

Boy Scouts in South Africa

The aim of the Boy Scouts of South Africa is to encourage the spiritual, mental, social, and physical development of boys and young men by:

- (a) developing their character
- (b) training them in citizenship
- (c) developing their personal fitness by promoting their spiritual, mental and physical qualities,

So that they may take a constructive part in the community.

There are 5 Scout regions around the world – South Africa is one part of the Africa region. It is one of the oldest Scout organizations in the world having being first founded in 1908 and presently comprises over 100, 000 Scouts.

In general the Scout organization in South Africa is set up similarly to Scouting in the United States of America.

There are three branches in the movement, namely, Cubs (7½- 11 years), Scouts (11 – 18 years), and Rovers (18+ years; open to both sexes).

The table compares some of the Troop positions and terminology between the South African and the USA movements.

South Africa	United States of America
Patrols	Patrols
Patrol Leader	Patrol Leader
Patrol Second	Assistant Patrol Leader
Patrol in Council	Patrol Meeting
Troop Scouter	Scoutmaster
Assistant Troop Scouter	Assistant Scoutmaster
Junior Assistant Troop Scouter	Junior Assistant Scoutmaster
Court of Honour	Patrol Leaders Council
Troop Scouters Council	Scoutmasters Meeting
Group Scouter	Troop Chairman

A Scout Group can consist of any combination of the 3 branches (Cubs, Scouts, Rovers). The head of the Group (Chairman) is the Group Scouter. To assist him in his task a Group Committee is elected annually consisting of all parents and other willing lay members. These members are elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Parents Association, which consists of the parents of all the boys in the Group.

Groups are combined into Districts on a geographical basis and Districts in turn are grouped into Areas.

The table below compares the Scout ranks between the South African and USA movements.

South Africa	United States of America
Troop Membership Badge	Scout Badge
Pathfinder	Tenderfoot
Adventurer	Second Class
First Class	First Class
	Star
Explorer	Life
Springbok Scout (Top Award)	Eagle Scout

Interest Badges and Challenge Awards

Interest Badges (Merit Badges) cover a wide spectrum of specialized activities, and are intended to offer Scouts an incentive to broaden their interests and skills, and to be exposed to a diverse range of activities. To encourage both wider interests and outdoor activities, some Interest Badges are incorporated in the requirements of the Explorer Badges.

There are 86 interest badges that can be earned. Seven of these badges have an aeronautical theme, namely, air glider, air mechanics, air meteorologist, air navigator, air spotter, air traffic controller, and model aero-engineer. Many of the badges are geared towards outdoor skills and nature. An interesting one is “numismatist.”

Challenge Awards are another optional extra, designed to provide ambitious Scouts with a range of challenges to tackle. Interest Badges and Challenge Awards can be earned at any stage provided all the criteria are met. Awards can be made for long service, for gallantry and for merit. Long service medals can only be awarded to adults, as the minimum period of service is 15 years.

Adult Leader Training

The training of Troop Scouters has four components.

1. Formal Wood Badge training course
 - Basic (equivalent to BSA Scoutmaster Fundamentals)
 - Preliminary
 - Advanced
2. Specialist courses
3. In-service training
4. Continuous self-training

Wood Badge Training in South Africa

The Basic Wood Badge course addresses the issue of “what is Scouting.” The Preliminary Wood Badge course trains Scouters in how to make Scouting work. The Advanced Wood Badge course takes an in-depth look at Scouting, to put across the reasons for doing what Scouts do.

Advanced Wood Badge training is made up of 3 parts: a project/study of theory questions, a practical course and an application period of three months minimum in-service training.

On completion of the Preliminary Wood Badge course Scouters may wear the two-stranded leather Turk’s Head woggle. The Wood Badge awarded to Scouters consists of facsimiles of two of the wooden beads of the necklace originally belonging to king Dinizulu, and is worn on a leather bootlace around the neck.

The award of the Wood Badge carries with it membership of the 1st Gilwell Group and the right to wear the Gilwell scarf. Additional wooden beads are awarded to members who are appointed to the Training Team.