

## How can your Troop have successful Patrols?

As a Scouter, you have probably heard at one time or another something along the lines of: "Matthew can't go on the hike this weekend because he has hockey." This is just one example; we have all heard things like this over the years. Such statements are evidence that Scouting often becomes a lower priority among all the extracurricular activities going on in a young person's life, especially if that activity is a sports team. This is because when you are part of a team, you are expected to be there because your team is counting on you.

How can you use the Patrol system to make every Scout feel like part of a team?



By splitting a Troop into Patrols of six to eight Scouts each, every Scout has the opportunity to contribute to the work of the team. When a Patrol plans an Adventure, the Scouts share the responsibilities. There aren't too many or too few members for most tasks that can be expected as a part of Scouting. Patrols can pursue Adventures as a small team, or can bring ideas for Adventures to the whole Troop.

There is no single best way to create Patrols, but they should be formed by the Scouts themselves. You may, however, offer plenty of help by supporting how the Scouts go about forming Patrols (while not dictating what Scouts should be in what Patrols), and you can provide some important guidance about the chemistry that should make for good Patrols—and a good Troop.

To facilitate the Youth-led selection of Patrols but keep the process manageable, it can be a good idea for fourth-year Scouts to collaborate on selecting Patrols.

When selecting Patrols, senior Scouts should be encouraged to ask themselves some important questions, such as:

- How can we make sure that the Patrols are made up of Scouts who will get along with each other?

- How can we make sure that there is a mixture of experience within a Patrol so that we can learn from each other?
- How can we make sure that every Patrol will be responsible and capable?
- Are there any siblings or close friendships that we should pay special consideration to?

Once Patrols are selected, Scouters should encourage them to work closely together as teams. The members will grow closer to one another over time. Planning, Doing and Reviewing Adventures together will strengthen the Patrols and make Scouting a more rewarding experience for the members of the Troop.

Remember, Patrols are a crucial part of the Scout Method. The Patrol system is literally as old as Scouting itself, and there is no better way to make every Scout feel like part of the team.