

Browsea Island Weekend Games and Activities

Like today's Scouts, Scouts of the past enjoyed a wide variety of games and activities. Some of these tested Scout skills, while others were purely for fun. The highlight of your Browsea Island weekend could be a series of games like those Baden-Powell taught the first Scouts back in 1907.

Kim's Game

Equipment: 20 or 30 small objects (pencils, patches, photos, coins, etc.), a large sheet, and a pencil and paper for each player

Place the objects on the ground and cover them with the sheet. Have the players gather in a circle. Remove the sheet for 60 seconds to let the players study the assortment of objects. Replace the sheet, and ask the players to write down all the objects they saw. The player who remembers the most objects wins.

Variation: Use items that have a distinctive scent, like cinnamon or cedar. Put the items in paper bags and have players smell them and guess what they are.

Old Spotty-Face

Equipment: A large piece of poster board divided into 12 squares, smaller versions of the large board (one per player), six or eight black paper circles about 1/2 inch in diameter, pins or masking tape, and a pencil for each player.

Give the players the small poster boards and pencils and send them a few hundred yards away. Affix the paper circles to the large poster board, one per square, to form a pattern. Hold the board up so the players can see it. Have them walk toward you until they can make out the pattern and reproduce it on their boards. The player who gets the pattern correct at the greatest distance wins.

Fugitives

Equipment: A large, numbered disk of cardboard for each player, safety pins, peanuts, or sunflower seeds

Pin a numbered cardboard disk on each player's back. One player is the fugitive, while the others act as hunters. Give the fugitive 10 minutes to leave the area and hide. He must leave a trail by dropping peanuts or sunflower seeds along the way. The hunters must then track him down. The first hunter to get close enough to see the fugitive's number wins. However, if the fugitive is able to see a hunter's number first, that hunter is out of the game.

Make a Rag Ball

Equipment: Rags, twine or string, and peach baskets or bushel baskets

Cut rags into strips, roll the strips into a ball, and secure tightly with twine or string. Play games such as dodgeball, basketball (using a peach basket tied to a tree as a makeshift hoop), bucketball (like basketball except the ball must stay in the bushel basket "bucket" to count as a score), or some other familiar game that requires a ball.

Compass Points

Equipment: Eight hiking staffs, arranged on the ground so they radiate from the center and point in the eight major compass directions: north, northeast, east, southeast, south, southwest, west, and northwest.

One Scout stands at the end of each staff. Call out two compass headings-southeast and north, for example. The Scouts standing at those headings immediately exchange places, going around the outside of the circle.

If a Scout moves without being called-or is called but moves to the wrong place-he loses a point. After losing three points, a player is out of the game.

Variation: To make the game harder, use 16 staffs, adding directions like north-northeast or west-southwest, or call out the degrees instead of the names -90 degrees instead of east, for example.

Tracking

Equipment: Props for scenarios, as described below

Mark off a tracking area about 15 yards square in snow, sand, or damp ground. Have one patrol create a scenario by making footprints and other marks. Then, have a second patrol try to figure out what happened. Possible scenarios:

- A Scout walked along with a bucket of water and put it down when he stopped to rest.
- A Scout walked backward.
- A man walked through with a cane and then was joined by another man.
- A Scout carrying a box stopped to rest and sat on it.

Brownsea Island Scout camp

The **Brownsea Island Scout camp** began as a boys' camping event on Brownsea Island in Poole Harbor, southern England, organized by Lieutenant-General Baden-Powell to test his ideas for the book *Scouting for Boys*.

Robert Baden-Powell had become a national hero during the Boer War as a result of his successful defense of the town of Mafeking, which was under siege from October 1899 to May 1900. The Mafeking Cadets, made up of local boys aged 12 to 15, acted as messengers throughout the siege, and had impressed him with their resourcefulness and courage. Baden-Powell had also published a number of popular books on military scouting, including *Aids to Scouting for NCOs and Men*, published in 1899. Though written for non-commissioned officers, it became a best-seller and was used by teachers and youth organizations. In the years after the war Baden-Powell broached the idea of a new youth organization with a number of people, including William Alexander Smith, founder of the Boys' Brigade, with whom he discussed setting up a Boys Brigade Scouting achievement. To test his ideas while writing *Scouting for Boys*, Baden-Powell conceived of an experimental camp, creating a program to take place on Brownsea Island during the summer of 1907. He invited his lifelong friend, Major Kenneth McLaren, to attend the camp as an assistant.

First Scout encampment

Baden-Powell had visited Brownsea Island as a boy with his brothers. It covers 560 acres of woodland and open areas, and features two lakes. The island perfectly suited his needs for the camp as it was isolated from the mainland and hence from the press, yet was only a short ferry trip from the town of Poole, making for easy logistics.

Baden-Powell invited boys from different social backgrounds to participate from 1 to 8 August 1907 in activities around camping, observation, woodcraft, chivalry, lifesaving and patriotism. Recognized as the world's first Scout camp, the event is regarded as the real origin of the worldwide Scout movement. A revolutionary idea during the class-conscious Edwardian era. Eleven came from the well-to-do private boarding schools of Eton and Harrow, mostly sons of Baden-Powell's friends. Seven came from the Boys' Brigade at Bournemouth, and three came from

the Brigade at Poole & Hamworthy. Baden-Powell's nine-year-old nephew Donald Baden-Powell also attended. The camp fee was dependent on means: one pound for the public-school boys, and three shillings and sixpence for the others.

The boys were arranged into four patrols, designated as the Wolves, Ravens, Bulls and Curlews.

As this was the first Boy Scouting event, the boys did not have uniform shirts, but they did wear khaki scarves and were presented with brass fleur-de-lis badges, the first use of the Scout emblem. They also wore a colored knot on their shoulder indicating their patrol: green for Bulls, blue for Wolves, yellow for Curlews, and red for Ravens. The patrol leader carried a staff with a flag depicting the patrol animal. After passing tests on knots, tracking, and the national flag, they were given another brass badge, a scroll with the words *Be Prepared*, to wear below the fleur-de-lis.

Program

Each patrol camped in an army bell tent. The camp began each day with a blast from a kudu horn that Baden-Powell had found in the Somabula forest during the Matabele campaign of 1896. He used the same kudu horn to open the Coming of Age Jamboree 22 years later in 1929. The day began at 6:00 a.m., with cocoa, exercises, flag break and prayers, followed by breakfast at 8:00 a.m. Then followed the morning exercise of the subject of the day, as well as bathing, if deemed necessary. After lunch, there was a strict siesta (no talking allowed), followed by the afternoon activity based on the subject of the day. At 5:00 p.m. the day ended with games, supper, campfire yarns and prayers. Baden-Powell made full use of his personal fame as the hero of the Siege of Mafeking. For many of the participants, the highlights of the camp were his campfire yarns of his African experiences, and the Zulu "Ingonyama" chant, translating to "he is a lion". Turning in for the night was compulsory for every patrol at 9:00 p.m., regardless of age.

Each day was based on a different theme: Day 1 was preliminary, day 2 was campaigning, day 3 was observation, day 4 for woodcraft, day 5 was chivalry, day 6 was saving a life, day 7 was patriotism, and day 8 was the conclusion. The participants left by ferry on the 9th day, 9 August 1907.