

Axe Throwing

By Peter McLaren



The Unique ceremony of burying the axe in the War Post, at the Outdoor School of Dan Beard, National Commissioner, Boy Scouts of America. Mr. Beard (the figure to the right of the boy throwing) says, "All the axes in the War Post are Plumb Axes."

Axe Throwing is Fascinating

A number of times in my work with scouts, I have demonstrated how to throw the axe at a target. Scouts have taken to the game avidly, and soon there would be a spirited competition under way.

The knack is easily acquired, and the game has a certain thrill which appeals to every boy.

The rules are simple: First a throwing board is made if contests are to be held indoors.

This should be constructed of yellow pine or some similar wood three inches thick. It should be at least six feet high and twenty inches wide. This may be constructed of two boards, six feet long and ten or twelve inches wide, fastened with three cross-pieces at the back.

Fasten the throwing board securely to a wall. Then paint a bull's-eye target, circular in shape, and twelve inches in diameter.

Mark a point four feet from the floor as the center of your target. Make the first circle three inches in diameter with your mark as the center point of this circle.

Your next circle should be seven and one-half inches in diameter, using the same point as center, and your third circle, twelve inches in diameter.

This gives three scoring rings, and they should be numbered as follows; Bull's eye--5; middle ring--3; outer ring--1. The score is determined by the ring in which the top of the axe blade imbeds.

Safety line.-- Mark on the floor, a safety line eight feet wide (four feet on each side from center of the target), extending it back for a distance of twenty feet.

This is the throwing alley, or safety zone, and no one must be permitted within it except the boy throwing. Use ropes as safety lines and permit no boys behind the target, or close to the boy throwing.

Distance of Throw.-- The minimum distance for a throw is nine feet. Mark a line at a point this distance from the target over which contestants must not step.

The knack in throwing is to discover your correct distance--a point from which the Scout Axe will turn so that the blade will stick in the target.

To locate your proper distance try a few practice throws starting at the twelve-foot point, and moving forward or backward until the axe makes the proper turn and strikes the target, blade first. Then you can practice for accuracy.

When a contest is held, the first boy should step into position with his scout axe held at his side by the end of the handle. He should take a firm stance with the feet spread apart and the weight of the body resting on the right foot. The aim is taken, not by sighting along the axe, but by fixing the eyes on the target, and raising the axe until the edge is on a level with the eyes. In this position the edge, and handle of axe should form a vertical line with the forearm and elbow. The axe is then brought back over the shoulder without turning the edge to one side or the other, and thrown from this position with a natural forward sweep of the arm, swinging the body forward as the axe is thrown. See Figure 63.



Fig. 63.

Always keep the axe blade in a direct line with the target and throw the axe with a free forward swing.

Each boy is entitled to three throws in succession but no axe must be thrown while another is sticking in the target.

No attempt should be made to spin the axe in the air. The weight of the head will cause it to revolve as it speeds towards the target.

For Outdoors.--The same sort of a throwing board, as described for indoor use, may be used outdoors by fastening it to a post or fence. Or a portable target may be used as shown in Figure 63.

Always observe the safety precautions whether in doors or out in the woods. Never fasten a target to a growing tree.

Advanced Throwing.--As boys become proficient in throwing the axe, they should practice throwing from a greater distance. Throwing teams may be organized, each member of the team throwing at a particular spot in the target, so that a design, or pattern, is formed by the axes after all have thrown.