

Beavers in Action!

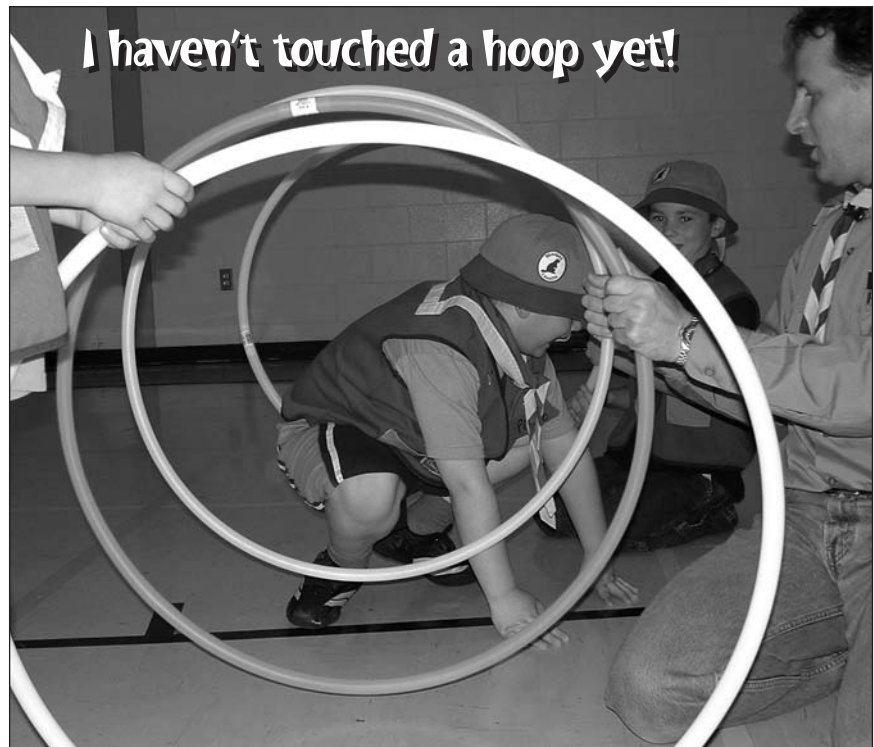
(Athlete Night)

by Sharon Fitzsimmons

During our planning meetings, we must remember to include ideas and suggestions from our most valuable resources, the Beavers! In our Colony, we make it a point to ask the Beavers at the beginning of the year, what type of activities the group would enjoy; who they may want to have as a special guest, where they might like to go for a tour, what kind of crafts they'd like to try, etc. We also ask for feedback at the end of the Beaver year. One of our favorite nights, which we are asked for time and again, is Athlete Night.

Prior to the big night, we ask the parents to have their son/daughter wear a pair of shorts and a T-shirt and to send indoor sneakers. A couple of weeks before the meeting, one of the leaders picks up participation ribbons at a local trophy shop. Many times we were able to get the ribbons donated and if not, they are very inexpensive. At the end of the meeting, each Beaver is asked to come forward, thanked for his/her enthusiastic participation and teamwork and then a leader pins the ribbon on his/her shirt. A rousing cheer finishes off the simple ceremony and all the Beavers leave the meeting feeling very special, as if they've just won Gold at the Olympics!

Try to set up your stations before the meeting starts, enabling you to begin right away. Organization and planning will prevent chaos! Each station is supervised by one adult (great chance to have parents help) and Keo also assists. Meeting in a gym-



Photos courtesy of Sharon Fitzsimmons

nasium affords us plenty of room, so we set up five stations. With twenty Beavers, we have four at each station, spending about five minutes at each station. It usually takes about half an hour or so to complete all five stations. If your meeting place is smaller than a gymnasium, four stations can work equally as well.

Before beginning, we briefly ("briefly" being the key word, as the Beavers are very anxious to start) explain what to do at each station, with the leaders demonstrating. We also tell them if they think of another way to do the activity, by all means let the leader know. Our quiet sign (the Beaver salute) is used to indicate when it is time to change stations. Most importantly, we remind them about our special Colony rules. **NO ONE GETS HURT and EVERYONE HAS FUN!**

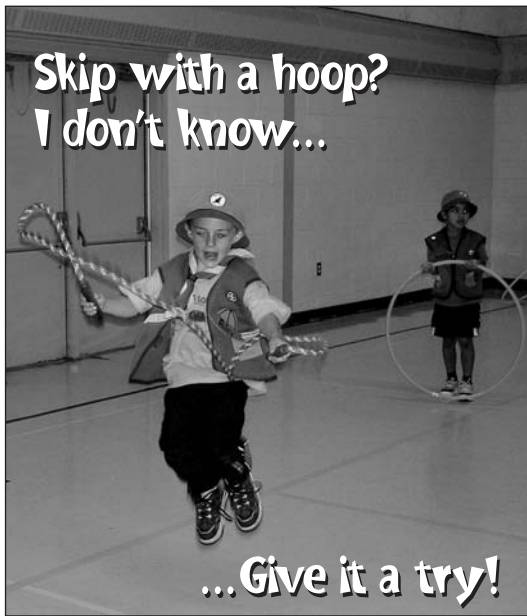
When we are finished, we have all the Beavers sit in a circle, wind down and have a drink and snack. This is a perfect time to get some feedback on their favourite station.

Pool Noodle Hockey:

With only four Beavers at each station, two pool noodles are sufficient. Arrange five chairs (or Beaver hats as markers) in a straight line about two feet apart. The Beavers try to hit a sock (rolled in a tight ball) through the chair legs. This is more difficult than it appears, as the pool noodles wiggle and are at times difficult to control, making it tricky to shoot accurately! Other options include trying to get the sock balls **between** the chairs, or going in and out and around. We hear lots of giggles from this station, as the pool noodles get all floppy; they are very long for short Beavers to control!!

Skipping:

This is a very simple station to prepare, as it only involves skipping ropes. Make sure that you have as many ropes as you have Beavers. It's surprising how many Beavers do not know how to skip, so this is a good chance to teach that skill. Our Beavers have changed this activity over the



Beavers have fun changing the activities and creating variations on a theme.

While holding an 'Athlete Night', stress the importance of being active, staying fit and having fun.

years, to skipping in pairs, wriggling the rope on the ground while other Beavers try to jump over it or better still, doing the limbo with the rope. Our Beavers are very creative!

Hoops:

This station has many variations. We like to use the traditional Aboriginal game of rolling the hoops and throwing beanbags or balls through them as they are rolling. For this game, the Beavers work in pairs. One is the 'roller' and the other is the 'thrower'. It is inevitable that as soon as the Beavers pick up a hoop, they try spinning it around their waist, so this is another simple way to use the hoops. Another variation is to have a leader hold up a hoop on either side of his body and have the Beavers throw balls or beanbags through them. Still another idea for this station, is to have the leader and the other Beavers hold up the hoops to create a sort of tunnel and each Beaver tries to crawl through, without touching any part of the hoop (which is almost impossible). The hoops usually collapse taking the Beavers and leaders down too, so there's lots of laughter heard at this station. This is another one of our favorite stations.

Bowling:

Another simple station, but lots of fun. The Beavers like keeping track of how many pins they knock down within a certain number of turns. If you do not have the classic plastic bowling set, you could use empty two litre plastic pop bottles.

Obstacle course:

This station requires a little time for set up, before the Beavers arrive. It can be set up in any order. We use the long narrow bench that is always in our gymnasium. The Beavers have to balance to get across it. We have stacking cans to make towers with the correct sizes. Mats make it safe for the Beavers to roll over and over until they get to the end. Skipping ropes could be used at this station too. We often set up a few chairs to crawl through. You could have a mini relay race of any kind (we use tissue paper rolled into balls to be carried on a spoon). Let your imagination run wild to create this station.

Each time we repeat this favorite night, we take the time to talk to the Beavers in very simple terms, as to what it takes to be an athlete, stressing the importance of being active and staying fit and having fun doing it. In 5th Cole Harbour 'B' Colony we certainly know how to have FUN!! ^

– Sharon Fitzsimmons is one of the new authors for Fun at the Pond and likes to keep active with her Beavers!

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