

Rocket Construction Tips

Here are some tips from a couple of the judges at the McLean County 4-H Fair.

1. Do not choose a rocket kit with plastic fins. It will be disqualified.
2. Use all the pieces in your kit. Follow the instructions and have a copy at the judging.
3. Make sure that the recovery system is free to deploy and only the shock cord is glued in.
4. Do not have a live motor in your rocket during the judging. 2 and 3 stage sections can be held together with spent motors.
5. Try to get the fins on as straight as possible. Take care to make them evenly spaced around the body of the rocket and perpendicular to the body tube.
6. Sand all balsa parts to a smooth finish. Fill the grain of the wood before painting.
7. Round the edges of the fins. Even better is to round the leading edges and taper the trailing edges to make an airfoil.
8. Sand the seams on plastic nosecones.
9. Fill and sand the spirals and seams on the body tube.
10. Try for neat glue joints. Avoid heavy globs of glue and paint.
11. Apply the paint in multiple light coats. Sand surfaces smooth between coats.
12. Apply the decals as straight as possible. Use the instructions and kit artwork for positioning.