



FIRST[®] In Florida

Inspiring Florida's Youth in Science & Technology

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OrlandoFRC.org

Keys to Competition Readiness

Adapted from FTC Team Duct Tape (www.TeamDuctTape.com)

As competitions heat up all over the country, it's a good time to review some key aspects of competition readiness – and it involves a lot more than what goes on down on the field!

FIRST things First

This one's pretty basic but there are still a surprising number of students who don't what program they're in. *FIRST* stands for: For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology .

Stay Informed

Read all communications from US FIRST, your coaches and mentors thoroughly and completely
Important online resources include:

- FRC page at US FIRST: <http://www.usfirst.org/frc>
- FRC Blog: <http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/blog>
- Team Email Blast Archives: <http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/emailblastarchive.aspx>
- FRC Manual: <http://frc-manual.usfirst.org>
- Official FRC Q&A: <https://frc-ga.usfirst.org/Questions.php>
- Chief Delphi (Unofficial) FRC Forum: <http://www.chiefdelphi.com/forums/index.php>
- FRC Season Calendar: <http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/calendar>
- WPI FRC Control System: <http://wpilib.screenstepslive.com/s/3120>
- NEMO- NonEngineering Mentor Organization: <http://www.firstnemo.org/>
- FIRST Fundraising Toolkit : <http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/first-fundraising-toolkit>

Remember your FIRST Values!

This is really is the whole point of all of this. Judges may ask, in some way, how you think these relate to real world experiences, or how you feel your team exemplifies the Core Values.

- We are a Team.
- We do the work to get the job done with guidance from our coaches and mentors.
- We honor the spirit of friendly competition.
- What we learn is more important than what we win.
- We share our experiences with others.
- We display gracious professionalism in everything we do.
- We have fun!

Be Competition Ready!

It's good to have a good looking, high performing robot. But that's only half the competition, and the most variable half. Lots of things can go wrong on the field, from technical, mechanical and electrical

failures to poor strategy to failed alliances. The only thing you have complete control of in a competition (or anywhere) is – YOU! To make sure you're in the best possible shape for the competition:

1) Look sharp! Dress as a team. Wear closed toed shoes – and tie them! And don't have any dangling strings or straps that can get caught on things.

2) Be Gracious Professionals! Mind your manners, in the pit, on the competition field and everywhere in between. Hold doors for people, help other teams whenever you can, and be good to each other – you're at the competition because of ALL of you, because of the gifts, skills and talents each of you brings to your team. Recognize, respect and celebrate that. You succeed or fail together, but your chances of being successful are far, far higher work as a solid team. Communicate with each other – fully, clearly and consistently. Think and act, instead of reacting without thought.

3) BE at the competition! To get the most out of this great opportunity, you have to BE there in body, mind and spirit. Avoid recreational or superfluous cell phone use. Support your team actively and enthusiastically from the stands, and support your alliance team from the field.

4) Use your pre- and post-match competition lists – Every time! *(You do have those ,don't you?)*

5) Stay till the end. Win or lose, stay for the full competition and cheer on remaining teams, just like you enjoy being cheered on when you're competing. Staying for a full competition, regardless of your own success in it, does several things:

- It establishes you as GP competitors
- It might provide you with an additional opportunity to the next level
- You'll learn a lot and get some new ideas for your own robot watching the finalist matches

Be Judge Ready

- Show the judges you're happy to be there, shake hands, and welcome them to your pit area.
- Arrange yourselves so that your main speakers are scattered throughout your group, rather than grouped on one side.
- Be ready to showcase everything and anything – have your display board area clear for viewing, your community service notebook handy, design sketches at ready
- Be prepared to talk about at least one thing you've worked on or enjoyed with the team.

It can't be emphasized enough that the field matches are only one part of the game. A team succeeds on the merits of their full corporate appearance and ability: how well you showcase your achievements and your teamwork during visits from judges, and your conduct and teamwork throughout the event are all major and equal components of the award recognition process.

Aim High!

First and foremost, the Chairman's Award points out: *"The FIRST® Robotics Competition (FRC®) is about much more than the mechanics of building a robot or winning a competitive event. It is about the partnership among people who are part of the FIRST community and the impact on those who*

participate in FIRST programs with a united goal of achieving FIRST's mission. FIRST's mission is to change the way young people regard science and technology and to inspire an appreciation for the real-life rewards and career opportunities in these fields."

Focus on that, with demonstrated mentor guided, student driven engineering learning and accomplishment, good robot performance, creativity in team spirit, strategy and outreach, solid teamwork skills, and attention to safety and you will do well!

Below are the elements that judges look for in awarding different recognition honors. Taken together, the ultimate description of the highest character and achievement of the best award winning teams includes teams that

- Embody the goals and mission of *FIRST*
- Have a creative design, in process, execution, or via a creative or unique strategy of play, focusing on a feature or features of the machine or development process.
- Exhibit outstanding efforts in advancing respect/appreciation for engineering and engineers, both within their school and their community.
- Have a comprehensive business plan in order to define, manage and achieve team objectives, displaying entrepreneurial enthusiasm and the vital business skills to ensure a self-sustaining program
- Exhibit any aspect of engineering elegance featuring advantageous machine feature(s) that reinforces the principles of *FIRST*.
- Exhibit outstanding student leaders whose passion for and effectiveness at attaining FIRST ideals is exemplary.
- Exhibit outstanding sportsmanship and continuous Gracious Professionalism® in the heat of competition, both on and off the playing field.
- Show attractiveness in engineering and outstanding visual aesthetic integration from the machine to the team appearance.
- Exhibit form and function in an efficiently designed machine that effectively addresses the game challenge.
- Show evidence of progression beyond safety fundamentals by using innovative ways to eliminate or protect against hazards, consistently demonstrates excellence in industrial safety performance that shines throughout the competition from unbagging to re-pack.
- Have innovative control system or application of control components (electrical, mechanical or software) to provide unique machine functions.
- Exhibit extraordinary enthusiasm and spirit through exceptional partnership and teamwork to further the objectives of *FIRST*.
- Exhibit machine robustness in concept and fabrication.
- Are clearly looking beyond the team website, taking into account the numerous ways people search for and consume content.
- As a rookie team exemplifies a young but strong partnership effort, as well as implementing the mission of *FIRST*: To inspire students to learn more about science and technology.
- As a rookie team, exhibit outstanding success in advancing respect and appreciation for engineering and engineers both within their school and in their community.

It's a long list but helping students aim high, with each of these points as a team goal, will put them at the top of the pack!