

Use of Trax Software for Achievement and Attendance

General Overview

The Trax software is a “freeware” that is hosted and maintained by Frank Steele of Pack 615 in League City, TX. While BSA does not support, endorse, or in any manner acknowledge it, the software is quite nice in helping Den Leaders and the Packs maintain their advancement records.

The Trax software is based upon Microsoft Excel and therefore the user must have a legal copy of Excel on their machine and know how to basically utilize Excel in order to run Trax.

Each Den will utilize the following two sets of Trax software:

- Rank Specific achievement/ attendance
- Pin and Belt Loop Specific

How to set up and use this software and how to provide the information to the Pack Advancement Chair to make sure your Den members get their awards is discussed following.

Starting to Use

Each software package has several tabs along the bottom. These tabs include instructions showing how to set up the software by Den. Included is a tab for attendance and 15 for the Den members (more member tabs than you will typically need). Move along the bottom from tab to tab to become familiar with them and to see what tabs are there.

To begin overall, go to the Instruction tab and put the Pack number and Den name in the indicated boxes.

Enter the Den member’s names one per spreadsheet tab as per the instructions but basically, double click on the tab indicating “Scout 1” and “Scout 2” and so forth and enter the boy’s name. This will translate to the entire spreadsheet to put the boy’s name in all the relevant locations in the spreadsheet.

Carefully read the instructions relevant for each rank and also the pins and belt loop Trax. Note that depending on the rank, etc. different areas of the spreadsheet are used to enter the information and that information is then translated to other summary areas to provide a “one entry only” means of maintaining records.

You should never need to unprotect the spreadsheets with the Password. If you do, based on my experience you are trying to do something you should not be doing and the spreadsheet is trying to protect you!

Attendance

In the rank specific Trax programs, one tab is labeled “attendance”. All Pack meetings, Pack specific activities, Den Meetings, and any Den Specific activities should be entered and maintained on this tab. Typically at the beginning of the Cub year, the Pack Meeting and Activities will be sent out (or loaded into the spreadsheets) so everyone is consistent in those activities.

Rank Specifics

For Tiger, Wolf, and Bear, the achievements are spelled out and are entered directly into the achievement tab for each boy.

Electives are also shown on an elective tab and will be used to determine the number of Yellow disks (for Tiger) or arrow points (for Wolf and Bear) that the boy obtains based on their work towards elective requirements.

As the boy earns requirements towards their achievements and electives, they are shown on the Summary tab. Note that disks or arrow points are not shown to be available for being awarded until the boy has attained their base rank (Tiger, Wolf, or Bear). These electives are over and beyond the rank achievement and can only be awarded after the base rank is attained. The Summary Tab is to be forwarded to the Advancement Chair for monthly recognition.

Webelos Specifics

The Webelos Trax is different from the other ranks for several reasons having to do with attaining Webelos and then Arrow Of Light awards. Thus it should be carefully noted that:

- There is a “WebelosBadge” tab. That is for guys working on the Webelos badge itself.
- There is a “ArrowOfLight” tab. That is for guys working on the Arrow of Light badge itself (only after completion of the Webelos badge).
- There is an “ActivityPins” tab. Activities Pins are the electives of which 3 are required for Webelos and 5 more for Arrow Of Light of the total of 20 available Activity Pins. This tab maintains the requirements and achievements against them. As they are earned, they will be “translated” to the Webelos or Arrow Of Light achievement section in the protected areas shown in gray. This is part of the tool integration. Similarly, when a Belt Loop is a requirement for an Activity Pin, that requirement must be entered in

the Belt Loop area and will be translated over (see for example in “Aquanaut” the swimming belt loop award).

- There is a “SportsPin” tab. Note however, that since only the “Physical Fitness Sports Pin” is required as part of the “Athlete” Activity Pin this is the only Sports Pin shown within Webelos. Other Sports Pins can be obtained separately and are tracked in the BeltLoopPin trax software.
- There is a “Summary” tab. This combines all the other tabs by the entire Den membership and should be used to forward to the Advancement Chair to obtain awards of rank or pin.
- NOTE: for Webelos it is VERY IMPORTANT to recognize that Sports/Academic Pins or the Belt Loops leading to Webelos Activity Pins MUST BE EARNED AS A WEBELOS. So if a boy earns these pins as an earlier rank, they must be earned fully again to count for Webelos. This is the reason that the Webelos/ Arrow Of Light trax contains some of these pins in addition to the Belt Loop/ Pin trax. Those belt loops/ activity pins earned as and for a Webelos should be entered into the Webelos trax and any not used for Webelos requirements can continue to be entered into the BeltLoopPin trax that travels with the boys Den to Den. Great care must be exercised to be sure that this is maintained properly.

Pin and Belt Loop Specifics

For the Tiger, Wolf, and Bear ranks, the Academic and Sports belt loops and pins can be earned as additional “options” that do not count towards the rank but can offer a way to further explore the world. These achievements should be captured in the BeltLoopPin trax software.

- NOTE: since the boys in a Den typically travel along together to the next Den rank level, the BeltLoopPin trax should be maintained as they progress along to keep records for the boy and properly award their belt loops and/or pins.

As noted in the Webelos specific section above, Pins or Belt Loops utilized for any Webelos achievement CANNOT have been earned in a prior rank unless they are “re-earned” separately as a Webelos. However, a boy working on Webelos or Arrow Of Light can also work on any pin or belt loop that they desire as an option over and beyond their requirements.

Information Sent to Pack Advancement Chair

In order for the Advancement Chair to be able to properly provide ranks, arrow points (or disks for Tigers), Pins, and Belt Loops, they must know who has earned which badge/ award, and when it was earned.

To enable this with a minimum of work for all involved, the following process must be adhered to:

Rank/ Electives/ Activity Pins

To be awarded at Pack meetings

1. No later than a full week prior to the Pack meeting for which an award is desired, the information on advancement must be sent to the Advancement Chair. Note: this should only be done when the summary tab on the rank trax indicates an award should be presented to one or more boys by showing “earned” and that award is not already shown as “awarded”
2. The Summary tab from the rank/ elective trax must be sent to the Advancement Chair via email by the following method:
 - a. Select the Summary tab
 - b. From the Excel menu choose Edit/ Move or Copy and pull down “New Book” from the “To Book” pull down.
 - c. Click on “Create a Copy”
 - d. Click “OK” and a copy of the Summary sheet is produced independently of the original Trax sheet.
 - e. Name the Summary “(Den Name) – (Rank) – (Date).xls” (for example “Hawk – Webelos – 09-15-2008” and save it to a known location on your PC hard drive
 - f. Send an email to the Advancement Chair with the file attached
3. The Advancement Chair will determine what awards/ electives are to be obtained and will provide them to the Cub Master at the next Pack meeting stapled on a card with the boy’s name
4. The Advancement Chair will indicate on the stand alone Summary file that the rank/ elective has been “awarded” by putting a “X” in the appropriate “awarded” column. The Advancement Chair will maintain a copy of the specific summary document for reference.
5. The Advancement Chair will email the updated file back to the Den Leader (or designee) who will update their master Rank trax summary with an appropriate “X” in the awarded column to indicate that the rank/ elective has been awarded to the appropriate boy.

Belt Loops/ Academic & Sports Pins

To be awarded at Pack meetings

1. No later than a full week prior to the Pack meeting for which an award is desired, the information on Belt Loops/ Academic & Sports Pins earned must be sent to the Advancement Chair. Note: this should only be done when the summary tab on the BeltLoopPin trax indicates an award should be presented to one or more boys by showing “earned” and that award is not already shown as “awarded”
2. The Summary tab from the BeltLoopPin trax must be sent to the Advancement Chair via email by the following method:
 - a. Select the Summary tab
 - b. From the Excel menu choose Edit/ Move or Copy and pull down “New Book” from the “To Book” pull down.
 - c. Click on “Create a Copy”
 - d. Click “OK” and a copy of the Summary sheet is produced independently of the original Trax sheet.
 - e. Name the Summary “(Den Name) – BeltLoops – (Date).xls” (for example “Hawk – BeltLoops – 09-15-2008” and save it to a known location on your PC hard drive
 - f. Send an email to the Advancement Chair with the file attached
3. The Advancement Chair will determine what Belt Loops/ Pins are to be obtained and will provide them to the Cub Master at the next Pack meeting attached to a card with the boy’s name
4. The Advancement Chair will indicate on the stand alone Summary file that the Belt Loop/ Pin has been “awarded” by putting a “X” in the appropriate “awarded” column. The Advancement Chair will maintain a copy of the specific summary document for reference.
5. The Advancement Chair will email the updated file back to the Den Leader (or designee) who will update their master Belt Loop/ Pin trax summary with an appropriate “X” in the awarded column to indicate that the Belt Loop/ Pin has been awarded to the appropriate boy.

Attendance Segments

To be awarded at Pack meetings

1. No later than a full week prior to the Pack meeting for which an award is desired, the information on attendance must be sent to the Advancement Chair.
2. The Attendance tab from the rank/ elective trax must be sent to the Advancement Chair via email by the following method:
 - g. Select the Attendance tab

- h. From the Excel menu choose Edit/ Move or Copy and pull down “New Book” from the “To Book” pull down.
 - i. Click on “Create a Copy”
 - j. Click “OK” and a copy of the Summary sheet is produced independently of the original Trax sheet.
 - k. Name the Summary “(Den Name) – Attendance – (Date).xls” (for example “Hawk – Attendance – 09-15-2008” and save it to a known location on your PC hard drive
 - l. Send an email to the Advancement Chair with the file attached
 3. The Advancement Chair will determine what segments are to be obtained and will provide them to the Den Leader at the next Pack meeting in a baggie for distribution to the boy(s) at the next Den meeting.