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I. INTRODUCTION

The sports and recreation director has a very important position within the lodge, one that is both exciting and rewarding. In this position you will be responsible for planning and supervising a well-rounded activity program that will be of interest to all members and that will enhance their well being. In addition, incorporating various activities with a Norwegian flavor will expand members' knowledge of Norwegian heritage.

To be as effective as possible, it's a good idea to coordinate your activities with the social and cultural directors and president of your lodge. In doing so, you can accomplish more and provide a more robust program to your lodge members. For the same reason, you are also encouraged to work with your zone director and sports directors from neighboring lodges to promote events within your area. Your district sports director can also be a valuable resource to aid you in planning and organizing activities for your lodge.

The section that follows is a resource that you can refer to during your term of office. These materials will help generate ideas that will improve the recreational activities in your lodge.

II. ACTIVITIES

Here are a few general ideas for lodge sports activities you might want to try in your lodge. New activities and variations in old ones will help freshen your programs. Try to work in a new recreation activity every year to create renewed enthusiasm for the sports program.

LEAGUE SPORTS

League sports provide a great opportunity for your lodge members to socialize with each other outside of regular lodge meetings. Participation in such activities will provide opportunities to increase fraternalism and friendship among members. Consider entering your lodge into a bowling, golf, softball, tennis, volleyball or soccer league. In addition, participation in community leagues can also be a great avenue to introduce Sons of Norway to prospective members.

LODGE CLUBS

Similar to participating in league sports, group(s) could be established based on common interest among members in a particular sport or activity. In this case, participation would not necessarily be tied to competition unless the members decided to "compete" between themselves.

LODGE OUTINGS

Lodge outings are another great way for members to get together outside of a traditional lodge meeting. Consider planning various events such as picnics, hiking, fishing, hunting, orienteering, camping, or ski touring.

SPECTATOR SPORT ACTIVITIES

Working with the social director, you could organize group attendance at a local sporting event. For instance, the lodge can purchase a block of tickets to a professional or semi-professional event such as football, baseball, hockey, etc. Consider planning time to socialize before and/or after the event.

GUEST LECTURER

A sports figure or coach can come to give demonstrations or talk about a particular sport. For example, a cross-country skier can give technique tips in the winter or a golf pro can give some tips in the spring.

LODGE SPONSORED TEAM SPORTS

Lodge sponsored team sports are a great way to promote Sons of Norway and your lodge, while making a contribution to your community. Consider sponsoring uniforms or encouraging members to be a coach for a little league baseball, soccer or hockey team.

TOURNAMENTS

Consider sponsoring a district or community golf, bowling, soccer, softball or some other sports tournament. Community tournaments can be a great member recruitment tool for your lodge, as well as a fundraiser. District tournaments might be done in conjunction with your district convention or as a totally separate event held at any time. Either way, district tournaments can be another opportunity to raise funds as well as being a great way to meet and reacquaint members of your lodge with others in the district.

III. SONS OF NORWAY SPORTS PROGRAMS

SPORTS MEDAL PROGRAM

Sons of Norway's Sports Medal Program brings a bit of Norwegian tradition to its members by encouraging everyone to participate in fun, athletic activities. The program, which is based on a Norwegian model, rewards members with pins for their accomplishments in a variety of activities.

Members can earn bronze, silver, gold and enamel pins in walking (*Gangmerke*), skiing (*Skimerke*), bicycling (*Sykkelmanke*) and general fitness (*Idrettsmerke*) categories. Participants track their progress on record cards, which are available for no charge from Sons of Norway Headquarters or online at www.sonsofnorway.com.

Here's how the program works, and what you need to do to help members participate:

- The member chooses the medal and level they want to work towards, and tracks their progress on the appropriate record card. Record cards are available for free from the Sons of Norway Supply department. To order, e-mail supply@sofn.com or call 800-945-8851.
- When a member has completed the requirements for a medal, they should present their completed record card to you for approval. It is your responsibility to order their medals from the Sons of Norway Supply department. To place an order, download the Sports Medal Order Form from www.sonsofnorway.com or contact the Supply department by calling 800-945-8851 or by e-mailing supply@sofn.com. All medals, record cards and forms are available for no charge to all members.
- You should keep the records cards. Please **DO NOT** send them to Headquarters.

- Each level must be completed within 365 days of beginning. When a level has been reached, the participant starts over again with zero points.
- Although it is possible for members to participate on their own, working with the lodge sports director helps build and maintain a sense of involvement with the lodge. To further encourage this sense of lodge engagement, you may want to present the medals at a lodge meeting or event.

The guidelines for each medal should be followed as much as possible. However, as sports director, you are free to use your own discretion if the requirements do not fit for a member or members. Use your best judgment for awarding medals, keeping in mind that the goal of the program is to promote regular exercise, healthy lifestyles and as much participation as possible.

ORIENTEERING

Orienteering has its roots in Scandinavia and was brought to the United States in the 1940s. Using a topographical map and a compass, participants find their way on foot across the countryside, navigating from point to point. The course has orange and white markers (called “controls”) at locations or features designed on a special map. Each control is visited in sequence. Participants use their navigational skill to choose the best route. The map and compass skills learned in orienteering are useful to hikers, hunters and back-packers as well as anyone interested in fitness and experiencing the outdoors.

Orienteering is an activity that can be enjoyed by everyone, as each person or group sets their own pace. Orienteering can be a highly competitive race of navigational skill and physical speed, or a healthful hike through the woods with the added mental challenge of locating the topographic features marked with an orange and white control. Most events have a variety of courses—from short, easy ones for new orienteering participants to long, complicated ones for elite competitors. At larger events, there are categories on the many courses so that participants compete with others of their own age, gender and level of experience/fitness. At any event, an individual can always choose to just walk a course at their own pace as an untimed participant.

Sons of Norway Headquarters has orienteering kits available to use for no charge to help you organize your own event. If your lodge is interested in setting up an orienteering activity, you can order the manual through the Fraternal department by e-mailing culture@sofn.com or by calling 800-945-8851. A short video on orienteering is also available from the Sons of Norway Media Lending Library using the above contact information.

IV. SUPPLIES

The following information can either be ordered from Sons of Norway Headquarters Supply department by calling (800) 945-8851 or can be downloaded from the members section of the Sons of Norway website www.sonsofnorway.com:

Lodge Supply Requisition Form (J318)

Lodge Supply Catalog (J321)

Skimerke (*skiing medal*) Record Form (J804)

Sports Medal Order Form (J805)

Sykkelmerke (*bicycling medal*) Record Form (J810)

Idrettsmerke (*general sports medal*)

Record Form (J811)

Sports Medal Brochure (J812)

Gangmerke (*walking medal*) Record Form (J813)

Barneløpet Manual (*Children's Race*)
(Idea Bank # 40) (JBM3008)

Orienteering Manual (Idea Bank # 14)
(JOM3009)

NOTES

IV. CONCLUSION

As sports director you have a unique position within your lodge. By planning and promoting sports and related activities, you are helping to develop and support fellowship among members. An active sports program can contribute to a positive and energetic atmosphere within the lodge, which, in turn, can help attract and retain members. Equally important, having a sports program can help your lodge members stay healthy and vital by encouraging an active lifestyle.