

CHIEFS: These recreation ideas are presented as suggestions and are not intended to be requirements toward Skill completion. They will, however, make your boys' experience that much better and you are encouraged to consider them. Their order corresponds to the Lesson Knots. So, be sure not to introduce them too early. However, repeat any favorites and ensure that your boys have the best possible time in your crew meetings!

Brooms and/or mop handles, poles or sticks will be suggested for some games. Also, a single, longer length of line (probably longer than the ones the boys have been learning with) may simplify preparations for a game. Above all, prepare well ahead of time: give your boys the maximum fun by ensuring the maximum time is available for them.

### S.O.A.R.R. ("Squares On A Round Rope")

For LESSON 1

This game requires hand agility and strategy, since there is more than one way to complete the task. Boys are to tie Square Knots along a single length of line. Below are variations that can be played with any number of boys, type and length of rope, and available time (you may also want to play again in other meetings using other methods or, if time allows, more than one this time):

1. "Squeeze the Squares" Boys tie as many square knots as they can on a single length of rope of preferably three feet or more. (Hint: it can be more efficient to tie the first knot in the center, then other knots going outward towards the ends. But let the boys figure that out for themselves!) If you have a length of rope for each boy, then all will compete at the same time. If not, then each boy on a 'team' takes his turn tying a knot, and then passes off to his next teammate who ties the next one. The objective is to either tie as many knots as the rope can hold – or – whoever can fill their rope first.
2. "Square – Un-square" Boys work as teams (3 or more boys each.) The first boy ties **3** (three) square knots and passes the rope to the next teammate who unties and then re-ties them. The last boy passes his three knots to the first boy who unties, then presents rope to Chief. The team doing so first is the 'winner' (though game does not end until all teams complete the task.) This variation works well if the available rope is in 'shorter' lengths.

### T.O.W ("Tug-O-War")

For LESSON 1 and/or 2

This will be a 'friendly' game of Tug-O-War (which, of course, means no roughness!) The 'tow rope' will be made from the practice lines that your boys have been learning their knots with. Have the boys join the ends of their lines with **Square Knots** (or **Sheet Bends** – perhaps every other one) and add **Figure 8** knots along the lines every 2 or 3 feet. All of the knots will serve as 'hand holds'. There should be a section of 4 or more feet in the middle that separates the two teams. Be sure that everything turns out to be long enough for the number of boys who will compete. For large Sites, boys should be divided into teams of about 4 or more (though you will

need an even number of teams.) Small Sites can put their boys into just two opposing teams (but do not ‘overcrowd it’ or boys will be falling over each other!)

Make a ‘center line’ that one team pulls the other across (a piece of tape on a tile floor, or a line in the sand outside, or even someone’s belt laid on the ground.) Have both teams pull gently in their direction until the line is just ‘taut’, and then commence the game (with a sound or hand signal.) Game is ‘won’ when the second member of the opposite team is pulled onto or over the ‘line’. Be sure that everyone knows that the pulling stops when game is over!!

If your rope material is light (small in diameter) consider wrapping two or three together to make it easier for boys to grip. Remember, game is to be fun and for boys to practice their knots, not to prove who is tougher! Try to balance teams so they are reasonably close in size and age.

### **S.K.O.A.R.R.** (“Stopper Knots On A Round Rope”)

For LESSON 2

This game is just like S.O.A.R.R. only the boys now tie Stopper Knots (Figure 8 knots) along a single length of line. This will be much more challenging as the knots will be harder to make – knots should begin at one end and proceed to the other (no advantage to starting in the middle!) Use any of the S.O.A.R.R. game variations from above.

### **HITCH YOUR HORSE**

For LESSON 3

Boys will compete in teams of three (two will be fine if you come up ‘short’ on players.) A Crew Chief or adult will be seated, facing boys, about 8 – 10 feet from their ‘starting mark’. First boy on each team has a length of rope in hand. When ready, Chief calls out “**Hitch Your Horse with a...**” (adding either “**...Pile Hitch**” or “**...Clove Hitch**” to the command.) His arms are extended at his sides and either bent at a 90 degree angle for Pile Hitch and top-of-post Clove Hitch -or- straight for a Clove Hitch on a railing or branch (be sure boys understand these instructions.)

When the Chief starts the game, the first boy hands an end of his rope to the next boy in line who is then ‘led’ to the ‘hitching post’ where the appropriate knot is tied. Chief nods his approval and first boy returns to starting line while the ‘horse’ unties himself from the ‘post’. Then, this second boy goes to get his ‘horse’ (either the third teammate or the first one again) and ‘leads’ him to the ‘post’ to be tied with the next knot as commanded. This ‘horse’ unties, gets next player, and final knot is done in like manner. Team that completes all knots and returns first to the starting line with their rope is the winner. (It may be close, so ensure boys don’t shove or impede each other, where injuries could occur!!)

Chief: The maximum number of knots that can be attached to each arm is two (and be sure to instruct boys not to make the knots too tight!!) So, for larger sites, either have only four teams competing at a time - or - have additional ‘hitching posts’ with other leaders. If game is re-started (either for additional teams or just for additional fun) change the order of the knots so boys won’t know ahead of time what to expect.

## **QUICKIE HITCHIES**

### **LESSON 4**

Crew Chief will sit on a chair with arms up in 90 degree angles (or, better, use two brooms or mop handles.) Boys approach, tie first a Two Half Hitch, untie, then a Taut Line Hitch and untie. They then present the rope to their next teammate who does the same. Round continues until last boy on a team unties his second knot and then holds up his rope.

This is a speed and accuracy game. Divide boys into two or more teams of several or more (if your Site's Apprentice Boys is not too large, let them all be grouped into just two opposing teams. Large teams work just as well.) Be sure to prepare ahead if you are having more than two teams (more chiefs or broom handles!?) Ensuring that the knots are soundly made is important: a loose, poorly tied knot defeats the whole purpose.

## **SOMEBODY SAVE THE BOY**

### **LESSON 5**

This game requires the right environment. A team of boys will make a life-saving Bowline knot, cast it to a 'drowning' boy, then pull him to 'safety'. To accomplish this you need a willing 'victim' (probably a smallest boy) who will be pulled across a floor surface or carpet (outside is not a good idea. Also, a cloth bag or pillow case can make the sliding a bit easier and more comfortable.) If your practice ropes are short in length you will need to join them end-to-end to make a rope at least 12 feet long or use one of that length. Divide your boys into two or more 'rescue teams' with at least 4 per team, each having their own 'rescue rope'.

Game begins with the 'victim' (sitting on floor, about 10 feet from team.) Victim cries "Help! Help!" and team goes to work making a bowline of the right size to slip over the victim's head and arms. The bowline is then tossed to the victim who gets it into position. Now, the team carefully pulls him to 'safety' (up to the feet of the first team member.) This will not be a timed contest – working quickly is important, but getting the victim to 'shore' safely is what matters. Everybody will be winners if they do it right! Boys will enjoy the activity just as it is.

Chief: It may be necessary to assist the 'victim' in getting the knot in place. It will also be more comfortable for him to be on his back, holding onto the line, as he is pulled to 'shore'. Again, you want the 'rescue team' to work quickly preparing the knot but they should use care in bringing the victim to safety. Let's not allow bruises or carpet burns to ruin a good time!!

## **TIE IT ALL TOGETHER**

### **LESSON 6**

The objective is simple: have boys tie, then untie, all 10 of their knots. Boy finishing first (or in the least amount of time) wins! Will go quickly if each boy has his own piece of rope (though your job of keeping up with them all will be tougher.) Whatever solution you use just remember that this is an opportunity for all your boys to get better with all their knots. Be available to help those who may be struggling - the idea of a 'contest' is just to challenge the boys to work harder.