

# A Den Leaders Guide To Scouts BSA Crossover

A quick-reference guide for AOL Den Leaders to confidently prepare Scouts and families for a successful transition from Cub Scouts to Scouts BSA.



## Crossover: Step-by-Step Guide

The **AOL** to Scout Crossover marks the transition from the Cub adult-led program to a youth-led program. The **Arrow of Light** (AOL) rank recognizes a Scouts readiness to join Scouts BSA where they will continue to grow. Your **GOAL** as a AOL Den leader should be to help celebrate and coordinate this transition so that they arrive at their new troops with confidence, curiosity, and Scout spirit.

### 1. Develop relationships with Troops

- Reach out to local Troops through [BeAScout.org](http://BeAScout.org)
- Select a den chief for your den
- Review the Troops program calendar and coordinate joint activities
- Encourage the troop to support pack activities
- Discuss what your path as a leader looks like if you join the Troop

### 2. Coordinate Troop visits

- Visits help AOLs complete Bobcat requirements and find a Troop that fits their needs.
- Share the visit evaluation checklist with your families and coach them in selecting a troop.

### 3. Set expectations

- On how Scouts BSA is different from Cub Scouting.
- How and when the transition will happen.
- What information the troop needs from each family
- How Scout funds will be handled when they leave the pack.

### 4. Plan your program

- Plan your Den Calendar and activities to support completing the AOL award by the crossover date.
- Complete all advancement requirements prior to the crossover and mark them off in Scoutbook.
- Discuss your plan with the Cubmaster and Committee. Seek their support to help share the planning.

### 5. Plan you celebration

- Coordinate a date for your crossover ceremony with the Troops.
- Select a ceremony template from the resources section or come up with your own. Many troops have them already.
- Decide if you want to present any special items at the ceremony to the AOLs or Den Leaders. Recruit den parents to help coordinate this.
- Conduct your crossover ceremony and **CELEBRATE!**

### 6. Adjourn

- Meet with the incoming AOL Den Leader and share your experience and insight!



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## Crossover: Month by Month Timeline

### June - September

- Review AOL and Bobcat requirements
- Contact Local Troops and schedule visits
- Plan joint camping trip in October
- Encourage AOLs to attend day/resident camp to complete requirements
- Select a Den Chief
- Develop your Den calendar
- Share family contact information with Troops
- Share your plan with pack leaders

### October

- Visit the Troops and plan the camping trip
- Conduct the joint camping trip
- Continue completing award requirements
  - Attend Webelos Woods

### November

- Visit the Troops
- Have the Troops and Den Chief help with Den activities
- Start planning the Crossover ceremony with the Troops
- Continue completing award requirements
- Identify parents that will coordinate special recognition awards

### December

- Continue completing award requirements
- Confirm Crossover ceremony details
- Review Crossover with Cubmaster or Blue and Gold coordinator
- Confirm which Scouts are crossing over to a troop and share required information with the Troop.

### January

- Finalize Crossover Ceremony
- Order special recognition items and materials for the Crossover Ceremony
- Rehearse the ceremony with Scouts and Troop
- Coordinate family onboarding into Troop calendar and communication systems.

### February-May

- **Conduct Crossover ceremony!**
- Meet with incoming AOL Den Leaders

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## Crossover: Troop Visit Checklist

- Who is leading more, the Scouts or the Adults?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- The Troop meeting time and location work for our family?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- The Troop size, spirit and culture are what we're looking for?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- The Troop program calendar is robust and offers an array of activities including Camping, Outdoor Activities, Service Projects, Educational Activities, Advancement Opportunities and High Adventure  
\_\_\_\_\_
- My Scout has friends in the Troop?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- I have adult friends in the Troop?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Does the Troop offer fundraising opportunities to pay for events?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Does the Troop offer Scholarships for uniforms, camps, and training?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How does the Troop communicate about upcoming events?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How easy is it to sign up and pay for activities?  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## Crossover: FAQ

**Q: Can Scouts that don't complete the AOL rank requirements crossover to a Troop?**

A: Yes as long as they are at least 11 years old OR have completed the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Make sure to include them in your crossover and award ceremony.

**Q: Should Scouts only visit and crossover to the Troop that has a relationship with their Pack?**

A: Many Packs and Troops have healthy relationships but they aren't always a good fit for every family. Your goal is to keep Scouts in Scouting and provide them with options. In addition every Troop has discretion over how they implement parts of the BSA program. Use the Troop Visit Checklist to help families decide which Troop works best for them.

**Q: Most guidance recommends crossing over in February or March what if we want to do it later?**

A: The main benefit of crossing over in February is that your Scouts have ample time to fit in with the Troop and get excited about the program before the end of the year and Summer Camp. If you do choose to crossover later make sure that you are planning enough joint activities with the Troop to build those social connections.

**Q: A family isn't sure they want to cross over to a troop because of competing schedules. How do I encourage them to continue?**

A: It's completely normal for families to balance sports, music, school, and other commitments. Scouting is designed to work alongside those activities, not compete with them. It helps young people build confidence, independence, and resilience at a pace that fits your family's schedule, which is why many families continue Scouting as part of a well-rounded path toward adulthood.

**Q: Do I need to fully prepare my Scouts for Scouts BSA before crossover?**

A: Your role is to teach your Scouts confidence, independence, and resilience. Troops expect beginners and can teach them the Scout Skills they need to succeed.

**Q: Do we have to have a crossover ceremony?**

A: Arrow of Light is the highest rank in Cub Scouting and the only one that carries into Scouts BSA. For many Scouts, it marks a meaningful milestone and a transition to greater independence. The ceremony doesn't need to be elaborate—just taking a few moments to recognize their effort reinforces pride, closure, and excitement for what comes next.

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## Crossover: Resources

### **District Commissioners**

A District Commissioner is a volunteer who helps units succeed. For AOL crossovers, they can connect you with local troops, answer questions, and offer guidance based on experience—not inspection or evaluation.

**Council Commissioner:** Brian Garland, [bjgarland@gmail.com](mailto:bjgarland@gmail.com)

**Calvin Coolidge:** Bob Coates, [bob.coatesvt@outlook.com](mailto:bob.coatesvt@outlook.com)

**Ethan Allen:** Simon Drew, [simondrew@comcast.net](mailto:simondrew@comcast.net)

**Long Trail:** Stephen Flores, [ch\\_snoopy@hotmail.com](mailto:ch_snoopy@hotmail.com)

**Three Rivers:** Dacyn Channell, [dacyn8channell@yahoo.com](mailto:dacyn8channell@yahoo.com)

### **BSA National Guidance on AOL to Scout Transition**

<https://www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/resources/recruitment-marketing/webelos-to-scouts-transition/>

### **How to prepare arrow of light scouts for a successful transition to scouts bsa**

<https://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2025/12/03/how-to-prepare-arrow-of-light-scouts-for-a-successful-transition-to-scouts-bsa/>

### **Example Arrow of Light Crossover Ceremony**

<https://www.scouting.org/cub-scout-presentations/arrow-of-light-crossover/>