for Senior LEADERS

Gittin' Thar

By William H. Wadsworth, Asst. Scout Executive,

A Senior Scout squints across his compass down the valley, then hurriedly scans his map. He tries to decide whether to run across country or to take the longer but smoother road to the next control station. There's no sign of competitors on the trail ahead of him, but coming up behind he can hear someone crashing through the brush. He has to decide and fast, because the man with the shortest elapsed time will win this cross-country pathfinding race.

In this sport the competitors leave the starting line at intervals, each finding his own way with map and compass over a course of points (control stations) marked on the map.

The sport originated in Sweden where there now are 1,500 clubs with 31,000 members. Senior Scouts are helping introduce it in this country. The first pathfinding race in America was among Scouters at Indiana Dunes State Park in November 1946, and the first one on skis was held last March at a Senior Scout Rendezvous at Turin, New York.

Pratts Falls Race

To see how races are conducted, here's the way one was run at Pratts Falls, New York. This course was fairly short and easy (see illustration), since the racers were new to the game. Competition was among Crews, with enough equipment in each so all members could participate and check on one another. This is how it went:

All Crews briefed on the rules. Each Crew Leader was given 3" x 5" check card on a string (see illustration) to hang around his neck. Drawing held to determine starting order of Crews. Crew Leaders filled out top lines of check cards. Two maps and two Pathfinder compasses issued each Crew and a few minutes allowed for studying maps. Location of starting point announced:

STARTING POINT: *N.E. corner of parking area.*

Maps are collected before first Crew starts so all have equal time to study them. Crews called to starting line according to starting numbers. Crews started at one-minute intervals. Starting time of each Crew is recorded on master sheet. Crew Leader is given an unmarked map of the course and instructions for first control station:

1st CONTROL STATION: *W. ½ mile. Azimuth 289°. E. side of road opposite the house.*

Crew reads instructions, locates first station on map, determines the station's location with compass, chooses best route according to map and terrain, and takes off.

Arriving at first station, Crew Leader has checker mark the Crew's card with code letter. (On illustration first code letter is "G.")

Crew gets instructions for second control station:

2nd CONTROL STATION: *S.S.E. 1¼". Azimuth 170° in fork of creek.*

Crew locates station by finding creek fork in S.S.E. direction and measuring 1¼" on map to check exact location. (Map in illustration has been reduced to half size of map actually used.)

Instructions to next stations:

3rd CONTROL STATION: *E.S.E. 3/10 of mile. Bridge on road leading N. into park from road junction at spot elevation 1270.*

4th CONTROL STATION: *2" E.S.E. First road junction E. of Spot elevation 1270.*

5th CONTROL STATION — FINISH: *Approximately 2/5 mile N.N.W. Azimuth 335 ½" N. of 2nd "T" in "Pratts." Under large sugar maple tree.*

(Instructions for fourth station are particularly good because they raise the problem of going either directly cross-country or following the road.)

Checker at each station must not write his code letter on Crew's card unless card contains code letter of previous station. At finish line official records Crew's finishing time and subtracts starting time from it. Crew with shortest time wins.

"Dead" Control Stations

Stations without checkers have a code letter on a card along with directions for the next station tacked up in a conspicuous place. This code letter is copied by the racers in the proper square on their check cards. "Dead" or "Alive," stations should be marked with a bright banner that can be seen about 50 yards away. A wig wag flag of red and white makes an excellent marker. Keep it from being seen a long way off and so used as a landmark, but also allow it to be seen easily once the racers have come up to the nearby landmark they have been following.

Watch these "Trail Signs" for Senior Scout articles.

Laying Out a Course

Make course so it favors skill in map reading and use of compass instead of running power.

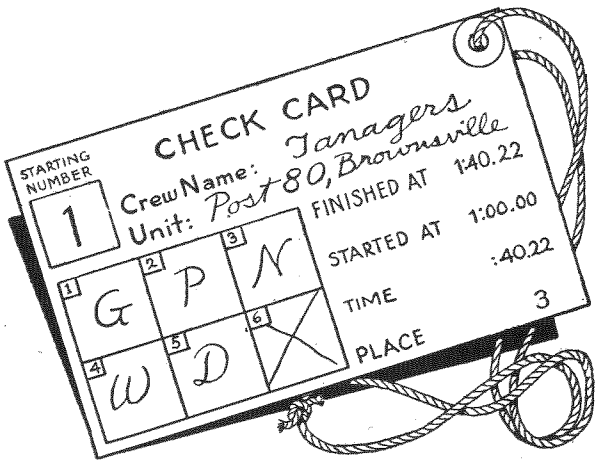
Include as many choices of routes as possible; choosing the best route, by use of map and compass, is the greatest test of the cross-country pathfinder.

Keep the course within easily distinguished boundaries, such as highways, railroads, and streams, which should be pointed out in the pre-race briefing, so that contestants will not wander "out of the county."

Make certain the map and terrain agree before placing control stations.

Fustest

Onondaga Council, Syracuse, N. Y.



Place stations near prominent points or landmarks easily located on map and terrain, not in middle of thickets or swamps.

Do not set up a line of travel *from* a station close to the line of travel *to* that station; have the lines form an angle more than 90°; this prevents those approaching a station from seeing those leaving it.

Have someone check your instructions after they are written, preferably by going over the course before the race.

Course Sites

A fairly large and sparsely settled area is best for a course. Although rolling terrain is most suitable, flat or mountainous land will do. Some prominent natural features are desirable, as well as man-made features, to be used as landmarks. Open field and thinly planted second-growth with paths and roads permit fast movement across country. Things that serve as landmarks and also problem creating obstacles, are ponds, lakes, streams, swamps, thick woods, hills, bluffs and ravines. No area need have all these features, but a variety of them makes an interesting course. Avoid areas with quarry pits, bogs, steep slopes, and other dangerous sites.

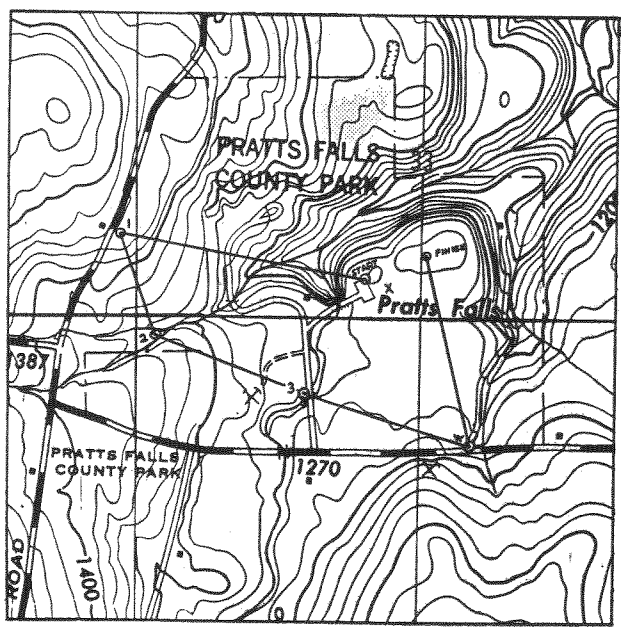
Be sure you have permission of land owners and caretakers before laying a course across their property — or near it in case contestants are likely to cross the property in detouring around obstacles.

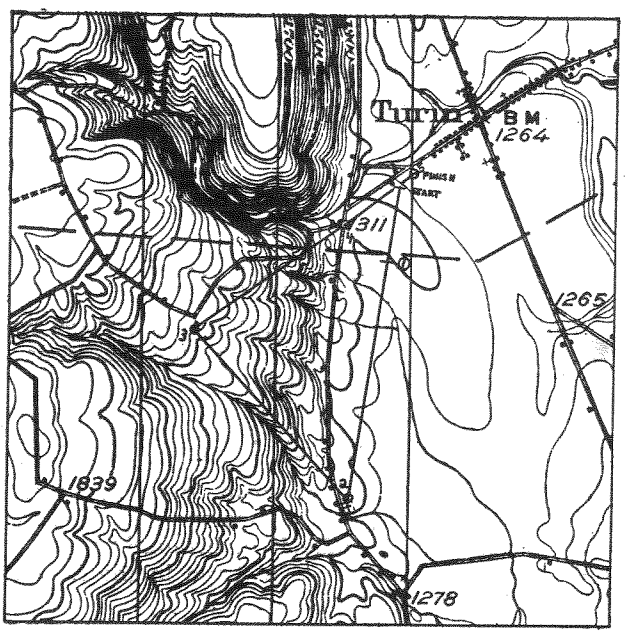
The intervals of starting Crews may range from one to five minutes, depending on the number of contestants, length of course, and time available.

Equipment

Each Crew or contestant in a race needs a compass, maps, and map case. See page 22 about the Pathfinder and Explorer models of the Silva compass, best for cross-country pathfinding.

Use topographic, Army grid, or similar maps.





The more details shown and the larger the scale, the better. If possible get the kind indicating wooded areas in color. "Topo" and Army maps, if not available at your map dealer, may be ordered from the U. S. Geological Survey or the U. S. Army Map Service, Washington, D. C.

If you need extra copies of a government map or want one enlarged, make a deal with a blue print or photostat company. When enlarging maps, include the legend, date, contour interval, declination, and *drawn* scale, but omit the *numerical* scale. With the title include the name of the race.

A map case can be made from a sheet of cardboard and a sheet of clear plastic, both 8″ x 10″, fastened together on three edges with adhesive tape. Fold the map to show the desired area and slip into the case.

Turin Ski Race

Flat and open terrain at the start of the course is required in a race when all contestants start at the same time instead of at intervals. This was true of the first ski race at Turin. The winning Crew finished the four-mile course just thirty seconds ahead of the next Crew. It was proved that Crews merely following others could not win, although most tried to profit by the others mistakes.

The instructions for this race follow, those at each station describing the next station. The map in the illustration is reduced one-half from the one used in the race.

START: *Control Station 1 is a row of flags parallel to row of flags at Start. Go on azimuth of 200 and find flag of same number you cover at start.*

CONTROL STATION 1: *Control Station 2 is located near N.E. corner of cemetery, about 1 mile S.S.W. on left side of road running between spot elevations 1311 and 1278.*

CONTROL STATION 2: *Control Station 3 is on an azimuth of 327, about 4/5 of a mile N.W. At a house by a sharp turn in the road.*

CONTROL STATION 3: *Control Station 4 is at the road junction by spot elevation 1311. It is N.E. of your present location.*

CONTROL STATION 4: *The finish is at school near the start.*

Tips On Conducting Races

Competition may be on a Unit, District, Council, or inter-Council basis. Contestants may be individuals, pairs, or Crews. Try including a girl in each pair over a fairly easy course.

Methods of travel — try mixing them — are running, canoe, rowboat, sailboat, bicycle, horse, snowshoes, skis, skates.

Set a time limit after which all contestants should report to the finish line.

Have a first aid crew on hand, just in case.

Be sure the officials' watches at the start and finish lines are synchronized.

Put the course in neutral territory so no one has the advantage of racing in his "back yard."

For further details write to Silva, Inc., LaPorte, Indiana, for the free pamphlet, *The Sport of Orienteering.*

Books On Behavior and Boats

Guide Book for the Young Man About Town by Norton H. Johnathan. John C. Winston Co., Philadelphia, 1948, 239 pages, $2.50.

This enlarged revision of the popular *Gentlemen Aren't Sissies* is a sophisticated and witty approach to gentlemanly behavior. It covers a wide variety of subjects but gets right down to cases. Young men will like the rapid-fire gags and straight-forward advice which make it entertaining reading and also a good reference to have in the Senior Unit's or leader's library.

Boats Anyone Can Build by the Editors of Popular Science Monthly. Popular Science Publishing Co., 1947, 238 pages, $2.98.

This book is an answer to many requests from Senior Units for small craft plans. A variety of boats are shown including kayak, outboard runabout, sailing dinghy, duck boat, sailing and motor cruisers, catboat, scow, pram, car-top boat, surfboard, utility skiff, and dory. All are relatively simple in design and construction. Each craft is pictured in action and at various stages of construction. Complete detail and assembly drawings and a bill of materials are given.

Theater Party

Simple to arrange, easy to pay for, and sure to provide a good time, even for girl-shy Seniors — that's a theater party. One Crew, two Crews, or the entire Unit can get up a party on short notice — how short depends on how far ahead the girls like to be called for dates. They meet at the Unit's headquarters or someone's home, then to the theater, and perhaps later to somebody else's home or a soda joint for refreshments.

Each fellow foots his own bill. Transportation may be via bus or good-natured dads' cars. No one has to arrange entertainment in addition to the movie, and a bashful Senior doesn't have to make with the conversation all evening long.

Navigation Charts

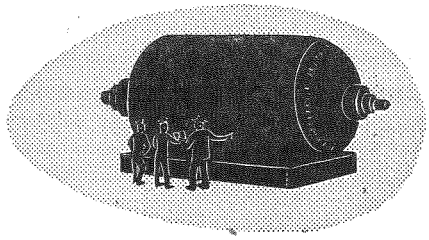
Fall and winter meetings are ideal for studying navigation. To make it realistic, get aeronautical and nautical charts of the areas that interest your Seniors most.

The *Aeronautical Chart Catalog* may be obtained from the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, Washington 25, D. C. It contains a list of dealers in every state, the area covered by each chart, catalog numbers, prices, and a list of related Civil Aeronautic Bulletins. Local airports have this catalog and generally sell the charts. They may have out-of-date charts free for the asking.

Nautical charts are published by several government agencies. The Coast and Geodetic Survey catalog (Serial No. 641) lists all the kinds of charts covering coasts of the United States and possessions. It may be obtained from the Survey office or seen at most map stores.

Charts of all oceans and seas, and of foreign coasts and harbors, are catalogued in Circular No. 3 of the U. S. Hydrographic Office, Washington, D. C. Both the Survey and Hydrographic Office lists have titles of related publications.

A catalog of charts of the Great Lakes, Lake Champlain, New York Canals, Lake of the Woods, and Rainy Lake is available from the U. S. Lake Survey Office, Detroit, Mich. A Mississippi River map list may be obtained from the Mississippi River Commission, Vicksburg, Miss.



Vocational Explorations

Some places appearing ordinary from the outside have enough on the inside to fill two or three interesting hours for Seniors. Once or twice a year get your Program Committees to arrange vocational explorations of such points as a police station, newspaper office, radio station, fire station, bank, telephone office, electric power and gas plants, manufacturing plant, airport, railroad terminal, hospital, department store, welfare agency, court room, or what have you.

Squadron 3 and Post 3, Kingston, N. Y., gave a Halloween costume party last October for girls and boys of a children's home. The Seniors presented their guests with toys, games, and books after an hour of moving pictures.

Has your Senior Unit brought happy smiles like these in the picture to the faces of some youngsters? If not, why not plan a Halloween, Thanksgiving, or Christmas party for a less-chance group? Why not make it an annual tradition?

Photo by Ken Roosa, Rosendale, N. Y.