



ORDER OF THE ARROW

The Unit Leader's Guide to Order of the Arrow Unit Elections



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Egwa Tawa Dee Lodge

Atlanta Area Council

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USE OF THIS GUIDE

This guide has been prepared for and made available to unit leaders in the Atlanta Area Council to assist them in understanding both the Order of the Arrow policies regarding unit elections and how unit elections are conducted. In addition, it contains information that is specific as to how unit elections are coordinated and managed locally by Egwa Tawa Dee Lodge and its chapters.

The content in this guide pertaining to rules and policies related to unit elections has been derived from Order of the Arrow publications and as such does not supersede and cannot contradict current Order of the Arrow unit election rules and policies.

FEEDBACK

Unit leaders are encouraged to submit your comments, suggestions, and questions pertaining to this guide by sending an email to lodgechief@acegwa.org.

WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in conducting an Order of the Arrow (OA) unit election in your troop or team. This guide has been made available to assist in your planning and preparation for holding an election in your unit. Here you will find the information needed to understand the Order of the Arrow rules and policies for conducting a unit election, the responsibilities of both the OA unit election team and your unit in this election process, and some frequently asked questions (FAQs) answered which you may find helpful. In addition, the membership requirements for youth and adults are listed. An important distinction to note is that youth are elected while adults are nominated; included is an Adult Candidate Nomination form that your unit committee may find helpful to have in advance of the actual unit election.

INTRODUCTION

The Order of the Arrow is Scouting's National Honor Society. It recognizes those Scouts who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives and, through that recognition, cause other Scouts to conduct themselves in such a way that warrants similar recognition, to promote camping, to develop leaders, and to crystallize the Scout habit of helpfulness into a life purpose of leadership in cheerful service to others. To become a member of the Order of the Arrow, a Boy Scout or Varsity Scout is chosen by a vote of the youth in his unit. This is a unique feature of the OA since many of those who select their unit's candidates for this honor are not members of the OA. In this way membership is controlled by the youth in their own unit and not by those who are already Arrowmen. However, OA members in the unit have a vote during the election as well as nonmembers.

This annual opportunity for the youth members to vote for those deemed worthy in each troop or team to be candidates for membership in the OA is provided by the lodge through unit election teams. The unit election team makes a scheduled visit to the unit and conducts the election coordinating with the unit leader to insure the election is conducted in accordance with the current Order of the Arrow guidelines.

The lodge determines the time of year for unit elections to be conducted and the length of the election cycle. Several factors are considered when deciding the dates of the unit election cycle, including the Induction Weekend dates, the council and lodge calendars, and holidays among others. Here in the Atlanta Area Council our OA lodge, Egwa Tawa Dee, has set the annual unit election cycle as running from mid-December to the beginning of April. The actual begin and end dates are decided each year and publicized through the lodge website, emails, and a direct mailing to the unit leader.

Be advised: Unit elections must be conducted within the dates of the election cycle as established by the lodge. A unit election can only be conducted once annually for a unit; supplemental elections are not approved.

OVERVIEW

The lodge has overall responsibility for the management of unit elections in every troop and team in the council. Egwa Tawa Dee Lodge delegates responsibility for executing the unit election process to its chapters which corresponds to the council's districts. Each chapter is responsible for all aspects of the unit election process within their district. This includes contacting the unit leader of every troop and team in their district to schedule a unit election, coordinating the chapter unit elections teams to insure that every scheduled unit election has a team in attendance to conduct the election, and then quickly and reliably transmitting the unit election results to the lodge leadership as required. Also promptly transmitting the Adult Candidate Nominations Forms to the Lodge Adviser so the Lodge Adult Selection committee can act in a timely manner. When the Lodge Adult Selection committee renders a decision the chapter will then notify the unit committee of that decision.

The chapter unit election team is the interface between the chapter/lodge and the unit. The unit election team is responsible for showing up on time, properly uniformed, and prepared to conduct the unit election in cooperation with the unit leader insuring that the election is conducted in accordance with current Order of the Arrow guidelines. The unit election team is to certify all unit election documentation completed is both correct and legible, and then immediately submit that completed documentation to the chapter leadership for transmittal to the lodge.

Be advised: Units are not sanctioned to conduct their own elections. A chapter unit election team must be present to certify the unit election results.

REQUESTING A UNIT ELECTION

To schedule a unit election or request additional information, utilize the below listed email address which corresponds to your district to contact the chapter leadership responsible for coordinating your unit election:

Appalachian Trail District	OAelectionappalachiantrl@acegwa.org
Button Gwinnett District	OAelectionbuttongwinnett@acegwa.org
Foothills District	OAelectionfoothills@acegwa.org
Hightower Trail District	OAelectionhightowertrl@acegwa.org
Indian Springs District	OAelectionindiansprings@acegwa.org
Northern Ridge District	OAelectionnorthernridge@acegwa.org
Phoenix District	OAelectionphoenix@acegwa.org
Pickett's Mill District	OAelectionpicketsmill@acegwa.org
Silver Comet District	OAelectionsilvercomet@acegwa.org
Soapstone Ridge District	OAelectionsoapstoneridge@acegwa.org
Southwest Atlanta District	OAelectionsouthwestatlanta@acegwa.org
Southern Crescent District	OAelectionsoutherncrest@acegwa.org
Yellow River District	OAelectionyellowriver@acegwa.org

Hint: It is suggested that before scheduling the unit election the unit leader select several potential dates so as to have back-up dates in the event that all of the chapter's unit election teams are already committed on your first choice date.

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

To become eligible for election, a Boy Scout or Varsity Scout must be registered with the Boy Scouts of America and have the approval of his unit leader prior to the election. The unit leader must certify his Scout spirit (i.e., his adherence to the Scout Oath and Law and active participation in unit activities). The unit leader must also certify that the nominee meets all specified requirements at the time of this annual election.

Youth membership qualifications. All members, of, or candidates for membership in, the Order of the Arrow who are under the age of 21 years of age shall be considered youth members or candidates for youth membership, subject to meeting the following requirements:

- Be a registered member of the Boy Scouts of America.
- Hold the First Class rank of the Boy Scouts of America, as a minimum.
- After registration with a troop or team, have experienced 15 days and nights of Boy Scout camping during the two-year period prior to the election. The 15 days and nights must include one, but no more than one, long-term camp consisting of six consecutive days and five nights of resident camping, approved and under the auspices and standards of the Boy Scouts of America. The balance of the camping must be overnight, weekend, or other short-term camps.

Candidates for youth membership shall be elected by other youth members in accordance with policies set forth by the National Order of the Arrow committee.

Be advised: Eligible youth members who have no interest in being a member of the Order of the Arrow may voluntarily withdraw from consideration for election and then should not be included in the list of eligible members on the ballot.

Adult membership qualifications. All members of, or candidates for membership in, the Order of the Arrow who are 21 years of age or older and who are registered members of the Boy Scouts of America shall be considered adult members or candidates for adult membership. Individuals shall be selected as candidates based on the following:

Each year, upon holding a troop or team election for youth candidates that results in at least one youth candidate being elected, the unit committee may nominate adults to the Lodge Adult Selection committee. The number of adults nominated can be no more than one-third of the number of youth candidates elected, rounded up where the number of youth candidates is not a multiple of three. In addition to the one-third limit, the unit committee may nominate the currently-serving unit leader (but not assistant leaders), as long as he or she has served as unit leader for at least the previous twelve months. Nominated adults recommended by the Lodge Adult Selection committee, with the approval of the Council Scout Executive, will be candidates for induction, provided the following conditions are fulfilled:

- Selection of the adult is based on the ability to perform the necessary functions to help the Order fulfill its purpose, and not for recognition of service, including current or prior achievement and position.
- The individual will be an asset to the Order because of demonstrated abilities that fulfill the purpose of the Order.
- The camping requirements set forth for youth members are fulfilled.
- The adult leader's membership will provide a positive example for the growth and development of the youth members of the lodge.

Adults may be nominated for membership only one time per year as either unit Scouters or district/council Scouters, but not both. How they are nominated depends on where they maintain their primary registration.

Because the Order of the Arrow is principally a youth organization, adults are not selected for membership as a recognition. Selection should take place only when the adult's position in Boy Scouting or Varsity Scouting will make Order of the Arrow membership more meaningful in the lives of the youth membership.

Unit committees may nominate qualified adults by completing an **Adult Candidate Nomination Form**, a copy of which is included at the end of this guide. This is a two-page form that must be completed in its entirety. When completed the Adult Candidate Nomination Form can be submitted to the chapter unit election team conducting the election, or it can be emailed to the Lodge Adviser at lodgeadviser@aaacegwa.org. Mailing or "dropping off" nomination forms at the AAC VSC Program Center is not recommended as it can delay if not prevent the approval process from occurring. The deadline for submitting adult nominations to the Lodge Adult Selection committee is the same date as the deadline for submitting unit election reports, however adult nominations cannot be submitted prior to the completion of that unit's OA election as no adults are eligible for nomination until youth are elected from that unit.

Be advised: Do not notify, announce, make public, or "Call-out," adult nominees until such time as the unit committee is notified that the nominee has been approved as a candidate for induction.

UNIT ELECTIONS RULES AND PROCEDURES

The definitive rules and procedures for unit elections are contained in the *Guide for Officers and Advisers* pages 20-23. In case of any conflict or ambiguity between items contained in the *Guide to Inductions* or the *Guide to Unit Elections* and items in the *Guide for Officers and Advisers*, always refer to the *Guide for Officers and Advisers* as the definitive document.

In Boy Scout troops and Varsity Scout teams, every registered active member of the unit under age 21 at the time of election is eligible to vote in an Order of the Arrow unit election; this includes assistant Scoutmasters and assistant Varsity Scout Coaches who are 18, 19 or 20 years old.

A Boy Scout or Varsity Scout who carries a current national membership card and participates in at least some unit activities during the year is considered to be a registered active member of the unit. For example, an assistant scoutmaster away at college who participates in some unit activities when home, such as campouts, camporees, or occasional unit meetings, should be considered a registered active member.

A youth who moves away or drops out of the unit because of other interests would not be counted in the registered active membership figure.

Elections are only to be held in troops and teams; elections are not to be held in Venturing crews or Cub Scout packs. Lodges are encouraged to complete all unit elections prior to their troops/teams going to summer camp. This ensures that the maximum number of troop/team members can be present to vote in the election. All elections must be conducted by the OA lodge of the council in which the troop or team is chartered. No unit may visit outside its council and hold an OA unit election under the auspices of the OA lodge of another council.

Call-outs should be conducted by the OA lodge of the council in which the troop or team is chartered. It is possible for a visiting troop or team to have their elected candidates called out at an out-of-council summer camp if the lodge serving the camp is willing to conduct the call-out. The unit leader must present a letter from the home lodge chief and lodge adviser requesting the call-out and identifying the members to be called out. A signed copy of the home lodge's unit election report must accompany this request. Following the unit's return, the home lodge chief and lodge adviser must receive confirmation of the call-out.

Newly elected candidates for membership in the Order must complete the Ordeal and be inducted into the Order by the lodge that serves the council in which the unit is chartered. This allows the candidates to bond with their contemporaries as they go through the Ordeal and creates a positive leadership environment in which they can progress. Out-of-council Ordeals are not permitted except when religious custom and observance precludes attendance at the Ordeals of a Scout's home lodge (e.g., Sabbath-observant Jewish Scouts). In this special case, the region Order of the Arrow chairman may be petitioned for an exception to permit the Scout to be inducted by another lodge.

Unit Election Rules

1. The lodge will determine the time of the year unit elections will be held and should inform troop and team leaders of this by mail well in advance. As stated above, lodges are encouraged to complete all unit elections prior to their troops/teams going to summer camp. This insures that the maximum number of troop/team members can be present to vote in the election. For this reason and to avoid improper out-of-council unit requests, elections should not be conducted at summer camp.
2. The lodge, through the unit elections committee, should work with the Scoutmaster or Varsity Scout Coach in establishing the actual time and place to conduct the election. The Order should

be represented by a two- or three-member team from the lodge or chapter unit elections committee. All OA election team members must be trained and in proper uniform during the election.

3. Before the election, the unit leader must verify to the OA unit elections team that at least 50 percent of the registered active unit membership is present. If at least 50 percent is not present, an election cannot be held and the election should be rescheduled. The number of registered active members and the number present are entered in the spaces provided on the Unit Elections Report (see the resources section). If the unit leader is a member of the Order, he or she may explain to the group the purpose of the Order of the Arrow and the basis upon which candidates should be selected, and describe the method of election. If the unit leader is not a member of the Order, a member of the OA unit elections team should make this presentation with the unit leader's consent, demonstrating that election leadership is a cooperative effort of the unit leader and the OA unit elections team.
4. The unit leader provides a list of registered active members of the unit who meet all eligibility requirements, including attitude and participation. The names of these members are entered on the report form and the unit leader signs the certification.
5. The election team leader explains the following to the unit leader:
 - This is the current method of election approved by the national OA committee in use by the lodge.
 - All eligible youths who receive votes from at least 50 percent of those who turn in ballots are elected. If no one is elected, a second vote may be held immediately, and the result of this vote will be final.
6. A voter may list on his ballot any combination of names, including all eligible candidates he believes are worthy to become members of the Order of the Arrow.
7. The OA unit elections team conducts the election. A unit election ceremony is contained in the resource section, and a unit elections video is available from the OA national office. Stress the following points:
 - Select the candidates who, in your opinion, have set the best examples of brotherhood, cheerfulness, and service.
 - Vote only for those you believe will continue in unselfish service to your troop/team.
 - If you feel that no one is worthy, turn in a blank ballot.
 - If you are new in the unit and do not know the candidates well enough to vote wisely, you may abstain by not turning in a ballot at all; this will not affect the final result.
 - Youths eligible for election also vote, and they may vote for themselves if they feel they are worthy.
8. When the voting is finished, the OA unit elections team counts the number of ballots turned in and enters the numbers on the Unit Elections Report.
9. The OA unit elections team determines the minimum number of votes one must receive to be elected, as follows: If the number of ballots turned in was even (2, 4, 6, 8, etc.), divide this number by two. If the number was odd (1, 3, 5, 7, etc.), add one and then divide by two. The number of votes a youth must receive to be elected is entered on the Unit Elections Report.

10. The election team and the unit leader count the votes in private. All votes count equally. If at least one has been elected, the election result is final. The OA team places a check mark next to the names of those who have been elected.
11. If no one is elected, the OA team announces this fact and states that the unit will now be given the opportunity to vote again. Time is allowed for further explanation of the purpose of the Order and the election procedures, and for any questions. No information about the votes received by candidates is to be revealed at any time. The second ballot is then held immediately, and if the unit still elects no one, this is the final result for this year's election.

Announcement of results. As soon as the election is completed, the unit leader may or may not choose to announce to the entire unit the names of members who have been elected.

Names, mail and email addresses, and phone numbers of the newly elected candidates must be forwarded to the lodge membership committee immediately. Candidates will be called out at the earliest possible time, either at a resident camp, a camporee, or a special ceremony.

Candidate status. After election, Boy Scouts, Varsity Scouts, and adults remain candidates until completion of the Ordeal and Ordeal ceremony. If this period of candidacy exceeds one year, the candidate's name will be dropped. To become candidates again, they must be re-elected.

The executive committee of the lodge may extend the one-year limit between election and induction if a candidate is ill or there are other unusual circumstances.

If a candidate permanently relocates to a new Boy Scout council prior to completing the Ordeal, the candidate should immediately join a troop or team in the new council. A copy of the election report must be presented to the new unit leader to arrange induction in the new lodge. The candidacy period is not restarted or extended.

Adult recommendations. Each year, upon holding a troop or team election for youth candidates that results in at least one youth candidate being elected, the unit committee may nominate registered unit adults, 21 years of age or older, to the lodge adult selection committee for approval to be candidates for induction. The number of adults nominated can be no more than one-third of the number of youth candidates elected, rounded up where the number of youth candidates is not a multiple of three. In addition to the one-third limit, the unit committee may nominate the currently-serving unit leader (but not assistant leaders), as long as he or she has served as unit leader for at least the previous 12 months. The lodge should set up a system to transmit adult nominations to the lodge adult selection committee and the committee's decisions back to the lodge, chapter, and units. Adults may not be called out until the lodge adult selection committee recommends and the Scout executive approves them. Maintain the confidentiality of adult recommendations to avoid embarrassment if a nominated adult is not recommended by the lodge adult selection committee or is not approved by the Scout executive.

Membership requirements. Consult the *Guide for Officers and Advisers* for youth, adult and professional membership qualifications.

Honorary and life membership. Honorary or life membership in the Order of the Arrow are not allowed. See the *Guide for Officers and Advisers*.

UNIT ELECTIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The definitive rules and procedures for unit elections are contained in the *Guide for Officers and Advisers*, pages 20–23. In case of any conflict or ambiguity between the *Guide to Inductions* or the *Guide to Unit Elections* and the *Guide for Officers and Advisers*, always refer to the *Guide for Officers and Advisers* as the definitive document.

Q. When does a Scout have to earn his First Class Rank to become eligible for election?

A. The *Guide for Officers and Advisers* says:

... hold the First Class rank or higher of the Boy Scouts of America ...

To ensure that the Scout will be able to handle the challenges of the Ordeal weekend and to uphold the Order's standing as Scouting's national honor society, each candidate must have passed a board of review for the First Class rank before the election is held. Any Scout who has passed his First Class board of review meets this requirement, even if the award has not been formally presented, such as at a court of honor.

Q. Can a Scout use the same camping nights towards the requirements of Camping merit badge and for the OA camping requirement.

A. Yes. While the Boy Scout advancement program often prohibits one action or event from counting towards two different requirements, camping nights can be counted towards both Boy Scout advancement and the OA camping requirement.

Q. A Scout who recently joined my troop camped a lot in his previous troop. Should that camping be counted when deciding if he can be listed on the election ballot for my troop's unit election?

A. Yes. All camping done by a Scout while registered with a troop or team counts towards the camping portion of the membership qualifications, as long as the camping was within the last two years.

Q. A Scout in my troop is also registered in a Venturing crew. Can camping trips with the crew count towards the camping requirement?

A. Since the Scout is registered with the troop, and the camping with the crew is "under the auspices of the BSA," these camping trips while the youth member is also a Boy Scout can count towards the camping requirement.

Q. If a Scout goes to summer camp and a jamboree in the same summer, how do these count towards the camping requirement?

A. The *Guide for Officers and Advisers* says:

Have experienced 15 nights of Boy Scout camping while registered with a troop or team within the two years immediately prior to the election. **The 15 nights must include one, but no more than one, long-term camp consisting of at least five consecutive nights of overnight camping,** approved and under the auspices and standards of the Boy Scouts of America. **Only five nights of the long-term camp may be credited toward the 15-night camping requirement;** the balance of the camping (10 nights) must be overnight, weekend, or other short-term camps of, at most, three nights each. *[emphasis added]*

Only one long term camp can be used towards the camping requirement. For a Scout who attends summer camp and a jamboree in the same year, five nights of the time at summer camp or at the jamboree (but not both) can be used towards the camping requirement. Ten more nights of short-term camp would also be required to meet the camping requirement.

Q. Does the long term camp have to be at my council's camp?

- A. Camping at a council's own camp(s) is not part of the national requirements for eligibility for election to the Order of the Arrow. Any "long-term camp ... approved and under the auspices and standards of the Boy Scouts of America" meets this portion of the camping requirement.

Councils and lodges should conduct elections in any troop or team that requests one, without regard to where the unit attends summer camp.

Q. What does "... under the auspices of the Boy Scouts of America" mean in the camping requirement?

- A. It means: Camping conducted within the guidelines of the Boy Scouts of America, amongst other things, to conduct the program in accordance with the *Guide to Safe Scouting* and all youth protection guidelines, and, if water sports are conducted, using Safe Swim Defense and the buddy system, using a Tour Plan, and all other policies in force not specifically listed here. Ultimately, the local council is the final arbiter of whether an encampment is in compliance and therefore under the auspices of the BSA.

Q. I went on several camping trips when I was registered as a Webelos den leader and before I registered as an assistant Scoutmaster. Can those trips count towards the OA camping requirement?

- A. The Order of the Arrow's membership eligibility requirements focus on youth Boy Scouts, and the camping requirement must be fulfilled through camping done while a Boy Scout. Because of this, time spent camping as a Cub Scout does not count towards OA eligibility. This makes sense when we consider another requirement, which is that election candidates be First Class Scouts, and work towards the First Class requirements cannot begin until a boy becomes a Boy Scout.

Similarly, camping done by unit adults only counts towards OA membership when the adults are registered as Boy Scout or Varsity Team leaders. Thus, camping done while registered as a Webelos den leader does not count towards OA eligibility (unless the adult is also registered in a troop or team at the time).

Q. We have an adult assistant Scoutmaster who is two nights shy of the camping requirement. Youth elections are next week. Most likely two Scouts will be elected (one of them the assistant Scoutmaster's son). Five days after the youth election the assistant Scoutmaster will have met the camping requirement. Can the troop committee nominate the assistant Scoutmaster several days after the youth election?

- A. The *Guide for Officers and Advisers* says:

"Each year, upon holding a troop or team election for youth candidates that results in at least one youth candidate being elected, the unit committee may nominate adults to the lodge adult selection committee..."

In many units, the unit committee meets once or twice a month, so adult nominations may follow the youth election by as much as a few weeks. Adults must meet the eligibility requirements when the unit committee makes its decision on whom to nominate, not at the time of the youth election.

Q. Do youths have to be present for an election, or can they participate by phone or Skype or vote through an absentee ballot?

A. All youths must be physically present to vote in a unit election. Voting by phone, Skype, absentee ballot, etc. is not permitted in unit elections.

Q. Do youths have to be present to be placed on the election ballot and be elected?

A. No. All Scouts who meet the eligibility requirements should be included on the election ballot, even if some of these Scouts are not present when the election is being held.

Q. As a unit leader, how do I determine which youths are active and thus count for purposes of determining if a quorum is present for an election?

A. The *Guide for Officers and Advisers* says:

Registered active member. In Boy Scout troops and Varsity Scout teams, every registered active member of the unit under age 21 at the time of election (including assistant Scoutmasters and assistant Varsity Scout Coaches who are 18, 19 or 20 years old) is eligible to vote.

A Boy Scout or Varsity Scout who carries a current national membership card and participates in at least some unit activities during the year is considered to be a registered active member of the unit. For example, a youth away at college who participates in some unit activities when home, such as a campout, camporee, or occasional unit meeting, should be considered a registered active member.

A youth who moves away or drops out of the unit because of other interests would not be counted in the registered active membership figure.

As an example, a Scout who hasn't participated in unit activities in several months and who cannot be reached to confirm that they have dropped out of the unit should not be counted as a member of the unit when deciding if at least 50 percent of the registered active unit membership is present.

Q. Can a troop/team conduct its own election?

A. The *Guide for Officers and Advisers* says:

Induction: Election to Ordeal

2. The lodge, through the unit elections committee, should work with the troop/team leader in establishing the actual time and place to conduct the election. The Order should be represented by a two- or three-member team from the lodge or chapter unit elections committee. All election teams must be trained and in proper uniform during the election.

The lodge is responsible for making sure that election teams are properly trained, so it's important that troops and teams not conduct their own elections.

Q. What's the status in the Order of assistant Scoutmasters and assistant Varsity Scout Coaches who are under age 21?

A. Young adults ages 18 through 20 are considered youth members of the Order of the Arrow. Because of this, assistant Scoutmasters and assistant Varsity Scout Coaches who are 18, 19 or 20 years old and who meet the youth eligibility requirements should be included on election ballots whenever an election is held in a troop or team, and these young adults should be allowed to participate in the

election in the same manner as youth members under age 18. Once inducted, these young adults may participate fully in the Order of the Arrow as youth members, until their 21st birthday.

Q. Can a unit use pre-printed ballots in an election?

- A. Yes. However, care must be taken to ensure that all candidates' names appear on the ballot. Excluding a candidate's name and having it "written in" during the election is inappropriate since this may prevent a fair opportunity for this candidate to be elected. If it is discovered that an eligible candidate's name is missing from a pre-printed ballot, blank ballots should be used instead.

Q. Can "All of the above" be included as a choice on a pre-printed ballot?

- A. Yes. A voter may list on his ballot any combination of names, including all eligible candidates who he believes are worthy to become members of the Order of the Arrow so having an "all of the above" box on a pre-printed ballot is appropriate. Here is a sample:

<p>Please place a check next to the name of each candidate who you believe is worthy to become a member of the Order of the Arrow.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Jeff Scout</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> José Star</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Dhairya Eagle</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> All of the above</p> <p>If you feel that no one is worthy, turn in an unmarked ballot.</p> <p>If you do not know the candidates well enough to vote wisely you may abstain by not turning in a ballot at all. This will not affect the final result.</p>
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Q. Can a unit leader or council add requirements to the national OA requirements for election?

- A. No, a Scoutmaster or Varsity Scout Coach (or unit committee, district, council, chapter or lodge) has no authority to change the requirements for election to the Order of the Arrow, just as they have no authority to change the Eagle Scout or other rank requirements. However, a Scoutmaster or Varsity Scout Coach does have the responsibility to certify that the troop's or team's Scouts have met the national eligibility requirements before submitting their names for the ballot for the unit's election.

Q. What is the unit leader's role in a unit election?

- A. The *Guide for Officers and Advisers* says:

Membership Requirements

Unit leader approval. To become eligible for election, a Boy Scout or Varsity Scout must be registered with the Boy Scouts of America and have the approval of his unit leader immediately **prior** to the election. The unit leader must certify his Scout spirit (i.e., his adherence to the Scout Oath and Law and active participation in unit activities). The unit leader must also certify that the nominee meets all specified requirements at the time of this annual election.

Induction: Election to Ordeal

4. The unit leader provides a list of all registered active members of the unit who meet all eligibility requirements, including attitude and participation.

The Scoutmaster or Varsity Scout Coach holds the responsibility of certifying a Scout's eligibility before placement on an Order of the Arrow election ballot. The unit leader's certification is as of the date of the election, and any Scout who meets the camping and other requirements as of that date should be listed on the election ballot. This approval is not one of preferential treatment or specific selection for membership rooted in the unit leader's own vision, but one of qualifying a candidate for eligibility. By including a Scout's name on the list of those whose names should appear on an election ballot, the unit leader certifies that:

- The Scout is a currently registered active member of the troop or team
- The Scout exhibits Scout spirit by living in accordance with the Scout Oath and Law
- The Scout fulfills all other Order of the Arrow membership requirements

Clearly, the unit leader's approval is earned through merit in Scouting. The unit leader has two roles with the OA: an administrative certification that the objective requirements are met and a more judgment-oriented one with the Scout spirit requirement that the Scout, in his or her opinion, has been a "good Scout" and lives up to the obligations taken in the Scout Oath and Scout Law. This requirement helps to uphold the high standard that OA membership warrants.

Q. Can a unit leader adjust the results of the youth election results before the results are announced?

- A. After the youths have voted, the unit leader cannot adjust the results of the election. The *Guide for Officers and Advisers* says that lodge rules must include this standard rule:

Rule III.A. The requirements for membership in this lodge are as stated in the current printing of the *Order of the Arrow Handbook* and the *Order of the Arrow Guide for Officers and Advisers*.

Starting on page 22 of the *Guide for Officers and Advisers*, the "Induction: Election to Ordeal" section details the procedure to be used for elections. Voting by Scoutmasters or adjusting the results of the youth votes is not part of the procedure and therefore is not allowed.

However, the unit leader is **not** an ineffective actor with regard to OA unit elections. Here is what one successful, long-term Scoutmaster did. He reports that he was never disappointed with the wisdom of the voters:

I made the OA unit election a yearlong process of encouraging the Scouts in the troop to participate in the Order's activities, and always made sure a youth member (the Troop OA Representative) got up and explained what the event was being held, and ensured that our Patrol Leaders' Council had a copy of the chapter and lodge calendar to be sure that the PLC did not schedule any events in conflict with the published OA calendar. This calendar exercise alone put the OA events front and center in the minds of the troop youth leaders once a month.

Beyond talking about the OA and their events, I would follow up the Troop Rep's presentation by telling the troop "why" the OA did these things. Often, I would include discussions of service and the concept of servant leadership in my Scoutmaster minutes.

Then, six weeks before the election, as soon as our youths scheduled the chapter election team to come to the troop, I would begin a series of short comments in each meeting or campout describing the OA and what it was about. It went like this:

Six weeks out: Bring in a copy of James Fennimore Cooper's book, *The Last of the Mohicans* and explain that the OA had roots in great American literature. See what they know about it.

Five weeks out: Show a video I compiled on *The Last of the Mohicans* movie...and take questions about the Delaware Tribe...Get out a map of the Great Northeast and show the range of the Delaware.

Four weeks out: Introduce the concept of service. Bring in my 1914 handbook and show the Scouts the chapter on chivalry and let them see the original drawing of a boy helping an old lady cross the street.

Three weeks out: Remind them of their slogan, to do a good turn daily, and see if any Scouts have examples of ones they might share with the group. Ask them to be sure to do this in the coming week.

Two weeks out: Talk about the OA and ask three or four Scouts who are members to speak for two to three minutes each about what to look for in a member, drawing on the above. Ask the Scouts to give you specific examples of acts of kindness that have been performed by the troop members. Include as many Scouts in this as you can... you can suggest those squeamish or awkward Scouts who you believe may be overlooked, but you feel are worthy. Scouts will know if you are honest in this... or campaigning, so just speak from your heart as the Scouts do most of the talking about their fellows.

One week out: Specifically talk with them about the ballot, post the draft ballot so all can see, and be sure they come see the advancement committee member present, if we do not show them as qualified, when they think they may be. Address the "popularity contest" aspect of the election as something to avoid, and call on their higher angels to identify each person who lives the Scout Oath and Law in the meeting.

Election night: Introduce the election team and reiterate the purpose of the OA. Explain that the OA is the only organization in Scouting where the non-members choose the members, and reinforce that I have authorized this ballot because I believe these Scouts are qualified and worthy of consideration.

Of course, every situation is different, but over the years, our troop's Scouts chose a wide range of Scouts, but I was never disappointed. I made it a year round education process, so never was tempted to have to adjust the will of the Scouts. I spent my time adjusting their thinking to what would serve the troop and the OA best. It worked.

Q. How do you keep the elections from being a popularity contest? Some Scouts who meet the requirements and definitely have the qualities of a true Boy Scout are not elected. They meet the qualifications year after year. Even the other Scouts are surprised certain Scouts are never elected.

A. The unit elections chair from the local lodge or chapter might be invited to come and talk to the Scouts about the Order of the Arrow, rather than relying solely on the OA Elections video. Nationally, many of our most successful chapters and lodges have noticed that this practice, especially when the unit leader is also invited to comment, makes those in the troop or team recognize the founding ideals of the OA and helps to take away consideration of other factors.

In May 2008 the Order of the Arrow distributed an Operations Update which included a Unit Elections section on page 3. Its recommendations have been used effectively in a number of troops and teams around the country. Here is a quote from the Operations Update to further address the question:

Electing candidates from medium to large size troops and teams can be a challenge. The basic problem is that many Scouts, especially the older ones, don't really know the younger Scouts and are reluctant to vote for them. This can be a significant problem especially with youths who are quiet and introverted.

Noticing their low election results, a number of Scoutmasters have developed a procedure to directly address this situation. It has produced significant improvements in the election results in these units. Some Scoutmasters announce the youth's rank, number of nights of camping, and service hours as the names are read. Others include similar information on the ballot of names. Another technique is to print the individual Scouting record of each candidate, listing his name, school grade, rank, number of merit badges, summer camp years, camping nights, leadership positions held, and special awards or events attended. Regardless of the procedure used, the purpose of this is to help the unit members know something about the candidates before they vote. It works and produces much better election results.

The Scoutmaster still decides the names to appear on the ballot, listing only those who have demonstrated Scout spirit and who meet the OA eligibility requirements. A Scout whose name is being withheld because of Scout spirit needs to be told why in advance. Also, some Scouts may not be interested in becoming OA members. The Scoutmaster should offer the eligible candidates the opportunity to "opt out" of being on the annual ballot prior to its printing.

This procedure has been tried and tested. It produces 50% to 100% better election results and is worthy of your consideration.

Q. Can you help me better understand the number of unit adults who can be nominated when a troop/team conducts an election?

A. The *Guide for Officers and Advisers* says:

Each year, upon holding a troop or team election for youth candidates that results in at least one youth candidate being elected, the unit committee may nominate adults to the lodge adult selection committee, composed of the lodge adviser, the chairman of the council committee on which the lodge adviser serves, and the lodge staff adviser. The number of adults nominated can be no more than one-third of the number of youth candidates elected, rounded up where the number of youth candidates is not a multiple of three. In addition to the one-third limit, the unit committee may nominate the currently serving unit leader (but not assistant leaders), as long as he or she has served as unit leader for at least the previous 12 months.

So, as long as the adults meet the camping and other requirements, this chart can be used:

No. of Youths Elected	Maximum No. of Adults That Can be Nominated	No. of Youths Elected	Maximum No. of Adults That Can be Nominated
0	0	7	3 + unit leader
1	1 + unit leader	8	3 + unit leader
2	1 + unit leader	9	3 + unit leader
3	1 + unit leader	10	4 + unit leader
4	2 + unit leader	11	4 + unit leader
5	2 + unit leader	12	4 + unit leader
6	2 + unit leader	And so forth	

Q. What is the role of the unit leader (Scoutmaster or Varsity Scout Coach) and the unit committee chairman in signing the adult nomination form? Do they decide which adults get nominated or does the troop/team committee make the decision?

A. The *Guide for Officers and Advisers* says:

“Each year, upon holding a troop or team election for youth candidates that results in at least one youth candidate being elected, the unit committee may nominate adults to the lodge adult

selection committee, composed of the lodge adviser, the chairman of the council committee on which the lodge adviser serves and the lodge staff adviser.”

The unit committee decides which adults are nominated, and the unit leader and unit committee chair sign on behalf of the committee and its decision.

Q. What should our lodge do if a Scoutmaster or Varsity Scout Coach mistakenly certifies a Scout as eligible for election when he is not eligible and that Scout is subsequently called out?

- A. If a Scout was incorrectly elected, but not called out, do not add him to the list of those to be called out. Have the Scoutmaster or Varsity Scout Coach counsel the Scout and explain to him that a mistake was made. Encourage the Scout to remain involved and committed so that he may appear on next year’s ballot.

If a Scout was incorrectly called out but not inducted, do not induct him, and, again, have that Scoutmaster or Varsity Scout Coach conference.

If a Scout was incorrectly inducted, the Scout should be allowed to retain membership in the Order of the Arrow. The Scout should be counseled about the circumstances with guidance from his Scoutmaster or Varsity Scout Coach and the chapter or lodge adviser so that they can help the Scout mature, participate, and be successful in the Order.

Q. I’m a chapter adviser. A chapter election team recently conducted an election for a troop in my chapter and three Scouts were elected. The day after the election, the Scoutmaster contacted me to ask for a supplemental election because he accidentally left some Scouts off the list of those eligible for election. Can the chapter arrange for another election?

- A. Election policy is set by the national OA committee to ensure uniformity across the nation. One longstanding policy is that a unit may have only one election per year. While it's regrettable that the Scoutmaster did not provide a complete list of eligible Scouts for the election that was held, national policy does not permit an additional election to be held to address the issue.



Adult Candidate Nomination Form

Each year, upon holding a troop or team election for youth candidates that results in at least one youth candidate being elected, the unit committee may nominate registered unit adults (age 21 or over) to the lodge adult selection committee. The number of adults nominated can be no more than one-third of the number of youth candidates elected, rounded up where the number of youth candidates is not a multiple of three. In addition to the one-third limit, the unit committee may nominate the currently-serving unit leader (but not assistant leaders), as long as he or she has served as unit leader for at least the previous 12 months. Recommendations of the lodge adult selection committee, with the approval of the Scout executive, serving as Supreme Chief of the Fire, will be candidates for induction, provided all conditions are fulfilled. Consult the *Guide for Officers and Advisers* for procedures for district and council Scouters.

Please print clearly and complete all of the information requested

District: _____ Unit Number: _____ Position: _____

First Name: _____ Middle Initial: _____ Last Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Birth Date: ____ / ____ / ____ Years as Adult: ____ Home Phone: (____) _____

Email Address(es): _____

Training Completed: _____

Positions Held: _____

Scout as Youth / Rank: _____

Community Activities: _____

Employment / Trade: _____

Camping Requirement: _____

The camping requirement for youth candidates must be fulfilled by adults for them to be considered. To be eligible, the adult must have completed 15 nights of Boy Scout camping during the two years immediately prior to nomination. The 15 nights must include one, but no more than one, long-term camp consisting of five consecutive nights of overnight camping, approved and under the auspices and standards of the BSA. Only five nights of the long-term camp may be credited toward the 15-night camping requirement; the balance must be overnight, weekend, or other short-term camps of, at most, three nights each. Include above the dates and location of the long-term camping experience.

Please also make a brief statement regarding the individual for each item on the back of this page.

Nomination for Unit Scouters: The adult leader, who fulfills the above requirements, is nominated for membership consideration in the Order of the Arrow. Date: ____/____/____

Unit Leader: _____
Print Name Signature

Committee Chairman: _____
Print Name Signature

Nomination for District/Council Scouters: The adult leader, who fulfills the above requirements, is nominated for membership consideration in the Order of the Arrow. Date: ____/____/____

Nominator: _____
Print Name & Position Signature



Adult Candidate Nomination Form

1. Selection of the adult is based upon the ability to perform the necessary functions and not for recognition of service, including current or prior achievement and position. The individual's abilities include:

2. As Scouting's National Honor Society, the Order of the Arrow's purpose is to:
- Recognize those who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives and through that recognition cause others to conduct themselves in a way that warrants similar recognition.
 - Promote camping, responsible outdoor adventure, and environmental stewardship as essential components of every Scout's experience, in the unit, year-round, and in summer camp.
 - Develop leaders with the willingness, character, spirit, and ability to advance the activities of their units, our Brotherhood, Scouting, and ultimately our nation.
 - Crystallize the Scout habit of helpfulness into a life purpose of leadership in cheerful service to others.

This adult will be an asset to the Order of the Arrow due to demonstrated skills and abilities, which fulfill the purpose of the Order of the Arrow, in the following manner:

3. This adult leader's membership will provide a positive role model for the growth and development of the youth members of the lodge because:
