Combine Packs for a Fantastic Pinewood Derby

Pinewood Derby is always an exciting day that has been looked forward to by countless numbers of Cub Scouts since 1953. But for packs like ours that might be small in numbers (22 boys) race day can be over before the fun even begins.

A little planning and coordination with one or two other packs can bring the excitement of “Let’s Go Racing” to your Derby. While that excitement is what your looking for don’t forget the serendipity that comes with a combined pack event. The camaraderie, and friendships that can be built will be worth a whole lot more to your Scouts as they grow in Scouting.

Planning and communication between pack committee members is vital to have a successful Race Day. One or two meeting a couple of months before the day of the race should get the nuts and bolts and details ironed out.

Even building the cars can be combined.

Host a designated car-making workshop where parents and sons build the cars together and parents bring tools to share. It’s fun, and it’s a great way for the less mechanically inclined to learn a thing or two.

Some of the best Pinewood Derby workshops use the assembly line approach. Parents and scouts go from station to station working on their car. When they’re done, they have a near-finished product ready for painting.
Race Day

1. Make sure you have a large enough space to host the event. School gyms work great.

1. Have your Scout Leaders and volunteers broken into Race Official teams. Try to combine members from different Packs to create camaraderie.

Pit Team that checks in the families and weighs and inspects the cars.

Track Team that sets up the track, tests it and runs the race.

I. Car carriers (people who move the cars from the storage area to the track for the race itself.)

II. Supervisors to watch the car storage area.

III. Track officials who make sure that the crowd does not impinge on the track itself and who call out the results of each heat.

IV. Scorekeepers who write down the results of each heat or enter them on a computer program.

V. Judges for the other competitions referred to above (craftsmanship, best paint job, etc.)

VI. Overall referee, an experienced leader who serves as a wise peacekeeper and has the authority to make final decisions if disputes arise.

Food Team that keeps Cub Scouts and parents happy and well-fed. This can be a fund raiser or provided by the Packs.

Activities Team that handles anything not related the race — pictures, face-painting, skits and songs, and anything else to keep Scouts entertained. Set out a big container of Legos for the younger sisters and brothers of racers to enjoy during the Derby.
Stagger Arrival and Departure Times
Give parents specific, staggered arrival times to minimize waiting around. This makes weigh-in easier.
If you want have Tigers race first as they probably have a shorter attention span:
You could even hold several awards ceremonies — one after each division is finished — so that families can leave when their son’s racing category has concluded.
Ask yourself: Is it really necessary for every family to be there for the entire event?
Remember to leave them wanting more.
Get the parents, older siblings, grandparents, and friends involved with an ‘Outlaw’ race.
It brings all the excitement of the Cub race, but rules are secondary to speed.

Make memories, take pictures
A Pinewood Derby will be over in a couple of hours, but the memories will last forever. That’s especially true if you take official race day photos of Scouts and their families.
First, create a fun backdrop. It should include your pack flag, some racing imagery and the current year.
Next, assign a volunteer to take the photos of the Cub Scout with his car and his parents.
You could even do close-ups of each Scout’s car.
You can make the photos available on a photo site like Flickr for parents to download and post to Facebook for all the world to see.

Trophies and Certificates
Scouts love recognition so make sure you have certificates and trophies. On that note think about a travelling trophy that winning Pack can take home for bragging rights. It gives a little friendly racing competition flavor to a Great Day.
A sound system, racing software, projector & screen, and aluminum track can only enhance the day.
REMEMBER IT’S ALL ABOUT THE BOYS AND FUN IS THE #1 GOAL
For more ideas there are great recourses on the internet. Here are two to get you started.
https://www.scouting.org/training/adult/supplemental/pinewood/
http://usscouts.org/pinewood/cspine.asp