



Webelos Transition



An important but often-overlooked part of scouting is the flow of scouts between a pack and a troop. Many scouters have watched Webelos walk across the bridge as they symbolize their passage from cub to boy scouting. But the amount of planning, training and work that prepares a cub scout for the crossover is sometimes taken for granted.

The scouting program is, at its best, a seamless progression from youth to adulthood. A large part of its

success depends on how well the cub and boy scouting programs work together.

Webelos transition is about *how* a den of Webelos scouts crosses that bridge—whether their steps are uncertain and doubtful or enthusiastic and proud. It is also about whether the crossover is viewed by the Webelos (and their parents!) as an end or a beginning.

Webelos I and Webelos II: What's the difference?

Unlike the Bobcat, Wolf and Bear patches, the Webelos patch is worn for two consecutive years. Although "Webelos I" and "Webelos II" are similar in name, the programs are different—they must be different, because scouts would lose interest if they did similar things two years in a row. So what's the difference?

Webelos I:

The **GOALS** of the first Webelos year are:

- to earn the Webelos badge.
- to learn the basics of boy scouting (scout oath, law, sign, etc.)

The highlight of the first Webelos year is often an outing with the troop, most likely in the Spring. This gives Webelos a taste of the outdoors and scouting, and something to think about over the summer.

Webelos II:

The **GOALS** of the second Webelos year are:

- to earn the arrow of light.
- to move into the troop (*this is the main goal!*)

During this year, the Webelos program draws closer to the scouting program. The den should do more outdoor activities with the troop (at least two), attend troop meetings (more than one meeting and more than one troop!), and practice doing things as a patrol, without adult help (setting up tents, cooking, fire building).

Tips for Troops

- If you have a fall or winter fundraiser, invite Webelos to participate in it. Let them earn money for their scout accounts so they'll have funds waiting for them when they cross over.
- When you invite the Webelos to camp with you, make them responsible for part of a meal. Pick some dish, have the ingredients and instructions ready, and let the Webelos know their task is to prepare the food.
- Have a Webelos II den attend a few meetings with the troop (this is different from having them over to observe a troop meeting). The Webelos should be part of the meeting opening, then move to another room for their den meeting and return later for the troop game and closing.
- **Immediately** after planning your yearly calendar, give a copy of it to Webelos den leaders or the Cubmaster. Packs plan their activities months ahead of time. If they know when your outings are, they'll plan accordingly.
- Service projects and courts of honor (especially Eagle courts of honor) are great opportunities to invite Webelos—partly because including the Webelos requires little extra planning.

What Dens Need

Names & Numbers

You can get the names, numbers and meeting places for troops in your area. Stop by or call the council office (or call your unit commissioner!)

Den Chiefs

Want help at den meetings? Need some scouts to teach by example? Any troop in your area should be able to supply you with a den chief (or two).

The key to a successful den chief program is letting the Den Chiefs know ahead of time what you want them to teach. Scouts know a great deal about camping, and you'll be amazed at what they can present, given time to prepare.

Campouts

Nothing gets Webelos more enthusiastic about scouts than spending time in the woods. On any given month, you should be able to find a troop willing to let your den accompany them for a day.



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Games Parents Play: (Cub Scouts vs. Boy Scouts)

Many cub scouts parents have some idea of how boy scouting works. After all, they've been doing cub scouts for a while, and it can't be too much different, right?

Well, mostly right. At heart, boy scouts and cub scouts are both games. The goal is to have fun, and possibly learn something. But the games have different rules.

In the Cub Scout game, parents and boys play together as a team. It's an easy game—nearly impossible to have a losing season. The game doesn't involve much competition. There are lots of pins and patches and ribbons and trophies, to display on a bookshelf or up on the wall.

But in the Boy Scout game, the boys form their own team. Parents aren't on the team—they watch from the sidelines. The game is much harder, pitting scouts against nature. It is possible to lose—not preparing for the outdoors or failing to work as a team carries real consequences (being wet or hungry, for instance).

And the rewards (of course) are greater. Many of them are harder to capture, outside of memory. How do you frame the silence of a lake at daybreak? Or the contrast between the icy wind outside and the snug interior of a snow cave? Or the tiredness of the arms after shoveling and digging all day to create those foot-thick walls of snow?

Boy Scouts is a different game for scouts, and a different game for parents. Here are some differences in how Cub Scout parents and Boy Scout parents play the game:

A pack leader needs to be outgoing and have the skills of an entertainer.

A troop adult needs to appear introverted and a little bit lazy.

A pack leader usually leads boys in songs, skits, and cheers.

That's the SPL's responsibility in the troop, with the adults quietly looking on.

A pack leader sets rules and enforces behavior.

In a troop, the scouts do that. Adults teach and guide the scouts on their performance—but behind the scenes, not during the action.

A pack leader is responsible for managing the troop program.

Troop adults let the scouts run their own program.

A pack leader gives badges to honor scouts.

Adults in the troop give responsibility, so scouts can find their honor.

A pack leader leads the boys on a hike so they have a wonderful experience.

Adults in the troop follow the scouts, to let them find the wonder in their experience.

Scouts and Sports

Sports, sports & more sports. The subject comes up right away when parents are asked about plans for moving from cub scouts to boy scouts. The popular view seems to be that scouts and sports is a one-or-the-other type of deal.

This feeling is easy to understand. After all, both cost time and money. Both have (somewhat) similar goals—practicing teamwork and having fun while growing in ability.

But it's mistaken. Scouts and sports are not mutually exclusive, and they never will be, for two reasons:

1. Scouts is no substitute for sports.

Scouts are always involved in athletics. Nearly every scout is absent for part of the year, during the play season. This is normal in any troop. Likewise, parents tend to help less with troop activities when they are busy (for instance) driving to and from hockey games. Again, this is expected. Different sports are played at different times of the year, and a good troop distributes responsibility across its membership to accommodate.

2. Sports is no substitute for scouts.

Despite things in common, athletics and scouts are not the same. Some sports, like wrestling, focus on the individual, and others are team-based. Scouting is a mixture—while there is much individual recognition and achievement, scouts do almost everything in groups.

More importantly, boy scouting is boy-run. In a sport, management decisions are made by an adult coach. In a troop, the scouts elect leaders from their own ranks to make these decisions.

*Finally, competition is the overwhelming priority in athletic programs. Teams usually have strict rules about attendance ("No practice, no play"). Scouting, on the other hand, is designed to fit a boy's changing interests, and a family's busy schedule. Miss a meeting? You can still come camping. Scouting's standards are based on principle--what someone **is**, rather than what he **does**.*

Besides sports, there are hundreds of things that boys and parents are involved in. The scouting program is designed to exist alongside the other activities of growing up. To the question of "sports or scouts?" The answer should be "yes!"

"I always hate to hear someone say their son will not continue on to Boy Scouts. I usually ask them if their son will go on to college after High School. Almost all will say "sure". I ask why they would put their son through years of preparation for being a Boy Scout and then let him walk away from that next level of education. At least it makes them think!"

--A Unit Commissioner