

Pinewood Derby Pitfalls and Possibilities



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About the Presenter - Steve Sarver

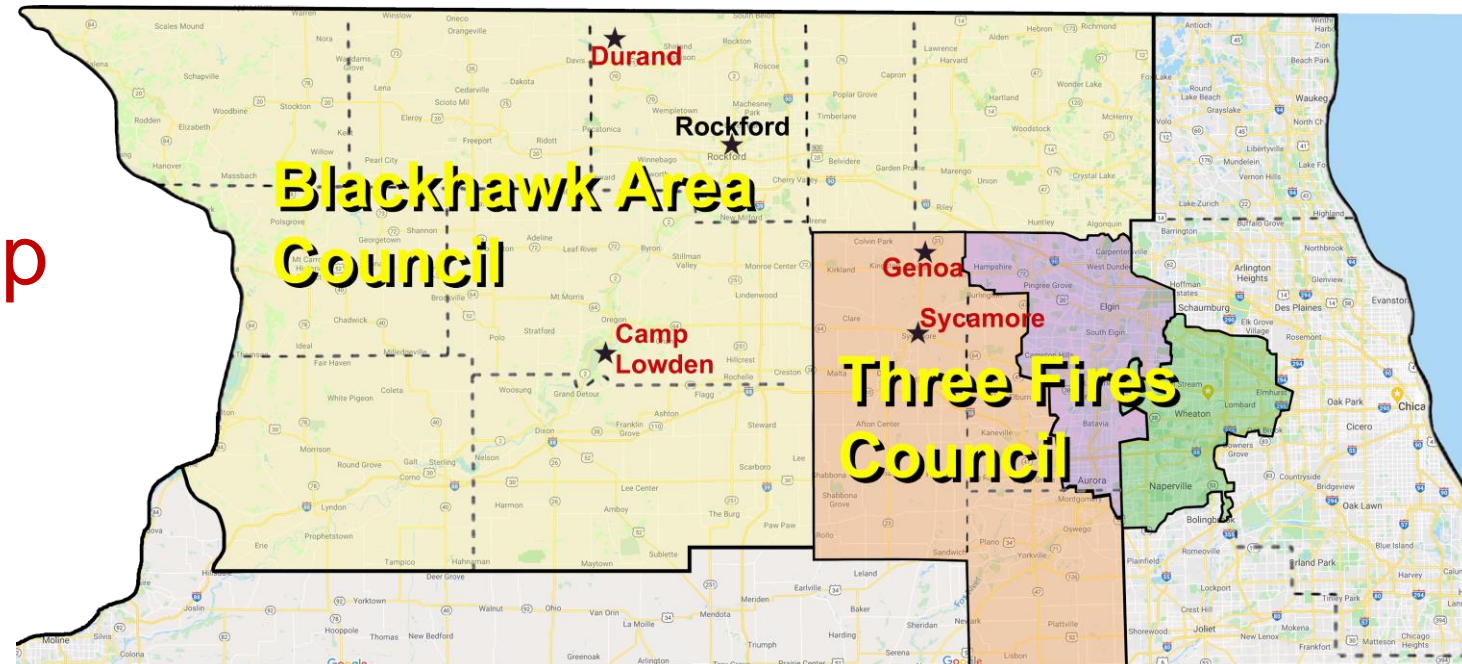
- 47 years in Scouting
- Cub Scout and Boy Scout
 - Arrow of Light
 - Eagle Scout
- Adult Leader
 - Troop Committee
 - Asst. Scoutmaster
 - Den Leader
 - Cubmaster
 - Wood Badge Staff



Steve and Cindy Sarver, 1978

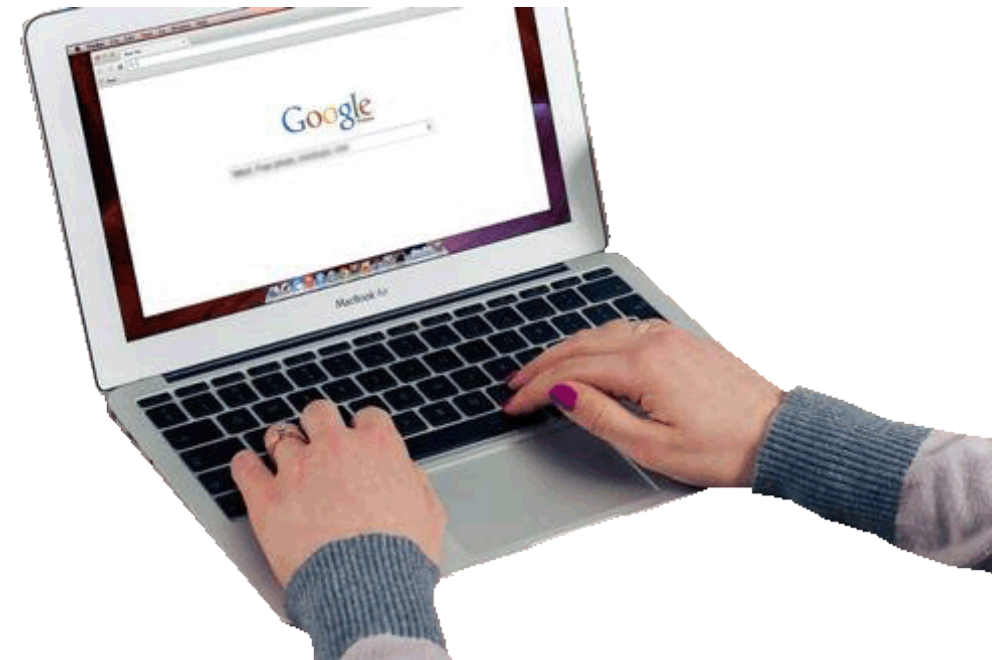
About the Presenter - Steve Sarver

- Originally from Blackhawk Area Council
 - Hometown troop and pack
- Three Fires Council
 - Founded Cub Scout pack
- Camp Lowden Scout Camp
 - Historian



On My Web Site – sarverman.org

- This presentation
- Handouts
 - Agendas
 - Workshops
 - Personnel needed
 - Car design templates and sample cars
 - Double-elimination brackets
 - Award certificate
- And more!



Can You Relate to This?

*“Things went pretty well...
...I only had three Scouts cry.”*

–Actual quote from a Cubmaster



Which Experience Do You Want to Have?



or



Today's Presentation

- Potential Pitfalls / How to Resolve
- Timeline Prior to Derby
- “Pinewood Personnel”
- Derby Day Tips
- Recognitions
 - “What Scouts Take Home”
- “Alternative” Races
- Your Experiences / Questions



Potential Pitfalls

Things that can
turn “fun”
into “disaster”



Potential Pitfalls

- Too much “lag time”
 - Scouts not actively engaged in activity
 - Scouts / Parents / siblings bored
- Check-In / Inspection Issues
- Lack of understanding of process
 - Parents / Scouts don't know what is expected



Potential Pitfalls

- Lack of orderly process
 - Event must run like clockwork!
- Preparations not ready
- Personnel not trained
- Upset Scouts due to lack of receiving award
 - Crying Scouts is *not* what you want to see!



Timeline Prior to Derby



“Be Prepared” to avoid last-minute surprises!



Timeline Prior to Derby

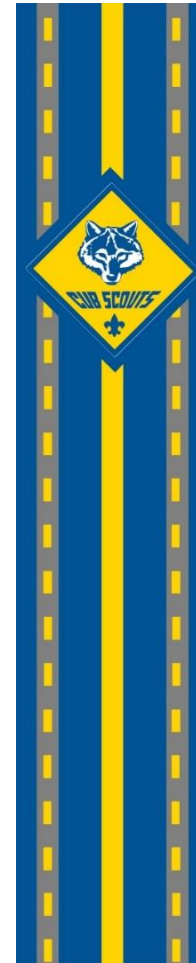
- **Summer**

- **Set up track**

- Identify and fix any issues
 - Standardized any hardware
 - If track made from wood, sand, paint, stain, varnish, etc., as needed
- Tip!* – make notes at Derby time as to what needs to be done in summer

- **Inspect / Evaluate Electronics**

- Timers
- Software
- Etc.



Timeline Prior to Derby

- **Summer**

- Possibly hold “summertime derby”

- “Just for fun”
- Use old cars
- Great idea for recruitment!



Timeline Prior to Derby

• Early Fall

- Confirm venue well in advance
 - Get on calendar ASAP
 - Suggest 6 months ahead
 - Get confirmation in writing (if necessary)
- Any costs (rental, set up, clean up)?
- Make sure your venue has...
 - Adequate parking
 - Enough space to do Derby
 - Kitchen facilities (if having food)
 - Bathroom facilities
 - Space for “Kiddie Korner” (younger siblings)



Timeline Prior to Derby

- **November**

- Pinewood Derby Core Committee meeting
 - Evaluate last Derby and discuss possible changes
 - Review procedures and discuss timeline
 - Discuss roles and identify who is to do what
 - Finalize date, time, confirm location
 - Establish dates for workshops

- **Purchase car kits**

- Scout shops could be sold out in December!



Timeline Prior to Derby

- **December**
 - Hand out car kits (e.g., at holiday party)
 - Have handouts for parents
 - Basic information / expectations / dates
 - Workshop information
 - Any other handouts you may have
 - Have supplies on hand to sell
 - e.g., weights, decals, etc.
 - **Be ready to answer any questions**



Timeline Prior to Derby

- **1 Month Before Derby**

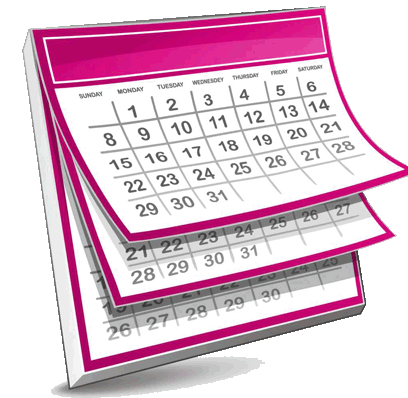
- Order awards
 - Trophies, medals, etc.
 - Prepare blank award certificates
- Walk-through of location
 - Discuss layout and needs
- Arrange for P.A. system
- If desired
 - Make “driver’s licenses”
 - Purchase patches and vest segments
 - Checkered-flag neckerchief for overall winner



Timeline Prior to Derby

- **Food**

- Agree in advance on who is bringing what
 - Have sign-up sheet or Google Doc for this
- Be sure to bring garbage bags, dishcloths, etc.
- Larger packs
 - Often buy a lot of food
 - (Sam's, Costco, etc.)
 - Sell food for profit



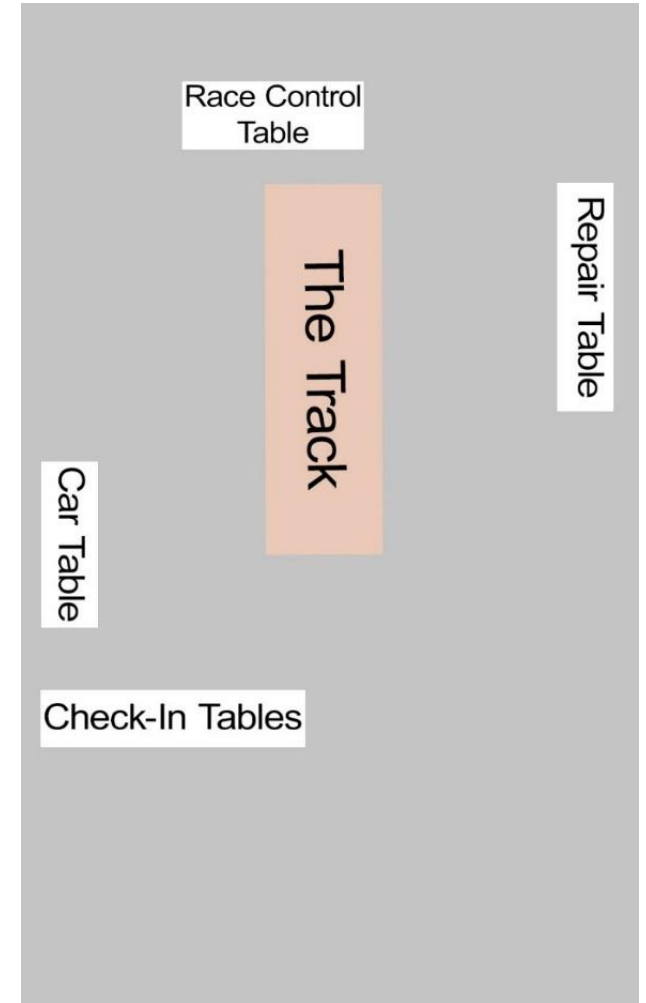
Timeline Prior to Derby

- **2 Weeks Before Derby**
 - Confirm venue arrangements
 - Prepare any other items needed
- **10 days out – text parents**
 - Date, time, what to bring, etc.
- **2-3 days out – send same text 😊**



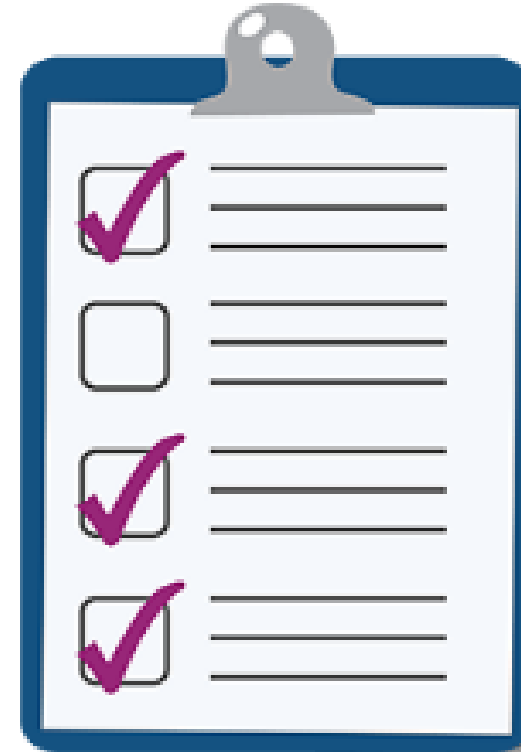
Timeline Prior to Derby

- Determine layout of room well in advance
 - Don't "experiment" on Derby Day!
- Have "restricted areas"
 - Safety reasons
 - Protection of cars / equipment



Timeline Prior to Derby

- Make checklist of what to bring
 - Avoids:
 - Need to “make a quick trip home”
 - Need to “run to the store”
 - Frequently overlooked:
 - Small stepladder or stool for Scouts to stand on when lining up cars
 - Spare cars in case Scout’s car fails inspection



“Pinewood Personnel”

Teams
for
Success



The Pinewood Derby is not a one-person show!!!

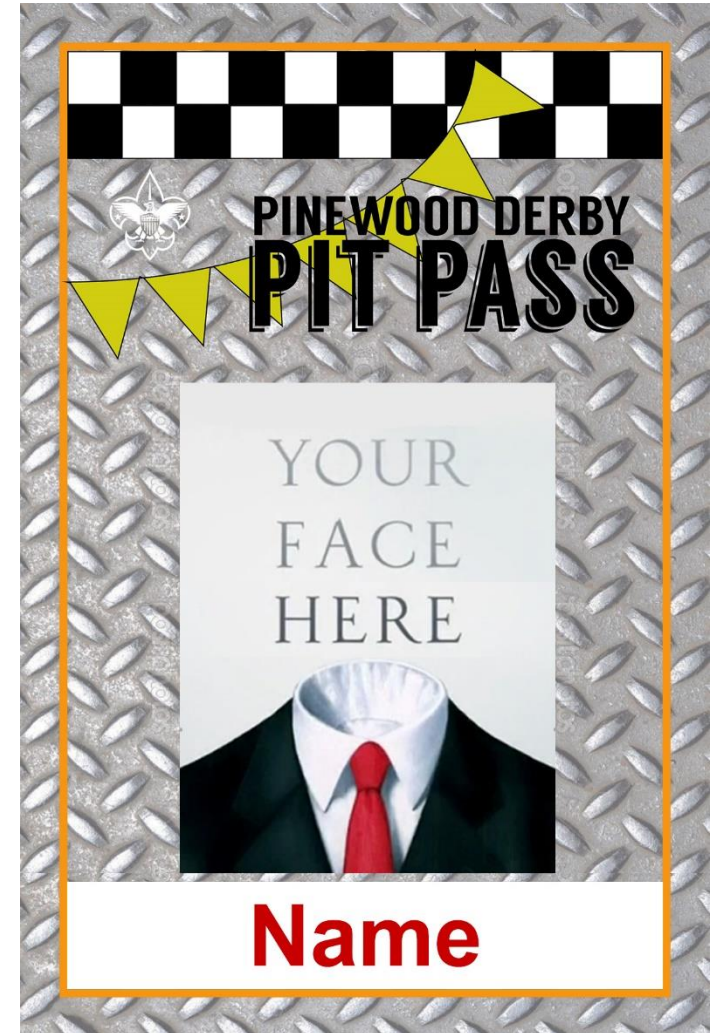
Not! Not! Not! Not! Not!



Pinewood Personnel

- **The Key!**

- Pre-determine roles that need to be filled
 - Cuts down on people doing too many things
 - Involves more people in process
- *“Let me know how I can help”*
 - Figure out what you *need*
 - Then ask for help!
- Set up “Parent Teams”
 - Pair up new people with experienced people
 - Have experienced people mentor new people



Pinewood Personnel

“Parent Teams” Suggestions

- Event MC
- Track Operations Team
- Tech Support Team
- Check-In Team
- Race Operations Team
- Race Control Team
- Awards Team
- Pit Crew
- Trading Post Team
- Activities Team
- Photography Team
- Derby Diner Team

Pinewood Personnel

- **Train them**
 - Well in advance of event!
 - What needs to be done
- **Empower them!**
 - Troubleshoot
 - Problem-solve
 - *“I took care of it”* means **YOU** don't have to



Photography Team

- **Very hard to get quality photos**

- Kids constantly in motion
- Cars moving
- Hard to get in good position

- **Personnel**

- Get dedicated person to handle photography



- **Put together “shot list” so nothing gets overlooked**

Photography Team

- Great photos “sell the story!”



Photography Team

- **Posed / static photos**

- Car table
- Close-ups of each Scout's car
- Photo of Scout with car and parents
- Award winners (together and separate)
- Scouts receiving awards
- Etc.



Photography Team



Candid photos



Fun photos!



Silly photos!

Check-In

Often *biggest headache*

- Staff not prepared / trained
- Time
 - It can take some time to properly inspect car
- Failed Inspections
 - Last-minute repairs can take more time / are stressful
- *What do Scouts do once checked in?*
 - Usually lot of “lag time” while waiting for others to check in

Check-In

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- **Staggered check-in times**
 - Keeps everyone from showing up at same time
- **Advance check-in**
 - e.g., day before
- **Progressive check-in stations**
 - Not everything is done at one station
 - Keeps things moving

Check-In Stations

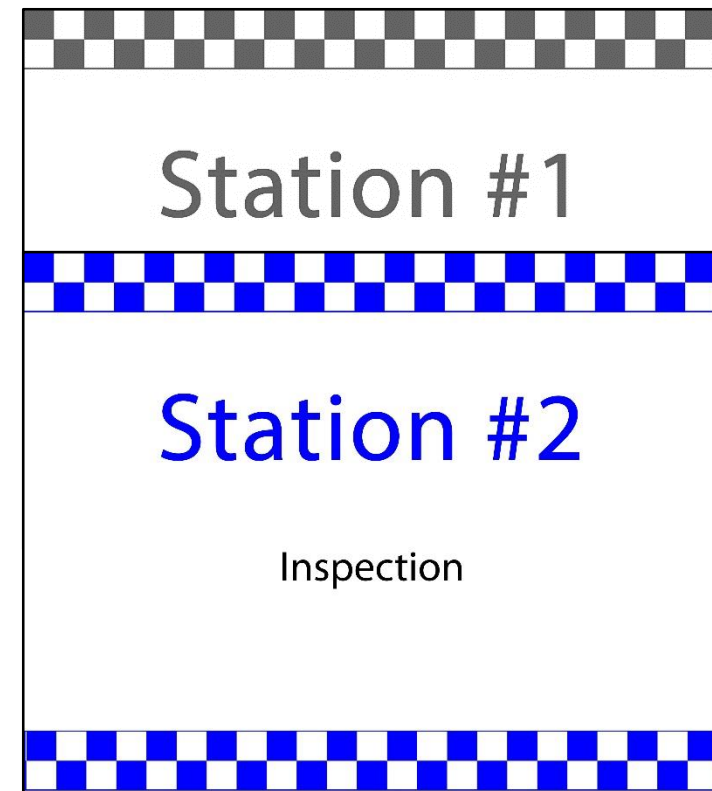
- **Station #1 – Check-In / Registration**
 - Make list of names, cars, descriptions
 - Helps keep track of who has / has not arrived
 - Later, give list to Awards Team to make certificates



Name	Den	Name of Car	Description of Car
John Smith	AOL	"Swiss Cheese"	Yellow block of cheese with holes
Joe James	Tiger	"Watermelon"	Green and red with seeds painted on it
Bruce Wilson	Webelos	"Reeses Peanut Butter Cup"	Orange candy bar
Gabe Stevens	Wolf	"Crayons"	Box of crayons

Check-In Stations

- Station #1 – Check-in / Registration
- **Station #2 – Inspection**
 - Height, weight, etc.
 - BSA does not provide many “official” rules
 - Use district or council rules
 - Helps prevent surprises at check-in at that level



Check-In Stations

- Station #1 – Check-in / Registration
- Station #2 – Inspection
- **Station #3 – Photos**
 - Car
 - Scout with car
 - Scout and family with car
 - Exceptional photos
 - Enter in national photo contest
 - Send to district / council



Station #1

Station #2

Station #3

Photo

Check-In Stations

- Station #1 – Check-in / Registration
- Station #2 – Inspection
- Station #3 – Photos
- **Station #4 – Starter's Table**
 - Test run for any issues
 - If any last-minute repairs, car must be reinspected

Station #1

Station #2

Station #3

Station #4

Starter's Table

Keep as Simple as Possible!

- Signage must be
 - Clear
 - Concise
 - Visible
- If necessary
 - Put extra people at station(s) to keep lines moving smoothly



Signage

- Colored tape on floor
 - Easy-to-identify stations

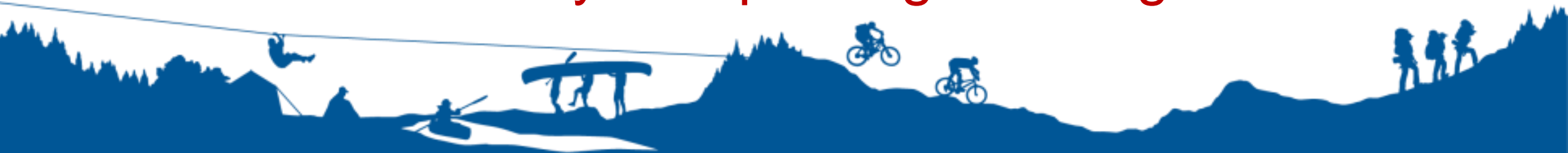


Race Time!



**Hey
Cub Scouts...
Get Ready
to Race!**

The Key: Keep Things Moving!



Keep Things Moving Between Heats

- **Have MC do announcements**
 - Promote upcoming events
 - Day Camp, Resident Camp, etc.
 - Sell popcorn or other items
 - Etc.



Keep Things Moving Between Heats

- “Questionnaire” for Each Scout

Your name _____
Your car's name _____
Is this your 1st Pinewood Derby? _____
What I like the most about my car is _____
Why did you pick the design for your car? _____
The hardest thing to do to get my car ready was _____
Who helped you build your car? _____
What kind of car would you like to make next year? _____
<i>Please return this form to the check-in table when complete</i>

- Scout (with parent's help) completes during “dead time”
 - Between check-in and start of Derby
- Read off between heats
- *Scouts always like being talked up and cheered for*

Keep Things Moving

- **Breaks**

- Try not to have unless for specific reason
 - e.g., “10-minute food break”
- Keep to Minimum
 - Keeps kids from running around
 - Keeps the event moving
 - Keeps things from getting broken

- **Before awards are announced**

- Have extra cars and have brief “young kid’s race”
- Hand out stickers as prizes



What if Electronics Break Down?

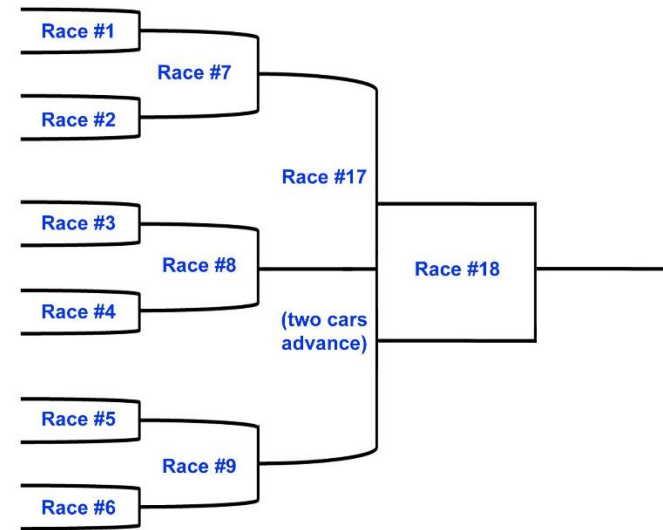
- Be prepared to keep track manually

Name	Heat 1	Heat 2	Heat 3	Heat 4	Heat 5	Heat 6	Heat 7	Heat 8	SUM of Times	Overall Speed Ranking
John Smith	3.30	3.11	3.19	3.17	3.17	3.23	3.21	3.28	25.64	5
Joe James	2.79	2.80	2.81	2.79	2.77	2.79	2.76	2.77	22.28	1
Bruce Wilson	3.06	2.90	3.15	3.12	3.21	3.10	3.04	3.14	24.73	4
Gabe Stevens	3.31	3.44	2.98	3.57	3.45	3.56	3.58	3.65	27.54	6
Hunter Best	2.83	2.83	2.89	2.86	2.86	2.81	2.80	2.82	22.71	2
Will Taylor	3.04	3.02	2.98	3.09	3.11	3.19	3.16	3.12	24.71	3

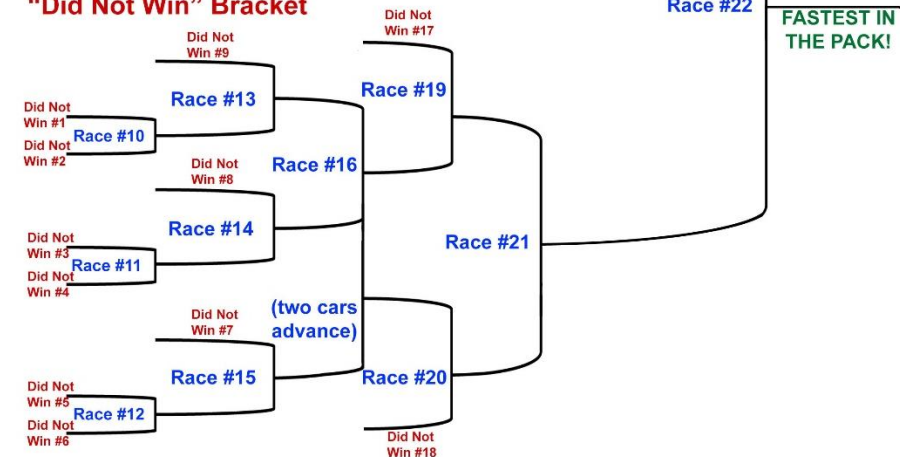
What if Electronics Break Down?

- Have backup plan!
- Possibly use double-elimination brackets
- “Did Not Win” Bracket
 - There are no “losers!”

Winners Bracket



“Did Not Win” Bracket



Recognitions

(What Scouts Take Home)



It is a car race...fill 'em up with *fun!*



Every Scout should be recognized!

- I come right out and say this at the beginning of the Derby
 - “Some people will win the race”
 - “Some people will not”
 - “But *everybody* is a winner”
 - “There are no ‘losers’”
- Yet, ALL Scouts should be recognized
 - In front of family / peers
 - They feel great
 - No one is left out

Take-Homes for Scouts

- **Driver's Licenses**

- Scouts love them!
- When to hand out?
 - Tried handing out at check-in
 - Did not make for smooth check-in
 - Did not “recognize” the Scout
- Call up each Scout individually and hand out right before Derby

Derby Driver's License

Name: Johnny Smith
Rank: Tiger
Pack: Your#
City: YourTown, IL
District: YourDist
Event: 2024 Pinewood Derby

Approved by: _____

Date: February 28, 2024

Take-Homes for Scouts

- **Award Certificate**

- Present to every Scout at conclusion of race
- Ensures he / she receives recognition for efforts, regardless of placement in race



Take-Homes for Scouts

- **Award Certificate**

- Make list of Scouts, cars, and description at check-in
- Determine appropriate award for each Scout
 - Best Detail
 - Best Effort
 - Best Paint Job
 - Coolest Color
 - Best Wheels
 - [Your own suggestions]
- Write name of Scout and selected award on certificate
- Sign all certificates in advance

Take-Homes for Scouts

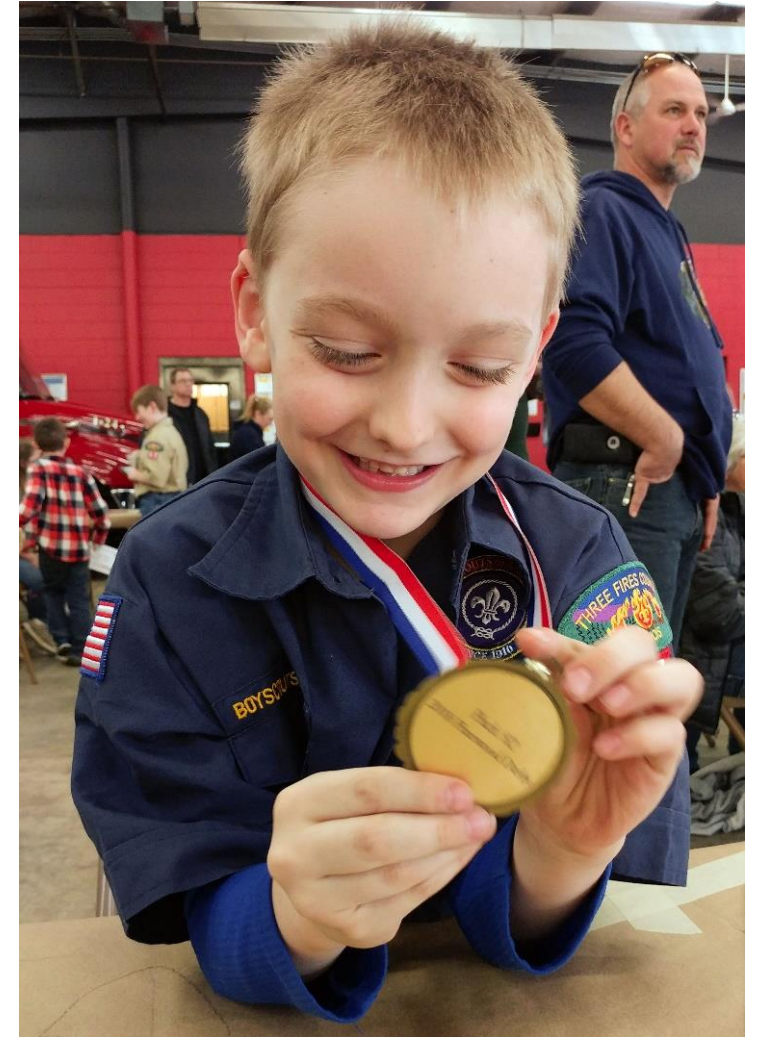
- Award Certificate
 - It makes no difference what “award” is bestowed!
 - Important thing is that every Scout gets something!



Take-Homes for Scouts

- **Medals**

- Scouts really enjoy them, sometimes even more so than trophies



Trophies

- **Every pack is different...and that is fine!**
 - Some have age-based trophies
 - e.g., “1st Place Tigers”
 - Some base on cumulative times
 - Some base on overall average time
 - Some give trophies to every Scout
 - “Participation trophy”



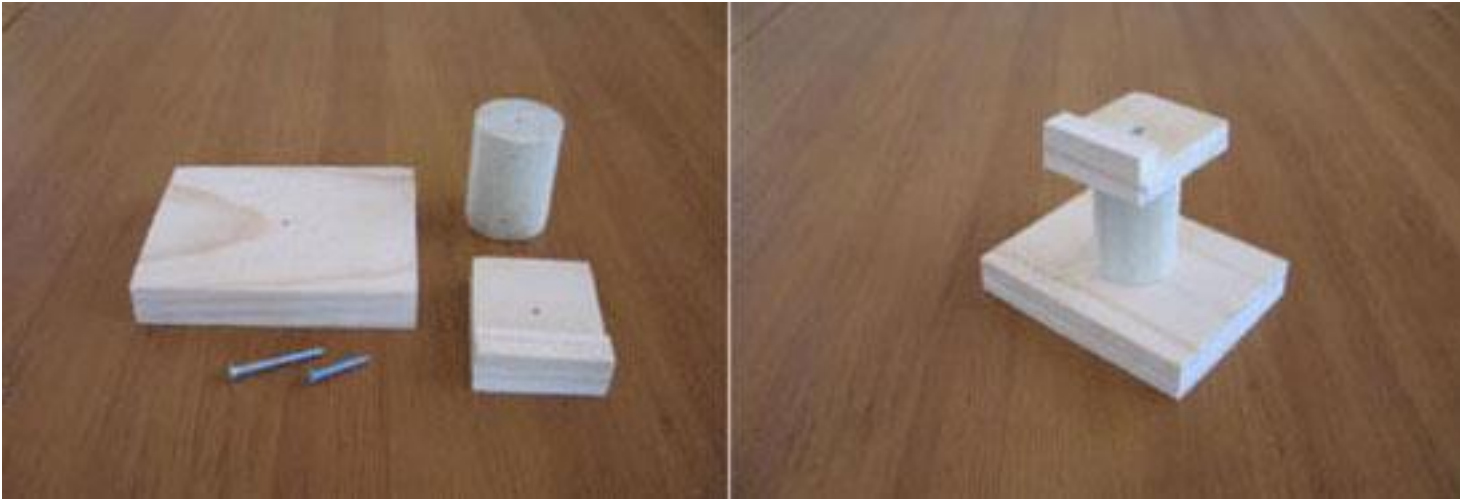
Trophies

- My “Trophy-Making 101” class
 - Period 5 today!
 - Can also find on my Web site



Take-Homes for Scouts

- Car Stands
 - Possibly make in den meeting prior to Derby



Special Awards

- **“Fastest-in-the-Pack”**
 - Award a “checkered-flag” neckerchief
 - 1 yard of checkered-flag print cloth will yield 2 neckerchiefs
- **“Best Behaved Scout”**
 - Announce before race that this will be awarded at end of Derby
 - Have parents vote on this later
 - If prize is good enough, Scouts will actually “compete” for this!



Special Awards

- “Safest Car”
 - Great way to put positive spin on car that ran slowest
 - Have fire engine at top where race car would normally go



Each Scout is Recognized

- Each Scout leaves with (at minimum):
 - Driver's License
 - Award Certificate
 - Medal
 - Any other tchotchkes you hand out
 - Car stand
 - Coloring pages
 - Trophies (to some)
 - Huge smiles, because *they had fun!*



Each Scout is Recognized

- **After Derby Photos**
 - Car
 - Scout with car
 - Scout and family with car
 - Scouts receiving recognitions
 - Scouts with trophies
- *Scouts are only this young ONCE!*



Miscellaneous Tips

(Those odds and ends that don't fit
anywhere else in this presentation)



District (or Council) Derby

- **Criteria**

- Be sure everyone knows who will be going to district / council Derby
- Have an “alternate” in case Scout cannot attend

- **Announce winners at end of pack derby**

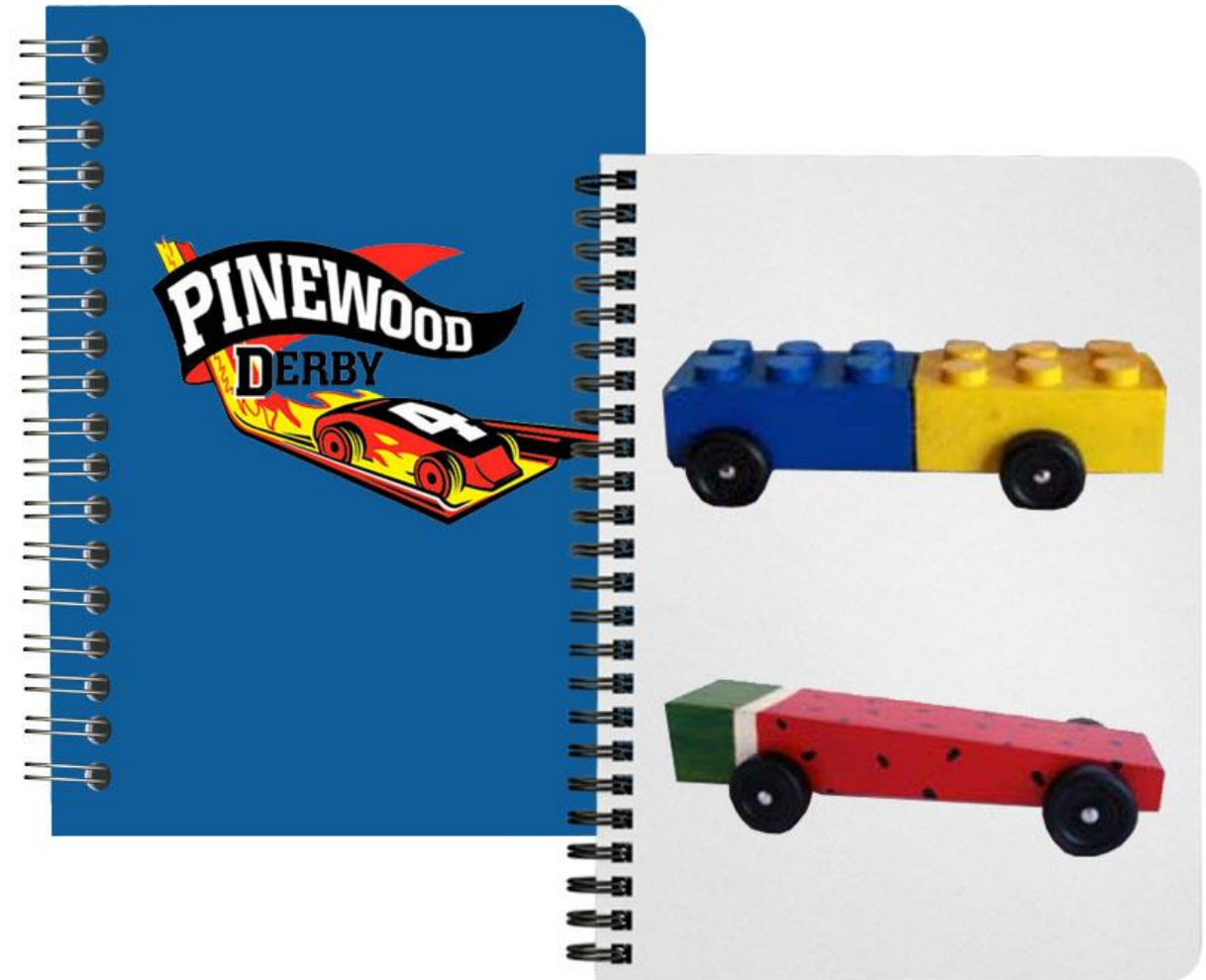
- **Sequester cars of those going to district / council derby**

- **Have information sheet ready to hand out to those going**

- Date / Time / Location
- Anything else they need to know

Spiral Notebook

- Help Scout decide on design
 - Current Year
 - Following Year
- Memories of Cub Scouting



Those Who Need Help

- **What to do about those who...**
 - ...are not so crafty?
 - ...do not have tools or space?
 - ...are not sure what to do with the block of wood?
- **Do some Pinewood Workshops!**



Pinewood Workshops

- **Times for adults to share tools / knowledge**
 - Scouts not allowed to use power tools
- **Helps Scouts...**
 - ...become familiar with process
 - ...do as much of work as possible
 - ...make their “dream car”



Car Design

- Have examples for those who need help deciding
- Sometimes the easiest cars to make involve little or no cutting
 - It's all in the paint job!



Keep Race from Being the “Only” Thing

- Helps to dilute hard feelings for those who do not “win”
- Have assorted “sideshow” activities
 - Food
 - Prize drawings
 - Another track to run cars on
 - e.g., Hot Wheels
 - Coloring pages
 - Etc.

Upgrade Your “Car Table”

- **Make stands for cars**
 - Keep from rolling around table
 - Or off table!



Upgrade Your Photo Area

- Props
- Flags
- Different backgrounds
- Etc.



Have a repeat-after-me “Racers Pledge”

“My car is wood

The wheels are vinyl

We’re here for fun

The judge’s decision is final!”



“Alternative” Races

Some Thoughts and Suggestions



“Alternative” Races – Examples

- “Lego cars”

- They make special car kits for Legos



- Rhubarb races!

- Council in central Illinois does this



“Alternative” Races

- “Parents’ Race”

- a.k.a., “Why do kids get to have all the fun?”
- Parents build own car following same rules as Scouts
- Perhaps charge “entry fee” to raise money for pack
- Hold following final pack races while judges are preparing awards

- Can be done at any time of year

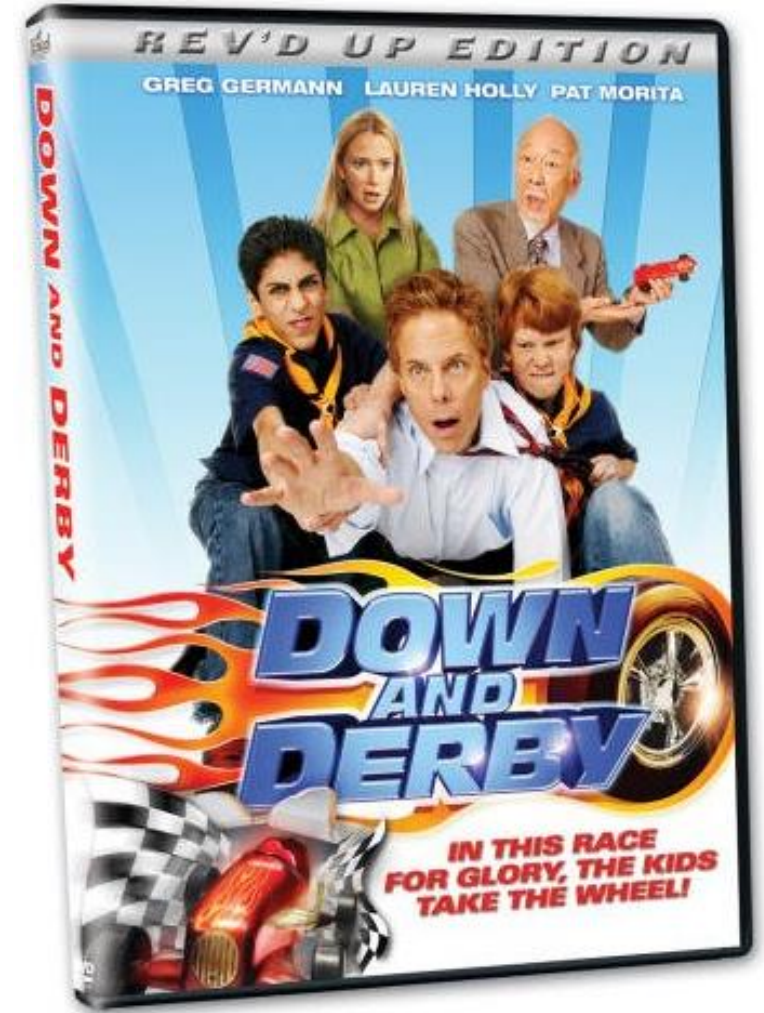
- Excellent idea for recruitment night!

- Be careful!

- Keep it fun, but do not let it get out of hand
- Carelessness could damage track, electronics, etc.

Movie Night Prior to Derby

- “Down and Derby”
 - Four dads become obsessed with building the fastest car
 - Scouts *and* adults will all enjoy this movie...*it's a hoot!*



ENTIRE POINT OF DERBY

- Adult / youth interaction – build car *together*
- Big loser in some cases is not the car
 - It is Scout who lost out on opportunity to work with their hands and parent, uncle/aunt, grandparent, etc., to create something that is *his / hers*
- Should be fun for *all!*
 - If this is not what your Derby is like, you have a big problem!



Help your Scout do his / her best

Your Experiences / Questions

Thanks for coming!
Enjoy the rest of your day!

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