



Introduction

The Awana Grand Prix has its origins in the Cub Scout's Pinewood Derby. The first Pinewood Derby race was held on May 15, 1953, by Cub Scout Pack 280C in Manhattan Beach, California. The Cubmaster, Don Murphy, had a son that was too young to participate in the popular Soap Box Derby races, so he came up with the idea of racing miniature wood cars. In a Scouting Magazine article, Mr. Murphy recalled "I'd made models of airplanes, cars, boats, and any number of other structures and remembered the pleasure I got out of doing it," he said. "I also wanted to devise a wholesome, constructive activity that would foster a closer father-son relationship and promote craftsmanship and good sportsmanship through competition."

According to the Official Awana Grand Prix How-To Book, the first Awana Grand Prix took place around 1970. According to the Awana website, "In 2004 alone, over 4,100 churches have purchased more than 25,000 car kits. An estimated one-third of Awana-registered churches – and 200,000-plus clubbers – participate in Grand Prix annually."

Why - Purpose of the Awana Grand Prix

1. Spread the Gospel!
2. Adult - Child interaction
3. Craftsmanship
4. Promote good sportsmanship
5. It's FUN!

Who - Those Involved

- Racers
 - à 3rd Grade to Varsity clubbers
 - à Parents / Leaders / LIT's - Cubbies and Sparks can help parent with their car
- Race Staff
 - à Race Commissioner - Find someone enthusiastic
 - à Workshop Coordinator - Coordinates the workshops and the Pit Area on race day
 - à Master of Ceremonies - Someone other than the Race Commissioner. Enthusiasm is a must!
 - à Gospel Speaker - Short (about 15 min) clear presentation of the Gospel. Gear the message more towards the spectators than the kids.
 - à Speed and Design Judges - Should not be related to any racer, if possible.
 - à Check-in Judges - Makes sure car complies with the rules to keep the competition fair.
 - à Others: Pit Crew, Starter, Computer Operator, Sound Man, Photographer, Videographer
- Adult Partners and Spectators

What - Race Resources

- Budget
 - à Use to determine entrance fee and to project and track expenses
 - à Can sell food and snacks to help cover costs.
- Weigh Scale – Weight is critical to a car's performance, so the scale should be accurate to at least 0.1 ounces (0.01 ounces is better).
- Track
 - à Use existing, buy, build, rent, or borrow?
 - à If building, start well in advance of the race and use good materials. Good plans available over the web.
 - à If using existing track, check its condition well in advance. May have to rehab or replace.
- Electronics
 - à Timer's can prevent many arguments over results. Can buy assembled timers, kits or build your own.
 - à Can build or buy solenoid operated start gates and drag racing style light trees.
- Software – A variety of software is available. Race management, chart generators, sound effects, instant replay, race planning, and driver's licenses.
- Supplies - Awana Catalog is main source. Hobby stores, hardware stores, and websites are others.
- Information – GrandPrix Race Central, <http://grandprix-race-central.com> and Derby Talk, <http://derbytalk.com>



When - Set the Schedule

- Events to Schedule
 - à Initial announcement
 - à When to start and stop selling car kits
 - à Workshops - At least 2 are recommended to help those that need help and/or tools.
 - à Time Trials - Allows racers to test cars on the track. No timing actually done and no head-to-head competition. Schedule shortly before the race. Can also do early car check-in then.
 - à Race Day - Set timeline for Car Check-in, Opening Ceremonies, Design Judging, Racing, Gospel Message, and Awards Ceremony.
- Dates
 - à Need to work around Awana Olympics, Bible Quiz and holidays.
 - à Before Christmas may be a better time frame than after.
 - à Club nights are NOT good for doing a Grand Prix, due to time constraints.
- Times
 - à Racing should be between 1 to 1.5 hours to keep everyone's interest. This does not include time for opening or awards ceremonies, so plan appropriately.
 - à Workshop times should be pretty wide open to encourage participation.

Where - Have plenty of space and be easily accessible

- Selling cars - Before and after club, at Church and at the workshops.
- Workshops - At the Church or a home. Need a place large enough to setup tools and that can get very messy.
- Time Trials - A room large enough to setup the track.
- Race
 - à Need enough room for track, tables, Pit Area, spectator seating, etc.
 - à Elevate track on a stage or tables, if possible.
 - à Holding race outside is not recommended.

How - Keep it Fun, Fair and Organized

- Planning – Use a checklist and start early.
- Workshops
 - à Focus should be to assist and advise the racers and their adult partners in building the car.
 - à The racers should do as much as they are physically able and mature enough to do. Should be supervised with power tools.
 - à Provide sample designs (photos and/or templates) to spur ideas.
 - à Make scale available
 - à Weights – Can get store bought weights or use scrap metal, fishing weights, washers, screws, etc. If using lead, should be totally encased.
- Rules
 - à Aim should be to prohibit things that require specialized tools or expertise that all racers do not have access to.
 - à Rules that come with the kits are a starting point, but are not sufficient. Many samples available on web.
- Responsibilities and Procedures - Each person on the race staff should have defined responsibilities and procedures on how to do their job.
- Car Check-in
 - à Try to do an early check-in to make race day check-in faster. Only do if have a secure place to keep cars.
 - à Check-in inspectors need to strictly enforce the rules and be consistent.
 - à Make sure racers have lubricated their cars. Better to insist they do than to have their cars not finish.
- Race Scheduling
 - à Many different methods: Single/Double/Triple Elimination, Perfect-N Series, Stearns, Lane Rotation, etc.
 - à There is no scheduling method that Awana says must be used.
 - à Goal should be to give the racers an equal opportunity to win.
 - à Post schedule where all can see and use a projection system or TV if available to display results.
- Racing – If at all possible, the racers should be the only ones to handle the cars.
- Awards
 - à For speed and design (don't forget about design!)
 - à Trophies, plaques, certificates, and medals are options depending on budget.
 - à Other Possible Awards – Best of Show, Most Creative, Most Colorful, Best Gas Mileage (slowest car), etc.