

FIRST 2026 **CHAMPIONSHIP**

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EVENT GUIDE

3.11.26

FIRST **AGE** PRESENTED BY
Qualcomm

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Welcome to the *FIRST* Championship

The 2026 *FIRST*® Championship presented by BAE Systems will bring together thousands of students from around the world for the ultimate celebration of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) and innovation. Join our archaeology-inspired robotics season. In this 2025-2026 season, *FIRST*® AGE™ presented by Qualcomm, every artifact we uncover holds a story. Each tool, each innovation, and each work of art connects us to the people and ideas that came before us. Using STEM skills and teamwork, today we can dig deeper into discoveries than ever before.

The information in this event guide outlines our overall event goal to provide a unique, transformative experience for all teams, sponsors, volunteers, and supporters of *FIRST* in a fun and safe environment. Join us as we celebrate a future that's built better together at *FIRST* Championship. Get ready to have fun and be part of something extraordinary.

Accessibility at the Championship

We have expanded our accessibility information for the event. Please [click here for all our accessibility](#) (persons with disabilities) measures at the *FIRST* Championship.

App

Download the *FIRST* Championship App for interactive maps, personalized schedules, activities, team info, volunteer info, alerts, and more.



Please find the direct store links below:

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/id1099958883>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.guidebook.apps.firstchampionship.android>

Block Party at Discovery Green

Wednesday, April 29, 2026 – Friday, May 1, 2026

The *FIRST* Championship Discovery Green Block Party is the outside extension of our campus. A variety of activities will be available throughout the week such as giant family and lawn games, Live Band Karaoke, Silent Disco and dance party. Discovery Green is directly across from the George R. Brown Convention Center. A detailed schedule of activities will be available in the app.

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Closing Celebration

Our closing celebration experience will bring together *FIRST*® LEGO® League Explore, *FIRST*® LEGO® League Challenge, *FIRST*® Tech Challenge, and *FIRST*® Robotics Competition celebrations under the roof of the George R. Brown Convention Center. Each program will have a custom experience, while a global broadcast throughout the convention center will keep attendees up to date on highlights from each program. All are invited to this joint Closing Celebration involving all programs. Please check the schedule for each program's ceremony time.

FIRST Championship Conferences

The *FIRST* Championship Conferences will be held Wednesday- Friday. The conference includes sessions and workshops on topics of interest to all members of the *FIRST* community in the following topics: business, marketing, outreach, engineering, game strategy, programming, implementation & success stories, workforce development, and education.

Sessions are either 15 or 45 minutes in length and will be held in rooms 340, 350 and 360 on the 3rd floor of the convention center. For a full list of conferences, please download the app.

All sessions are first come, first serve. You must be present and, in the line, waiting prior to the session start to get in. Once we are full, we will close the doors.

FIRST Programs

FIRST LEGO League Explore (grades K-4)

Elementary school kids are challenged to explore a STEM topic, then present what they learned with on their team journey through their team poster and a motorized LEGO team model. Sixty teams will present their findings at the *FIRST* LEGO League Explore Festival located in the Ballroom, Level 3 of the George R Brown Convention Center. For program-specific information in Houston, see [FIRST LEGO League Explore Addendum](#).

FIRST LEGO League Challenge (ages 9-16)

Friendly competition is at the heart of *FIRST* LEGO League Challenge, as teams of students ages 9-16 engage in research, problem-solving, coding and engineering – building and programming a LEGO robot that navigates the missions of the **UNEARTHED™** challenge. All activities will be held in Ballroom, Level 3 at the George R. Brown Convention Center, where you can see 108 teams work on their robots and compete. For program-specific information in Houston, see [FIRST LEGO League Challenge Addendum](#).

FIRST Tech Challenge (grades 7-12)

Middle and high school students have earned their advancement from competitions around the world to compete at the highest level. Since launching **DECODE™ presented by RTX** game in September, students have designed, built, and programmed their robots to perform to the best of their abilities. 342 *FIRST* Tech Challenge teams will come together in Houston, Texas to compete on and off the playing field for awards and the chance to be the DECODE competition winners! The *FIRST* Tech Challenge event will be on Level 3 in Halls A and B of the George R. Brown Convention Center. Come check out all the fun! For program specific information, please check out the [FIRST Tech Challenge Addendum](#).

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FIRST Robotics Competition (grades 9-12)

High school students from over 600 teams compete on special playing fields with robots they have designed, programmed, and built themselves. *FIRST* Robotics Competition Fields and pits (safety glasses provided and required) will be in the George R. Brown Convention Center Halls A – E, Level 1. Watch teams compete in this year's robotics challenge, **REBUILT™ presented by Haas** on eight playing fields. For program- specific information in Houston, see [FIRST Robotics Competition Addendum](#).

FIRST Store

The *FIRST* Store is your on-site source for merchandise made exclusively for the *FIRST* #STEMsquad, including limited edition *FIRST* Championship must-haves. Get your *FIRST* gear now!

The *FIRST* Store is located on site on Level 1, outside Hall C.

Hours of Operation:

Date:	Open:	Close
Wednesday, April 29, 2026	6:00 AM	6:00 PM
Thursday, April 30, 2026	6:00 AM	6:00 PM
Friday, May 1, 2026	6:00 AM	6:00 PM
Saturday, May 2, 2026	6:30 AM	After Closing Ceremonies

Food & Concessions

There are concessions located within the convention center, with many food options around the George R. Brown Convention Center as well. Local food trucks will be around Discovery Green. [View a list of nearby restaurants](#).

The food kiosks at the George R Brown Convention Center are **cashless and will only accept debit and credit cards**.

Health and Safety

All children under 12 must always be accompanied by an adult in the Pit area. Be aware of apparel and hair safety issues while working on your robot. Sandals, open-toed shoes, and Crocs are not allowed in the Pits, fields, or other teamwork areas. Wear relaxed, fun and appropriate clothing; remember, you represent your team and *FIRST*. Body paint in lieu of clothes, bathing suits and other revealing clothes are not appropriate. Face coverings and vaccinations are not required but are recommended. If you are feeling ill, please do not attend the event.

Enhanced Security Measures

As part of our continued commitment to attendee safety, each year we re-evaluate the safety measures we instate at the Championship. The perimeter of the screening area will expand this year to include parts of Discovery Green and Avenidas de las Americas. Security entrances will all be located at these outdoor perimeters, along with the previous GRB/Hotel walkway entrances. There will be metal detection screenings at all event entrances. For any attendee that does alert when going through the detectors, they will then move to a secondary screening line. We expect this process to be similar in entry time as our previous process.

Additionally, we will be using our canine dog teams during team load in for vehicle screening at the loading docks for both *FIRST* Robotics Competition and *FIRST* Tech Challenge.

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These enhanced security measures are part of our ongoing commitment to providing a safe and welcoming environment. Please make sure that you read through the prohibited items list and follow the directions of event staff to assist in a quicker entry and thank you for your cooperation in making this event a great experience for everyone!

Mascots

Please keep safety in mind and make sure that mascot and team costumes are safe for the wearer as to vision and movement and are comfortable and cool enough to prevent fainting and dehydration. Mascots are not allowed on the playing field.

Medical Incidents

FIRST requires that physical injuries and medical problems, however slight, be documented and reported to the party conducting the event or his or her designee and to *FIRST* Headquarters within 48 hours of the occurrence. Medical incidents can be reported electronically from any Wi-Fi enabled device using the Medical Incident Form on the [*FIRST* Reporting Portal](#). Pit Admins have tablets that can be utilized to report incidents to *FIRST*.

Reporting Youth Protection and Youth Safety Concerns

The Youth Protection Concern form on the [*FIRST* Reporting Portal](#) can be used to report concerns related to Youth Protection and Youth Safety that do not involve medical incidents or physical injuries, such as bullying, harassment or inappropriate conduct involving or impacting youth participants. Feedback about issues such as game play, rule changes, awards, and event management (other than medical/safety issues) are considered program related concerns and not youth protection issues and should be shared with *FIRST* via customerservice@firstinspires.org. Please note that match results and award results are final and that we will not review match videos.

Supporting Mental Health at *FIRST* Championship

Taking care of your mental well-being is just as important as your team's performance on the field. If you're feeling overwhelmed, stressed, or need someone to talk to, confidential counseling services are available on-site for adults and youth participants. The Harris Center for Mental Health will provide trained counselors who will offer confidential, on-site counseling services to *FIRST* participants Thu-Sat from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

To Schedule an Appointment, Scan the QR code or complete this [form](#). Walk-Ins Welcome (Based on Availability)



If you have questions, email safety@firstinspires.org.

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Note about Confidentiality: All appointments are private, and the limited data collected via the form is used only for scheduling. It will be deleted after the event.

Safety Glasses

Safety Glasses are required to be worn by everyone while in the *FIRST* Robotics Competition and *FIRST* Tech Challenge Pit Area. Safety Glasses are available for spectators at major Pit Entrances for these programs, but teams should plan to bring their own.

Security

Be sure to keep valuable items with you always or placed in a lockable compartment in your Pit station. *FIRST* and the George R. Brown Convention Center does not guarantee security of personal items. We strongly recommend that you do not leave behind valuable items in your Pits at any time, such as personal computers, cell phones, cameras, etc. You can report any lost items to the Event Information Desk (see Lost and Found).

Remember, the Pits are open to the public. Please take proper security measures to protect your valuable items.

Prohibited Items

- Abusive, foul, or disruptive language
- Aerosol containers of any kind
- Animals (except service animals to aid guests with disabilities)
- Coolers*
- Fighting, taunting, threatening remarks, gestures, or harassment of any kind
- Fireworks, firearms, and weapons of any kind (including parking lots)
- Glass containers of any kind
- Illegal substances, drugs, and drug paraphernalia
- Knives of any length except pocketknives no longer than 4"
- Laser Pointers
- Noisemakers (musical instruments, bullhorns, air horns, whistles, etc.)
- Outside Alcohol/Flasks
- Outside food or beverages*
- Smoking or the use of vapor (or similar) devices
- Throwing objects
- Trespassing, soliciting, peddling, and loitering
- Unauthorized/unlicensed vendors are not allowed.
- No unauthorized solicitation and materials including handbills, flyers, stickers, giveaways, samples, etc.
- Unmanned Aircraft Systems & Radio-Controlled Model Aircraft/Drones
- Any other item or action deemed dangerous or inappropriate

Event security reserves the right to deem any other item inappropriate. No prohibited item will be accepted at the entry gates for safekeeping.

*Exceptions will be made for those with medical requirements and/or special needs. Individuals with these special needs should contact a security person at their entry gate for special attention.

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Houston Highlights

The City has put together a [list of activities](#) for our community.

Local Transportation

Metro Transportation is available in Houston - **Purchase discount passes**

For more information about public transportation and the accessibility of Houston public transportation, please visit the Houston Metroride Store.

TAP AND GO TO THE 2026 FIRST ROBOTICS CONFERENCE

METRO invites you to explore our city with the all-new **METRO FIRST ROBOTICS PASS**. This **ALL-ACCESS** pass includes **UNLIMITED** travel using **METRO Local Bus**, **METRO Rail**, and our **Downtown Direct** service to the airports. Enjoy our all-you-can-ride service, **April 28 through May 3, 2026**, with just the tap of your pass!

METRO FIRST ROBOTICS PASS*

Students:	\$10
Adults:	\$20

*METRO First Robotics Pass is not required to ride METRO services. General one-way fare starts at \$1.25 each way.

METRO
RideMETRO.org | Call or text 713-635-4000

Main: <https://www.metroridestore.org/category-s/157.htm>

Adult Card: <https://www.metroridestore.org/product-p/rob-001.htm>

Student Card: <https://www.metroridestore.org/product-p/rob-002.htm>

Innovation Faire

The Innovation Faire on **Level 2** brings together *FIRST* sponsors, supporters and students with engaging interactive events and booths. There will also be a college scholarship row, and other interactive exhibits. The students will take away a deeper understanding of why each sponsor celebrates STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) as the basis for their companies' existence, and how they can be a part of it in the future.

Hours of Operation:

Wednesday, April 29, 2026	10:00am - 4:00pm
Thursday, April 30, 2026	10:00am - 4:00pm
Friday, May 1, 2026	10:00am - 4:00pm

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Live Streaming

The [live stream](#) will be available on April 29, 2026.

Registration and Badging

Please be ready to present your ID when picking up your badge.

Check-In

FIRST requires every Championship attendee to be registered and badged, including adult team mentors, youth team members, parents, family members, chaperones, etc. who are participating in the event. Spectator registration grants access to participant-only activities and increases the security of the event. Team registration should be completed prior to your arrival, as this will expedite your team’s attendee badge collection and your entrance to the event.

Consent and Release Forms

All participating team members and volunteers must complete the current season *FIRST* Consent and Release form prior to arrival.

Pronoun Ribbons

Pronoun ribbons are available at Central Registration and program Pit Admins.

Registration and Badging Hours

Central Registration Hours of Operation:

Date:	Open:	Close
Tuesday, April 28, 2026	7:00 AM	6:00 PM
Wednesday, April 29, 2025	7:00 AM	6:00 PM
Thursday, April 30, 2026	7:00 AM	6:00 PM
Friday, May 1, 2026	7:00 AM	6:00 PM
Saturday, May 2, 2026	7:00 AM	2:00 PM

Satellite Registration Hours of Operation:

Date:	Satellite Area:	Open:	Close:
Wednesday, April 29, 2026	<i>FIRST</i> Tech Challenge	7:30 AM	12:00 PM
Wednesday, April 29, 2026	<i>FIRST</i> Robotics Competition	7:00 AM	6:00 PM
Wednesday, April 29, 2026	<i>FIRST</i> LEGO League Challenge	11:00 AM	3:00 PM

Schedule

Please see the *FIRST* Championship app for the full list of events. (coming soon)

Student Ambassador

Guests are invited to take an in-depth tour of the Championship with our most knowledgeable tour guides, our students! Tours are available Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. All tours are subject to availability. Please see the Student Ambassadors desk located near registration to set up a tour.

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Team Picture Area

There is a designated area at the *FIRST* Championship where teams are welcome to take group pictures with their sponsors, team mates etc. This area is located right outside of the GRB Convention Center. There will be a *FIRST* sign where teams can pose for their pictures to be taken. Please note, teams will need to supply their own photographers for the pictures.

Venue Information

Houston, our gracious host city, is excited to welcome 50,000 people from around the world who will join us for the ultimate celebration of STEM and innovation. In 2025, the City of Houston hosted the largest *FIRST* Championship event to date, with approximately 50,000 attendees from more than 50 countries. The 2026 *FIRST* Championship will continue our focus on providing a welcoming and fun space for the *FIRST* community to gather and celebrate our season.

Campus Locations

The *FIRST* Championship Event is a multiple point campus, which will include four venues/spaces:

George R Brown Convention Center

FIRST® LEGO® League Explore, *FIRST*® LEGO® League Challenge, *FIRST*® Tech Challenge, *FIRST*® Robotics Competition, *FIRST*® Championship Conferences, the *FIRST*® Store, and the Innovation Faire including Scholarship Row. The George R. Brown Convention Center is located on Avenida de las Americas. Visit the venue site here: <http://www.grbhouston.com/>

Discovery Green

FIRST Championship Block Party

The Marriott Marquis Hotel

Headquarter Hotel

The Hilton America's Hotel

Headquarter Hotel along with a range of meetings and events

Campus Map (coming soon)

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Lost and Found

Items for lost and found will be logged in at the information desk located near registration for the duration of that day. At the end of the day, the items will be delivered to building security where they will remain through the event. At the end of the event and for up to 30 days post event, please call the facility directly for missing items.

George R. Brown Convention Center
713-853-8087 GRBinfo@houstonfirst.com

Items lost under the bleachers: Items of extreme importance such as medication, a purse or wallet, please note where you were sitting and check in at pit administration. Pit Administration will then contact security to retrieve your lost item. For all other items, security will make periodic sweeps and deliver found items to the Lost and Found at the information desk where you can then retrieve your items.

Under no circumstances should anyone but security go under the bleachers.

Parking

[Surface Lot & Garage Parking](#) is available around the George R. Brown Convention Center. Check out the [interactive map](#) to find and reserve parking in real time.

Shipping

The George R. Brown Convention Center cannot accept shipments directly. For robot shipping please refer to the program addendums.

Wireless

Free wireless internet access is available in the common areas of the George R. Brown Convention Center. This access is not available on the Pit floor or in the playing field areas of the George R. Brown Convention Center. When not actively using your Wi-Fi, please switch off your Wi-Fi and personal hotspots to benefit robot performance.

Due to the wireless nature of *FIRST* control systems, wireless availability will be evaluated during the event. Teams will not be allowed to set up their own wireless networks at the Championship. While we certainly appreciate the positive potential team-created wireless networks could represent, there is a chance such wireless networks could interfere with planned activities during the event.

Volunteers

As part of our global robotics community, *FIRST* volunteers build and bolster millions of young people to embrace innovation and collaboration. At the 2026 *FIRST* Championship, you will work side by side with *FIRST* participants from around the world to help build their leadership and problem-solving skills and, their sense of belonging and self-confidence, and most importantly, help them have fun! Join us for the ultimate innovation celebration and build up and inspire the next generation of changemakers.

Find out more about [volunteering](#) at *FIRST* Championship. Check out the Volunteer Guide for the most up-to-date information on the *FIRST* Championship volunteer experience.

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