



KEYSTONE

KLONDIKE

SATURDAY
JANUARY 20, 2001

Bill & Brian
20 x 20 x 20
I'm taking home
a play in between

BEAUMONT SCOUT RESERVATION

SLED RULES

- 2' wide x 6' long
- Wood frame
- Manufactured skis not permitted as runners
- Manufactured sleds not permitted as body of Patrol sled.

SIX EAGER WEBelos Scouts push and drag their homemade sled constructed of scrap plywood and skis. They hold tightly to black electrical-tape handles on a rope as they anxiously wrestle the sled to the starting line.

In a moment, with most of the Webelos Scouts pulling the sled and a lucky Webelos Scout rider, they will set out over a six-station, snowy Scout camp course. An older Boy Scout "driver" helps steer the sled in the right direction.

It's the annual Frontier District Klondike Derby, part of the Denver Area Council's program to guide Webelos Scouts into Boy Scouting.

By Darby Junkin

Photographs by Eric Lars Bakke



(Above) At the Klondike Derby's flapjack cooking station, George Davis flips pancakes for the Brown's Hole breakfast competition. (Below) Team 2 of Troop 41, and Pack 217 sprints along the Klondike trail.

"It took us three weeks to make this!" says Johnathan Wright, 9, of Webelos Den 1, Pack 217.

'Just do your best'

"We're going to win," declares another Webelos Scout.

"It doesn't matter who wins," retorts George Davis, their Boy Scout driver from Troop 41. "Just do your best."

Johnathan and the other Webelos Scouts look at George with awe, listening for his slightest order. Their sled is next on the starting line.

A heavy, wooden, dense-looking sled borrowed from another troop is also dragged to the starting line by another Webelos Scout



DOGS AND MUSHERS OF

Denver-area Webelos Scouts get a solid taste of the outdoor excitement (and teamwork skills) of Boy Scouting at this traditional snow-country event.



(Above) Rick Williams helps Troop 377 Scout Tony Ventola on the ski and slingshot course. (Right) Scouts and Webelos Scouts face off in the traditional tug-of-war.

den. Six Webelos Scouts and three new Scouts from two dens of Pack 168, with Troop 1, cling to it, while a cadre of as many smiling parents stand by.

Nick Tippery, patrol leader of Troop 1, attempts to organize his crew of eager Webelos Scouts. "O.K., you can all run with the sled, but everyone who starts has to finish," he warns. "And everyone must drink water at the two stations. Everyone."

"It's really exciting to see what it's all about," says Linda Rhea, mother of 9-year-old Patrick (who is firmly entrenched in the riding seat of the sled). "It lets them finally get a close look at Boy Scouting."

"The Webelos Scouts



don't have to camp during the derby, so for them, it's like being out sledding," says Nick Tippery, still trying to organize his sled team into the most effective pushing and pulling formation. The younger boys, however, cling to sides of the sled, unwilling to give up their positions. "They learn about winter camping, about dehydration... and teamwork," he says, with extra emphasis on the last word.

"O.K.," yells Nick, as the clock counts down, "everybody get ready. I still need some 'dogs'—not everyone can be a rider."

Follow the yellow-striped trees

It's time for Den 1 to go, and an organizer barks out the final instructions:

"You've got about 30 seconds before you go. Do not, I repeat, do NOT miss that first turn. Follow the yellow-striped trees; they will take you to each station. Under NO conditions may you pick the sled up, even on rocks or road. Teams that do will be disqualified. Stay to the snow (continued on page 40)



THE KLONDIKE TRAIL

Klondike Derby (from page 29)

as much as possible.

"At Station Two, your team must drink a quart of water. EVERYONE must take a drink. Teams are judged on the best time and points."

Finally—they're off! And they're not alone. Adult leaders, carrying cameras, trail the Den 1 sled.

"This is the best yet," says Joanna Wright, leader of Den 1 since 1994. "We've been doing inside things most of the year. With the Klondike Derby, Webelos boys can go out and have fun. It's a good snow activity and you don't have to know how to ski. And you can be wild outside instead of in a little room."

"Do we have to eat this?" a Webelos Scout asks, eyeing a gooey, uncooked pancake.

The boys worked hard making the sled by themselves, she continues, breathing hard to keep up with it. "I wanted them to have something to remember when they got older," she says, holding up her camera.

The boys pull the sled around the first turn and are immediately confronted with Station One, dubbed "Brown's Hole."

They have to cook a pancake over a small gas camping stove. The batter is mixed in a small plastic bag, then poured into the not-yet-hot-enough frying pan.

"We should have made 10 little ones," a team member yells as he observes the large pancake's lack of progress. "This is taking too long."

"Do we have to eat this?" asks another, looking at the sticky white guck being flipped in the pan.

"O.K., it's done," says George Davis, who is manning the frying pan. "Everybody has to take a little bit."

"No spitting out," cautions the Scout leader monitoring the station, while stifling a smile.

The pancake disappears.

"They'll spend all week talking about this at school," laughs Joanna Wright. "They'll talk about what they did, and it will make them want to do more of it."

That's a key to the Klondike event, she adds. "This gives them an inkling about Boy Scouting and gets them

outdoors, learning teamwork, good sportsmanship, and how to build a sled."

Next stop: 'Pierre's Hole'

Now it's time for the sled from Pack 168. The Webelos Scout mushers take off, with as many parents as boys running behind.

By the time the team is gulping down water at Station Two and preparing to go to "Pierre's Hole," most of the parents are walking.

But they're having as much fun as the youngsters, slogging through the spring snow and picking up the trail of lost caps and mittens as the boys slow to a walk as well.

"Go, go, go!" yell a few parents, trying to find their own second wind in the high altitude.

"We've got quite a bit of parent support. Otherwise this wouldn't happen," says Kevin Tippery, Scoutmaster of Troop 1 and father of Nick, the Boy Scout "driving" the Pack 168 sled. "We tried to get out a lot of pre-information as to what to expect, and the Webelos Scouts jumped right in."

"What they experience, though, is what fun it can be working together, rather than working against each other," the older Tippery adds, strid-

ing strongly behind the sled. "Click always form, but with the Klondike rather than splitting into groups, they see Scouts working together, getting through the course with everyone's help, and they also get a winter experience."

"The best thing is having fun here," Tippery concludes with a smile. "They're not all watching one person do it; it's not a lecture. It's interesting."

Earning the Polar Bear badge

On this camping experience, the snow is patchy, but the temperatures are expected to drop below zero. That will assure some new Scouts a shot at earning the council's Polar Bear Club patch.

"My son wished there was more snow," says Rich Stein, whose son, Pack 376, was on his first winter camp-out as well as pulling a sled with his new pack. "This is the kind of thing to keep kids in Scouting—amazingly excited."

"It's kind of scary for some," says Tom Coon, a father and Scoutmaster of Troop 90 in southwest Denver. "It's their first official experience, and it's a winter camp-out. With the Klondike, we try to instill [the habit of

BUILDING EXCITEMENT AND PROMISES

The Frontier District of the Denver Area Council is composed of 60 percent urban, 40 percent suburban boys and has the most inner-city youngsters of the council's six traditional districts. It had a 55 percent transition rate in 1995, and the district traditionally has a lower transition rate because there are fewer volunteers available.

The Webelos Scouts who wish to participate in the annual winter Klondike Derby must be invited and sponsored by a Boy Scout troop. "We know we have to include the Webelos program in the planning process," said John Coleman Jr., Denver Area Council field director. "It's important to get those Webelos Scouts out to the Klondike to encourage their graduation into a Boy Scout troop."

The Klondike Derby serves to initiate new Scouts, who were inducted in late February, into their first winter camping experience. And it also builds excitement and promises about what Scouting offers for the Webelos Scouts.

The 60 Webelos Scouts who came to this Klondike were encouraged to camp overnight. Though not required to do so, almost all decided they would—and got to be involved with Scouts, many for the first time.

And their presence had special appeal for the all-Scout Klondike teams, too: For every Webelos Scout included on a sled, the team received a five-second handicap on its overall time.



drinking water at high altitude and try to help instill teamwork."

The Scouts from Troop 90 run a sled clearly built from experience, being light, strong, versatile, and made of PVC plastic tubes and skids, yet with wheels for the rocky parts of the six-station route.

The five other stations challenge the new Scouts and Webelos Scouts and give the more experienced Scouts a sporting time. Aside from having to drink a quart of water at Stations Two and Four, dubbed "Horse Creek" and "Green River," respectively, the teams are also required to lash two poles together to fetch a water bucket at "Pierre's Hole" and set up a dining fly at "Jackson Hole." They are also to light a match with a hatchet at "Burnt Fork"—or if unable to, one team member has to take a lap around the area. The experienced Scouts light the match in the blink of an eye; more than one team composed of new Scouts or Webelos Scouts take many a lap.

"It's stuff like this that keeps them off the streets," says Don Linville enthusiastically, whose son Jesse is running with Pack 376. "They can see for themselves and get to interact with the Boy Scouts one on one."

For the Webelos Scouts, though, the appraisal of the experience is more succinct. "The worst part is going uphill," Jesse Linville, a Webelos Scout, says between deep breaths at the finish line. "The best part was going down."

"Whatever it is, I've done it. That's what it teaches you," says George Davis with a quietly pleased smile as Webelos Scouts and new Scouts pulling his sled collapse into the snow just over the finish line. "It's a hard course...and now they know what it's like in Boy Scouting." ■



"Are you absolutely sure, Dr. Pleshke, that my mother's advice hasn't affected the treatment?"

Letters (from page 4)

Return the Lion Badge to Cub Scouting. Two years as Webelos Scouts is one year too much. Transition doesn't take two years.

Institute service bars. A simple patch—gold with a blue background, red with a tan background—with each stripe showing a year in the organization. This patch can be worn on the sleeve of the Scout's shirt, representing his years of activity. The service bars would replace the existing star pins and would be more noticeable and practical.

John J. Leddy Jr.
Cubmaster, Pack 6
West Caldwell, N.J.

◆ Town and state insignia were replaced by the council community emblem because units in small towns wanted to show their council affiliation. Also, this allowed for one inventory for all council members rather than many separate patches for every community.

Ideally, Webelos Scouts should graduate into Boy Scouting after 18 months.

The Webelos Scout program, which replaced the Lion badge, is really more appropriate for 18 months, when Webelos Scouts graduate into Boy Scouting in February.

The uniform and insignia project team tries to keep the uniform as uncluttered as possible while still giving recognition. The service stars placed above the pocket have been determined to be the best method for recognizing tenure while wearing the uniform.

Scouting's past can be interesting

I found September's The Way It Was column concerning railroad Scouters in the 1920s to be extremely interesting. It was something I didn't know about Scouting history.

I hope to see more articles like this. I think it is fun to hear about the past, especially with regards to Scouting and what it has done for the community and business.

John A. Feist
Council Board Member
Golden, Colo.

85 YEARS IN THE MAKING



BOYS' LIFE

85TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE PATCH

1 to 4 patches @ \$3.50 each
5 to 9 patches @ \$3.25 each
10 to 19 patches @ \$3.00 each
20 or more patches @ \$2.50 each

BOYS' LIFE magazine will observe its 85th Anniversary March 1, 1996. To celebrate this event BOYS' LIFE has issued a limited edition 85th Anniversary patch. Only 15,000 were created and are available now as long as supplies last. The patch is a 3-inch diameter, fully embroidered commemorative (shown above). The BOYS' LIFE Commemorative Patch is a great collectable. Or you can use them as awards, recognitions, or, as a nice way to say, "Thank you."

Mail orders to
BOYS' LIFE COMMEMORATIVE
DEPT SC1
PO BOX 152079
Irving, TX 75015-2079

Please send _____ patch(es) @
\$ _____ each; totaling
\$ _____.

(Add applicable sales tax. Orders outside the U.S. add \$1.05 for additional postage.)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ ZIP _____