

RAJA LOFLAND and Scott Summerfield, both nine, put the finishing touches on their Pinewood Derby entries. The boys and their parents make the cars from

scratch, with hopes of winning a trophy. Summerfield's car placed second in the nine-year-old division last Friday.

STAFF PHOTOS BY ETTA SMITH



DERBY WINNERS, from left, front row, are Earnest Teague, third place, nine-year-old division; Jamie Furr, first, seven-year-old division; Matt Sutton, second, seven-year-old; and Ricky Todd, third, seven-year-old. On the back row are Scott Summerfield, se-

cond, nine-year-old division; John Clark, winner, nine-year-old; Chad Smith, winner, eight-year-old; Brian Riddle, third, eight-year-old and Rusty Hughes, second, eight-year-old division.



DEN LEADERS Ron Lofland (left) and Jack Metts release the cars down the 30-foot elevated track two at a time while several cub scouts look on.

Under the sun

Ready, Set, Go!

Racing's A Team Effort

BY ETTA SMITH

Seaside Station resident Raja Lofland says his dad deserves some of the credit for his racing achievements. Nine-year-old Raja is one of 25 Cub Scouts who competed in the countywide Pinewood Derby at the National Guard Armory in Shallotte last Friday night.

This is Raja's second year in the derby. He placed third in last year's event with "Shoe Car," the name given to his souped-up handmade sports car.

This year's entry is dubbed the "Tar Heel." He and his dad, Ron Lofland, designed and built it over a period of about two weeks.

It weighs exactly five ounces, according to Raja, and is built from scratch.

Raja and most all of the boys from Pack 227 entered a car in the event.

To prepare for the derby each scout gets a kit that includes four nails and four wheels, a two-ounce block of pine wood and some glue.

From the block of wood, the boys and their parents carve out a body, adding the wheels and paint and their own design features.

The cars must weigh five ounces and be of a specific length. If one of the boys carves a little too much wood off his car, extra weight can be added by taping small lead fishing weights on the bottom of the racer.

The 25 entries are placed on the top of a 30-foot elevated race track, two at a time. When the red flag is dropped the cars are released and the excitement begins.

After the double elimination competition, a trophy is presented to the first-, second- and third-place winners in each of three divisions. The divisions are for eight-, nine-

and ten-year-olds. A trophy is also presented for the best-looking car.

Percy Woodard, chairman of a committee that organizes the pack, said the event is a lot of fun, and gives the kids a chance to work with their parents on a project.

"I've seen a lot of single mothers work with their sons on the project. It gives them a chance to be a part of their boy's activity," he said.

The winner of the event will compete with Cub Scouts from all over southeastern North Carolina in mid-March, he said, with an opportunity to win again and advance to state-level competition.

While the emphasis is on the scouts, the Pinewood Derby is a team effort.

"My dad did most of the work," said Raja of his racer. "He likes doing this as much as I do."

Raja's derby entry is Tar Heel blue with a '60s-style peace sign on the hood and a pair of white feet painted on the side. He said it's a combination of he and his dad's creation.

"It's (the race) so much fun," said Raja. "Sure, I get nervous when I stand on the sidelines and watch the race because I want to win."

If he does win, he added, he can't take all the credit, since his dad did some of the work. But being able to work with his dad on a project is definitely part of the fun.

"My dad has fun doing this too," he said. "He helped me pick out the name for the car and helped shape it and paint it."

"So, if I win," said Raja, "it won't just be me winning, it'll be me and my dad as a team."

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




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