

2026 *FIRST* Robotics Competition Emcee Training



FIRST
LEGO
LEAGUE

FIRST
TECH
CHALLENGE

FIRST
ROBOTICS
COMPETITION

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Responsibilities & Expectations

- The Emcee role is vital to a successful event; the better informed, knowledgeable, and comfortable you are in your role will directly translate to the success of an event and the enjoyment of the teams and spectators.
- The Emcee and Game Announcer (GA) work as a team to entertain and inform the audience in an engaging fashion.
- The Emcee role is the visual *FIRST* presence.
- The Emcee is a performance role. The ideal candidate is a local science and engineering role model with charisma.

Responsibilities & Expectations

- This position requires:
 - a lively, animated personality
 - good public speaking skills
 - the ability to handle unanticipated situations
 - a lot of energy
- The Emcee is responsible for:
 - opening and closing the competition
 - introducing guest speakers, Judges, teams, agenda, and awards
 - imparting the *FIRST* vision and mission
- The Emcee must:
 - embody the spirit and professionalism of *FIRST*
 - be fun, energetic, accessible to the teams, and be able to clearly "drive" the event

FIRST[®] Robotics Competition

Competition Schedule

** Note: schedule varies between Events – See Volunteer Coordinator for specifics*

Daily schedules are based on the type of event and the number of event days. Regionals and District Championships are typically four-day events, while District events and shortened Regionals are three-day events.

Daily schedules will vary by event, but there are common components in all events:

- Practice matches
- Opening Ceremonies
- Qualification Matches
- Alliance Selection
- Playoff Tournament and Award Presentations
- Closing Awards Ceremony

The Event Part I - Preparation

Before the Event

- Confirm volunteer position with the Volunteer Coordinator, as well as the schedule of the event and the hours you will be required on-site
- Familiarize yourself with game rules, game-play strategy, and season updates
- Familiarize yourself with the teams competing at your event
- Review Alliance Selection procedure with script and video
- Access the tools for Emcees and Game Announcers which will help guide you thru the event with Team introductions, Alliance Selection, etc. *****NOTE: for both of these tools you will need to bring your own device (computer/tablet/phone)***
 - **FRC Matchup:** <https://frcmatchup.com/events> (this is the more streamlined and basic tool)
 - **GA Tool:** www.gatool.org (this is the more sophisticated and complex tool)

The Event Part I - Preparation

Onsite at the Event

- Introduce yourself to the Scoring Table team you'll be working with:
 - FTA (*FIRST* Technical Advisor) and Field Supervisor
 - Game Announcer and Scorekeeper
 - Head Referee, AV/Production crew
- Review the Opening Ceremonies script with the Event Manager
- Prepare your brief opening remarks
- Review pronunciation of Judge Advisor and guest speaker names and titles
- Establish team introduction process with Announcer, FTA and Field Supervisor
- Review Alliance Selection process with Technical Director, FTA, Scorekeeper and Game Announcer
- Review all awards scripts before Award Ceremonies, edit and seek inconsistencies

The Event Part II - Let The Games Begin!

- After the Event Manager has confirmed that all Guest Speakers and Judges are present, the show begins with an opening video.
- The Opening Ceremonies script, which has been prepared by the Event Manager, Technical Director and the Emcee, is used by the Emcee, A/V Crew, and Event Manager to ensure a synchronized execution.
- **Use the script as a template.** Make note cards to summarize/bullet point the script and personalize it. ***Do NOT just read the script directly.*** The script is a working document where your experience and remarks are needed to help color the message.
- You ***MUST*** follow the order of the script: the Technical Director and Event Manager are staging Speakers and video rolls in order. Your job is to “tee” them up.
- Don’t wander around the playing field while speaking. Address the camera and audience. If you wander, the camera is constantly moving trying to follow you

The Event

Part II - Let The Games Begin!

Match play

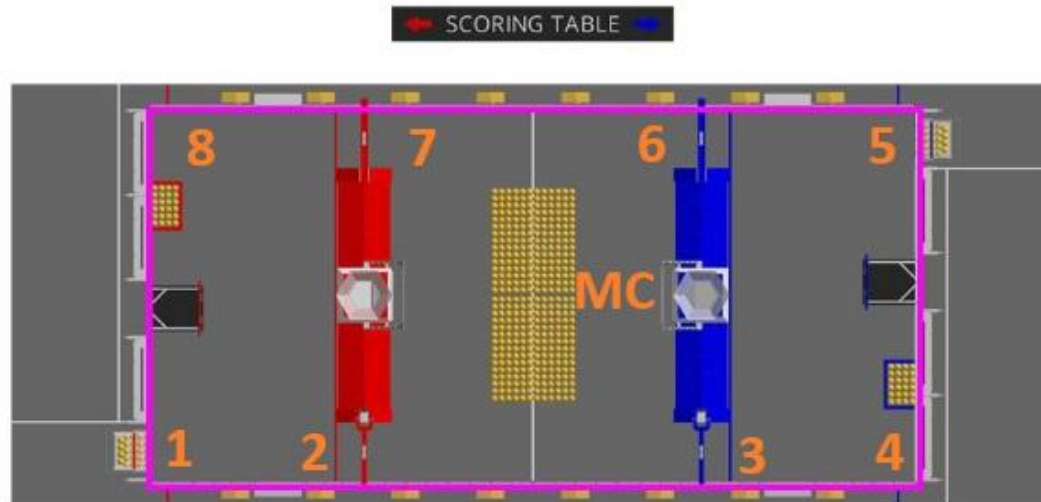
- Introduce each team by number **starting with the Red Alliance** team closest to the scoring table and proceed counter-clockwise around the field. The GA completes the introduction (first two sponsors, nickname and hometown & state; use short name thereafter).
- After all teams are introduced, and after the light tower shows robots are linked, the FTA will give you a thumbs up to start the match. Say ***“Drivers behind the line, and 3, 2, 1, GO!”*** to start the match. The Emcee ***MUST*** be consistent with this countdown for each and every match.
- **Do Not Say:** “Red Alliance ready? Blue Alliance ready? Field ready? Referee ready?” before every match. This adds time, slowing down the event. Your visual check will tell you whether everyone is ready.
- The GA provides play-by-play commentary and announces the official score after the match.

The Event

Part II - Let The Games Begin!

Alliance Selection

- The Emcee runs the Alliance Selection process after all Qualification matches are concluded. An Alliance Selection script is available on the Emcee & GA Training Material webpage. Work with the FTA to set the staging process on the field.
- The Captain identifiers (armbands, buttons, etc) should be placed on the field carpet : 4 across the front of the field, and 4 across the back. Alliance Captains stand at corresponding numbers when introduced.



The Event

Part II - Let The Games Begin!

Alliance Selection – *****use the Alliance Selection script*****

- After the Qualification matches conclude, begin by congratulating all competing teams and introduce the Alliance Selection video, which outlines the Selection process. There is an 8-minute timer which will begin counting down to the start of the Alliance Selection.
- Using the Alliance Selection script, follow the scripting and procedure to run the Alliance Selection.
- The #1 seed picks first, then work thru the picking order with one pick for each Alliance from Alliance #1 to #8, then reverse the picking order and start at #8, finishing with Alliance #1.

The Event

Part II - Let The Games Begin!

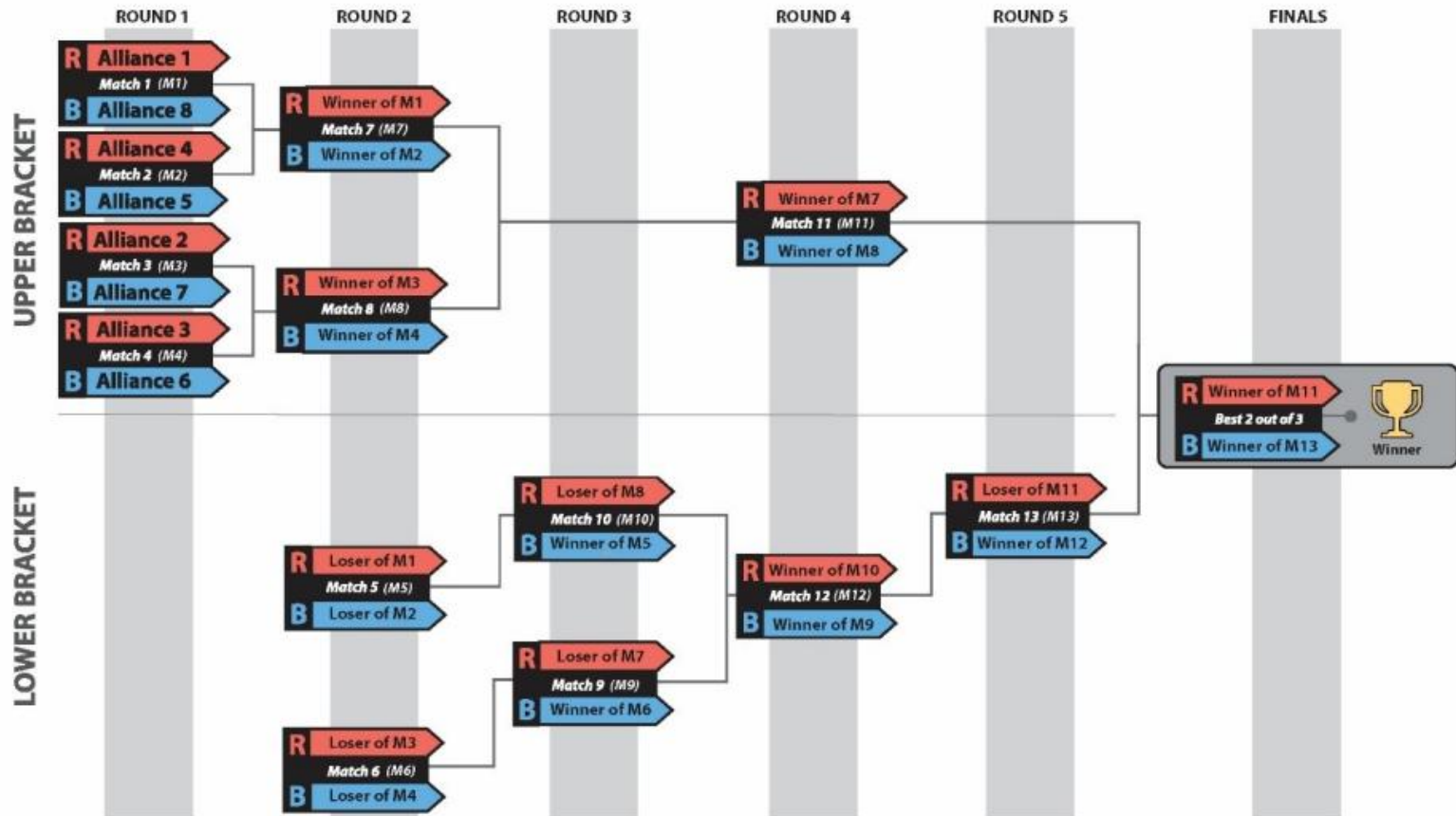
Alliance Selection- *****use the Alliance Selection script*****

- Use the projected Available Teams graphic to view unselected teams.
- If a top eight team selects another top eight team, use this phrasing:
“Would you prefer to join or form your own Alliance?”
- There is a 2 minute “Confer Break” between the selection rounds. Introduce the video using the script.
- At the conclusion of the Alliance Selection, remind the next eight highest ranked teams that they are the back-up teams should an Alliance elect to bring in a substitute.
- All backups must confirm with the Lead Queuer that they will play as a back-up if needed.

The Event

Part II - Let The Games Begin!

Playoff Bracket



The Event

Part II - Let The Games Begin!

Playoff Tournament

- This is a double elimination bracket of the eight Alliances from the Alliance selection. The Emcee and the Game Announcer must help guide the audience and teams thru the bracket, by explaining the team advancement using the supporting graphics/bracket and Playoff script.
- During the break before the Playoff Tournament, do your homework about the competing Alliances. Note past histories, regional facts, etc. to use with the GA during Playoff round team introductions.
- Do the “**FIRST Handshake**” ***before playing the first Finals match***, and after you introduce the teams for the first match of the Finals.
 - After introducing the Alliances, instruct the teams to shake hands in front of the field, and then return to their driver stations to start the match.

The Event

Part II - Let The Games Begin!

THE CEREMONIES

Opening Ceremony

- This sets the tone for the entire competition. It should be fun, upbeat, entertaining, and encouraging. You are the voice for celebrating the accomplishments of the teams and making all feel appreciated and welcome.
- Your introductions of Special Guests and Speakers (Politicians, Sponsors, Celebrities, etc.) should be professional, mature, and polite.
- Be sure to get correct pronunciations and titles from the Guest Speakers before the show begins. Scripts and other people are less reliable.

The Event

Part II - Let The Games Begin!

THE CEREMONIES

Awards Presentations

- Again, this is a place to honor the achievements of the teams. A polished, professional tone is appropriate.
- Prior to the Presentations, review the awards scripts with an eye for typos, bad grammar, missing words, etc.
- The Emcee should read the scripts slowly but with energy, standing in front of the Judges, or “centerstage”.
- The Game Announcer should only read the team Short Name and hometown/state after the Emcee announces the winning team’s number.

The Event

Part III - Performance Tips

- Remove your name badge prior to Opening Ceremony – it doesn't look good on camera.
- Let the microphone do the work. There is no need to scream, shout, or yell like the rest of the crowd - you have the microphone!
- If you push yourself vocally, assuming the audience can't hear you either, you will strain or lose your voice.
- If you can't hear yourself well:
 - Remember that the majority of the speakers are aimed at the audience, *not* at the competition field.
 - The monitor speakers aimed at the playing field can be mixed by the sound engineer to remove the music to allow you to hear yourself better.
 - Inform the Technical Director – it is their job to find a solution

The Event

Part III - Performance Tips

- Speak slowly and clearly. Diction is incredibly important.
- Don't scream into the mic. Really.
- To improve projection:
 - Use your diaphragm, and not your throat, for projection.
 - When inhaling, breathe in and allow your stomach/diaphragm to extend and not your shoulders to rise (try it!).

This technique will help you preserve your voice for the entire two days of the event, not just the first two hours!

- If everything sounds the same to the audience they will eventually tune out, so use vocal variety:
 - Vary your speaking style and volume throughout the event.
 - If your delivery is consistently too “high-energy”, the audience gets anxious and will also lose interest.
 - *An energetic, varied delivery is interesting and inviting to an audience.*

The Event

Part III - Performance Tips

- Routinely check to make sure your headset is in the best position to pick up your voice and not riding too high or too low on your head.
- Don't hold the headset mic to your mouth every time you talk.
- If using a hand-held microphone, hold it close to your mouth and speak into it, not over it.
- Do your homework and double check that team names, team nicknames, Robot names, Sponsors, etc. are all correct.
- During the team introductions fill in pertinent performance statistics, if possible, e.g. "Currently in first place, team 88...", or "Last year's Southwest Regional Winner..."
- The fact that the team won a Judge's award five years ago is NOT pertinent.

The Event

Part III - Performance Tips

- Talk to teams between matches and ask to wear their uniform, carry their flag, etc.
- Team intros are very fast-paced in order to keep the competition on schedule. You will constantly be seeking to find the balance between personalizing the intros and staying on schedule.
- If you have to fill time, review the game, lead a dance, roll a video. Let the music do the work – you DO NOT have to speak/vamp the entire time. Just keep the audience informed of the schedule.
- Be sure to thank all the Volunteer efforts that contribute to the success of the Competition.
- Dress appropriately. No torn jeans, baggy-half-way-down-your butt jeans, etc.

The Event

Part III - Performance Tips

- Work on getting into a rhythm with the Game Announcer, making eye contact and connecting with him/her. Often, the crowd noise is so loud that you cannot hear one another. Establishing a rhythm helps so that you don't step on each other's words (talk at the same time).
- Confirm that your microphone is off before speaking off-line.
- Stay hydrated. And time your restroom breaks wisely!
- Work together with the Event Manager and Technical Director – they are the “Directors” of the show.
- Don't scream into the mic.
- Develop your own style – don't try to be somebody you're not!

The Event

Part IV - Making the Event Professional

- The Emcee's job is to be a visual presence, informing the audience, and keeping the event lively and moving forward. From Opening to Closing Ceremonies, to team introductions, the Emcee is in front of the audience.
- The Game Announcer should primarily speak only during team intros, play-by-play commentary, and score announcement.
- *The differentiation between these roles is critical to:*
 - aid the audience on where to focus their attention
 - create a structure where the Game Announcer supports the Emcee
 - create two specific roles without competitive/overlapping focus and speaking
 - *Consider the structure and success of both Pro sports and talk-show formats.*

The Event

Part IV - Making the Event Professional

- The event is intended to be inspiring, exciting, entertaining, and most of all, as professional and seamless as you can make it.
- Be ready to begin each match as soon as the field is reset, and do not get distracted by personal business (phone calls, chatting, etc.).
- Floor access needs to be controlled- do not encourage parades, dances, tunnels, etc. unless instructed to do so by the Event Manager.
- Fun and professional are not mutually exclusive. But it does take work!
- Get beyond yourself and consider the event. Remember that the teams and audience want to be entertained by both the event and match play.
- Join the receiving line during the Awards Ceremony and help lead the congratulatory spirit!

The Event

Part IV - Making the Event Professional

- Allow some silence to emphasize what is being said.
- Periodically recap game rules and strategy between rounds.
- Do not play favorites or endlessly praise veteran teams over rookies (or other veterans for that matter.)
- Use the complete game name during Opening and Awards ceremonies, as well as during the Alliance Selection.
- ***Do not*** banter with the GA over the mic. This is a live event, not radio.
- Do not interfere or attempt to influence Referee rulings.
- Do not emphasize winning above all else.
- Remember, the students and teams are the focus, not you.

The Event

Part IV - Making the Event Professional

- Don't scream or talk so fast that you cannot be understood. You have 6+ hours per day to maintain audience attention. Screaming unintelligibly is grating on the audience.
- **Never** direct strategy to teams.
- Do not do “shout-outs”, “happy birthday” wishes etc. to the audience. This is both unprofessional and opens the floodgates for endless birthday announcements. When there are requests, use discretion about possibly working the announcement into a team intro.
- Behave, as well as sound, professional. (*For example, do not stand on your chair to gain a better sightline!*)
- Thank all the Volunteer efforts that make the competition possible, from the Regional Planning Committee to the Field Reset Crew – the event could not happen without them.

The Event

Part IV - Best Practices

- *What Works – Emcee*

- Driving the show thru the arc of the event and feeling the energy of the audience.
- Double checking correct name and title for any speaker you'll be introducing, even if you think you know how to pronounce it.
- Speaking clearly to the audience when introducing teams and during Opening and Award Ceremonies.
- Speaking with a positive and enthusiastic style.
- Highlighting teams that have excelled and providing positive reinforcement for teams having a difficult competition.
- Working with the DJ as unscheduled breaks occur.
- Reviewing scripts with the Event Manager the day before the event. Make index cards outlining the script so that you don't carry the Opening Ceremony script onto the field.

The Event

Part IV - Best Practices

- ***What Works***

- Introducing yourself to teams, Judges, VIPs, Staff, Field Crew, A/V Crew
- Establishing team introduction protocol with GA and Field Supervisor
- Establishing Alliance Selection protocol with Technical Director, Field Supervisor, Scorer and GA.
- Reviewing all awards scripts prior to an Awards Ceremony. Seek inconsistencies, mistakes, etc. Confirm any changes with Technical Director and Scorer.
- Establishing traffic pattern and protocol for award ceremonies with Event Mgr.
- Adapting to change

The Event

Part IV - Worst Practices

- ***What Does Not Work***

- Monotone delivery.
- Making the event about yourself.
- Being distracted and not ready to start intros for each match in a timely way.
- Highlighting your association with a team or Announcing great things about a team you're associated with, even though you haven't told anyone you are associated with a certain team.
- Not studying up on the team accomplishments, where teams are from, or interesting fun facts about the teams.
- Not staying in sync with the GA on announcements or coordinating a plan for who will be announcing what

Lead Volunteer Communication

With your team of volunteers:

- As a Lead Volunteer you are a LEADER.
- Lead Volunteers must communicate with the Volunteer Coordinator(s) to get names and begin communicating with their team as soon as possible via e mail etc.
- As a team leader, you must communicate with your volunteers to create a sense of a team and teamwork.
- By doing so, questions can be answered in advance, comfort levels increased, and miscellaneous information gotten out of the way.
- There should be no surprises when you get together with your volunteer team at the event.

Lead Volunteer Communication

With the other lead volunteers at your event:

- Take the opportunity to meet with other lead volunteers and discuss your expectations.
- Discuss overlapping areas of responsibility and decide on how issues in these areas should be handled.
- Clarify each others roles BEFORE a problem arises.
- Make sure everyone understands the non-medical incident report .

Critical Review

- Be prepared
- Remember to keep the focus on the teams and students
- Use your personality to help make the teams and event shine
- Stay on schedule
- Make the event as polished and professional as possible
- Remember that the playing field is only one piece of the event. Decisions made there effect all other areas.
- Utilize the experience of the Event Manager and Technical Director
- You represent *FIRST*!

Conclusion

- Every *FIRST* event is a place for celebration; a gathering of smart and dedicated students, educators, professionals, parents, and mentors.
- It is the primary role of the Emcee to breathe life into the event, to be the leader of the celebration – illuminating all that needs to be celebrated!

Resources & Contact Info

- **Resource and Training Materials:**

- <https://www.firstinspires.org/resources/library/frc/emcee-ga-training>

- **Gracious Volunteer Experience for Event Volunteers:**

- <https://training.firstinspires.org/courses/the-gracious-volunteer-event-volunteer>

- **All FIRST Robotics Competition Event Position Descriptions:**

- https://www.firstinspires.org/community/volunteers/roles#first_robotics_competition

- **FRC Emcee and GA Position Descriptions:**

- **Emcee:** <https://www.firstinspires.org/community/volunteers/roles/emcee>

- **GA:** <https://www.firstinspires.org/community/volunteers/roles/game-announcer>

- **FRC Matchup:** <https://frcmatchup.com/events>

- **GA Tool Access:** <https://mailchi.mp/05884400853c/gatool> **GA Tool:** www.gatool.org

- **Questions or concerns, please contact:**

- Blair Hundertmark, *FIRST* Lead Emcee 800 871-8326 ext. #441 Blair@firstinspires.org

What's Next?

- Now that you have reviewed the key materials to succeed in your position be sure to:
 - Review all game info and any other materials available.
 - Sign up for GA Tool and load onto the device you'll bring to the event
 - Plan to participate in the pre and post-event training calls. These calls help volunteers at all Regional and District events be successful!
 - Complete the post-event survey