

Varsity Scouting and the Buckskin Trail

The Buckskin Trail provides the position-specific training needed for Scoutmasters and Assistant Scoutmasters of Boy Scout troops, and can also provide the position-specific training needed for Coaches and Assistant Coaches of Varsity teams if we know that you need the training.

The Boy Scouts of America has developed three types of units for youth between the ages of 11 and 18 years old:

- The traditional Boy Scout Troop, for boys aged 11 to 18,
- The Varsity Team, for boys aged 14 to 18. This unit was developed for the special cases where youth participants are engaged in competitive sports, such as elite soccer teams for parts of the year, and the coaching staff wants the boys to remain together during the off-season, and
- The Venturing Crew, for youth between 14 and 21. This program is generally open to both sexes, and crews may be all male, all female or coed. They will have a variety of specializations, including high adventure, boating or sailing (the Sea Scouts) and religious life. Boys (but not girls) can be co-registered in both a troop and a crew, or a team and a crew.

The LDS uses Boy Scouting as a young men's program within the church, and many stakes sponsor three different units:

- A Boy Scout troop, for boys between the ages of 11 through 13,
- A Varsity Team, for boys between the ages of 14 to 16, and
- A Venturing crew for boys between the ages of 17 and 18, when most boys in the program leave to go on to higher education.

The reason for using three different units is to provide for the age separation needed for religious training from the Church that goes along with membership in a Scouting unit. Despite the different names applied to the three different units, they typically function as if they were Boy Scout Troops.

The BSA provides different training courses for each of the three types of units, depending on the position held by the adult leader:

- For Boy Scout Troop Leaders:
 - All leaders must take "Youth Protection" (Y01) every two years,
 - Committee members must take "Troop Committee Challenge" (S10), and
 - Scoutmasters and Assistant Scoutmasters must take two courses, "Scoutmaster/Assistant Scoutmaster Leader Specific Training" (S24) and "Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills" (S11).
- For Varsity Team Leaders:
 - All leaders must take "Youth Protection" (Y01) every two years,
 - Committee members must take "Team Committee Challenge" (WS11), and
 - Varsity Scout Coaches and Assistant Varsity Scout Coaches must take two courses, "Varsity Coach Leader Specific Training" (V21) and "Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills" (S11)
- For Venturing Leaders:
 - All leaders must take "Venturing Youth Protection" (Y02) every two years. As a side note, this course deals with youth protection requirements for older youth, and also covers issues for working with coed units, which isn't applicable for LDS Venturing

leaders. These leaders may also wish to take the regular youth protection course (Y01), but must take the Venturing Youth Protection Course (Y02) to be considered Youth Protection trained.

- Committee members must take "Crew Committee Challenge" (WS12), and
- Venturing Crew Advisors and Associate Advisors must take "Venturing Leader Specific Training" (P21). They are not required to take "Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills" (S11), but it would be advisable for Crews with a high-adventure orientation, or for LDS Crews, which function more like troops.

The Buckskin Trail is a locally-developed training course, taught in the outdoors, which currently satisfies the requirements for "Scoutmaster/Assistant Scoutmaster Leader Specific Training" (S24) and "Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills" (S11), as well as covering the outdoor requirements for Webelos leaders (Outdoor Webelos Leader, or OWL) and starting in 2016, for Cub Scout Leaders (Basic Adult Leader Outdoor Orientation, or BALOO). As such, it, and Youth Protection will complete all of the position-specific training needed for Scoutmasters and Assistant Scoutmasters, as well as the outdoor skills requirements for Cub Scout and Webelos leaders.

Buckskin Trail is not specifically designed to provide the training needed Varsity Coaches and Assistant Varsity Coaches, and the training staff does not routinely code the "Varsity Coach Leader Specific Training" (V21) course onto the training report. However, if any Varsity leader wishes to take this training, go ahead and sign up for Buckskin Trail, and on the first Wednesday, when you arrive and sign in for the course, please let the Scribe know, and a member of the Buckskin Trail staff will ensure that you receive training credit for the course. The differences between the "Scoutmaster/Assistant Scoutmaster Leader Specific Training" (S24) course and the "Varsity Coach Leader Specific Training" (V21) course are trivial, and include the substitution of a few names (Troop and Crew, Scoutmaster and Coach, Senior Patrol leader and Captain), as well as including earning a Varsity letter, which isn't an emphasis on LDS Varsity Team activities anyway. We will then give you credit for BOTH the S24 troop leader course, and the V21 Team leader course, so you can seamlessly transition back and forth between a troop and a team. If any Team leader has taken Buckskin Trail in the past eight years (since 2008, when the S24 courses were added to Buckskin Trail), please let us know, and we can give you credit for the V21 Team leader course after a few minutes of talking with us.

If you are a leader for a Venturing Crew, we can put you in touch with a member of the Buckskin Trail staff who is qualified to teach the "Venturing Leader Specific Training" (P21) course for you and your co-leaders.