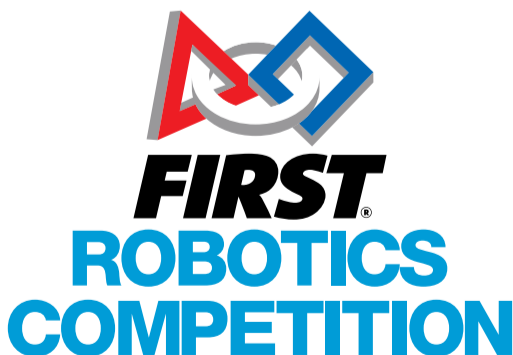


1

Introduction

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 ABOUT *FIRST*[®]

FIRST[®] (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) was founded by inventor Dean Kamen to inspire young people's interest in science and technology. Based in Manchester, New Hampshire, *FIRST* is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit public charity.

FIRST provides four programs:

- *FIRST* Robotics Competition for grades 9-12, ages 14-18
- *FIRST* Tech Challenge for grades 7-12, ages 12-18
- *FIRST* LEGO League for grades 4-8, ages 9-14 (ages 9-16 outside of North America)
- *FIRST* LEGO League Jr. for grades K-3, ages 6-9

Please visit our website: www.firstinspires.org for more information about *FIRST*'s programs.

1.2 What is the *FIRST*[®] Robotics Competition[®]

This Varsity Sport for the Mind™ combines the excitement of sport with the rigors of science and technology. Under strict rules, limited resources and time limits, teams students are challenged to raise funds, design a team “brand”, hone teamwork skills, and build and program robots to perform prescribed tasks against a field of competitors. It's as close to “real-world” engineering as a student can get.

The *FIRST* Robotics Competition pairs high school students with adult mentors (primarily engineers and teachers) to design and build robots that compete against one another in a high energy environment. Each January at the Kickoff, a new, challenging game is introduced. These exciting competitions combine the practical application of science and technology with the fun, intense energy and excitement of a championship-style sporting event. Teams are encouraged to display *Gracious Professionalism*[®] and to help other teams and cooperate while competing – known as Coopertition[®]

In 2016, the *FIRST* Robotics Competition will reach 78,000 high-school students representing approximately 3,100 teams. Teams come from nearly every state in the United States, as well as many other countries. *FIRST* Robotics Competition teams will participate in over 50 Regional Competitions, more than 60 *FIRST* Robotics Competition District Competitions, and 8 District Championships. In addition, approximately 600 teams will qualify to go to the *FIRST* Championship at the Edward Jones Dome in St. Louis, MO.

This year's game will be presented at the 2016 *FIRST* Robotics Competition Kickoff on Saturday, January 9, 2016.

At the Kickoff, all teams will:

- see the 2016 game field for the first time
- learn about the 2016 game rules and regulations
- receive a Kickoff Kit to provide a starting point for all teams

1.3 *Gracious Professionalism*[®], a *FIRST* Credo

Gracious Professionalism[®] is part of the ethos of *FIRST*. It's a way of doing things that encourages high-quality work, emphasizes the value of others, and respects individuals and the community.

Gracious Professionalism is not clearly defined for a reason. It can and should mean different things to everyone.

Some possible meanings of *Gracious Professionalism* include:

- Gracious attitudes and behaviors are win-win
- Gracious folks respect others and let that respect show in their actions
- Professionals possess special knowledge and are trusted by society to use that knowledge responsibly
- Gracious Professionals make a valued contribution in a manner pleasing to others and to themselves

In the context of *FIRST*, this means that all teams and participants should:

- Learn to be strong competitors, but also treat one another with respect and kindness in the process
- Avoid leaving anyone feeling as if they are excluded or unappreciated
- Knowledge, pride and empathy should be comfortably and genuinely blended

In the end, *Gracious Professionalism* is part of pursuing a meaningful life. When professionals use knowledge in a gracious manner and individuals act with integrity and sensitivity, everyone wins and society benefits.



“The *FIRST* spirit encourages doing high-quality, well-informed work in a manner that leaves everyone feeling valued. *Gracious Professionalism* seems to be a good descriptor for part of the ethos of *FIRST*. It is part of what makes *FIRST* different and wonderful.”

- DR. WOODIE FLOWERS, NATIONAL ADVISOR FOR *FIRST*

It is a good idea to spend time going over this concept with your team and reinforcing it regularly. We recommend providing your team with real-life examples of *Gracious Professionalism* in practice, such as when a team loans valuable materials or expertise to another team that they will later face as an opponent in competition. Routinely highlight opportunities to display *Gracious Professionalism* at events, and encourage team members to suggest ways in which they can demonstrate this quality themselves and through outreach activities.

1.4 Coopertition®

At *FIRST*, Coopertition is displaying unqualified kindness and respect in the face of fierce competition. Coopertition is founded on the concept and philosophy that teams can and should help and cooperate with one another even as they compete.

Coopertition involves learning from teammates and mentors. Coopertition means competing always, but assisting and enabling others when you can.



PLEASE take the time to read the sections of this manual. It was prepared with YOU in mind and is a great resource for important information you will need throughout the season!