

2015 District commissioner
North Star District

Announcement of Commissioner's Awards at Camporees



Background. In 1907, Lord Baden Powell held his famous experiment of Scouting at Brown Sea Island. He had several ideas about what Boy Scouts would look like. He used this as an opportunity to invite some boys. The boys were asked to follow the patrol method. Baden Powell was looking to find out how the theory worked in practice.

We all know that the experiment was successful. But we sometimes forget the lessons he was attempting to learn.

Goal. District Commissioner Jeff Heck has undertaken to introduce new awards to Camporees. The coveted Willie Award remains for the unit with the best campsite. The commissioners award will focus on the best implementation of the patrol system, separate from all existing awards. The goal is to engage the patrols as cohesive units as B-P intended.

Return to First Principles. The first principle of the patrol system is that a patrol leader leads a distinct group of boys in a distinct area. The senior patrol leader coordinates the activities between the patrol leaders so that each patrol thrives and learns. He does this

primarily through the Patrol Leaders Council.

The scoutmaster is not the "master" of scouts as "leader" -- but as in "schoolmaster" -- as "teacher" of scouts. The scoutmaster should allow the scouts to learn using safe opportunities to fail with dignity. The lessons come from heavy use of start-stop-continue in the patrols and the PLC. These awards seek to emphasize these principles.

Description of Awards. This award is broken into two parts. The first part are awards for a single Camporee. The second is for long-term use of the patrol system.

For all patrols present, they will compete for **Commissioner's Honors.** All patrols will achieve on a pass-fail basis. A patrol earns the honor by

(1)having a patrol leader elected by the patrol (not appointed by adults or PLC; can be temporary election) and identified to Commissioner in writing before encampment begins (meaning no gear removed from vehicles), which can be left at the registration table,

(2)a patrol flag posted while in camp and carried to competitions and campfires (poster board acceptable, but cloth preferred due to risk of inclement weather),

(3)a well-demarcated patrol area, consistent with Willie Award criteria,

(4)a patrol log book that has been used in preparation for at least two patrol leader council meetings at Camporee in order to allow each scout an opportunity to comment on stop-start-continue discussions for the patrol and troop,

(5)a separate cook area for the patrol within their demarcated area (fire safety, etc., allowing; if outside patrol area, effort to create significant

distance between each patrol and adult stations are important; adults sharing cook space with a patrol is disqualifier),

(6)a posted work chart in compliance with Willie Award criteria,

(7)attendance at each Camporee activity (time and weather permitting), as reported by judges, and

(8)a written stop-start-continue report from patrol and reported by patrol leader about Camporee's quality to Commissioner. *See* General Comments below. Patrol log pages acceptable.

Patrols established for the sole purpose of the Camporee *are eligible*.

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For all patrols present, the **Commissioner's High Honors Award** goes to a patrol that:

(1)uses no pop-ups or picnic shelters for cook areas (preference for dining flies),

(2)creates at least one piece of furniture or similar scale scoutcraft project with skills from or inspired by the Boy Scout Handbook or BSA Fieldbook or other scoutcraft/bushcraft publication (use of novel pioneering methods like the Japanese Mark III square lashing are encouraged),

(3)relies *mostly* on the type of equipment that would fit in the patrol members' backpacks and

one patrol box (emphasis on field-expedient methods and minimal reliance on car camping methods), exceptions for food-related tools, and

(4)makes at least one cooked dish made from fresh ingredients over the weekend that uses other heating methods than camp stoves (e.g., Dutch ovens, solar ovens, reflector ovens, campfire roasting, foil wrapping).

(5)If a cooking competition is offered, participate in it.

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Extensive use of well-crafted field expedients in a patrol area is a competitive advantage in judging. Use of techniques used for high adventure trips like Philmont or the Boundary Waters is the goal. *Only one high honor awarded per Camporee*.

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For patrols participating in several camporees, the **Brown Sea Isle Award** goes to the patrol earning a Commissioner's Honor for at least two previous Camporees and the current Camporee, they have had at least 60% of their patrol members participate in at least two-thirds of the Commissioner's Honor Camporees (that is, this seeks to reward long-term retention and participation of patrol members).

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The **Brown Sea Isle Award with Distinction** goes to patrols who achieve the Brown Sea Isle Award while led by a patrol leader or assistant patrol leader who has White Stag Training (NYLT) at no less than one of the Camporees.

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For all SPLs present, the **Commissioner's SPL Merit Award** goes to Senior Patrol Leaders who are

(1)elected by the boys prior to 14 days prior to encampment (ASPL acting as SPL is eligible if his appointment is 14 days prior and he is fully charged with managing the Camporee 14 days in advance),

(2)attend all SPL meetings at Camporee,

(3)use PLC's effectively to their SM's satisfaction as reported to Commissioner prior to Saturday evening flags,

(4)have more than one patrol present at Camporee,

(5)have more than one patrol earn Commissioner's Honors, and

(6)implemented one change from PLC stop-start-continue.

Multiple short PLC meetings throughout the weekend help in this process. Multiple SPL Merit Awards may be issued at a camporee.

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**Commissioner's Baden-Powell Order of Merit** goes to a scoutmaster who

1.received his Wood Badge,

2.had at least two patrols earn the Brown Sea Isle Award,

3.had one SPL earn the Commissioners SPL Merit Award,

4.had a separate patrol area for adults at each Camporee,

5.allowed the SPL to be the sole voice to the scouts, except in advising the PLC and

Scoutmaster's Minute (in other words patrol members, who are not on PLC, should think the Scoutmaster is mute on decisions),

6.recruit a troop representative cooking competitions, if offered, and

7.has completed his own stop-start-continue with his unit commissioner or district commissioner at each Camporee after a PLC.

Scouts' inviting scouters to participate in skits, songs, or activities are encouraged, as long as the patrol leader or songmaster remains in charge of planning. Scoutmasters' conferences are encouraged for a wide range of issues, but not to supplant PLC operations.

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**General Comments.** Since a scout is on his honor at all times, self-reporting on criteria is critical. Judging will rely on reports from patrol written reports, Commissioners on site, Willie Award judges, and Scoutmasters' reporting. The Patrol Leader will be responsible for making sure that all criteria have been met and reported by Saturday night flags. Commissioners or their appointees will be responsible for viewing the campsites.

In the spirit of merit badge counseling where use of pre-written worksheets is discouraged,

the boys will be expected to report their achievement of tasks on reports that they draft themselves. The scouts will be responsible for clear written communication of when, where, and how criteria were met. These reports may be turned in at registration in the Commissioner's mailbox or at Saturday evening flags.

Please note that these awards are *not based* on esthetics. They are based implementation of patrol system principles. The scouts need only demonstrate an earnest attempt to do their best to be eligible for Commissioner's Honors.