

Eagle Scout Samuel Galagan Earns All 139 Merit Badges: Pushing the Limits of Scouting

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Oct 26, 2022

Seventeen-year-old Samuel Galagan became the first person in the Southern Sierra Council in the Tejon District to complete all 139 merit badges offered by the Boys Scouts of America. At his recent Eagle Scout Court of Honor, Samuel, a member of Troop 194, was promoted to the rank of Eagle Scout, presented with his 139th merit badge blue card, and awarded both the Triple Crown and the Grand Slam.

At the ceremony, his first Scoutmaster of Troop 194, Kelly Jett said he's honored to see the man Sam has grown up into as a mature adult and a natural leader. "Sam has pushed the limit of scouting tenfold," Jett says. "He was always ready for the next challenge. You couldn't put enough challenges in front of him."

His accomplishments are rare in the scouting world. According to MeritBadgeKnot.com, less than one half of one percent of Boy Scouts have completed all the merit badge requirements available to them. And only four percent of Boy Scouts reach the rank of Eagle Scout.

In addition, the two awards, Triple Crown and Grand Slam, have an exclusivity to them. The Triple Crown is given to scouts who have attended three high adventure camps around the country and the Grand Slam is for the scouts who have attended all four. Since the Grand Slam's inception in 2014, only 1500 scouts have received this award.

To meet this requirement, Sam participated in Florida Sea Base's scuba diving program, Summit Bechtel Reserve's Orion 7-day program, Philmont Scout Ranch's 14-day backpacking trek where he summited Mt. Baldy at 14,023 feet, and Norther Tier's winter adventure camp where he went ice fishing, skiing, and cowboy camping in -26-degree weather on a frozen lake.

His mother, Jennifer says, "He has had 139 chances to try everything. He has done more than most people do in their lifetimes through scouting as a youth."





Sam is the first to say that it is with the support of his family, his parents, Peter and Jennifer, his brother Jacob, and countless extended family, community leaders, and friends, that he was able to achieve so much. His support network was evident at his Eagle Scout Court of Honor as people had come from Florida, Utah, Arizona, and other long distances to be there to celebrate his success. He says, “My parents have been my biggest support between their advice, knowledge, and driving.” With a laugh, his mom chimes in and says, “We have pretty much driven the entire state of California and some to get his merit badges.”

Starting his scouting career at the age of five in Cub Scouts, he says it just clicked and he really enjoyed it. Once a Boy Scout, he knew his goal was to become an Eagle Scout. Then, as he started working on merit badges, he knew he wanted to finish them all. “Merit Badges were my thing,” Sam says.

For the rank of Eagle Scout, participants must complete 21 merit badges, which Sam had finished by the time he achieved his Boy Scout Second Class. They also have to complete an Eagle Scout project that benefits the community. Sam and his crew constructed a 14 x 16-foot pergola shade structure at Dolores S. Whitley Elementary. This Reading Garden allows students a beautiful place where they can sit and read a book. This task was no small feat and required many hours of labor, donations, budgeting, and of course, paperwork. But, the end result was better than anyone could have imagined.

At his Eagle Scout Court of Honor, Sam was presented with his 139th blue card for the merit badge for bugling. Some of the 139 merit badges have been easier and more fun to complete. Sam says the cooking merit badge was pretty challenging because he had to plan extensive meals, budget, learn USDA food requirements, and cook meals at campouts, backpacking trips, and for his family. Also, he said there was a lot of paperwork.

Some merit badges have sparked a new interest for him like scuba diving, first aid, and golf. After Sam received his scuba diving merit badge, he knew he wanted to become better at it. He went on to receive his advanced open water diving certificate and his rescue diver certificate. And, he’s not stopping there. He has a trip planned to Hawaii this December to complete his master diver certificate.

Although Sam has achieved so much with boy scouts, he still will be active in his Troop 194. He handed over the reigns as Senior Patrol Leader and now is a Troop Instructor. As a junior at Centennial High School, he also stays busy with ASB, Link Crew, and clubs. “I have learned so much through scouts – leadership skills, time management, problem-solving, and making the best of situations. I have also made the best of friendships,” he says.

His advice to younger scouts, he says, “Set your goals in scouting and life; and make the most between the skills you learn and the people you meet.”



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