

2026 DIFFICULT RUN DISTRICT OFFICIAL PINEWOOD DERBY RULES



Key Points:

- Entry is limited to Lions, Tiger Cubs, Cub Scouts, and Webelos/Arrow of Light Scouts within the Difficult Run District who finished first by rank – Lion, Tiger, Wolf, Bear, Webelos, Arrow of Light – in their respective pack Pinewood Derby competitions.
- A Scout simultaneously eligible for the Race Competition and Concours (Design) Competition will not be permitted to enter both competitions. The Scout must decide which one of these competitions to enter and be pre-registered for that competition only. The Scout may cede their first-place position to the second-place finisher of their rank and allow them to enter either the Race or Concours competition with their own car.
- All work on the car must be exclusively that of the Scout and their parent/responsible adult. Outside work by others, professional or amateur, is prohibited, unless performed while assisting the Scout.
- The Scout must be present to submit their car to inspection, register their car, and present their car for competition in all heats of the Race Competition or in the Concours Competition. Pre-registered Scouts not present for inspection, registration, and racing or Concours judging will be disqualified. The District Derby Chairman has the authority to waive this requirement in hardship or emergency circumstances. A justification must be provided and approved.
- The wheelbase (distance between front and rear axles) may not be changed from the Official Pinewood Derby Car Kit body distance of $4\frac{3}{8}$ inches.
- Axles must remain straight and unbent.
- All four wheels mounted on the car must touch the ground flat and roll when placed on a level surface.
- Cars must measure no more than 5.00 ounces
- Cars must be no longer than 7.0 inches and no wider than $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches as determined by the official gauges during pre-race inspection. Underside clearance must be at least $\frac{3}{8}$ inch and inside wheel-to-wheel clearance must be at least $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Cars, including all added weights and attachments, must stand no taller than 3.0 inches at the tallest point.
- Cars that do not meet the car design standards will be disqualified.

Detailed Rules

I. RACE COMPETITION

Rules in this section pertain to the Difficult Run District Race Competition. For Concours (Design) Competition see Section II.

A. ELIGIBILITY

A1. Qualification. Entry is limited to Lions, Tiger Cubs, Cub Scouts, and Webelos/Arrow of Light Scouts (hereafter “Scouts”) within the Difficult Run District who finished first by rank – Lion, Tiger, Wolf, Bear, Webelos, Arrow of Light – in their respective pack Pinewood Derby competitions. Only one Scout per rank from each pack will be permitted to enter the Race Competition. Only these Scouts, or designated substitutes as specified in A2, are eligible to compete in the Race Competition.

A2. Substitute. A Scout finishing first for their rank in pack competition but unable to attend the Race Competition may designate a substitute Scout of their rank to enter the competition and race their (first-place finisher’s) car. Alternatively, the Scout may cede their first-place position to the second-place finisher of their rank and allow them to enter the Race Competition and race their own (second-place finisher’s) car. No other substitutes may be made.

A3. Competitor Categories. Race Competition is by rank: Lion, Tiger, Wolf, Bear, Webelos, and Arrow of Light. Scouts will compete in the Race Competition only against other Scouts of their own rank.

A4. Pre-Registration Required. All competing Scouts must be pre-registered, and fees paid, by their respective packs prior to the pre-registration deadline. No late entries or walk-in entries will be permitted without explicit approval from the District Derby Chairman. Each pack must pre-register its complement of Scouts by rank. Packs need not pre-register a full complement of six Scouts to participate; a contingent of fewer Scouts is acceptable.

A5. Dual Derby Event Registration Prohibited. A Scout simultaneously eligible for the Race Competition and Concours Competition will not be permitted to enter both competitions. The Scout must decide which one of these competitions to enter and be pre-registered by their pack for that competition only.

A6. Timeliness. Scouts and their responsible adults should report to the check-in desk at the event venue at the beginning of the announced check-in time interval for the Scout’s rank. A Scout may compete in the Race Competition only if they have completed inspection and registration by the stated race time for the Scout’s rank. The District Derby Chairman has the authority to waive this requirement in case of delays that are not the fault of the Scout or responsible adult.

B. CAR DESIGN STANDARDS

B1. Standards Applicable to Both Race Competition and Concours Competition. All cars entered into either the Race Competition or Concours Competition must meet all standards specified in this section (Section I.B) of the Difficult Run District Official Pinewood Derby Rules.

B2. New Work. Construction of all cars, including individual parts such as wheels and axles, must have begun after the date of last year's Difficult Run District Pinewood Derby.

B3. Work Exclusively that of the Scout and Responsible Adult. All work on the car must be exclusively that of the Scout and their parent/responsible adult. Outside work by others, professional or amateur, is prohibited, unless performed while assisting the Scout. Work for the purpose of this standard refers to work beginning with the Official Pinewood Derby Car Kit and other official Scouting America Pinewood Derby products ("Scouting America-licensed" is insufficient) and ending with the completed, finished, customized car, including design, construction, finishing and detailing.

B4. Deference to the Scout. The parent/responsible adult may provide oversight and guidance but is expected to assign to the Scout as much work on the car as in their judgment is prudent within the constraints of safety.

B5. Material. Cars must be constructed from the parts contained in the Official Pinewood Derby Car Kit, Scouting America Catalog Item #17006 (hereafter, "the kit"). Except as noted in B6, materials from the kit may be supplemented but not replaced. Cars constructed from any other wooden block or car kit are prohibited. Use of a precut car body is prohibited. Use of an uncut block of lumber or other material in lieu of the block in the kit is prohibited.

B6. Wheels and Axles. The car must roll on official Scouting America Pinewood Derby wheels only. These wheels must be mounted on official Scouting America Pinewood Derby axle nails only. "Scouting America-licensed" is insufficient; the wheels and axles must be official Scouting America products. The wheels may be the wheels that came with the kit, Scouting America standard black replacement wheels, or Scouting America replacement wheels available in different colors, Scouting America Catalog Items #17553-17557. When the car is placed on a flat surface, exactly four wheels, no more and no less, must touch the surface flat and roll when the car is moving.

The wheelbase (distance between front and rear axles) may not be changed from the kit body distance of $4\frac{3}{8}$ inches. The official kit block has pre-cut slots that are correctly spaced. If desired, these slots may be pre-drilled before they are used. However, the use of the pre-cut slots is not required.

B7. Axle Treatment. Polishing and de-burring of axle nails is allowed, as is axle beveling, tapering, and grooves on the axle. All work done on the wheels and axles must be done by the Scout and responsible adult. The use of pre-altered official Scouting America axles is prohibited. Axles must remain straight and unbent.

B8. Wheel Treatment. Hub and tread smoothing and polishing must not result in reduction of the wheel width from the original official Scouting America wheels. There must be a continuous ring of original tread marks plainly visible around the wheel. Wheels must not be machined to a beveled condition, and the portion of the wheel surface contacting the track must remain parallel to the axle. No other wheel modifications are allowed. Wheels pre-treated or pre-finished by a manufacturer or service provider are prohibited. When the car is placed on a flat surface, all four wheels mounted on the car must touch the surface flat and roll.

B9. Added Weights and Attachments. For the purpose of these standards, added weight is defined as any material on the car that is not provided in the kit (B5), or an allowable replacement wheel or axle (B6), although a spare tire (no matter the source) is considered added weight. Added weight will be considered part of the car in all measurements. All added weight must be securely fastened to the car by permanent glue, nails, screws, coin pockets, etc., but not by sticky, tacky, or adhesive substances such as wet glue, tape, or tack spray. Added weight must be passive, i.e. non-moving, non-magnetic, etc.

B10. Car Weight. Cars will be weighed on a digital scale, properly calibrated. Analog scales will not be used. Cars must measure no more than 5.0... ounces, where "0..." means repeating zeroes out to the precision limit of the scale display. Measurements are not rounded; a car measuring above 5.0... ounces exactly will not be allowed.

B11. Size. Cars must be no longer than 7.0 inches and no wider than $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches as determined by the official gauges during pre-race inspection. Underside clearance must be at least $\frac{3}{8}$ inches and inside wheel-to-wheel clearance must be at least $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Cars, including all added weights and attachments, must stand no taller than 3.0 inches at the tallest point. Measurements will not be rounded.

B12. Unacceptable Construction. All work done in constructing the car must be that of the Scout and responsible adult. The use of any pre-manufactured part for any purpose other than added weight is prohibited. The following must not be used in conjunction with the wheels or axles: hubcaps, washers, inserts, sleeves, bearings, or springs. The following must not be incorporated into the construction of the car: protrusions or wires that extend beyond the front of the car, cuts that allow the front of the car to extend beyond the starting line, or additions to the car that cause the car's front edge to not be in contact with the starting pin.

B13. Gravity Powered. The car must not be constructed or treated in such a way that the track's starting mechanism imparts momentum to the car. Sticky substances on the front of the car or protrusions that may catch on the starting pin are prohibited. Cars must not be self-propelled. Nothing must be added to the car that would provide any means of power other than gravity.

B14. Lubricants. Only dry lubricants such as High Speed Pinewood Derby Graphite, Scouting America Catalog Item #17019, or equivalent, will be allowed for lubricating the wheels. Lubricants must be applied before entering the Race Competition site. No lubricant may be applied to the car after it has been registered and inspected.

C. CONDUCT OF THE RACES

C1. Attendance Mandatory. The Scout must be present to submit their car to inspection, register their car, and observe their car in all heats of the Race Competition. Pre-registered Scouts not present for inspection, registration, or racing will be disqualified. The District Derby Chairman has the authority to waive this requirement in hardship or emergency circumstances. A justification must be provided and approved.

C2. Inspection. Each car entered in the Race Competition must pass a technical inspection for compliance with the design standards specified in Section I.B of the Difficult Run District Official Pinewood Derby Rules. Inspection times by rank will be announced by Race Competition officials before the event.

C3. Failure to Pass Inspection. If a car does not pass the technical inspection, Race Competition officials will inform the Scout of the reason their car did not pass. If the noncompliance with design standards is remediable, the Scout, with the assistance of their responsible adult, may make modifications to bring the car into compliance and resubmit their car to inspection. Modifications will be permitted up to the stated race time for the Scout's rank. Cars that do not meet the car design standards by that time will be disqualified.

C4. Registration. Each competing car passing inspection must be registered. Race Competition officials will announce registration times by rank. Scouts must be present for registration of their cars. Cars that are not registered will not be permitted to race, whether or not they pass inspection.

C5. Impound. No car may be altered in any way after the car has been registered. Race Competition officials will impound cars immediately upon registration. Cars entered in the Race Competition will remain impounded at all times when not racing in heats.

C6. Determination of Compliance with Race Competition Rules Considered Final Absent Appeal. Determination of compliance with eligibility requirements specified in Section I.A of the Difficult Run District Official Pinewood Derby Rules, and car design standards specified in Section I.B of the Difficult Run District Official Pinewood Derby Rules, is the sole responsibility of designated Race Competition officials. The decisions of these officials are considered final unless immediately appealed as specified in C7 below.

C7. Appeals. The Scout accompanied by their responsible adult must make any appeals of official decisions concerning compliance with the Difficult Run District Official Pinewood Derby Rules promptly. All appeals must be made to the District Derby Chairman. All decisions of the District Derby Chairman will be considered final and may not be appealed further.

C8. Car Handling. The Scout is responsible for making sure their car is present when called to compete in each heat. When called, Race Competition officials will pick up the car from the impound location, carry it to the track, place the car on the track, and when ready, release the competing cars to race down the track. When the heat is finished, a Race Competition official will lift each car from the track. The Scout is responsible for receiving their car from the Race Competition officials at the end of the Race Competition. At no point is the Scout allowed to touch

the track or come within the designated perimeter surrounding the track. Failure to follow these rules is cause for disqualification.

C9. Damage to Another Car. At the discretion of Race Competition officials, a Scout intentionally or unintentionally handling or damaging another Scout's car may be disqualified, should the incident compromise the competitive capability of that Scout's car.

C10. Lane Assignment; Heats. Assuming a four-lane track, up to four cars at a time will be raced in each heat. Each car will race in four heats, once in each lane of the track. Competition will continue until every car for that rank has faced four times. If a track with more or fewer than four lanes is used, the number of cars and the number of heats per rank will be adjusted accordingly.

C11. Car Leaves Lane. If during a heat a car leaves its lane, Race Competition officials will determine the cause. If the cause was a track malfunction, the malfunction will be repaired and the heat re-run. If the cause was a defect in the car, and the car having left its lane proceeded down the track in a manner that did not interfere with another car, then the heat will be considered valid, and the results will stand. If the car left its lane due to a defect in the car and interfered with another car without damage, the heat will be re-run. If during the re-run the car again leaves its lane and interferes with another car, the car leaving its lane will be disqualified. The heat will be re-run, and the remaining heats will be held, without the disqualified car.

C12. Car Damages Another Car. If during a heat a car leaves its lane due to a defect in the car, and causes damage to another car, the car leaving its lane will be disqualified.

C13. Car Leaves Track. If during a heat a car leaves the track, C11 and C12 will apply.

C14. Car Repair. If, during a heat, a wheel falls off or the car otherwise becomes damaged without causing damage to other cars, the Scout with their responsible adult may, to the best of their ability, perform repairs. A two-minute repair stop will be allowed. If the car is not repaired within the repair stop, the car will be disqualified. If the car is damaged due to a track fault, another car, or other circumstances beyond the Scout's or Race Competition officials' control, additional time and/or repair assistance may be provided at the discretion of the officials.

C15. Winners. For each rank, the top three finishers will be the cars with the lowest average time across the heats in which they raced. At the conclusion of the Race Competition for each rank, the top three finishers will be called to the presentation area to receive award recognition.

C16. Tie-Breaking. In the event of an exact tie, the tiebreaker will be the fastest single heat time within that rank. Should the fastest single heat time within the rank likewise be exactly tied, a runoff of the tied cars will be held. Assuming a four-lane track, each tied car will race in four heats, once in each lane of the track. The car's runoff time will be the car's average time across all four heats of the runoff. For tracks with more or fewer than four lanes, the number of heats will be adjusted accordingly. The winner will be the car with the fastest average time for the runoff, or if that time is still exactly tied, the fastest single heat time within the runoff. If at that point the times are exactly tied, multiple winners will be declared.

C17. Behavior Disqualification. A Cub Scout Gives Goodwill. Good sportsmanship is expected of all Scouts, responsible adults, and other representatives of the participating packs. Race Competition officials have the authority to immediately disqualify a Scout should their behavior, or the behavior of their responsible adult, or the behavior of any representative of their pack is deemed either verbally or physically disruptive, abusive, or inconsistent with the Scout Oath or Law. All must keep in mind the larger goal of Cub Scouts in setting the example of good citizenship and character, demonstrating, kindness and courtesy at all times.

C18. Event Compromised. The District Derby Chairman will have authority at any time during the Race Competition to declare a temporary halt to the event, if in their estimation the integrity or fairness of the competition has been compromised, such as through faulty equipment, erroneous scorekeeping, or other factor. During this temporary halt the District Derby Chairman will investigate the compromise and identify and implement remedies to ensure fairness. The Race Competition will then resume at their discretion.

C19. Conflicts Not Resolvable by Official Rules. The District Derby Chairman will resolve all questions, issues, and conflicts not addressed or resolvable by appeal to these Official Pinewood Derby Rules. Their resolutions are to be fair and equitable and not compromise the integrity of the event. Their decisions in these matters will be considered final.

C20. Awards and Recognition. The most important values in Pinewood Derby competition are Scout/parent participation, good sportsmanship, following the rules, and doing one's best. Race Competition officials are responsible for recognizing and encouraging these qualities in addition to recognizing top finishers based on race times. Racers will be recognized as follows: (a) every participating Scout will receive a Pinewood Derby patch; (b) recognitions will be awarded to top finishers by rank; and (c) additional recognition for sportsmanship and doing one's best may be awarded at the discretion of the Race Competition officials.

II. CONCOURS D'ELEGANCE (DESIGN) COMPETITION

A. ELIGIBILITY

A1. Qualification. Entry is limited to Lion, Tiger Cubs, Cub Scouts, and Webelos/Arrow of Light Scouts (hereafter "Scouts") within the Difficult Run District who finished first by rank – Lion, Tiger, Wolf, Bear, Webelos, Arrow of Light – in their respective pack Pinewood Derby Concours d'Elegance (design) competitions. Only one Scout per rank from each pack will be permitted to enter the Concours Competition. Only these Scouts, or designated substitutes as specified in A2, are eligible to compete in the Concours Competition.

A2. Substitute. An eligible Scout unable to attend the Concours Competition may designate a substitute Scout of their rank to enter the competition on their behalf (the car then becoming the substitute Scout's car for the purpose of the Concours Competition). Alternatively, the eligible Scout unable to attend may cede their first place position to the second-place finisher of their rank and allow them to enter the Concours Competition. No other substitutes may be made.

A3. Competitor Categories. The Concours Competition is by rank: Lion, Tiger, Wolf, Bear, Webelos, and Arrow of Light. Scouts will compete in the Concours Competition only against other Scouts of their own rank.

A4. Pre-Registration Required. All competing Scouts must be pre-registered, and fees paid by their respective packs prior to the pre-registration deadline. No late entries or walk-in entries will be permitted without explicit approval from the District Derby Chairman. Each pack must pre-register its complement of Scouts by rank. Packs need not pre-register a full complement of six Scouts to participate; a contingent of fewer Scouts is acceptable.

A5. Dual Derby Event Registration Prohibited. A Scout simultaneously eligible for the Race Competition and Concours Competition will not be permitted to enter both competitions. The Scout must decide which one of these competitions to enter and be pre-registered by their pack for that competition only.

A6. Timeliness. Scouts and their responsible adults should report to the check-in desk at the event venue at the beginning of the announced check-in time interval for the Scout's rank. A Scout may compete in the Concours Competition only if they have completed inspection and registration by the stated race time for the Scout's rank. The District Derby Chairman has the authority to waive this requirement in case of delays that are not the fault of the Scout or responsible adult.

B. CAR DESIGN STANDARDS

B1. Standards Applicable to Both Race Competition and Concours Competition. All cars entered into either the Race Competition or Concours Competition must meet all standards specified in Section I.B of the Difficult Run District Official Pinewood Derby Rules.

C. CONDUCT OF THE COMPETITION

C1. Attendance Mandatory. The Scout must be present to submit their car to inspection, register their car, and present their car for the Concours Competition. Preregistered Scouts not present for inspection or registration will be disqualified. The District Derby Chairman has the authority to waive this requirement in hardship or emergency circumstances. A justification must be provided and approved.

C2. Inspection. Each car must pass a technical inspection for compliance with the car design standards specified in Section I.B of the Difficult Run District Official Pinewood Derby Rules. Inspection times by rank will be announced by Concours Competition officials before the event.

C3. Failure to Pass Inspection. If a car does not pass the technical inspection, Concours Competition officials will inform the Scout of the reason their car did not pass. If the noncompliance with design standards is remediable, the Scout, with the assistance of their responsible adult, may make modifications to bring the car into compliance and resubmit their car to inspection. Modifications will be permitted up to the stated race time for the Scout's rank. Cars that do not meet the car design standards by that time will be disqualified.

C4. Registration. Each competing car passing inspection must be registered. Concoors Competition officials will announce registration times by rank. Scouts must be present for registration of their cars. Cars that are not registered will not be judged in the Concoors Competition, whether or not they pass inspection.

C5. Impound. No car may be altered in any way after the car has been registered. Concoors Competition officials will impound cars immediately upon registration.

C6. Determination of Compliance with Competition Rules Considered Final Absent Appeal. Determination of compliance with eligibility requirements specified in Section II.A of the Difficult Run District Official Pinewood Derby Rules, and car design standards specified in Section I.B of the Difficult Run District Official Pinewood Derby Rules, is the sole responsibility of designated Concoors Competition officials. The decisions of these officials are considered final unless immediately appealed as specified in C7 below.

C7. Appeals. The Scout accompanied by their responsible adult must make any appeals of official decisions concerning compliance with the Difficult Run District Official Pinewood Derby Rules promptly. All appeals must be made to the District Derby Chairman. All decisions of the District Derby Chairman will be considered final and may not be appealed further.

C8. No Racing. Cars entered into the Concoors Competition will not be raced. Cars in the Concoors Competition will not be judged in any way on their mobility, beyond compliance with the car design standards specified in Section I.B.

C9. Judging. Concoors Competition officials will judge cars for each rank for (1) originality of design, (2) color and finish, (3) accessories and decals, (4) use of Cub Scout motif. Equal weight will be given to each of these criteria. Scoring will be up to 10 points for each criterion, resulting in a maximum possible score of 40 points.

C10. No Judgment Appeals. Concoors judging is subjective by nature and as such cannot be appealed. All scoring and decisions of Concoors Competition officials are considered final and may not be contested.

C11. Behavior Disqualification. A Cub Scout Gives Goodwill. Good sportsmanship is expected of all Scouts, responsible parents, and other representatives of the participating packs. All Concoors Competition officials have the authority to immediately disqualify a Scout should their behavior, or the behavior of their responsible adult, or the behavior of any representative of their pack is deemed either verbally or physically disruptive, abusive, or inconsistent with the Scout Oath and Law. All must keep in mind the larger goal of Cub Scouts in setting the example of good citizenship and character, always demonstrating kindness and courtesy.

C12. Conflicts Not Resolvable by Official Rules. The District Derby Chairman will resolve all questions, issues, and conflicts not addressed or resolvable based on these Official Pinewood Derby Rules. Their resolutions are to be fair and equitable and not compromise the integrity of the event. Their decisions in these matters will be considered final.

C13. Awards and Recognition. The most important values in Pinewood Derby competition are Scout/parent participation, good sportsmanship, following the rules, and doing one's best. Concours Competition officials are responsible for recognizing and encouraging these qualities in addition to recognizing top finishers. Competitors will be recognized as follows: (a) Every participating Scout will receive a Pinewood Derby patch; (b) Recognitions will be awarded to top finishers by rank; and (c) Additional recognitions for sportsmanship and doing one's best will be awarded at the discretion of the Concours Competition officials.