

**2026 Historic Triangle District Klondike Derby
Leaders Guide
Ware Episcopal Church, Gloucester VA
February 6 - 8, 2026**

This event is open to all Scouts BSA troops, Venture Crews, Ships, Webelos and Arrow of Light scouts. Webelos and Arrow of Light scouts may form their own patrol of 6-8 scouts or attach to a troop.

In a Klondike Derby, Scout patrols acting as huskies using a pull rope attached to the front of specially designed homemade sleds around a field course marked by stations named for towns or cities, such as Yukon, Nome, Dawson, or Fairbanks. At each town, the Scouts tackle exercises in problem-solving, as well as contests and other activities in which the patrols or teams earn "gold nuggets" and credits towards top three prizes. Participants should dress in period costume which will enhance the experience. Helpful hint: Think late 1800's!

A LITTLE HISTORY

Just before the turn of the last century, gold prospectors traveled the sub-zero reaches of Alaska by means of dogs and sleds. They camped out in all kinds of winter weather, and needed adequate survival skills, which they learned from the native Eskimos. Scouting has incorporated this theme in the Klondike Derby. The point of a Klondike Derby, which usually is held in late January or February, is to make Scouts use their heads, to put their Scouting skills to work in the field, to demonstrate teamwork and Scout spirit, and to have fun outdoors on winter days.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

Each patrol or "dog team" (so-called because Scouts act as huskies) follows a course in numerical order as outlined on a map or score sheet given to the unit leader at registration. The map guides the teams around a circuit of the simulated towns. As they arrive at each town, the patrols should demonstrate their Scout spirit by giving their patrol yell. It will cost the team points if they don't yell. They will encounter a practical problem involving basic Scouting skills. Depending on how well the team works out this problem, it is awarded some nuggets. The team then has its score sheet marked and sets off for the next town. Each stop also may offer additional challenges for additional points. A shotgun start will be utilized, (Helpful hint: proper use of flint and steel will be needed) with two or more patrols starting at each town, and then proceeding in order, ending where they began. Towns must be visited in the correct rotation. All patrols must visit all towns but may not have time to participate in all activities at all stops. Upon finishing the course, each patrol reports to the Klondike Derby HQ to have its score sheets checked and recorded. Patches will be awarded to each dog team member along with awards based on their total score at the end of all Saturday activities.

Participating units may be asked to provide adult volunteers to help run the stations. Units will provide their own food. Adults who are not running stations may follow their patrols on the trail, provide encouragement and take pictures. But these adults are not allowed to help the scouts in any way, or the patrol may be penalized points.

POTENTIAL EVENTS TO BE PREPARED FOR (subject to change)

1. Blindfolded Target Touch: Scouts use 6-foot poles try for a bull's-eye on archery-like targets suspended from trees.
2. Survival Rope Throw: Tie and throw rescue rope to "victim" on cardboard ice flow or simulated ice breakthrough.
3. Pioneering: This is a timed lashing project, such as an entrance gateway, to be built by each patrol. The necessary materials are at hand. A sample project stands nearby.
4. Toxic Flood / Ravine Crossing: A chemical plant above the dam has blown up. Patrols have seven minutes to secure their sleds at least as high as their shortest Scout and move their sled across the ravine without it falling in.
5. Knots: Patrols have five minutes to produce ten specified knots.
6. Snowblind: All patrol members but one are blinded (blindfolded) in a snowstorm. But the Scout who can see is injured. The wounded Scout must direct their fellow Scouts in raising a tent as a team within a specified timeframe.
7. Signaling: Patrols will use signaling techniques to signal a silent message to a line-of-sight outpost. Scorers provide a multiple-word message to be sent, received, and decoded by each patrol. (The BSA Signs, Signals, and Codes merit badge requirements would be a good study guide, and scouts should be prepared for semaphore, Morse code, or cryptography.)
8. Fishing for Snapper: No Scout skills involved here, just fun. Set a bunch of mousetraps about five yards beyond a "shoreline" which Scouts may not cross. Equip them with "fishing rods" (bamboo poles), "line" (twine) and "bait" (nuts and washers). Patrols must cast and "catch" two "Snappers" in five minutes.
9. Measuring the height: This is a timed event that requires the starter and finish-line judge to synchronize their watches. Determine the height of an object.
10. Log Saw: Provide the Scouts two-man saws and improvised sawbucks. They must saw through a six-inch log against the clock. They can keep the chunk they saw off.
11. Search & Rescue: Patrol leaders are given the hiking plan of a missing solo hiker. Patrols follow the hiking plan to find a lost hiker that is too severely injured to move. Scouts must diagnose the hiker's medical problems and determine his/her exact location. Teams will be graded on their navigational skills, knowledge of first aid, use of the buddy system and the speed with which they report the hikers correct position back to HQ.
12. Slingshot Turkey Shoot: The scouts fire frozen kibble at pie plates decorated as turkeys. (Don't worry about picking up kibble afterward; it becomes critter food.) Grade shooters on accuracy.
13. Team Building: Patrols will engage in team building exercises, which may include but is not limited to:
 - a. Spider Web
 - b. Panning for Gold
14. Orienteering: Use a compass to navigate to coordinates and locate the targeted object.
15. Dead Horse Carry: Your pack horse has died, and you need to get it off the trail. Scouts must work together as a patrol to lift and carry a heavy "animal."
16. First Aid & Survival Trivia: Scouts answer basic questions on first aid and survival skills for points.
17. Mystery Event(s): Who knows what mysteries await our scouts beneath the frozen tundra?

SCORING

- Campsite inspections can earn bonus “gold” nuggets for organization and cleanliness.
- Before starting the derby, inspect each sled to see that the patrols have all the equipment and gear they were told to bring.
- Each sled will be inspected for craftsmanship, design, and originality. Patrols may lose points if their sled is built using wheels instead of runners, skis, etc.
- For the events themselves, maximum score per patrol per town should be 10 points. Patrols earn points based on the attempt, completing the task, completing it correctly, teamwork, and scout spirit.
- Awards will be given at the evening campfire to the top three scoring patrols.

EQUIPMENT LIST

Units will provide their own food. Ground fires are not permitted. Be prepared to use camp stoves for your cooking needs. A list of things each patrol must have on their sled should be distributed as early as two months before the Klondike. The Scouts can use anything on their sled to complete any given task. Volunteers running the towns will provide any special gear the youth may need.

SLED PACKING LIST

- A complete extra set of warm dry clothes and socks (wrapped in a waterproof covering) for each scout.
- Patrol flag
- Patrol roster
- Pencil & paper
- Clipboard & cover (or equivalent)
- Bag or pouch to hold the teams “gold nuggets”
- Watch
- Compass
- Flashlight
- Two staves, six-foot-long each
- Blanket
- Padded splints for arms & legs
- Patrol first-aid kit including four (4) cravats, gauze pads
- Pocketknife
- Two 2x4 lumber (one foot long each)
- Tin foil
- Three one-gallon water jugs/containers filled with potable water
- Flint & steel or hot spark kit
- Lunch for each scout
- Eight lengths of rope, six feet long each (whipped)
- Scout handbook
- Rain gear for each scout
- Cup for each scout
- Waterproof ground cover
- Trash bag
- Small skillet
- Spatula
- Kindling material for shotgun start

- Leather gloves for each scout

CLOTHING

One of the most important parts of the Klondike Derby is to keep warm and dry. Each Scout must know what to wear. Winter weather is very changeable, requiring preparedness for almost any condition. A nice day can turn into a raging blizzard. Your best protection is your common sense. Dress in layers. Avoid working up a sweat and keep yourself comfortable by removing or adding layers of clothing. No cotton clothing!

Waterproof boots are essential. Wear socks made of wool or other material that wicks away perspiration.

A wool stocking cap or similar head gear with ear coverings is necessary both during the day and at night in the sleeping bag to retain warmth. Scarves are recommended to protect the face from the cold and biting wind. Scouts should wear wool mittens covered with a water repellent shell. Gloves may be worn, but they are not as warm as mittens.

Scouts are more vulnerable to the cold at meals, because they do not move around as much. Prior to any meal, ask every Scout if all their clothing is dry. If not, they should change into dry clothes before eating.

Clothing Inspection: Unit leaders should visually inspect each Scout before he/she takes off on the trail. If any Scout is not adequately dressed, he/she should not be allowed on the trail.

SCHEDULE

Friday, February 6

5:30 – 8:00 PM Check-in and set up camp

9:00 PM SM/SPL meeting

10:00 PM Lights out

Saturday, February 7

7:00 AM Reveille

7:15 – 8:45 Breakfast and clean-up

9:00 AM Opening Flags

9:15 AM Assembly at starting point for Klondike Trail

9:30 AM – 4:00 PM Klondike Trail/Activities

12:00 – 1:00 PM Lunch on the trail (no activities)

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM Dinner and Clean-up

7:30 PM Campfire program and awards

9:00 PM In site Cracker Barrel

10:00 PM Lights out

Sunday, February 8

7:00 AM Reveille

7:15 AM – 8:00 AM Breakfast and clean-up

8:30 AM Chapel (Scouts Own Service) *Units may conduct on their own*

9:00 AM Break camp, Campsite inspection, Check out

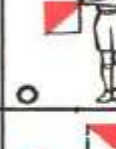
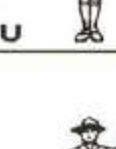
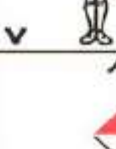
***Times subject to change**

Morse Code

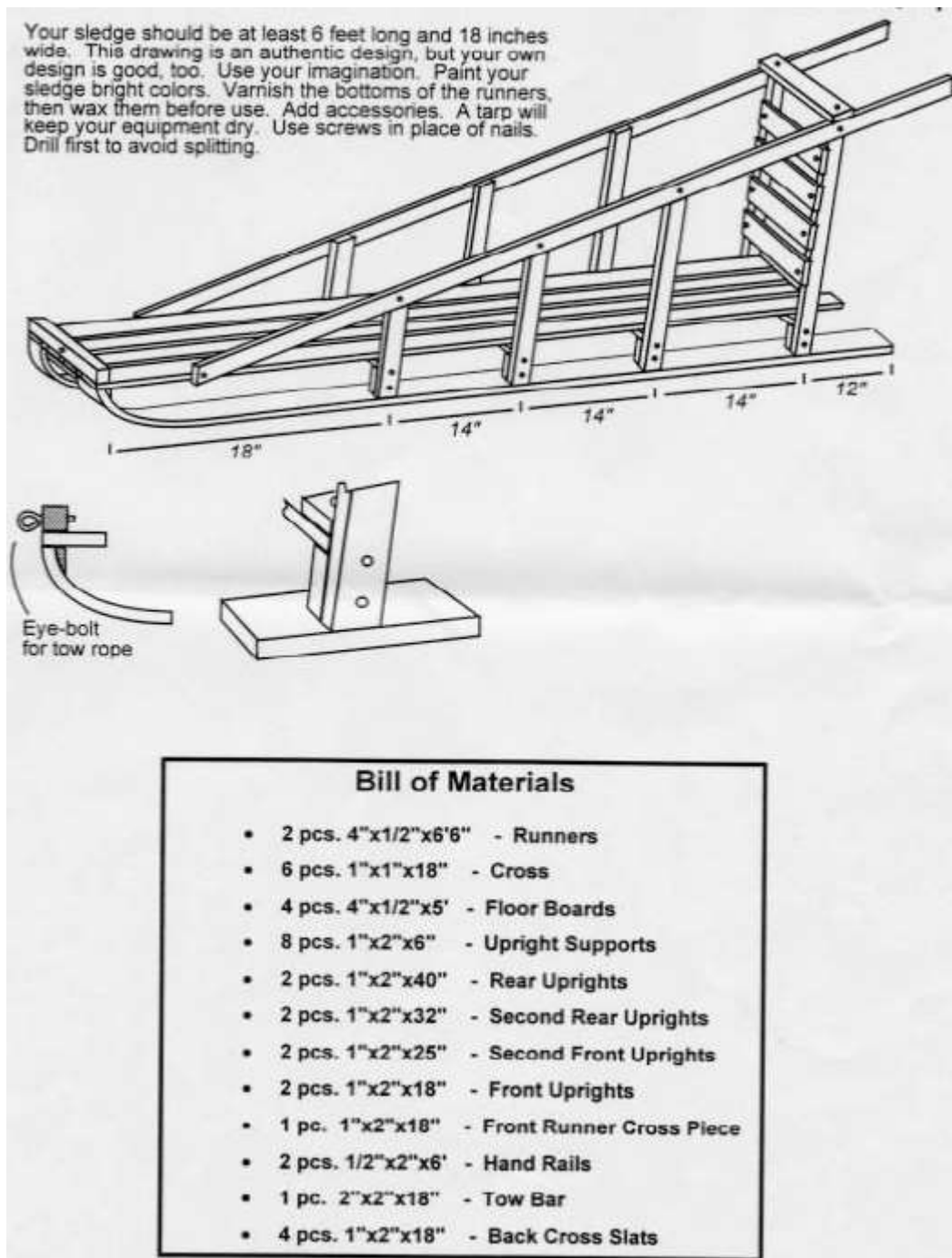
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B	-... .	O	- - - -
C	- . - .	P	.- - - .
D	- . .	Q	- - - . -
E	.	R	.- . .
F	.. - .	S	
G	- - - .	T	-
H		U	.. - -
I	..	V	... - -
J	.- - - -	W	.- - - -
K	- . -	X	- . . -
L	.- . .	Y	- - . - -
M	- -	Z	- - . .

FIG. 81.—Morse alphabet.

Semaphore

ERROR		REPEAT		
 A	 1	 B	 2	 3
 4	 5	 6	 7	 8
 9	 0	NEGATIVE		
PREPARATORY		ANNULLING		
 K	 L	 M	 N	 O
AFFIRMATIVE		ACKNOWLEDGE		
 P	 Q	 R	 S	 T
 U	 V	 W	 X	 Y
 Z	ATTENTION			INTERVAL
				
				

Sample Klondike Derby Sled Plan



Questions or Concerns?

If anyone has any questions or concerns about the Klondike Derby prior to the event, please contact Mr. Jason Wells via email at troop111gloucester@gmail.com.

Directions to Klondike Derby

Ware Episcopal Church's official address is 7825 John Clayton Memorial Highway, Gloucester VA. However, all scout activities will occur behind the church so **all vehicles and especially troop trailers should enter via the church's second entrance at 7877 John Clayton Memorial Highway**. We will receive you there and direct you to your assigned campsite and parking.

Registration Information

Although this Klondike Derby is sponsored by the Historic Triangle District, all Scouting America units are invited to attend. We encourage all units to contact and invite the Webelos in your respective areas to attend as part of your Klondike Derby teams. Event patches will be provided for paid attendees (scouts and adults) and will be passed out at check-out.

2026 Historic Triangle District Klondike Derby Event Code # 203

Please attach this form along with payment. Registration fee is \$15 per person. Registration deadline is Saturday, January 31, 2026 at 11:59pm ET. Late registrations will not be accepted. Register via Black Pug* or in person at the council office:

Colonial Virginia Council, BSA
11834 Canon Blvd. Suite L
Newport News, VA 23606

Unit and Type #: _____ District: _____

On site Leader's Name: _____

On site Leader's Phone Number: _____

Number of Scouting participants: _____

Number of Patrols: _____

Number of Adults attending: _____

Total Registration fee: \$15.00 X number of youth participants: _____

Checks should be made payable to Colonial Virginia Council, BSA noted for the Historic Triangle Klondike Derby.

* There is an online convenience fee for registering via Black Pug.

****No late registrations will be accepted****