



Troop 49 – The Pathfinders
Klondike Derby Trip Report
January 21, 2012

Building momentum:

After the holiday break, the troop regrouped in early January and began making preparations for the Klondike Derby. The Pathfinders had not participated in a District Klondike Derby in many years. With the recent merger of Black Bear and Laoapogh Mountain Districts, the format of the program was changed significantly, so there was a completely clean slate of history and expectations of the event. The tasks to complete prior to departure included preparing the patrols, procuring sleds, and gathering the gear needed to bring along for the day's activities.

Sleds:

With a few emails and phone calls, the two troop sleds that were built in the late 1990's were found, and collected from the past leaders which had stored them for the troop. One of the sleds was "garage kept" and needed no work. The second sled was stored under a deck, and was weather worn. With the troop membership numbers in the 70+ range, the leaders decided it was time to make two new sleds and it was clear that the weathered sled needed some serious work to be derby ready.

With the legacy sleds in hand, along with a borrowed sled from Ramsey Pack 175, Mr. Leymeister & Mr. Burns combined the best features of both sled designs to design and build the new ones. Mr. Fern added a canvas liner to a couple of the sleds, giving them a very authentic Klondike appearance. The sled building project took several weeks to complete. Mr. Zakrzewski and Mr. Gannon donated skis, as did Mr. Swenson. In the mean time, work was done on the older sled by Mr. Burns and Mr. Dente. By the time of the event, there were three patrols participating, so only three sleds were needed.

January 12 Troop Meeting:

At this troop meeting, patrols were formed. With 24 scouts signed up, the group elected three patrol leaders and proceeded to break themselves into groups - very impressive!. Patrol Leaders Zack, Padraic and Donal decided to have one of the patrols compete as a "Tenderfoot" patrol, consisting of first year scouts. All patrols agreed to continue the Patrol Names from summer camp: Sea Turtles, Ninjas, and Chilin' Chili Peppers flags would fly once more!

With just one meeting until the event, the plan was to have each patrol identify a primary scout to specialize in each different skill, and training would be provided at the January 19th Troop Meeting.

There was no need to plan meals, since brown bag lunch would be the meal of the day, and each scout would bring his own lunch.

Following the troop meeting, the troop leaders appealed to the many of the Eagle Scouts in the troop for help executing the training plan:

Topic	Tasks
Fire Building	<p>**Safety First!!!</p> <p>Likely point loss for unsafe practice. (clear area, water nearby, etc.)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Materials needed to build 2) Fire Starters 3) Lean-to style 4) 2 match maximum!!! (no lighters!)
Orienteering Compass Use/Distance Est.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Ways to tell direction/north 2) Pace determination 3) Map Symbols
First Aid	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Tft-1st Class First Aid Reqs 2) Make a stretcher 3) Make a sling
Animal Track ID	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Review Track types & Characteristics 2) Non-Track evidence
Lifesaving Rope Throw	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Review Reach, Throw, Row, Go 2) COPE type skill drill "get someone out"
Scouting Lore	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Baden Powell / Brownsea / Mafeking 2) Boyce / Seton / Beard / West 3) Philips / Bechtel 4) Cubs/Exploring/Venture 5) Famous Scouts / Eagle History, etc.
Pioneering (Assuming knife/ax safety, maybe split a strike anywhere match with an ax?)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Knife & Axe sharpening 2) Saw Speed cut contest 3) Split a strike-anywhere match (light 2 halves)
Knots/Lashings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Tft-1st Class knots 2) Square/ Diag / Flagpole lashings

*Required direct adult supervision

January 19 Troop Meeting:

With many scouts and leaders scrambling to get from the Winter Concert at Valley Middle School, the troop meeting started right on time. Connors Hall was filled with the youngest and oldest scouts - in a scout form of controlled chaos. It was quite an inspiration to watch so much knowledge pass from the high school aged scouts to those who were going to represent the troop at the Klondike Derby.

Each of the sleds were situated on tables in the room, and patrols learned about everything from char cloth to knots and lashings. It was a busy and very productive meeting, as the last items were added to

and strapped on the sleds, and they were set and ready to go. Thanks to Mr. Di Pentima for donating, sanding, and fitting with grips, the long staves for stretchers! The boys looked and were quite well prepared.

January 21 – Derby Day:

The winter of 2011-2012 has yielded very little snow. Most of the snow that was accumulated came on the morning of January 21st. As most of the people in our community stayed indoors this Saturday morning because of the 4 inches of snow that fell overnight, the Pathfinders were loading vehicles and off to Shepherds Lake in Ringwood. We took I-287 since Skyline Drive would likely be closed. It was a slow ride up Ringwood Avenue and we made it up Sloatsburg Road to the park drive, which was very well kept. The state rangers did a great job at clearing the park roads since they knew hundreds of scouts were about to converge on the park.

We arrived and found an open area in one of the further parking lot tiers. The sleds were readied, and the leaders went to find the check-in site and procedures. The adult leaders followed the patrols through the inspection and start area. After that, each Patrol was off on its own, running to the event they were given as a starting point. It was especially interesting to see all of the sleds constructed by the participating troops - everything from PVC pipe to welded aluminum to 2 x 4s. There are so many styles and variations that come out of the same set of instructions.



The Klondike towns (events) included fire building, orienteering, knot tying (no-show), rescue rope throw, Indian lore, measurement approximation (heights and distances), animal track recognition, model campsite (find the mistakes), first aid, pioneering, and team work (using only voice, direct a blindfolded team member through a maze). More than enough to keep the boys engaged for the day!

When the adults got back to the parking area, we did typical site housekeeping tasks, such as setting up the dining fly, shoveling snow, setting up a warming fire in a portable fire pit, shoveling snow, building wind walls along the side of the dining fly, shoveling snow, setting up stoves and hot chocolate, and, of course we shoveled some snow, too.

Perhaps more significant, as we looked around, we realized that our scouts were going to return at lunch time to eat a cold sandwich from their knapsacks, while other troops were cooking! Since we had time, and the kitchen was already set up, Mr. Mellone, Mr. Fern, and Brendan took a ride to the grocery store to get some items for a hot lunch. They returned with cups of instant noodle soup, hot dogs and buns; adapting and overcoming as scouts do. As the noon break grew closer, cooking lunch began. Mrs. Spear, Mr. Fiumefreddo, Mr. Gannon, Mr. Fern and Mr. Allen readied the lunch area, heated milk for hot chocolate, cooked hot dogs and boiled water for the instant noodles, while Mr. Kozak was laying out salami, sausage, cheese and crackers. Thankfully, Mr. Di Pentima had provided the troop with a number of jugs of water, which were used in cooking and refilling water bottles.

When the scouts returned, they were very excited about the hot lunch. They gushed about their adventures and shared tips from the morning's events. Mr. Dente & Mr. Burns checked in with each Patrol Leader to ensure the patrols were doing well from a teamwork perspective. In this type of event, the score doesn't matter nearly as much as the fun, experience, and personal accomplishments. There was no doubt that all three of these were being achieved.



After lunch, the scouts headed back out on the trail, and the adults wrapped up the “hot lunch surprise”. After packing up the trailer, the adults took a walk around the park to watch the Pathfinders at work. We were proud to see the scouts complete fire building, orienteering, and truly hustling from one town to the next to make certain they visited all of the towns before closing.

By 3 PM, the stations were starting to wind down as the last of the fifty or so sleds came through. The Patrol Leaders lined up to check out with their progress sheets and gold and silver nuggets. The remaining members of the patrols returned the sleds to the parking area, and packed up the gear. The patrol leaders made it back to the troop area, all the scouts lined up for troop photos, and the convoy rolled out of the parking lot. As we headed out, the closing ceremony was just breaking up, and we checked in to get the results.



While the Troop 49 Pathfinder patrols did not place, it was of no consequence as there was a tremendous amount of accomplishment and anticipation for next year's event. It was an excellent showing for a group that had never competed in Klondike! The smiles on the faces in the photo above pretty much tell the whole story!

Submitted by Mr. Burns & Mr. Dente