2.5 m crossbar 5 m away. Run up and tie a timber hitch to a log (50 cm long). Hoist the log free of the ground and hitch the rope to a peg at your starting point. The log must remain clear of the ground.

Bell Ring: 10 Scout team; judged on time. Given no equipment, ring a bell hung 3.5 m above ground. You must ring the bell with your hand.

Log Pull Relay: Six Scout team with a 3 m rope; judged on time. Teams are arranged three Scouts at each end of the course. The first Scout ties the rope to a log and pulls the log to the other end of the course to be pulled back by the second Scout, and so on. The timber hitch is a fast knot to tie but, if they make it a single, they must keep on the tension at all times.

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Life Line: Three Scout team; judged on the number of successful throws. Throw an 11 metre rope over a 9 m distance to land between two pegs set a metre apart. Each Scout has two throws.

No-Match Firelighting: Two Scout team with materials supplied by troop; judged on the time it takes to get a self-sustaining flame in kindling. Flint, glass, steel wool, etc., are permitted but no matches, lighters, or commercial scratch lighters. You need good tinder here. I remember a Scout who used the gauze padding from the cast on his leg!

Bucksaw: Four Scout team with troop saw (two-man crosscut saws not permitted); judged on time taken to cut through a timber 15 cm x 15 cm. Two Scouts hold the timber, two Scouts use the saw. Scouts may change places.

Your PLs may benefit from a few tips: put the two heaviest Scouts on the log to anchor it; don't try to cut through a knot; avoid pushing on the saw, which only makes it bind. Use a 75 cm saw so you can get good strokes, and put in a new blade. The troop saw probably needs one anyway.

Six Knot Relay: Six Scout team; judged on time taken to tie knots correctly. In turn, each Scout runs 10 m, ties a knot, and returns to tag off the next Scout. The six knots are the reef, bowline, sheet bend, clove hitch, round turn and two half hitches, and sheep shank.

String Burn: Two Scout team with wood and matches supplied by troop; judged on time it takes fire to burn through string. Stretch a wire 30 cm above ground and a string 45 cm above ground. The fire lay must be kept below the wire.

Fast Compass: Four Scout team with compasses supplied by troop; judged on the number of correct readings in three minutes. Lay out a circle with about 20 numbered pegs around its perimeter. In turn, each Scout goes to the centre of the circle and is given a compass reading. He writes down the number of the peg in the direction he has been given.

How Wide: Six Scout team; judged on accuracy. On a field, draw two lines 20 to 40 m apart to represent the banks of a river. Using various methods, Scouts estimate the distance between the lines.

How High: Three Scout team; judged on accuracy. Use various methods to estimate the height of a pole.

How High the Hill: Six Scout team; judged on accuracy. Scouts estimate the height of a hill. They may climb it to do so. What do your patrol leaders say about the best way to make the estimate?

Pole Raising: Six Scout team; judged on time. There is a 5 m pole in a 10 m circle with one end of the pole touching the edge of the circle. You have two 30 m ropes. Without entering the circle, erect the pole in the centre of the circle.

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Blindfold Bowline-Reef: Four Scout team; judged on time to complete correctly. Scouts are blindfolded and forbidden to talk. All four first tie a bowline on themselves, then numbers one and two Scouts tie together their ropes with a reef knot while numbers three and four do the same.

Baseline Compass Course: Four Scout team; judged on accuracy. Set up a three leg course that leaves a given peg on the baseline and returns to a different peg on the baseline.

Tripod Chair: Six Scout team; judged on time. Lash and erect a tripod from three poles 4.3 m long. Test by suspending a rope with a bosun's chair (bowline on a bight) from the top. One Scout must sit in the chair and remain clear of the ground.

Can Race: One Scout; judged on distance travelled in two minutes. Given two large juice cans, move from point A to point B without letting your feet touch the ground.

Tire Obstacle Race: Two Scout team; judged on time. Scouts travel through a series of tires suspended at different levels from stout rope.

Stilt Race: Two Scout team; judged on total distance travelled in three minutes. Supply stilts with step placed 45 cm off the ground.

Kim's Game: Four Scout team; judged on number of accurate observations. You have a minute to view 25 items and three minutes to list them.

Atomic Bucket: Four Scout team judged on time to complete. A bucket half full of water sits on top of a 30 cm high post. Two Scouts, using two staves as a stretcher, must move the bucket 15 m to the top of a post 120 cm high. The other two Scouts reverse the procedure. An upset bucket means game over!

Leaky Can Race: Four Scout team; judged on the amount of water in the bucket after three minutes. Place a bucket 10 m away from a tub of water and give each team a small can with a hole drilled in the side near the bottom. Team members take turns to fill the can with water, race to the bucket to empty it, and return to give the can to the next Scout.

Styro Cup Relay: Six Scout team; judged on time and the amount of water remaining in the cup. Place three Scouts at each end of a 30 m course. Hand the first Scout a styrofoam cup full of water. The team runs a relay race carrying the cup of water over the course.

Soccer Kick: Four Scout team; judged on score. Give each Scout two chances to kick a soccer ball through a hula hoop standing vertically 10 m from the kick line.

Oil Drum Ball: Three Scout team; judged on score. Give each Scout two tries at throwing a tennis ball

into an oil drum placed 9 m away from the throwing line.

It's obvious that the challenges offer troops ways to win points, but we consider all the Scouts at a camporee winners and do not declare a top troop. Instead, we make awards in three categories: gold for the 10% of the troops who gained top points, silver for the next 10%, and bronze for all the others. We hand out the awards alphabetically, without announcing points. We think it's important that, instead of aiming to be "the best troop in the world", Scouts work towards making their troop the very best it can be.

Think about it, then go out there and involve your troop in a camporee this year.

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