

2026 DeKalb Elementary Science Olympiad

Event Clarifications

Version Date: 01-15-2026 **ORIGINAL ISSUE**

For each event, use only the photocopied Event Descriptions you received from your Head Coach.

Event Name	DeKalb Rules Clarification	Practice Resource from Fernbank Science Center
1. Backyard Biologist (DeKalb Modified Event)	<p>Use only the DeKalb Modified rules provided to your Head Coach. This event has a substantially modified list of plants and animals compared to 2025 and previous years.</p> <p>Tie Breaker: Pre-selected questions.</p>	TIP SHEET
2. Barge Building	<p>Teams receive a single 15 cm square sheet of standard aluminum foil. (They may replace one damaged / torn sheet with a scoring penalty.)</p> <p>Students may bring and use their own scissors and ruler; we do not provide these for this event.</p> <p>Students must predict the number of pieces of cargo their barge will hold. We provide the mass of each piece. ed weight by hand. They should practice converting total mass into the corresponding number of pieces. Their work (and prediction accuracy) is part of their score.</p> <p>Time permitting, students may load their own barge for testing.</p>	VIDEO on YouTube
3. Bridge Building (DeKalb Modified Event)	<p>Use only the DeKalb Modified rules provided to your Head Coach.</p> <p>DESO and GAESO use popsicle sticks for this event. See description for list of exact materials provided and clarified method of testing.</p> <p>We will provide 1 meter of standard (white) masking tape to each group. We will have scissors on hand, or students may bring their own. Students may bring a ruler if they like, but we do not provide those.</p> <p>The test mass is 250 grams.</p>	VIDEO on YouTube
4. Chopper Challenge	<p>Teams receive only a single piece of cardstock; all three choppers must be made using that sheet. Participants should plan to bring their own pencils, scissors, and rulers – we will not supply those.</p> <p>Tie Breaker: Longest time-in-air from set of three drop times.</p>	
5. Cool It	<p>Our Tie Breaker features a question about the science behind this event. Students should know examples of materials that have good thermal conductivity and poor thermal conductivity, common temperatures (e.g. boiling water, freezing water, room temperature, body temperature) in both degrees C and F.</p> <p>After building, students draw a simple diagram to document their design and materials used. They can practice this. To label materials, ensure they know words like Styrofoam, plywood, and aluminum.</p>	

6. Crime Busters	<p>Students must bring their own splash-proof goggles. No strong chemicals are used, but iodine stains clothes. We provide plastic well plates (either 12 or 24 wells) for students to use during powder identification, or students may elect to use a sheet of clear plastic. Students may NOT bring in any sheets or materials.</p> <p>Students do not need to make fingerprints, they identify prints “found at the scene” by comparing to fingerprint cards for each suspect.</p>	TIP SHEET
7. Data Crunchers (DeKalb Modified Event)	<p>Use only the DeKalb Modified rules provided to your Head Coach.</p> <p>Students will rotate through stations on a fixed time rotation.</p>	
8. Deep Blue Sea	<p>Although we will also feature ocean animals, plants, and physical features related to the Georgia coast, we do not limit our questions to this area as they will at the Georgia ESO.</p>	TIP SHEET
9. Disease Detectives	<p>No clarifications.</p>	TIP SHEET
10. Don't Bug Me	<p>We allow participants to bring in a single student-made key. All text must be hand-written. We will allow both hand-drawn images and printed pictures that are physically cut-and-pasted onto the key. (No printed images may have any text on them.)</p> <p>The format for a “key” is flexible: a small poster, drawings and notes on a single large piece of paper, or a short booklet of 2-3 sheets of paper (both sides) are all acceptable. Printouts of our Practice Tip Sheet are not acceptable as a key.</p>	TIP SHEET
11. Egg Drop (DeKalb Modified Event)	<p>Use only the DeKalb Modified rules provided to your Head Coach.</p> <p>See description for list of exact materials provided. Students receive 20 biodegradable (corn starch) peanuts.</p> <p>You can purchase similar biodegradable packing peanuts at stores like Fedex Office and Home Depot.</p>	VIDEO on YouTube
12. Grab a Gram	<p>No clarifications.</p>	
13. Gummy Bear Launch (DeKalb Modified Event)	<p>This event does not appear in the Science Olympiad Manual. Use only the DeKalb Modified rules provided to your Head Coach.</p> <p>Tie Breaker: Smaller distance (from target center) on first launch.</p>	VIDEO on YouTube
14. Mystery Architecture	<p>We allow a 30-minute building time. (The manual has only 20 minutes.)</p> <p>Students may bring their own scissors, rulers, and pliers. We do not supply these.</p> <p>The Practice Tip Sheet for this event includes a list of the materials we commonly provide. Practice with those!</p>	TIP SHEET
15. No Bones About It	<p>No clarifications.</p>	
16. Paddle Boat Construction (DeKalb Modified Event)	<p>Use only the DeKalb Modified rules provided to your Head Coach.</p> <p>We allow two runs as long as the second starts within a 6-minute window. We provide #64 rubber bands. All teams must use new rubber bands that we provide them with at the event.</p>	

17. Paper Rockets	<p>We treat the rocket design provided in steps 1 – 6 as a suggestion. Teams may create alternative designs that use only the paper provided. Teams may choose the best dimensions and placement for fins.</p> <p>All teams can make two rockets, but they must choose one to compete with. Both members of your team launch the same rocket.</p>	
18. Pastamobile (DeKalb Modified Event)	<p>Use only the DeKalb Modified rules provided to your Head Coach.</p> <p>At DESO, we use two different ramps with two runs on each. The better distance counts on each. One ramp features “speed bumps.”</p>	
19. Picture This (DeKalb Modified Event)	<p>Use only the DeKalb Modified rules provided to your Head Coach.</p> <p>At DESO, 2 students compete rather than 3. Students alternate as “sketcher” and “guesser.”</p> <p>The Tip Sheet includes a released word list from previous competition.</p>	TIP SHEET
20. Rock Hound	<p>We allow participants to bring in a single student-made chart. We will allow both hand-drawn images and printed pictures that are physically cut-and-pasted onto the chart. (No printed images may have any text on them.)</p> <p>The format for a “chart” is flexible: a small poster, notes on a single large piece of paper, or a short booklet of 2-3 sheets of paper (both sides) are all acceptable. We collect charts used during each session, however, students may request their return following the Olympiad.</p> <p>Fernbank Science Center has several rock kits that can be checked out for a two-week period for practice. Please contact Michael Dowling at Fernbank Science Center to make arrangements.</p>	
21. Simple Machines	No clarifications.	TIP SHEET
22. Starry, Starry Night	Students should expect to encounter BOTH constellations with stars connected by line segments and photos or representations without connecting segments. Nobody needs to bring a red penlight; our rooms do not get that dark.	
23. Straw Tower (DeKalb Modified Event)	<p>Use only the DeKalb Modified rules provided to your Head Coach.</p> <p>We do NOT use pins. We provide 1 meter of masking tape or blue painters tape for each group. We provide scissors to groups that want them. Students may bring their own ruler if they wish.</p> <p>Towers must be free-standing with no tape attachments to table.</p> <p>We use a 25-minute building time limit.</p>	VIDEO on YouTube
24. The 24 Game (DeKalb Modified Event)	<p>This event does not appear in the Science Olympiad Manual. Use only the DeKalb Modified rules provided to your Head Coach.</p> <p>Practice cards are available from Suntex International, Inc. (www.24game.com)</p> <p>#33976 Four operations / Single digits #39976 Four operations / Double digits (Both are sets of 96 cards.)</p> <p>Students must write three separate lines / equations in their responses without grouping results together.</p>	

25. Water Rockets	<p>Parachute required. 1 m max height. No metal parts other than a small snap swivel.</p> <p>For Construction Rule #3, we do NOT require a straw to be attached vertically to the bottle.</p> <p>Fernbank Science Center has a some launchers that can be checked out for a two-week period for practice. (You will need a bike pump.) Please contact Michael Dowling at Fernbank Science Center to make arrangements.</p>	TIP SHEET
26. Weather or Not	<p>No clarifications.</p> <p>Fernbank Science Center has a kit that can be checked out for a two-week period for practice. Please contact Michael Dowling at Fernbank Science Center to make arrangements.</p>	TIP SHEET
27. Which Way's North?	<p><i>We use the 2023-2024 Georgia Official Highway and Transportation Map from GDOT for this event.</i> We provided two practice copies to each school in 2024. Please contact Michael Dowling at Fernbank Science Center if you cannot locate your school's map or need a fresh copy.</p>	TIP SHEET