

1-3-2-4

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“Every diver is responsible for his or her own material. That also goes for youth divers,” Nella had said. “Your buddy will check your scuba equipment, but you as the diver have to make sure everything is working properly and put it together yourself.”

The other youth divers had never heard of this strange ‘SCUBA’ word before, but Skubba had. It was very similar to his own name.

Fred had looked it up a while ago and had told Skubba what it meant, and he could now explain what the word meant to everyone else.

Of course Nella had already taught them how to assemble their equipment. She had showed them how to do it first, and then they had to do it together. Now, they had to do it alone.

The hardest part was getting the BCD jacket on the tank. For that you had to stand the tank up and then slip the jacket straps over it. Not too low though because your head would bump against the tank during the dive. But not too high either, because the jacket may come loose from the tank. But Skubba couldn’t remember what to do after that. First, he had to lie the jacket down on the ground with the tank on top of it and undo the straps to tighten them properly.

Nella had a trick with a number, but he had forgotten it. As always, Fred had neatly noted everything down. It was 1-3-4-2. Start through the first hole, then through the third, then the fourth and finally through number two. Pull and... No matter how he tried, he was always a hole short. How did she do it? Skubba and Fred had a problem. The trick with the number did not seem to work anymore.

They went to ask Nella. When she saw the number, she immediately knew what the problem was.

“It must be 1-3-2-4”, she said, and showed them how to do it.

“Then why did it work before?”, Skubba asked.

“Because this time, you did it with 2 and 4 in the wrong order.”

Weird, Fred thought. He had noted the correct number: 1-3-2-4 in his booklet but he had scratched the wrong one out.



Skubba did it again: first through hole 1, then through number 3, then the 2, and finally, 4. Pull... and success.

The jacket was firmly attached to the tank. Now he had to put the first stage on the tank. Which direction did he have to turn? Left, or right? Fred tried to help, but he too did not know if it was left or right.

Nella saw they were confused and came closer. “Guys, no problem. Many divers don’t know it either. But there is a trick to it.”

“What trick?”

“Tick-tock, close.”

“Tick-tock, close?” they asked in surprise.

“Yes, if you turn in the direction of the arms of a clock, ‘tick-tock’ then you will screw it in place, or ‘close’ a valve,” she explained.

“Ah,” Skubba answered and he tried it. It worked, he could attach the first stage to the tank.

“Now connect the hose and then I will open the valve,” Nella said. “How should I turn the valve to open it?” she asked.

“Turning counterclockwise and it will open the valve,” Fred said.

“Right! Well done guys.”

Skubba and Fred were proud. They could now assemble scuba equipment all by themselves.