



Marshmallow Golf and Other Reasons to be a Leader

— as told by J. Duncan MacGregor

In a recent training notice, one of the session write-ups indicated that program leaders could learn how to have fun with the youth. I believe this is missing the mark. The goal should be that all leaders should learn that they can have fun ... all the time. When training. When planning. Always. Not just when they are with the youth.

No, seriously, leaders have to have fun or we lose them. No leaders, no program, no kids. If you are having fun, you don't have to fake it. You won't be asking yourself, "Why am I doing this?" You'll be enjoying yourself, and the kids will too. Do it for yourself. Have fun. Be GOOFY (Notice the capitalization?). Be like Goofy the Disney character, who keeps seeing things in a fresh, innocent manner. This is the goal, the message, we

need to be passing along to our leaders. Now the key to this is — Marshmallow Golf.

How It Started

I was a Scout. Many years later, when I saw an ad on the local cable TV channel looking for a Cub Leader, I thought about it. I knew one of the families who were involved so I asked them how I could help. After an afternoon of interviews, I was in. Years go by. I become Akela, then a trainer, (NOW, THAT IS FUN), an assistant District Commissioner and up through the ranks. Things were running smoothly, so I left.

Three years later I get a phone call. There was a course going on, would I come to visit at least? Well, you can't go to something like that without bringing a present. I remembered an article I had kept (once a leader, always a resource person!), "The History of the Marshmallow," so I brought copies.

The article mentioned a Marshmallow Golf Tournament. During some tournaments there are special holes, where extra prizes are at stake: "Closest to the pin" and "Longest drive". I decided that at the

next Wood Badge course I was to train at, I would have an interactive game...FUN. Oh, oh, the session was how to evaluate your program.

So, I borrowed seven putters. (Hey, that way it doesn't matter if you are right or left handed, right? Uh, Correct?)

The candidates got a score card and two marshmallows. They had to share the clubs.

For the longest drive, a length of rope on the ground marked the T-off area. A track and field measuring tape made it official.

The second prize, (a roasting fork!), was closest to the pin. (Got to stick to the theme.)

The third was a regular golf hole. There was a flag (bicycle type) and everything except a hole. Too much work. So a hula hoop served. Strokes counted.

It was the last session of the day. I still like to think that is why it wasn't remembered. The score cards, forgotten. The lesson? The lesson was, evaluations at the end of a training are useful, but the program is and always was about, having FUN. Doing something different is FUN.

Marshmallow Golf

Go for a "Hole in One" and have Fun!



*Go ahead.
Keep score.
But there are
NO prizes!*



That is why the children started Scouting. B.-P. wrote the book, the children made it happen. Leaders are leaders because we want to play too. So we invited ourselves along. The program belongs to the kids... I just happen to be one.

Rules

These were the rules I made up for the first game of Marshmallow Golf. This may show what I mean. Leaders who have fun, bring fun. Everything can be fun. So, back to rules ...

There are no rules except ...

1. Players must not eat their opponent's ball (marshmallow).
2. Players must refrain from normal golf course language. Which of course, is coarse. So please, during this course, keep the course coarse to a minimum, of course!
3. Marking your marshmallow for identification purposes is allowed and encouraged.
4. Altering your marshmallow by heating, or insertion of foreign bodies (an object, not people!) in order to add mass, is expressly forbidden.
5. The least number of strokes wins.
6. Unless you are Scots by descent. Then you will want to get your monies worth for the green fees. We understand your desire for a triple digit score.
7. Water hazards are ... OK, now you are either way off course or the session should have been called off due to wind.
8. No! These are not Australian rules!
9. Are you still reading?

10. Play for the FUN of it. There are no prizes.

Instructions:

Longest Drive

Hit it once.

Use tape to measure from the tee.

Record distance here:

_____ metres/feet

Nearest to the Pin

Hit it once.

Use tape to measure distance to the roasting fork.

Record distance here:

_____ metres/feet

Note: It doesn't matter if you hit the fork. Measure from where the marshmallow lies.

The Links

Hit it as often as needed to get within the circle.

Strokes to be recorded here:

See Rule #6 to determine how well you did.

Marshmallow Golf continues to be played in my area. I once witnessed a 110 foot (33.5 m) marshmallow drive at a family reunion in Alberta. By the way, youth enjoy this too! I was recently at a Cuboree and it was being used as a Linking event, complete with an obstacle course and using trees as hazards. Go for a "Hole in One", and have Fun! \

– Yours in Scouting, J. Duncan MacGregor, the Marshmallow Man.

Linking to Strategic Directions #1 and #2.

A B C's of a Successful Leader

Use these as ideas to launch this Scouting year off as the best yet! Or better still, go through the A B C's with your youth and see what ideas they have.

- A** Ask your members how their day went.
- B** Brainstorm with your youth.
- C** Congratulate someone on a job well done.
- D** Discuss three activities your youth want to do.
- E** Encourage your members to try something new.
- F** Find a new place to visit.
- G** Give responsibility to youth.
- H** Hold one meeting outside a month.
- I** Include your sponsor/partner in a meeting.
- J** Join your youth in a game.
- K** Keep to a flexible meeting format.
- L** Limit boredom.
- M** Make every meeting Fun.
- N** Notice and give compliments.
- O** Offer to help if someone is struggling.
- P** Provide good role models.
- Q** Question to draw out ideas and suggestions.
- R** Respect everyone's right to their opinion.
- S** Share a laugh.
- T** Take time to listen.
- U** Urge your members to excel.
- V** Visit places of interest to the youth.
- W** Work with the Sixer's Council or Court of Honour.
- X** Xerox and save programs that work.
- Y** Yield results with encouragement.
- Z** Zoom through these A B C's for more ideas!



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