

## **FEBRUARY – SHOOTING SPORTS AND CUB SCOUTS**

### **Music Full then under**

AMY: Hello, everyone, and welcome to our CubCast for February. I'm Amy Hutcherson, Cub Scout member experience specialist. Joining me is *Boys' Life* senior writer, Aaron Derr. This month Dennis Kampa joins us to talk about Cub Scouting and shooting sports.

AARON: Now, the guys in my pack love shooting sports. We did it last fall and it's always a fantastic experience, and we're going to do it again this spring, so the timing for this interview is perfect.

AMY: Okay, to be honest, as a mom of two boys, those two things – Cub Scouting and shooting sports – said in the very same breath make me a little nervous.

AARON: Yeah. There's nothing like the first time you take your son to the shooting range, and after you hear them say, "Always point the gun towards the target," your kid is the first one who spins around and the gun spins around with him and everybody has to duck.

AMY Oh, my!

AARON: Yeah, been there, done that. But I'm sure CubCast favorite Dennis Kampa will help ease any anxieties we have about it.

AMY: Then let's go ahead and get started.

### **Music Fades**

AMY: Listeners, you may remember last April, Dennis Kampa encouraged us all to go to the beautiful Philmont Training Center. He's the National Camping School Task Force Chair and the Council President for the Rocky Mountain Council in Pueblo, Colorado, and also the author of the BALOO training. Dennis, welcome back to Cubcast.

DENNIS: Thank you, Amy. It's good to be here.

AMY: Okay, Dennis, Aaron says you're to ease my fears about pairing 8-year-olds with shooting sports, so let's start with what exactly is shooting sports and what does it entail?

DENNIS: Surprisingly, Amy, you're not the only parent concerned about giving a BB gun to their young Cub Scout son and that's part of the hallmark of our program is to encourage safety both on the range and handling any sort of BB guns, archery and slingshots. Also using proper techniques for loading, shooting and even recovering; in the case of archery, recovering those arrows once it's time to do that. That's probably the most important, and the part that parents are concerned about as well.

AARON: Very cool. And why do we use shooting sports? What are we trying to teach our boys?

DENNIS: Safety is the number one concern, just like anything else we do. We want to make sure that the young Scouts are learning the proper way to handle a BB gun or a bow and arrow or a slingshot. Also helping to tie into some of the points of the Scout Oath: trustworthy, helpful, obedient, cheerful when those arrows don't hit the target the first time, and even to the extent of the brave point of the Scout Law, just trying something new and working through it and improving skills. So, our number one is safety and second of all is do your best as Cub Scouts

AMY: I love how you tie in the Scout Law teaching sports, Dennis, and I know my own 8-year-old son as well as probably my husband is going to be really excited about all this stuff. So how do I get my den involved?

DENNIS: It's important to remember that the shooting sports for Cub Scouts is part of a council or district sponsored event, so that's either day camp, resident camp or your council or district may just have a shooting day for Cub Scouts where they open up the range at their camp or set one up at a local facility and run a shooting sports program for the day. So always sponsored by council or district. Unit shooting activities are not authorized for Cub Scouts.

AARON: What role do the parents play in shooting sports in Cub Scouts?

DENNIS: When I run a range, I like to have the parents around just because you can't have too many sets of eyes on where the guns are pointed or where the bows and arrows are pointed and that sort of thing. So, parents should be part of the process, helping out, listening to the safety lecture before the shooting starts, and helping their son learn those fine points, because the average 8 or 9-year-old is not going to pick it up hearing it once. They're going to have to hear it a couple of times. So, if the parent can help reinforce the safety aspect, that's going to be critical.

The other part of it is just helping out as their son goes through the process of learning to shoot; bows and arrows especially can be really hard for an 8-year-old. So, parents have a big role and the council or district should be using them in that role as they're rolling forward with the program.

AMY: Are there any specific things that I as a leader need to know about using a BB gun or a bow and arrow?

DENNIS: Any knowledge would be a good thing. It couldn't hurt to know more about how a BB gun works. I know I was excited when my son went to day camp and learned how to shoot BB guns, so that sounded like a good excuse to go and buy a BB gun and (laughter) relive my youth ...

AMY: I think all men are wired the same way when it comes to shooting.

DENNIS: (Laughs) It's part of the deal. But the range itself, as I said earlier, are run by range masters. Those are a Scouter who has been trained. For Cub Scouts it's a person who's been trained by someone who has been to a National Camp School shooting sports training session or a NRA or a National Archery Association trainer as well. We don't just cut (the boys) loose with the tools and let them go for it. We have a very safe process. We have trained range masters leading the range and those folks are in charge. I visited one range doing camp visitation and there was a Marine Corps guy there in charge of the range and the Scouts were very aware that it was his range and they'd better listen to him because if they didn't pay attention they weren't going to get to shoot that day. So important part of the deal.

AARON: Dennis, what resources are available to me as a Cub Scout leader if I want to prepare my pack or den for a shooting sports adventure?

DENNIS: The resources in the Boy Scouts for the shooting sports are very well done. There is a shooting sports manual, [\[Boy Scouts of America National Shooting Sports Manual\]](#) put out by the BSA that covers everything from Cub Scouts all the way up through the Venturing program. It's a progressive program and there's plenty of information available there. The new Cub Scout Shooting Sports Award will be supported by a Leader Guide which will be downloadable and also support all the information that the requirements call for, and, that award will be included in a Leader Guide.

So, if you wanted to brush up on what the actual requirements are and the proper way to do those, then that will be included in that Leader Guide as well. So, again, plenty of support. You just have to be willing to find it and to open up the book and read it.

AMY: My ears perked up when you said 'award'. In Cub Scouting we love these awards. Can you elaborate a little bit on the recognition for shooting sports?

DENNIS: Sure. Well, it's Scouting so we have to have patches, right?

AMY: (Laughter) Right.

DENNIS: So the first level of the recognition is a patch. The new program has four of those, so there is one for Tigers, one for Wolves, one for Bear and one for Webelos. And that's earned by the level-one requirements which is basically just safe operation and a little bit about how to use it. And then from there, there's another level of recognition. There's a device for each discipline, so there would be one for BB guns, one for archery and one for slingshots, which would be worn on that patch, so kind of a two-step process. First the patch, and then as the Scout goes through the various disciplines there would be another pin that attaches to that patch as they master that skill as well.

I should point out that it probably is going to be impossible for the Scout to earn all three of those devices and the patch as part of a regular day camp situation. It's more likely that they will get a patch and one device based on the amount of time it's going to take for them to get through all the requirements and to learn that skill as much as needed to complete the requirements. So if your son is one of those kids that has to have every award, if you're one of those parents that has to have your son have every

award that's out there, you're going to have to plan and go into either multiple sessions for camp or support a shooting day in your district or council as well.

AARON: Very cool. Dennis, I wonder, before we let you go, if you could talk a little bit more about slingshots. My boys and my son's Cub Scout pack and we've done BB guns, we've done bows and arrows, we've never done slingshots. This is a new thing. Can you talk about that a little bit?

DENNIS: Yeah, and the kind of slingshots I'm talking about would probably be more familiar to you if I said the term "Wrist-Rocket." That's a trademarked name, so we can't use that as part of our program, but that's the type of slingshot we're looking for folks to use. If you're not familiar with that, it's got a wrist support that comes back up over your arm and helps to steady of the device and makes it more stable for as a shooting platform.

AARON: Cool.

DENNIS: So you're right; it is something new. It's always technically been part of the program although most councils or districts haven't really supported it. When we were coming up with the new program we wanted to put a little something new in there so we built up the slingshot program. We tested it at Philmont this summer at the Training Center with adults and with kids. Everybody had a good time. So, something new for the folks that have experience and also for those who are brand new getting into it.

AARON: And it's only at a council event. You can't just go in your backyard and do it, right?

DENNIS: Safety is number one in everything we do here. There can be some variation in ammunition and what you shoot at and that sort of thing, so

there is a little bit more flexibility than the other programs but, again, safety is still the main concern.

AMY: Definitely. Okay, Dennis, is there anything else that our listeners might want to know about shooting sports?

DENNIS: I'd just like to point out that, depending on where you are listening to this, you may have some problems working through this. I know there are restrictions on BB guns and archery equipment in different states across the country, so I would caution you to make sure that you're aware of what those restrictions are in your locale and then also follow the BSA program.

AMY: Got it, okay. Well, as a den leader and a mother, I am sure glad that shooting sports is about teaching the boys some necessary life skills and not about how to shoot a firearm. I really appreciate how you articulate that so wonderfully not only for myself but also for our listeners. As always, thanks so much for coming on CubCast, Dennis. You're always so great to have on the show.

DENNIS: My pleasure.

AARON: And now a sneak peek at the February ScoutCast; then we'll be right back with Reminders and Tips.

### **(ScoutCast – The Scoutmaster's Minute)**

AARON: That should be a pretty good one for Cub leaders as well. But before you head over to the ScoutCast page, it's time for CubCast Reminders and Tips. Amy, take it away.

AMY: Let's get started with succession plans. Having a succession plan means being prepared to replace volunteers in key roles because the den or pack

leader may have committed to their responsibilities but, alas, they may not be able to keep that commitment.

AARON: And since our motto is Be Prepared, a successor needs to be identified for the role should something unexpected happen. With a succession plan in place, you won't be scrambling around trying to fill a vacancy and the pack can maintain its tradition of 100% trained leaders. Tune into the April 2014 CubCast for more on succession plans and cultivating new leaders.

AMY: This is also a good time to be thinking about recruiting more boys in the pack with the Spring Roundup. Talk to your District Executive about coordinating your recruitment efforts with local schools. Point out to the boys that just because they're on a soccer team or a baseball team, they can still be a Cub Scout.

AARON: Be sure to let them know that even though they can't attend all the meetings, they can still advance and have fun in Scouting. In fact, you can go back to the January 2015 CubCast to learn how Cub Scouts and sports can complement each other.

AMY: Okay. You've heard of Journey to Excellence, right? It's the BSA's tool for making your pack the best it could be. For a guide to getting started with JTE scoring, including what's in it for you, turn to the January-February 2016 issue of *Scouting* magazine. There is also a great discussion on JTE on the November 2013 CubCast. Using both these resources should guarantee you the gold.

**BEGIN MUSIC UNDER**

AMY: The music cue means the February CubCast has now come to an end. Special thanks to our guest Dennis Kampa.

AARON: And thank you for joining us. Be sure to come back next month as we discuss your family's role in the Cub Scout program.

AMY: Don't forget to send us your thoughts and ideas for a future CubCast. It's easy. Just send an e-mail to [cubcast@scouting.org](mailto:cubcast@scouting.org) or a tweet to [@cubcast](https://twitter.com/cubcast). We look forward to hearing from you. With that, I'm Amy Hutcherson –

AARON: And I'm Aaron Derr. We leave you with a shooting sports favorite from the Think-n-Grin section of Boys' Life magazine. A book never written: Shooting Sports – by B.A. Bettershot.

AMY: (Laughs) Good one.

**MUSIC FULL TO FINISH**