

Teen on verge of earning elite Scouting status

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Devon Erickson, a 17-year-old Eagle Scout, holds his double sash holding the merit badges he has earned Saturday.

Devon Erickson is preparing to accomplish a rare feat.

The 17-year-old Eagle Scout from Spirit Lake headed out to Camp Easton on Lake Coeur d'Alene on Saturday to earn his kayaking merit badge, the 133rd and last possible badge he can earn at this point.

"I always wanted to get them all," Devon said in Coeur d'Alene en route to the camp.

The final badge will grant him membership to a highly exclusive club. An independent registry at [meritbadgeknot.com](http://www.meritbadgeknot.com/) (<http://www.meritbadgeknot.com/>) shows that since the 1920s, 171 people throughout the nation have earned all the merit badges the Boy Scouts of America has to offer.

He will also be the first to earn every single badge among all his 11,000 fellow Boy Scouts in the Inland Northwest Council, which includes young people in 17 counties throughout Eastern Washington and North Idaho, said Colette Erickson, Devon's mother.

"I'm just really proud that he's finished it," Colette said. "I've heard a lot of kids come in and say they're going to do it, and I just thought, 'Well, we'll see.'"

She wasn't sure her son could reach his goal until he was about halfway there. Finishing the job was difficult, though, Colette said. Sometimes Devon needed a little encouragement from his family to stay on track.

"We kind of had to sit down and figure out how many do you need a year for you to finish this before you're 18," she said.

Devon has four more badges to sew onto the sliver of open space left on the front of the two sashes he's sewn together to showcase all his work.

"I didn't want to put them on the back because I want them all to show," he said.

Some of Devon's badges required only a day or two to finish, but others took months or even years. And some came with a physical cost.

Devon flipped over his handlebars around mile 26 of his 50-mile bike ride for the cycling merit badge and needed 13 stitches to close a wound in his chin.

"It was the first time ever getting stitches from a crash," he said.

But instead of putting his trip on pause, Devon decided to finish the ride first, letting the wound bleed for three hours before finally getting the stitches.

Devon will receive his final four badges at an Inland Northwest Council ceremony on July 20.

The Boy Scouts creates a handful of new badges each year, Colette said. Four new ones are set to come out this year, and Devon may pursue them if he can finish them before his 18th birthday in January.

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