2026 *FIRST* Robotics Competition

Game Announcer Training

FIRST.

FIRST
LEGO
LEAGUE

FIRST
TECH
CHALLENGE

FIRST
ROBOTICS
COMPETITION

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Responsibilities & Expectations

- The Game Announcer (GA) 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 teams are our "Customers". Review all the Customer Service training materials and Volunteer behavior expectations.

- The Emcee and Game Announcer work as a team to entertain and inform the audience in an engaging fashion.

- The Game Announcer role is the audible *FIRST* presence.

Responsibilities & Expectations

- The Game Announcer is a performance role, working with the Emcee to:

    - introduce teams

    - provide play-by-play commentary

    - report the scores

- This position requires:

    - a lively, animated vocal personality

    - good public speaking skills

    - a pleasant sounding voice

    - the ability to handle unanticipated situations

    - a lot of energy

- The Game Announcer must:

    - embody the spirit and professionalism of *FIRST*

    - be fun, energetic, creative and organized

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)
    - Emcee
    - Scorekeeper
    - Head Referee

- Review correct name, title and pronunciation of Emcee's name

- Review team info and fill-in any missing team nicknames, robot names, sponsors

- Confirm team name pronunciations

- Connect laptop/tablet/phone and update FRC Matchup or GA Tool to load in event info

- Establish team introduction protocol with Emcee

- Establish Alliance Selection process with Emcee and FTA

The Event
Part II - Let The Games Begin!

- On Competition days, after the Event Manager has confirmed that all Guest Speakers and Judges are present, the show begins. The Opening Ceremonies script that has been prepared by the Event Manager is used by the Emcee, A/V Crew, and Event Manager to ensure synchronization.

- Begin Match play
  - After the Emcee introduces each team by number, the Game Announcer completes the intro (first two sponsors, nickname and hometown & state. Use short name thereafter).
  - Then the Emcee counts down *"Drivers behind the lines, 3, 2, 1, Go"* to start the match. The Emcee MUST be consistent with this countdown for each and every match.
  - The Game Announcer provides play-by-play commentary and time remaining announcements throughout the match.
  - The Referees score the match and the Game Announcer announces the score and penalties as the score is displayed by A/V crew.

- Repeat!!

The Event
Part II - Let The Games Begin!

- Play-by-play is to be done by **ONE** Game Announcer only per match. The matches are too short to have more than one voice call the match without vocally stepping on top of one another.

- If there are two people serving as GA, options include:

  - One person do team introductions and report the scores, with the second person doing the play-by-play.

  - Rotate the position throughout the day (morning or afternoon, every 10 matches, etc.)

- Game Announcers should sit at the Scoring Table.

- Do not direct private comments to those watching online. Your audience is in the arena. If you make it exciting for them, it will translate to those watching online.
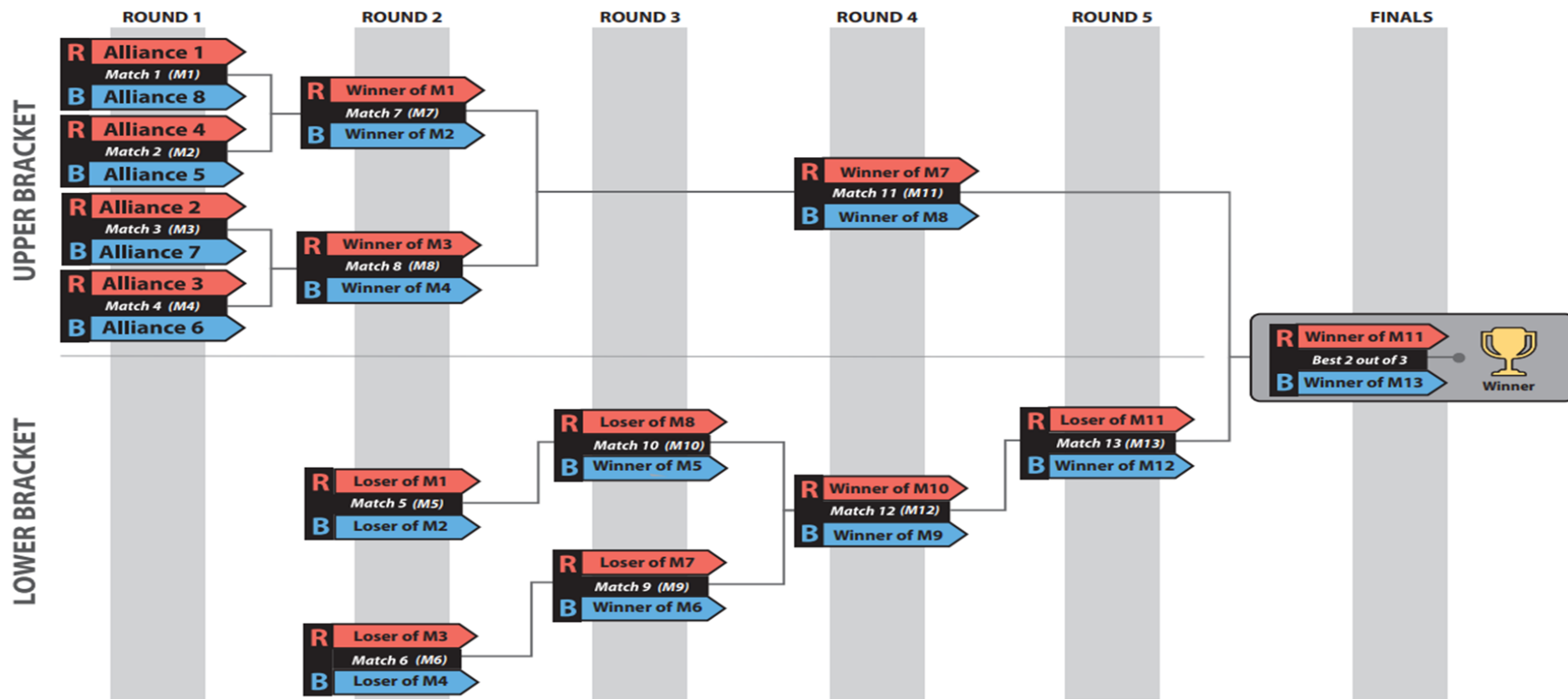
The Event
Part II - Let The Games Begin!

- During Alliance Selection the GA should announce the team's short name (eg. The RoboLizards) after the Emcee announces the team number.

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 and be very familiar with the format.

ROUND 1

Match	Red	Blue
Upper Bracket Round 1 - Match 1	Alliance 1	Alliance 8
Upper Bracket Round 1 - Match 2	Alliance 4	Alliance 5
Upper Bracket Round 1 - Match 3	Alliance 2	Alliance 7
Upper Bracket Round 1 - Match 4	Alliance 3	Alliance 6

ROUND 2

Match	Red	Blue
Lower Bracket Round 2 - Match 5	Loser of Match 1	Loser of Match 2
Lower Bracket Round 2 - Match 6	Loser of Match 3	Loser of Match 4
Upper Bracket Round 2 - Match 7	Winner of Match 1	Winner of Match 2
Upper Bracket Round 2 - Match 8	Winner of Match 3	Winner of Match 4

ROUND 3

Match	Red	Blue
Lower Bracket Round 3 - Match 9	Loser of Match 7	Winner of Match 6
Lower Bracket Round 3 - Match 10	Loser of Match 8	Winner of Match 5
==6 minute break - videos & music==		

ROUND 4

Match	Red	Blue
Upper Bracket Round 4 - Match 11	Winner of Match 7	Winner of Match 8
Lower Bracket Round 4 - Match 12	Winner of Match 9	Winner of Match 10
==15 minute break - Awards Segment 1==		

Imagery, Gracious Professionalism, Team Spirit,

Rising All Star

ROUND 5

Match	Red	Blue
Lower Bracket Round 5 - Match 13	Loser of Match 11	Winner of Match 12
==15 minute break - Awards Segment 2==		

Autonomous, Creativity, Quality, Industrial Design

FINALS – *best 2 out of 3 matches*

Finals- Match 14	Red	Blue
	Winner of Match 11	Winner of Match 13
==15 minute break - Awards Segment 3==		
Innovation in Control, Excellence in Engineering, Team Sustainability, Judges		

Finals- Match 15	Red	Blue
	Winner of Match 11	Winner of Match 13
if Finals are tied 1-1 ==15 minute break - Awards Segment 4==		
Rookie All Star, Dean's List, Engineering Inspiration *(these awards may be presented at the conclusion of all matches at the discretion of the event organizers)*		

Finals- Match 16 *(if needed)*	Red	Blue
	Winner of Match 11	Winner of Match 13
==Awards Segment 5==		
Finalist, Winner, *FIRST* Impact Award		

The Event
Part II - Let The Games Begin!

- During the Awards Ceremonies the GA should only announce winning team Names. The Emcee reads the Awards script and ends with the team #.

  - Coordinate this with the Emcee prior to the Awards Ceremony.

  - After the Emcee announces the award winning team's number, the GA should announce the team short name and hometown/state.

  - *Only* announce the team short name and hometown/state. The more you talk the less award "Stinger" music gets played to help with the celebration of winning.

The Event
Part III - Performance Tips

- Speak slowly and clearly. Diction is incredibly important!

- 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.*

- 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.

- If using a hand-held microphone, hold it close to your mouth and speak *into* it, not over it.

The Event
Part III - Performance Tips

- Do your homework **before** the event: know the game rules and point values. Watch web-streaming or archived Competitions to get a sense of game strategy.

- Double check that team names, team nicknames, Robot names, Sponsors, etc. are all correct.

- Keep team intros fast-paced in order to keep the competition on schedule.

- Do not make editorial/coaching comments, e.g. "team 77 should just pin team 78 against the rail until time runs out."

- Confirm that your microphone is off before speaking off-line.

- Don't yell into the mic.

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The Event
Part III - Performance Tips

- Work on getting into a rhythm with the Emcee, 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).

- Stay hydrated. Time your restroom breaks wisely.

- Your job is to comment on the play, *NOT* direct it.

- Work together with the Event Manager and Technical Director – they are the "Directors" of the show.

- Develop your own style – don't try to be somebody you're not!

- Do not take up a large amount of Scoring Table space. Many people share it, and you should not crowd the Scoring Table with a lot of personal equipment (monitors etc.)

The Event
Part III - Performance Tips

- Make time announcements at 1:00 minute played, 30 seconds remaining, 10 seconds remaining, and countdown the last 3 seconds.

- Make the descriptions as lively and interesting as possible without making it sound like a "Death Match".

- Use optimistic phrases to encourage poorly performing teams, e.g. "team 103 is trying to get something going", "It looks like team 132 is having trouble getting their robot in gear, hopefully they can figure something out, there's still 1:30 remaining in the match."

- **Silence is okay**. Let the action speak for itself sometimes. Constant announcing will cause the audience to tune you out.

- This event is a marathon, not a sprint. Time your energy and delivery accordingly.

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.

- 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.

- Do not play favorites or endlessly praise veteran teams over rookies (or other veterans for that matter.)

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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.

- ***Do Not*** banter with the Emcee over the mic. This is a *live* event, not radio.

- Do not do "shout-outs", "happy birthday" wishes etc. to the audience. This is unprofessional and opens the floodgates for endless birthday announcements. Direct requests to the Emcee.

- Behave professionally (e.g, don't stand on a chair to gain a better sightline…)

The Event
Part IV - Making the Event Professional

- Don't fill the time between matches by talking, or endlessly making announcements. **Let the music fill this time**.

- This is a **live** event: your job is to do play-by-play and intros, not color commentary between matches to "entertain".

- During the team introductions, and only if the event is on schedule, announce select **pertinent** performance statistics, if possible, e.g. "Currently ranked first", or "Last year's Southwest Regional Winner". But be selective! The fact that the team won a Judge's award five years ago is **NOT** pertinent.

The Event

Part IV - Making the Event Professional

- Do not interfere or attempt to influence Referee rulings.

- Do not emphasize winning above all else.

- Allow some silence - this is not a horserace. You have to make all 100+ matches interesting.

- Be succinct with penalty announcements and announce specific team #.

- GA's must announce team name for each & every team intro.

The Event

Part IV **- Making the Event Professional**

- Remember, the students and teams are intended to be center stage, not you!

- 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.).

- Colorful speech and a clipped delivery work well.

- Never direct strategy to teams.

The Event
Part IV - Best Practices

- *What Works –*

    - Being organized about the teams and their names/nicknames; especially when the teams are announced.

    - Speaking clearly and describing the action on the field.

    - Speaking with a positive and engaging style which is not too excited.

    - Highlighting teams doing well and encouraging teams who aren't.

    - Keeping the audience engaged even when play is slow.

    - Establish team introduction protocol with Emcee

    - Introduce yourself to teams, Judges, VIPs, Staff, Field and A/V Crew

    - Establish final score announcement timing with Scorer

    - Establish penalty announcement protocol with Head Ref

    - Prepping for all awards announcements with Emcee prior to Ceremony.

    - Establish alliance selection protocol with Emcee

The Event

Part IV - Worst Practices

- ***What Does Not Work***

  - Monotone talking or play by play, or talking too much. Let the music fill between matches.

  - Not being ready for all announcements, being distracted.

  - Highlighting your association with a team and/or announcing great about them even though you have not told anyone you are associated with a certain team

  - Not staying in sync with the Emcee on announcements or coordinating a plan for who will be announcing what.

  - Not having studied up on the teams for the Event.

The Event

- Alliances
- Fuel
- Bump
- Trench
- Outpost
- Hub
- Center Line
- Depot
- Tower
- Alliance Zone
- Neutral Zone
- Alliance Area
- Driver Station

- Robot Starting Line
- Corral
- Guard
- Autonomous & Teleop Periods
- Endgame
- Transition Shift
- Alliance Shift
- Energized Ranking Point
- Supercharged Ranking Point
- Traversal Ranking point
- Chute and Chute Door
- Rung
- Guardrail

The Event

Part IV - Sample *REBUILT presented by Haas* Terminology

- Parking
- Climbing
- April Tag
- Human Player
- Driver
- Shoots
- Match Point
- Foul
- Sprints, Sails, Dashes, Heads, Rushes
- Slides, Slips, Creeps
- Racing the clock
- Travels the field
- Surrogate
- Yellow & Red cards
- Disabled

- Feeds their robot
- Sets a pick
- Releases the Fuel
- Tosses
- Grapples
- Climbs aboard
- Drives the rail
- Tips over and rights itself
- Spinning their wheels
- Smokes the motors
- Boxes out
- Bypassed

The Event
Part IV - Making the Event Professional
Sample *FIRST* Announcer Terminology

- **Note:** these sample phrases give you an example of appropriate *REBUILT presented by Haas* terminology that is colorful and descriptive *without* being vicious.

- For more examples, use online resources (for example, the thebluealliance.com has many archived event videos) to locate demos from previous competitions.

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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 Game Announcer to describe the action on the competition field in a positive manner clearly, concisely, with energy and enthusiasm. Your role is to be a "voice", not a "face".

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

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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