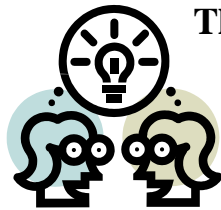




## A badge is born...

Just like any birth, there is a whole lot more to it than just a stork showing up with the finished product at your doorstep. Many people are totally unaware of all of the work that goes into the development of badges and the merit badge system itself. This manuscript is to shed some light on the process.



## The idea...

The ideas for badges come from various areas. Sometimes, one of our staff, just says, “Gee, we should have a badge for Dock Diving!” (this is the example that will be used throughout this instructional guide).

## Brainstorming

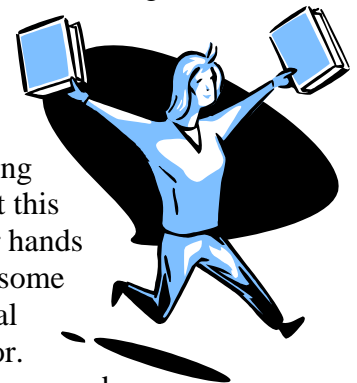


Then, some discussion takes place. Questions are asked: Is this a *real* sport? Who does it? Where do they do it? Are there rules? Do we know anyone who could provide more information for us? Could we feasibly offer this activity at camp? Who could instruct it? Will people take this badge seriously? Will it improve the human/canine bond? Will it be fun? Will it enrich people’s lives with their dogs? Is it worth making into a badge? Are there other badges like it? Are there components of this badge in other badges already (is there overlapping)? Could this idea just become a component of another badge that we may or may not have created yet?



## Research

Answers need to be found to all of the above questions. This may involve contacting people who might have some knowledge of the activity, or who might know someone who knows of someone who has information on the activity. It may involve doing searches on the internet, or sending letters to places on the planet that do this particular thing. At best, it would include some “hands on” involvement. Someone would need to actually view the event or participate in it with his or her dog at some venue. It might involve something like planning a trip to Purina Farms, for example, where we have heard that this competition takes place. On the visit, we would try to get our hands on a copy of the rules or guidelines for the sport, if there are any, and some history of the sport, if possible. We would want to videotape the actual running of the competition, and see what the evaluators/judges look for. We might have to photograph equipment to see what kinds of devices are used to get measurements in the water for the length of the dog’s jump. We will want to see what safety measures have been taken to insure that no dogs are injured, and that it will



be safe for people and dogs to participate in. For example, what is the actual dock made of? How have they eliminated the possibility of a dog catching a toenail between boards, or slipping on the surface? All of the research will be compiled and examined, and it will be decided if the badge passes the feasibility study, and will be able to be “born.”

## Guidelines

Next, the parameters for earning the badge have to be established. What are the key components of the badge? In which category will this badge belong? Is it more water safety, or more a performance event? What information will need to be covered in the Orientation and Safety talk for the badge? All of this will be laid out, and taken into consideration when developing the paperwork for the badge.



## Paperwork



Item by item, a Check off list will be developed, incorporating the key elements required for the badge (running and jumping off the dock on cue from the handler), and the steps leading up to that accomplishment (dog can swim; dog will do a “flying entry” from the beach; handler understands the safety precautions for performing this activity, handler understands the rules, etc.). The Merit Badge Form will be drafted, including the key elements for earning the badge. Then, we need to look for a picture to put on the form.

## Artwork Development

The concept for the artwork usually begins in the director’s brain. The basic parts of the badge are scratched out with stick figures. If a dog is pictured on the badge, it has to be considered which breed to put on the badge. Do we put a breed that has made the sport popular? Do we use an



“unusual” breed, not known for dock diving (in keeping with our practice of making badges available to all breeds, regardless of their intended use). Do we skip using a dog all together, and use the graphics of the equipment, instead? Several drafts are made, until a line drawing that will work has been arrived upon. Then the artwork is sent to an artist.



## Artwork Creation

The contracted artist will take the basic line drawing, and give it shape, form, and color. The artist will return a draft, to see if this is what the director had in mind. Sometimes, several changes will be made in the coloring, size, or position of the items in the graphic, until it is just right. Then, a background patch color is chosen, and the final colors are selected,



trying to stay within the 6-color maximum for the embroidery (to avoid additional charges). A serge (edge) thread color is chosen, based on what category the badge will be placed in. The artist will carefully select the colors from a color board, and record the number for each color, making a copy of the badge and instructions in full color, black & white, large (for detail) and small (for size), and sends this back to the director. This information is sent to our patch making company (The Patch Place), where the order is drawn up and sent overseas to the company that actually does the embroidery. In the mean time, the DSA head office puts the drawing of the graphic onto the badge form, the list of all possible badges sheet, the certification diploma form, and the DSA badge curriculum pages.

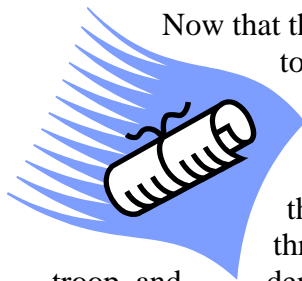


## Web Site

All of the paperwork must then be put in PDF format and re-submitted to the webmaster, who puts the new badge and the corrected versions of the camp curriculum up on the web site, for anyone in the world to be able to download and work on.



## Scoutmaster Training and Certification



Now that there is a badge for Dock Diving, we will need competent individuals to both teach it at camp and teach and/or check out the badge in general. The first step for the Scoutmaster is to achieve the badge, and then either get a Scoutmaster that is already certified in the badge to mentor him or her, or just take an examination to determine that he or she is ready to administer the badge. This can be done through teaching the badge at one of the camps, or at home in their local troop, and demonstrating his or her skills by meeting all of the necessary requirements, under the tutelage of a Scoutmaster Trainer. If there is no Scoutmaster Trainer available yet for the area of the person's local troop, some of the examination can be verified by viewing videotape made of the person conducting the class and checking out the Scouts. The person viewing the videotape will be a Scoutmaster Trainer who is certified to check out Scout Evaluators. This person will be appointed by the CPD (Certification Program Director), and they will have gone through the same training and testing process themselves, to reach the level of evaluating Scout Evaluators.



## Standardizing Equipment

To administer the badge, we will need to build or buy the appropriate equipment necessary to facilitate this. We will also have to be able to provide the information on where Scout Troops elsewhere can find materials to build or buy the equipment. We need to make sure that the equipment meets the specifications of the sport and that it is kept in good repair for use at camps (or by local troops). The rental or procurement and maintenance of the equipment itself can be a substantial investment. But the badge



cannot be offered without the necessary equipment. Often, the people who are earning the badges at camp, for instance, do not fully understand the thousands of dollars that are invested in the agility equipment, for example. Long before we are able to certify the 2,000 scouts necessary to pay for the equipment out there, it's time to buy new equipment. The expense is ongoing. Your local Scoutmaster has the same expenses if that person is checking you out on his or her equipment.



## Earning The Badge

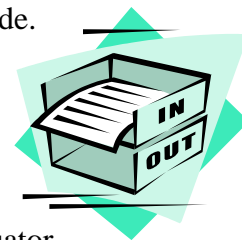


Once we have Scoutmasters and Scout Evaluators available who can oversee the Dock Diving badge, it can be offered to Scouts globally, and/or individuals attending one of our special Dog Scout Camps or training/certification exercises.

## Record Keeping

When the embroidered patches actually arrive, one- to two-hundred at a time, they are filed in appropriate bins with the graphic for the new badge on the outside.

A new merit badge paperwork cubby hole will be created in the Lodge, so that extra copies will be on hand, if someone wishes to complete that badge at camp. The badge form and check off will be input into the lodge computer, so that it will be available there. When each person completes the requirement for the badge either at camp, or through their troop, or by being checked out by a certifying Scout Evaluator,



they will submit the paperwork to the DSA office. The information will be recorded in permanent record, that on this date, this particular Dog Scout received this particular badge. The badge form itself will be verified (to make sure an approved Scout Evaluator signed the form), marked paid, stamped (to indicate that the information has been entered into that Scout's database file), date-stamped (to indicate that the merit badge and congratulation letter have been mailed to the Scout), and then filed with the Scout's other badges earned, in a file folder at the head office.

## Permanent Record

Once the badge has actually been issued, and permanently recorded in the DSA database, the process is complete. And, now you can understand why the merit badge fee

includes more than just the cost of the patch and postage, but also includes administrative costs, record-keeping, Scoutmaster fees, and equipment and other overhead. When you realize the process by which a badge is "born", you will see that there is a lot more into it than just a \$3.00 patch!

