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Scouts compete for ‘gold nuggets’ at Klondike Derby

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By Phyllis Booth

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Top left, Troop 193 from Winchendon participate in the “Flip the Blanket” event. Bottom left, a group of scouts carry their sled filled with appropriate gear. Above, scouts from Troop 1 in Princeton “rescue” and injured person found in the woods. Phyllis Booth photos

Between 150 and 200 scouts participated in the 2017 Wachusett Klondike Derby at the Norco Club on Houghton Road in Princeton over the weekend.

Many checked in on Friday evening and camped out overnight and were on hand for the 9 a.m. Saturday opening ceremony. All morning scout patrols, consisting of six to eight boys participated in eight Camporee-type events where Boy Scout Troops and Patrols compete against one another. Each Patrol used a dogtype sled loaded with personal and patrol equipment, made by the boys and using scout power to pull it instead of dogs. The scouts went through the woods and fields, up and down hills, stopping at different stations where they were tested on their skills of Scouting knowledge, teamwork and problem solving skills.

Events included supply and sled inspection (the object was to make sure scouts are prepared with appropriate gear) rifle shooting at paper targets for points, archery (shooting at paper targets for points), ice rescue, shelter building, and the Yukon sled race, where each patrol races to the far end of the field, receive a package and return with the package to the finish. The



first to return receives 10 gold nuggets. The Ice Hill/rope climb is another event where the patrol needs to get all members up an icy hill, using ropes and equipment on their sleds. One patrol member is “injured” and that person has to be brought up the hill also. Patrols received 10 gold nuggets for accomplishing the task in less than two minutes.

One of the purposes of the Klondike is to utilize the Patrol method during all activities. Scouts bring all materials required for an overnight adventure in extreme arctic conditions, including first aid and rescue items. They also brought gear for traveling in snow and building a snow shelter, which given the weather, turned out not to be necessary.

Scouts came from Athol, Gardner, Hubbardston, Leominster, Princeton, Sterling, Winchendon and Westminster. The Holden Fire Explorers were set up at the site with a first aid station. At that station, scouts had to go into the woods, find an injured ‘victim’ splint his broken leg, and working together, carry the victim out of the woods over several obstacles.

Scouts have 15 minutes to do this, said Princeton Scout leader Tim Kelly.



They have to work together to decide how they will do it, treat with first aid, make the stretcher and using team work carry the person over some rough terrain to safety, said Kelly. Scoring was based on how well the patrol determined the treatment needed and working together, providing the best solution to the problem. Each patrol group earns points depending on the length of time it took to accomplish the task.

Another event, Flip the Blanket – starts out with the entire patrol, 6-8 scouts, standing on a tarp with the object of flipping the tarp completely over without anyone stepping off the tarp at any time. If they do, they have to start over and the event is timed. This group (photo) accomplished the task in 1 minute 50 seconds. Later in the morning another group of younger scouts from the same town accomplished the task in 28 seconds.

Each of the events earns ‘gold nuggets’ for a patrol. Bonus gold nuggets are awarded for patrol spirit and using patrol method. The patrol with the most nuggets at the end of the day is awarded the Klondike Derby Championship flag.

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