

CREW LEADER'S ORIENTATION

ADVISORS COPY

Congratulations on being selected as a crew leader. Yours will be an experience that will never be forgotten and will provide you with a unique opportunity to better your leadership abilities and interpersonal skills. You are the quarterback and your team will be depending upon you to give them good leadership. Just as with any good quarterback, you need a game plan. This orientation will help you put together a game plan that will give you the best chance of success in the Super Bowl of Scouting: Philmont.

A good game plan always involves planning ahead and preparing for all foreseeable circumstances. A crucial element of any enjoyable outdoor experience is planning. The saying, *"an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure"* is really apparent in the woods. Examples of circumstances you should plan for include: the route for each day, how long it will take your crew to get to a destination, finding water sources along the way, looking at the map to determine which geographical features you should pass so you do not go the wrong way, etc. As you can see, it is necessary to plan for each day.

An excellent way of measuring how well you plan is to set goals for objectives that you would like to accomplish each day. Such goals would include: when everyone should get up in the morning, how fast camp should be broken, the time you want to get to your next camp, etc. These goals should be made by the entire crew at crew meetings held each night you are on the trail. It is amazing how much good planning and goal setting will make any outdoor experience more rewarding and enjoyable.

A Ranger will be assigned to your crew at the beginning of your Philmont Trek. The ranger is knowledgeable of outdoor skills and developing teamwork, and will orient your crew to the fundamentals of camping at Philmont. He or she will also give you suggestions on how to plan and how to implement those plans.

You, as the crew leader, are the quarterback of your crew and it is your responsibility to make sure the game plan is followed. Any good quarterback needs to know how to be an effective leader. Being a good leader means assuming leadership early and using an appropriate leadership style to fit the needs of each situation. Let your crew know that you are its leader and that you call the plays.

Upon being selected as the crew leader, you are given authority, it is now up to you to earn the respect of your crew, making sure that they always feel like they are part of the team. It is also important to know when to assert your leadership and when to be a diplomat. This is a difficult aspect of leadership and you should use every resource at your disposal concerning this point. If you are too assertive in leadership, your crew will look upon you as a dictator; however, if you are too diplomatic, some members of your crew will likely run all over you. Finding a happy medium separates the exceptional leaders from the inadequate ones. It is often helpful to look back to the leaders you respect and examine how they dealt with different situations. You will probably find that they almost, without exception, all led by example.

Perhaps the most difficult task you will face as crew leader is developing team work within the crew. As the leader, it is up to you to set a positive tone for the group. A positive attitude will help the crew get through almost any situation. Another aspect of developing good teamwork is resolving conflict early before it develops into a more serious matter. It is extremely important to always be aware of signs of conflict. You should consult your advisors about any situation that you are uncomfortable in dealing with.

As with any team, it takes time to develop good teamwork, and much effort should be taken in going on as many training hikes as it takes to get everyone working together as a team. A helpful tool in developing good teamwork is putting together a duty roster that splits up tasks such as cooking, cleanup, etc. A duty roster form will be provided when you arrive at Philmont.

As the quarterback, you are not alone in making decisions; you have at least two coaches. At Philmont these coaches are known as advisors and they are key members of your crew. They will give you a lot of valuable insight on how to be an effective crew leader and you should try to get as much advice from them as possible. Before coming to Philmont, sit down with your advisors and discuss your expectations of them and their expectations of you regarding your respective leadership roles within the crew. They have experience with leadership and will help you immensely in developing your leadership ability.

Hopefully, this orientation will have given you some idea as to what awaits you in your role as a crew leader. Your ranger will provide additional guidance during your orientation at Philmont. Remember, find your own leadership style and develop it. The most effective way of becoming a better leader is practice. We look forward to having your crew at Philmont and wish you the best of luck as the crew leader.

The Philmont Staff