



Tips for Hosting a Unit, District, or Council Fishing Event

(21011)

Prepared by the Youth Fishing Opportunities, Training and Education, and Document Development Task Teams
of the
BSA National Fishing Subcommittee

Introduction: This planning tool is based on years of experience, and is designed to help Scouters create a **Fun, Safe,** and **Simple** fishing event, derby or tournament!

Fishing Event: _____

Date: _____ Start time _____ Finish time _____

Rain Date: _____

Important Contacts:

Post at the event and provide a list of important names and contact information to staff.

Event Director _____ Phone _____

Lead Fishing Instructor _____ Phone _____

Safety Officer _____ Phone _____

Quartermaster _____ Phone _____

Camp Ranger (if event is at a Scout Camp)

Name _____ Phone _____

Nearest Emergency Medical Facility _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Staff

The **Lead Fishing Instructor** is responsible for all fishing operations. He or she will need assistants. In addition to CAIs and Angling Educators, recruit parents, Den and Scout Leaders and youth from Troops and Crews who like to fish to work with small groups of Scouts.

The **Safety Officer** is responsible for First Aid and ensuring and enforcing the safety items set forth below.

The **Quartermaster** is responsible for all fishing equipment including safety glasses. Will repair or re-rig poles or rods and reels as needed, and supervise storage and use of fishing tackle and equipment.

Parents will help their Scouts understand and follow instructions as well as help them catch and release their fish. Parents are responsible for their Scout's pole/rod, line and hook being properly used and secured.

Planning and Pre-event Activities

- Plan your activity ahead of time with event and unit leaders. Each event is different, depending on the location and the group. Be flexible and adapt.
- If combined with other events:
 - Allow enough travel time between events.
 - Allow a minimum for 45 minutes for fishing.
 - 15 minutes between each session.
- Check equipment, especially rods and reels. Make sure all are in working order.
- Set aside several designated areas for fishing poles.
 - **Ready to use.** “A rope rack” with strings to tie poles works well.
 - **Equipment Hospital** - a barrel (with a red cross) or other place for rods and reels that need repair.
- Identify productive fishing areas.
- Identify potential safety hazards; that includes deep water.
- Make accommodations for special needs youth and adults.

Training

In addition to the required Youth Protection for all Scouters the following BSA courses are highly recommended:

- Hazardous Weather Training
- Safety Afloat
- Safe Swim Defense

Safety Considerations

- There must be an adequate number of adults and older trained youth to watch the waterfront and supervise activities.
- Everyone in the fishing area:
 - Must wear **eye protection**.
 - Must wear closed toe shoes.
 - Must cast safely.
 - Should wear a broad-brimmed hat or cap.
- The barbs on all hooks must be crimped down.
- NO treble hooks allowed.
- Anyone hooked, should stand still and tell a leader. The leader will give ***three blasts on a whistle***. **Everyone must stand still.**
- **PFD recommended for non-swimmers fishing from a dock.**

First Aid

- Have a first aid kit at the fishing area.
- Know how to remove a hook using the Line Pull Extraction Method.

- Any situations beyond basic first aid by staff or parents, will be evaluated by the **Safety Officer** who will take appropriate action including if necessary, calling 911 or arranging for transportation to a medical facility as appropriate.

Lead Fishing Instructor's Short Talk

Should cover Health and Safety, plus Fishing Basics, including:

- **NO running!**
- **Eye protection must be worn by everyone in the fishing area.**
- Hats or caps with brims are recommended.
- All hook barbs must be crimped down.
- **NO treble hooks**
- How to safely cast. **Look before you cast!**
- How to bait a hook
- Watch your bobber or line & setting the hook
- Fighting a fish
- Handling and releasing a fish
- No fishing in restricted areas (swimming or boating area)
- Likely places to catch fish
- Fish identification
- What to do if someone gets hooked

The Whistle System

- **One blast - start fishing**
- **Two blasts - stop fishing**
- **Three blasts - FREEZE** - someone is hooked or there is another reason why everyone must stand in place.

Fishing Rods, Reels & Poles

- Fixed-line cane poles for younger Scouts
- Depending on skill level, spin-casting outfits for older Scouts.
- Scouts may bring and use their own tackle however don't spend time repairing personal gear.
- Let Scouts use event gear.

Fishing Gear

- Bobbers, 1-inch diameter
- Lead-free split shot or weights
- J hooks or Circle hooks, size 6 or 8 for panfish with barbs crimped down
- Spool of monofilament line, 6- or 8-lb. test. Store in a koozie.
- Roll of blue tape to secure hooks to cane poles
- Scissors or knife and cutting board to cut up worms.
- Needlenose pliers or forceps for each person who will be helping Scouts release fish.
- Hardened wire cutters.
- Fingernail clippers (on a lanyard) or line nippers for cutting fishing line (staff).
- Long rulers or fabric tape measure to measure fish.
- Cooler and ice for worms. Don't let the worms get wet.

Safety Equipment

- First aid kit
- Safety glasses
- Weather radio
- Two-way radios
- Whistles

Miscellaneous Equipment

- Water cooler and paper cups
- Trash can and trash bags
- Paper towels
- Poster of local fish
- Spin fishing outfits
- Antiseptic wipes, and or hand sanitizer

Bait

Have plenty of bait. Use cut-up pieces of earthworms or nightcrawlers, grubs, mealworms, waxworms, crickets or even camp hot dogs (when you run out of everything else). Make arrangements to purchase and store larger quantities of bait in advance.

Tournament Equipment

- Clipboard with copies of log-in sheet
- Pens or pencils
- Leader Board: Dry erase board; marker & eraser
- Prizes and/or certificates
- Giveaways
- Cameras

Some Catch and Release Fishing Contest Award Categories

- Longest fish
- Shortest fish
- Most fish caught (no size requirements)
- Most fish species caught
- Ugliest fish
- Most colorful fish
- Most unusual fish
- Most unusual non-fish item

Make sure the judges have a ruler or fabric tape measure.

Optional Activities

Backyard Bass Casting Contest

- Catch the most fish.
- Catch the most of a particular color of backyard bass.
- Have the Scouts identify the different species of fish.

Using clear tape, add pictures of different species of fish to the back of the Backyard Bass.

Equipment – At least one set of Backyard Bass (including plastic fish and plugs), a tarp and several closed-face spin-cast rods. Be sure to include one or two spares.



Spin-Casting Distance Contest

Equipment

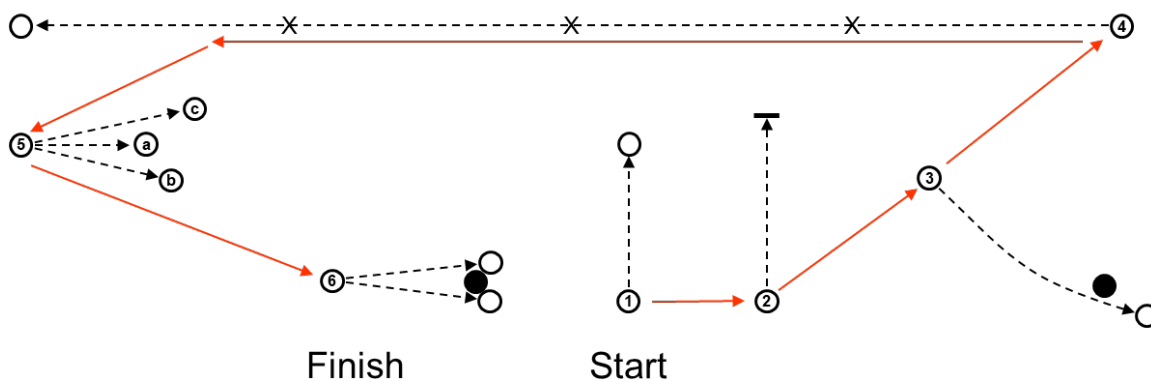
- 2 Spin-cast rods (1 to use and 1 backup)
- Casting Plugs
- 50' or 100' tape measure
- Stakes (placed at 25' intervals)
- Hammer mallet to drive in stakes.

Spin-Casting and/or Fly-Casting Accuracy

Cast to Hula Hoops, and upside down frisbees set at various locations and distances.

Fishing Golf

Create a fishing golf course using targets to test your casting abilities. The Scout who completes the course with the smallest number of casts, wins. Try it with cane pole, spin-cast, spinning or fly gear. Here's an example:



Conclusion and Clean-up

- Leave No trace.
- Properly dispose of left-over bait and trash in a plastic bag and put in the dumpster.
- Identify any rods that are not working and set aside for repair.
- Properly clean and sterilize equipment, and put it back in storage.

REMEMBER:

- Keep It Simple and Make It Fun!
- Take plenty of pictures and send to your fishing committee and council.
- Join the team! Become a BSA Certified Angling Instructor. Check out <http://bsafishing.com>.

Fish On!

Fishing Resources

BSA - Scout Fishing <https://www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/fishing/>

Fishing Merit Badge Counselor Guide and MB Pamphlet

“Tips on hosting a fishing event during a COVID -19 environment”

<https://i9peul1kn3a16vg4e45rqil7-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Scout-Group-Fishing-and-COVID-final.pdf>

Fly Fishing Merit Badge Counselor Guide and MB pamphlet

Become a BSA Certified Angling Instructor <http://bsafishing.com>

While you are there, check out the Blog Posts

Mecklenburg County Council Fishing Committee

<mcc.scouting.org/fishing> and <https://www.mccscouting.org/fishing-resources>

Connecticut Aquatics Resources Education

<https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Fishing/CARE/Instructor-Resources>

Intro to fishing - International Game Fishers Association (IGFA)

<https://learn-to-fish.igfa.org/courses/intro-to-fishing>

Take Me Fishing.org <https://www.takemefishing.org>

Educational Material by the State of Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife

<https://tpwd.texas.gov/education/angler-education/learn-to-fish>

- [Fishing Tips for Beginners](#) (PDF)
- [A Basic Guide for the Beginning Angler](#) (PDF)
 - o [\(guía en español\)](#) (PDF)
- [Fly Fishing for Beginners](#) (PDF)
- Videos on YouTube:
 - o [Getting Started: Fishing Resources](#)
 - o [Safety While Fishing](#)
 - o [Assembling Basic Gear](#)
 - o [Tackle Boxes and Supplies](#)
 - o [Bait and Lures](#)
 - o [How to Cast](#)
 - o [Freshwater Fishing](#)
 - o [Saltwater Fishing](#)
 - o [Fishing with Kids](#)
 - o [Cleaning and Storing Fish](#)

State and Local Wildlife and Parks Departments. Here are a few:

<http://www.iowadnr.gov/Fishing.aspx>

<http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/fishing/Pages/default.aspx>

<https://huntfish.mdc.mo.gov/fishing>

<https://www.ncwildlife.org/Fishing/Fishing-in-North-Carolina>

Join the team - Become a BSA Certified Angling Instructor <http://bsafishing.com>