

Adventurous Activities for Beaver Scouts



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Introduction

One of the reasons that young people join The Scout Association is to take part in adventurous activities; this applies from the Beaver Scout section to the Scout Network. These fun and exciting activities, sports and games are very often new to our Members. It is important that we as Leaders should try and provide some of these beneficial activities.

Positive Image

Encouraging young people to take part in these activities gives them the opportunity to take risks in a safe environment and to develop new skills and abilities that can be used in all parts of their lives. Trying new adventurous activities and succeeding at them gives young people the confidence to try other activities. Most young people will enjoy taking part in these activities and relish being given the opportunity to try. Giving young people the opportunity to do these activities within Scouting ensures that they are undertaken in a safe environment.

Giving young people the chance to take part in adventurous activities can be used as a potential recruitment tool. If young people enjoy these activities they will tell their friends about it who will, in turn, want to join and take part in the same activities.

A sense of adventure

To a six year old, most of what they do and see is an adventure as they are still learning enormous amounts about the world around them. A six year old's concept of adventure is very different to a 16 year old. For example, a six year old sitting in a bellboat going across a small pond will mean as

much as a trip on a raft on a white water river to a 16 year old.

Introduction to Activities

Whatever adventurous activities you provide for the Beaver Scouts they should be seen as an introduction to the activity. This is very important for two reasons; first, the capability of 6 – 8 year olds is not as great as those who are older. They are much smaller and have far less strength, so are less able to take part in some activities. For example, using a low rotating climbing wall rather than a full static climbing wall is much better and more enjoyable for Beaver Scouts. Another consideration when providing adventurous activities is the number of times you run them. If the Beaver Scouts take part in a lot of adventurous activities in Colony they will not have them to look forward to in Cub Scouts. A good idea is to talk with the Cub Scout Leaders to see what activities they do in the Pack and plan accordingly.

What should happen is that Beaver Scouts have an introduction to some of these activities. Then, as they move through the other sections, they build on the activities already enjoyed and experience new activities not tried before.

Providing the Adventure

When considering providing any adventurous activities Leaders should not worry about running them on their own. There are many people locally at District and County/Area level who can help run many adventurous activities. There will also be local Scout campsites and activity centres that can provide these activities.

The facts

All activities must be done in accordance with the most recent edition of Policy, Organisation and Rules. Also, as with any activity you run with your Beaver Scouts, you will need to complete a risk assessment. More information can be found in the factsheet FS120000 called Activities – Risk Assessment, which can be found on www.scoutbase.org.uk

There are very few activities which Beaver Scouts are not allowed to take part in, some of these are for safety reasons and others because centres do not have the equipment to fit young people of Beaver Scout age. Many air activities, such as Hang Gliding, are not permitted for those under the age of 14 years.

There are also some activities where the National Governing Body for the activity makes a restriction on ages of those taking part; this would mean that when using a commercial provider Beaver Scouts may not be permitted to take part. An example of this is Scuba Diving.

Hints and Tips:

When running any activities you need to be aware of the needs of the Beaver Scouts. You may have some Beaver Scouts who are frightened of trying some of the activities and may need encouraging. Let them take their time and watch the activity so that they can see what will happen. If they still don't want to try the activity, don't make them feel it is a problem.

Make the activity fun for the Beaver Scouts by have little competitions amongst the Beaver Scouts and against themselves. Don't put any pressure on them to take part, most Beaver Scouts will want to take part without any encouragement, others may need time to see what is going on. Praise them all when they do take part in the activity, this will encourage them to have another go and try and do better than last time.

Below are some examples of adventurous activities that could be provided at a suitable level for Beaver Scouts. This is not an exclusive list;

other activities can be adapted to suit the needs of this Section.

- Think about the activity at the Beaver Scouts' level, if the climbing wall looks big to you, it will look even bigger to them, so find a smaller alternative. Revolving walls are good for Beaver Scouts, these walls mean that they are not far from the ground and there is no need to wear a harness. You will usually find these walls at Activity Centres, but you may also be able to hire them in and get them delivered to your Scout HQ for the evening.
- 'Wheely' nights or challenges are a good way of introducing cycling to the Beaver Scouts. You could get them to bring their own bikes and helmets, as that will ensure that they fit properly. They could also use scooters or roller skates if they prefer. Set up a small course around your Scout HQ, at your local campsite or in the local park. Don't forget to make sure that the area is safe before the activities take place. These activities are great for developing the confidence and coordination of any young person.
- If your Beaver Scouts fancy doing some water activities then Bellboating is a good choice. Bellboats are very stable and enable up to 12 young people to take part in one boat. Bellboating is a fun activity and would allow the Beaver Scouts to try a paddle sport whilst limiting the likelihood of them ending up in the water. If you have more young people, or want to take more adults, you can use 2 boats at the same time, allowing races and the occasional water fight.
- Archery is another good activity for Beaver Scouts. You do need to make sure that the provider you use has bows that are small enough to allow the Beaver Scouts to take part safely. Beaver Scouts also like the idea of being Robin Hood and so this activity can be fitted into themed evenings and sleepovers.
- While members in the Explorer Scout section will regularly go walking in the hills, taking your Beaver Scouts on a walk to a nearby

pond or woodland will be just as exciting. As part of the walk you could run a short activity at the pond or woodland. Beaver Scouts have a great imagination so exploit this when you run this activity.

- Scouts will build a raft to carry them across a lake; Beaver Scouts can build a small raft to pull a teddy bear along a stream. Building small rafts will allow them to understand the concepts of raft building without the risk of getting wet. Don't forget to do a risk assessment for activity and make sure you are always careful near water.
- Not all Beaver Scouts can swim, so if you run a swimming session arrange to use the shallow end or the children's pool if there is one available. Turn the session into a fun session by using the play floats etc. Many pools have strict adult to child ratios, this may mean getting more adults along to help.
- Allow the Beaver Scouts to enjoy the fun of snow sports without snow by going grass sledging. All you need is a slope, some grass sledges and some Beaver Scouts. This is an activity the Beaver Scouts can do alongside adults – the heavier the load, the faster and further the sledge will go.

Setting expectations

It is important to set expectations for the activities you do; this needs to be done with both the parents and the Beaver Scouts. Try linking the activities you plan to do with an informative game about the activity the week before.

Make sure the parents are happy with the activity, there might also be a chance for them to come along, watch and possibly have a go.

It is also important to make the instructor aware of the abilities of the group, their age and size. This information may impact the way that the session is run or the equipment needed.

Adventure Activity Badge

To encourage Beaver Scout Leaders to allow their Beaver Scouts to take part in adventurous activities, a new activity badge has been

introduced called Adventure. The requirements are for Beaver Scouts to take part in three adventurous activities, two of which should be new to them. There are several suggestions of activities that the Beaver Scouts can try listed in the badge requirements, but this is by no means an exhaustive list.

Where to go and who can help

A good starting point for planning these activities would be to speak to other leaders in your area, as they may have done these activities before with their Colonies.

A good source of help is the Assistant County/Area Commissioner for Activities. They will be able to advise you the type of activities you can run with the Beaver Scouts.

Activity Centres and campsites may be able to provide these activities or point you in the direction of those who can.

The Internet is a great way of finding out more about activities; take a look at the A-Z Directory of activities on Scoutbase UK for more information on how to plan them within Scouting. <http://www.scoutbase.org.uk/ps/activities/factfile.php>