



Let's Go for a Ride!

How can you not be inspired by watching a skiing or snowboarding professional ripping a line of fresh powder across a snow-covered mountainside? When done properly, skiing and snowboarding allow a freedom and exhilaration not found with summer activities. As filmmaker Warren Miller has said, reaching the higher ground in life is looking inside yourself and pushing the limits to accomplish something you never thought was possible.

Skiing has long allowed people in northern countries the ability to get about in deep snow by staying on top of it rather than floundering in it. Skiing and snowboarding allow maximum progress in the winter with minimal exertion. Whether you use Nordic skis for a cross-country trek, snowboard and Alpine skis for downhill fun, or mountaineering skis for a backcountry adventure, snow sports are the best and most fun ways to get around in the snow.

Objectives

This month's activities should:

- Demonstrate the first-aid skills Scouts might need for injuries that could occur while skiing or snowboarding.
- Introduce the Your Responsibility Code for skiers and snowboarders.
- Help Scouts develop a fitness plan for winter sports.
- Teach Scouts what clothing is appropriate for winter conditions.
- Show Scouts how to fit and care for skiing and snowboarding equipment.
- Enable Scouts to plan and carry out a safe skiing/snowboarding main event.

RELATED ADVANCEMENT AND AWARDS

- Tenderfoot requirement 1c
- Second Class requirement 1b
- First Class requirement 1a
- Camping and Snow Sports merit badges
- Cross-Country Skiing and Snow Camping Varsity Scout activity pins
- Ranger: Winter Sports elective
- Quest requirement 5



Leadership Planning

As a leadership team, you may want to discuss the following items when choosing snow sports as your program feature during your planning meetings.

1. Which snow sports movie should we watch?
2. What should we do as our main event?
3. Where should we go for our main event?
4. What is our unit's skill level?
5. Where will we get equipment?
6. What costs will be involved (equipment rental, lift tickets, etc.)?
7. How can we involve parents?
8. Which parents can drive in the snow?
9. To meet our needs, what should we change in the sample meeting plans?

PARENTS CAN HELP WITH THE SNOW SPORTS PROGRAM FEATURE BY:

1. Sharing their skiing and snowboarding experience
2. Identifying consultants who can teach skiing/snowboarding skills
3. Providing transportation for the main event
4. Providing lunch and warm drinks
5. Maintaining current Youth Protection certification, which is required of all adults providing transportation for or participating in camping outings

SNOW SPORTS INFORMATION

Your Responsibility Code

- Always stay in control, and be able to stop or avoid other people or objects.
- People ahead of you have the right of way. It is your responsibility to avoid them.
- You must not stop where you obstruct a trail or are not visible from above.
- Whenever starting downhill or merging into a trail, look uphill and yield to others.
- Always use devices to help prevent runaway equipment.
- Observe all posted signs and warnings. Keep off closed trails and out of closed areas.
- Prior to using any lift, you must have the knowledge and ability to load, ride, and unload safely.

This code has been officially endorsed by the National Ski Areas Association, National Ski Patrol, Professional Ski Instructors of America, and the American Association of Snowboard Instructors.



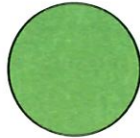
Sticking to trails that are appropriate for your level of skill will help keep the slopes safe and enjoyable for all users.





Ski Signs

Like many outdoor activities, snow sports have their own set of signs and symbols. While the exact signs may vary from location to location, most of them will look like these.



The easiest trails at a particular ski area



Trails that are more difficult than easy ones



Trails that are the most difficult



Trails for experts only



Freestyle terrain

Avalanche Dangers

The possibility of avalanches causes serious concern for skiers or riders whose outings take them into snowy, mountainous regions. An avalanche occurs when snow breaks loose on a slope or when a cornice of snow collapses and tumbles down. Often the sliding snow carries debris such as rocks and tree branches with it.

Your greatest protection against avalanches is knowing where, how, and when they are likely to occur and then planning routes that avoid these danger spots. Indicators of danger include the following.

Steep terrain. Avalanches usually happen on slopes of 40 to 60 degrees.

Accumulations of new snow. Avalanches generally occur during or after a heavy winter storm. The danger of an avalanche remains high until the new snow settles, consolidates, and becomes stable.

Variations in the quality of snow layers,

especially if one or more layers are airy, granular, or in slabs. A weak layer of snowpack can allow layers above to break loose and slide.

Be aware of sounds that suggest cracking or settling of the snowpack.

If, despite your preparations and judgment, you see an avalanche roaring toward you and you cannot get out of its path, jettison (ditch) your pack and your skis or snowboard. When the snow hits, move your arms and legs in a swimming motion to keep yourself upright, and try to keep your head above the surface. As the avalanche settles, push away any accumulation of snow from your face to form an air pocket that will allow you to breathe.

Should others in your party be caught in an avalanche, keep your eye on them as long as you can, and note the exact place you saw them last. Hopefully, they will be wearing avalanche beacons—battery-powered lights that emit a radio signal that can be picked up by the beacons of other group members—that will help you find them quickly. If not, listen for their voices and use your ski poles (grip side down) or a ski to probe the snow.

Search quickly. Your chances of saving a person decrease rapidly as the snow settles. When you find victims, use a sturdy short-handled shovel to free them, and then provide first aid for shock, hypothermia, and any injuries.

If you must cross the path of an avalanche, close up your clothing and put on your hat and gloves. Your chances of survival are much better if you stay warm. Wear a bright-colored avalanche cord. Tie one end to yourself and let the other end trail behind you. If your group has avalanche beacons, make sure you know how to use them and they are working properly.



Ski Lifts

Downhill skiers and snowboarders need a way to get to the top of the hill in order to come down. While this can be done by Sno-Cat, gondola, bus, and even helicopter, the most common method at most resorts is the ski lift. Rope tows, handle tows, T-bars, platter lifts, and chair lifts are all devices used to get riders to the top of the hill. The *Snow Sports* merit badge pamphlet is a great resource for learning more about these types of lifts.



Mountaineering and Backcountry Skiing

Mountaineering skiing combines the skills of downhill skiing with cross-country touring, while adding some of the skills found in mountain climbing. The skis used often employ attachable “skins” that allow them to grip the snow when hiking uphill. Mountaineering skis also may have convertible bindings that allow mobility while hiking but then lock down to allow the skier to ski downhill like an Alpine skier. While this type of skiing has been around for a long time, “split-snowboards” have been introduced recently that allow a rider to climb like a skier but come down as a snowboarder.

Backcountry skiing is considered to be skiing in remote regions outside ski area boundaries. You won’t see a ski patrol, marked ski runs, grooming, snowmaking, or ski lifts. Backcountry skiing can be hazardous due to avalanche, exhaustion, weather, cliffs, rock fall, and tree wells, so advanced skills for handling these hazards are required.





SKIING/SNOWBOARDING GAMES

Ski Trail Signs Relay

Equipment: Two sets of index cards for each group. Each card in the first set should show a drawing of a trail sign; each card in the second set should show the meaning of a trail sign.

How to play: The teams line up in relay formation. The two sets of cards are placed about 25 feet in front of each patrol. The cards with the pictured trail signs are placed facedown; the cards with the definitions are spread out faceup. On a signal, the first Scout from each team runs to their sets of cards and draws one of the facedown cards. He then places it on the correct definition card, runs back, and tags the next Scout. Continue until all cards are matched.

Scoring: The first team to match all cards correctly wins.

Slalom Hop Relay

Equipment: Twenty feet of rope for each team

How to play: Lay the ropes in straight lines in front of the teams. Team members go down their rope by hopping from side to side over the rope, with legs and feet together. This action simulates the motion a slalom skier uses when racing through gates. After some practice, have a relay race.

Scoring: First team to complete the challenge wins.

Helmet Overtake

Equipment: Two skiing/snowboarding helmets

How to play: The members form one circle and count off. You must have an even number of players. All even-numbered Scouts in the circle form one team and all odd-numbered Scouts form the other team. Hand a helmet to Scout No. 1 and the other helmet to an even-numbered Scout on the exact opposite side of the circle. On signal, Scouts must pass—not throw—the helmets clockwise only to members of their own team (every other Scout). Both helmets will be traveling in the same direction.

Scoring: The object of the game is for one team to pass their helmet faster than the other team and eventually overtake the other team's helmet.

Ski Jacket Stretcher Relay

Equipment: Two staves, two winter jackets, and one inflated balloon for each group

How to play: This is not a speed relay. The groups line up in relay formation, with two "victims" in front of each. On signal, two members of each group run up with the blanket and two staves, make a stretcher, and put one victim on it. When the stretcher carriers are ready to lift the stretcher, the youth leader (or judge) places the inflated balloon on the victim. The carriers take the victim to the starting line without letting the balloon fall off. The victim may not hold on to the balloon. (The balloon ensures care rather than speed.) At the starting line, the carriers lift the victim off, and two other Scouts run up to make a stretcher for transporting the second victim.

Scoring: The team that most carefully transports both victims (without letting the balloon fall off) to the starting





E.D.G.E. Ideas

Explain how it is done—Tell them.

Demonstrate the steps—Show them.

Guide learners as they practice—Watch them do it.

Enable them to succeed on their own—Have them practice/teach it.

EXPLAIN

- Explain the importance of the buddy system while on the slopes.
- Explain why cotton clothing should be avoided.
- Discuss why layers of clothes are best.
- Explain the different skill levels for skiing and snowboarding.
- Describe how to transport skis and snowboards on a car.
- Explain how rope-tows and ski lifts work.
- Discuss the dangers of avalanches and what warning signs to look for; show a video of an avalanche.
- Describe common snow sports injuries.

DEMONSTRATE

- Show how to safely carry skis and snowboards.
- Demonstrate proper fit of boots, skis, and snowboards.
- Show warm-up stretches and fitness exercises.
- Show how to stand up with skis/snowboard on.
- Show an internet video of how avalanche beacons work.
- Demonstrate care of fractures and sprains.

GUIDE

- Set up the buddy system for the main event.
- Guide Scouts through proper fitting of goggles and helmet.
- Have Scouts practice stretching and fitness exercises.
- Monitor Scouts as they put on equipment.
- Have Scouts practice getting on and off a lift.
- Watch Scouts as they practice turns and stops.
- Have Scouts practice making splints for injuries.

ENABLE

- Have experienced Scouts teach skiing/snowboarding skills to less experienced Scouts.
- Encourage Scouts to pursue an ongoing fitness program.
- Give youth leaders the tools needed to plan a skiing/snowboarding main event.
- Conduct a main event that lets Scouts choose their own difficulty levels.
- Let Scouts have fun while skiing or snowboarding.
- Encourage Scouts to pursue the Snow Sports merit badge.

MAIN EVENT SUMMARIES

● ESSENTIAL	■ CHALLENGING	◆ ADVANCED
Day Activity	Day Activity (possibly longer)	Back country Overnight Trip
Cross-country skiing day trip—Spend a day cross-country (Nordic) skiing on easy groomed trails. This activity is good for beginner skiers and is often less expensive than downhill skiing.	Downhill (Alpine) skiing and snowboarding—Travel to a downhill ski/snowboarding resort. Depending on the distance traveled, your group may want to consider a multiday excursion. Work on demonstrating and improving your skills. It is highly recommended that first-time skiers take lessons.	Mountaineering ski trip—Take a backcountry ski trip with mountaineering skis and skins. Use extreme caution in avalanche-prone areas. This activity should be combined with work on winter camping skills.



SNOWBOARDING AND SKIING

Meeting Plan: Snow Sports Overview



Week 1 Date _____

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	Play All Aboard: Scouts try to get on a 2-foot-square platform (or piece of poster board) without anyone touching the ground around it.		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law Uniform inspection		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce upcoming skiing/snowboarding activity. Show an appropriate video, such as a Warren Miller film (www.skinet.com/warrenmiller). • Introduce ski trail signs. • Discuss and determine each member's skill level. 		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 40 minutes	Cover the following skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting on equipment • Sidestepping • Getting up off the ground • Using rope tows 		7:20 p.m.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review essential skills above. • Cover the following skills: techniques for parallel turns on skis; techniques for heel-to-toe turns on snowboard; getting on and off chairlifts 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review essential and challenging skills above. • Cover the following skills: mogul techniques; christie turns on skis; riding fakie on a snowboard 		
Breakout Groups 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan an upcoming snow sports activity. • Review the buddy system and ski trail signs. 		8 p.m.
Game 10 minutes	Play Ski Trail Signs Relay (described earlier).		8:15 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.



SNOWBOARDING AND SKIING

Meeting Plan: Winter Sports Skills and Fitness



Week 2 Date _____

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	Play Balloon Battle Royale: Each player attaches an inflated balloon to his ankle with a 2-foot length of twine. The object is to stomp on other players' balloons while protecting your own.		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law Uniform inspection		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the different types of ski lifts and rope tows that are used at the resort you are going to visit. Learn how to get on and off the lift, and discuss lift-line etiquette. 		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 40 minutes	Learn and practice the following stretches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calf stretch Hamstring stretch Quad stretch Lower back stretch 		7:20 p.m.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the essential warm-up stretches above. Learn and practice the following strength-building exercises: leg squats, lunges, running in place, stair-step up 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review essential stretches and challenging exercises above. Plan and develop a fitness endurance program that might include running, cycling, and swimming. 		
Breakout Groups 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work on Scouts' skills as needed for next rank. Plan the menu/meals for the main event. 		8 p.m.
Game 10 minutes	Play Skip Hop Relay (described earlier).		8:15 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team review plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.






SNOWBOARDING AND SKIING

Meeting Plan: Care and Fitting of Equipment



Week 3 Date _____

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	If possible, meet at a local ski shop and spend preopening time browsing the merchandise.		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law Uniform inspection		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present and discuss the clothing, equipment, and other gear needed for winter sports. • Explain why clothes should be in layers and why cotton should be avoided. • Demonstrate how to safely carry the gear. • Discuss the importance of a helmet for preventing injuries. 		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 40 minutes	 Learn how to properly fit boots, skis, and snowboards.		7:20 p.m.
	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review fitting equipment. • Learn how to wax skis. 		
	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review fitting equipment. • With the help of a certified ski technician, learn the process of mounting and adjusting bindings. 		
Breakout Groups 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice Scouts' skills as needed for next rank. • Determine specific equipment needs of group for main event. 		8 p.m.
Game 10 minutes	Play Helmet Overtake (described earlier).		8:15 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.



SNOWBOARDING AND SKIING

Meeting Plan: Avalanche and First Aid



Week 4 Date _____

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	Show internet videos of avalanches.		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 10 minutes	Discuss the dangers of avalanches, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What to look for and how to avoid them. • What to do if you are caught in an avalanche • How to search for someone caught in an avalanche. 		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 40 minutes	Learn the first-aid procedures for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shivering • Sprains and strains 		7:20 p.m.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the essential skills above. • Learn first-aid procedures for: hypothermia, fractures, and splinting 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the essential and challenging skills above. • Learn the first-aid procedures for: severe hypothermia, fractures requiring traction splints, multiple casualties 		
Breakout Groups 15 minutes	Complete final preparations for the main event.		8 p.m.
Game 10 minutes	Play Ski Jacket Stretcher Relay (described earlier).		8:15 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.



SNOWBOARDING AND SKIING

Main Event: Nordic Skiing Day Trip



Date _____

Logistics

Location: _____

Departure time: _____

Return time: _____

Duration of activity: 8 hours

Budget: Completed _____ Approved _____

Camping: Duty roster _____ Menu _____

Transportation: Group _____ Self _____

Tour and activity plan: Completed _____ Submitted _____

Essential (Tier I)

Spent a day cross-country (Nordic) skiing on easy, groomed trails. This activity is good for beginning skiers and often is less expensive than downhill skiing.

Equipment List

- Proper layered clothing
- Hat and sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- Skis, boots, and poles
- Food
- Water
- Cellphone for emergencies
- Scout Basic Essentials (Review the list and take what you need.)

Activity

- Meet in a place appropriate for transportation to the ski site.
- Arrive at the ski area with appropriate clothing and equipment.
- Initiate the buddy system.
- Enjoy a fun day on the trails.
- Have a plan for emergencies.
- Take time to enjoy lunch.
- Return home.

Safety

For beginners, choose an easy terrain area. Avoid places with avalanche danger. Make sure drivers are comfortable with winter driving. Be aware of limits of cellphone coverage. Be sure to establish and maintain the buddy system.

Notes



SNOWBOARDING AND SKIING

Main Event: A Day (or More) of Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding



Date _____

Logistics

Location: _____

Departure time: _____

Return time: _____

Duration of activity: Overnight

Budget: Completed _____ Approved _____

Camping: Duty roster _____ Menu _____

Transportation: Group _____ Self _____

Tour and activity plan: Completed _____ Submitted _____

Challenging (Tier II)

Travel to a downhill ski/snowboarding resort. Depending on the distance traveled, your group may want to consider multiple days. Work on demonstrating and improving your skills. It is highly recommended that first-time skiers take lessons.

Equipment List

- Proper layered clothing
- Helmet and goggles
- Sunscreen
- Skis/snowboards, boots, and poles
- Food
- Water
- Money for lift tickets and lessons
- Cellphones in case of emergency
- Buddy list
- If staying overnight, appropriate sleeping bag, sleeping pad, toiletries, extra clothes
- Scout Basic Essentials (Review the list and take what you need.)

Activity

- Determine the resort you will be visiting.
- Decide if this requires overnight travel.
- Arrive at the mountain with appropriate clothing and gear (or rent on arrival).
- Initiate the buddy system.
- Enjoy a fun day on the slopes.
- Have a plan in case of injuries.
- Have a designated time and location for meeting at the end of the day.
- Transportation home.

Safety

Make sure drivers are comfortable driving in winter conditions. Establish and maintain the buddy system. Make sure everyone has a list of numbers to call in an emergency (in areas that have phone coverage). To avoid hypothermia, do not wear cotton clothing. Use only properly fitted equipment. Always wear a helmet.

Notes



SNOWBOARDING AND SKIING

Main Event: Backcountry Overnight Trip on Mountaineering Skis



Date _____

Logistics

Location: _____

Departure time: _____

Return time: _____

Duration of activity: Weekend

Budget: Completed _____ Approved _____

Camping: Duty roster _____ Menu _____

Transportation: Group _____ Self _____

Tour and activity plan: Completed _____ Submitted _____



Advanced (Tier III)

Take a backcountry ski trip with mountaineering skis and skins. Extreme caution needs to be used in avalanche-prone areas. This activity should be combined with work on winter camping skills.

Equipment List

- Avalanche beacons and probes
- Appropriate winter clothing
- Properly fitted boots and mountaineering skis
- Sunscreen
- Internal frame backpacks
- Winter sleeping bag and pad
- Camping gear (individual and group)
- Food
- Water
- Winter tents (unless using a snow cave)
- Cellphone or satellite phone for emergency communication
- Scout Basic Essentials (Review the list and take what you need.)

Activity

- Properly preplan the location.
- Research avalanche conditions.
- Check weather conditions before leaving (cancel or postpone the trip if not optimal).
- Transport to the snow zone.
- Trek into the camp area.
- Do other activities in the area as appropriate.
- Return to vehicle at designated times.
- Clean and put away equipment.

Safety

Acquire the assistance of an experienced consultant in the area of backcountry skiing and camping. Make sure everyone has appropriate clothing and winter camping equipment. Establish and maintain the buddy system. Monitor weather conditions before the trip. Cancel or postpone camping if not optimal. Be aware of avalanche danger—use avalanche beacons if available.

Notes

Start with easy, nearby locations at first. As skills increase, venture farther into the backcountry.



RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

Books

Emergency Preparedness, First Aid, Snow Sports, Search and Rescue, and Wilderness Survival merit badge pamphlets

Bartelski, Konrad, and Robin Neillands. *Learn Downhill Skiing in a Weekend*. Knopf, 1992.

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Volken, Martin, Scott Schell, and Margaret Wheeler. *Backcountry Skiing: Skills for Ski Touring and Ski Mountaineering (Mountaineers Outdoor Expert Series)*. Mountaineers Books, 2007

Websites

American Association of Snowboard Instructors

Website: www.thesnowpros.org

Cross Country Ski Areas Association

Website: www.xcski.org

National Ski Areas Association

Website: www.nsaa.org

National Ski Patrol

Website: www.nsp.org

Professional Ski Instructors of America

Website: www.thesnowpros.org

Snowsports Industries America

Website: www.snowlink.com

United States Ski and Snowboard Association

Website: <http://ussa.org>

Related Program Features

Emergency Preparedness, First Aid, Wilderness Survival, Winter Camping

Photo and Illustration Credits

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