

# **“Using Den Chiefs” – POW WOW Notes**

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## **So What's a Den Chief?**

- Activities Leader in Den
- Member of a Boy Scout Troop
- Pack/Troop Liaison
- Den Leader's Assistant
- A Role Model of Boy Scouting
- A boy!

## **What a Den Chief Is NOT!**

- A Denner or Assistant Denner
- A Substitute Den Leader
- An older Cub Scout
- An adult

## **A Den Chief Position Is a Boy Scout Leadership Position**

- Most Troop positions are for 6 months
- A Den Chief role should be setup for one year
  - o This qualifies for two Troop leadership roles
- Den Chief Signature sheet is VERY important
- Possibly THE MOST demanding Boy Scout role
  - o Member of two units
  - o Heavy time commitment
  - o Burn out VERY POSSIBLE, especially for older boys

## **Need a Counselor (SM or ASM) for Den Chiefs**

- To make sure he is doing his job for rank advancement and attendance at Den meetings
- To make sure that he is also fulfilling Scout duties: attendance, dues, campouts, etc.
- To watch for stress
- Help coordinate joint WEBELOS opportunities: Pack mtgs., Graduation ceremonies, Webelos hikes/campouts, Troop visits, etc.
- Interface with Den Leaders of Den Chiefs
- Help resolve conflicting issues: Summertime Troop campouts vs. Summertime Pack activities
- Counsel him to NOT use Boy Scout activities at Den meetings
- Help WEBELOS complete Boy Scout joining requirements for SCOUT Badge

### Den Leaders and Den Chiefs MUST communicate & Plan

- Activities at Den Meetings should fit in with topic, theme, & meeting plan
- Den Chief should not plan Achievement/Elective/Act. Pin work, but can ASSIST Den Leader with these
- Cub Packs/Dens usually follow "themes" whereas Scout Troops have a yearly plan for outdoor events. These two are DIFFERENT! Therefore Den Chiefs need to "know" themes and plan activities accordingly
- Den Leaders must be careful not to offload DL jobs on DCs
- DCs should ALWAYS plan for opening activities for each Den meeting
- Introduce the concept of "reading stories" => use Boys' Life magazine (for example). This prepares the Cub Scouts for the tremendous opportunity of campfire stories when they reach Boy Scouts
- Introduce lots of singing. Use Cub Scout songbook. What's a campout without singing? Cubs like to sing but Scouts hate it - until they experience the fun. If Cubs get to expect the singing, we'll have more "experienced" singers in Boy Scouting
- A DC should have his own copy of the Cub or Webelos Handbook for the year he is working with: WOLF, BEAR, WEBELOS
- A DC should use the "Weekly Meeting Planning Sheet" to help him organize his activities and for time budgeting

### Valid Activities for a Den Chief to Use

- Games; puzzles; songs; tricks; contests; stories (reading)
- Resources: How to Book, Den Chief Handbook, Cub Scout songbook, Group Meeting Sparklers, Boys' Life magazine, Scouting Internet sites

### Den Leaders and SMs/ASMs Should Help TEACH Den Chief Training Classes

- Helps demo activities
- Makes interactive discussions possible
- Reinforces role of Den Chief so that he is used properly
- Helps provide Staff for DC courses instead of "begging" for Trainers
- Allows Den Leaders who need Den Chiefs to meet Den Chiefs who are looking for Dens

Den Chiefs: Things to Watch for

- DC must always wear complete Boy Scout uniform
- DCs should be 2-3 years older than the boys in the Den (at least)
- Not always a good idea to have DCs be son of DL or have a brother in the Den they work with
- Scouts should have completed 1<sup>st</sup> Class rank before becoming a Den Chief
- Scouts attending DC training should be 13 years old or older and at 1<sup>st</sup> Class rank or above
- Really watch for burnout signs (missing meetings, unprepared, out of uniform, complaints from DC parents or Troop leaders, DC not acting as a good Boy Scout role model, etc.)
- Keep in constant touch with Troop SM/ASM and Den Chief's parents to monitor problems with: grades/schoolwork, overly tired, missing Troop meetings, staying up too late, missing out on school/family functions that are important, etc.
- Be FLEXIBLE! DCs also have: family events, Back to School nights, Troop Courts of Honor, homework/midterms/finals, Merit Badge meetings, Religious Medals meetings, PLCs, birthdays, etc.
- OVEREMPHASZE cleanliness! Wash hands after bathroom trips, always wash before eating (USE SOAP!)
- Do NOT allow DCs to discipline Cubs/Webelos
- Know exactly what activities a DC will be using at each meeting
- Watch for bad language and/or jokes: stress with DCs that you ALWAYS expect him to be a role model of Boy Scouting
- Define the parameters of what you will and will not allow at meetings: Chewing Gum? Swearing? Put downs? Yelling? Isolating certain Scouts?
- Do you use a Conduct Candle? Who can blow it out?
- Always supervise DCs around Cubs & Webelos (2 deep leadership concept)
- DCs can help identify Activity Pin "Guest" Leaders (Merit Badge Counselors whom they know)

### Meeting Planning

- Use Weekly Meeting Planning Sheet
- When's the best time?
  - o Right after a meeting? (Everyone may be tired and wanting to get home.)
  - o During the week between meetings? (This may mean an extra meeting for both of you - time commitment.)
  - o Right before a meeting? (Not enough time to prepare or acquire materials.)
- Share Theme ideas
- Pick activities related to current Achievement/Elective/Act. Pin work
- Practice skits or activities to be used at Pack meetings
- Might need some activities related to: Pinewood Derby, Bakeoffs, Blue & Gold dinners, Magic Shows/Entertainment nights, graduation ceremonies, community service, joint activities with a Troop (basic hiking hints)
- Some activities could be planned for Summertime Pack Outings
- Decide what a Den Chief can/will do at pack meetings. This may require a meeting between the DC and the Cubmaster
- Using materials:
  - o What types of materials?
  - o Where do they come from
  - o Who buys things that must be purchased?
  - o What is the budget weekly/monthly/yearly?
  - o Who prepares the materials?