2019 Event Registration FAQ

Updated 10/18/18

When will closing times for preference submission be?

Closing times will be Noon Eastern. This time will ensure our full IT, team support, and *FIRST* Robotics Competition staff are available to deal with any issues that may arise.

Teams will have a full seven days to enter their preferences. As we've said before, the best way to ensure you are on time is to plan to be early. With teams in 26 countries for the 2019 season, it's not possible for us to pick a time that is convenient for everyone. If you would prefer a midnight (your local time, I'm assuming) deadline, you may want to consider setting that as the internal deadline for your team the midnight before the absolute deadline from *FIRST*.

Also, please remember you can adjust your preferences as many times as you wish until the deadline, without penalty. You could submit a preliminary list shortly after the preference window opens to ensure you don't miss the deadline completely, then adjust if necessary before the window closes.

Doesn't this mean local teams may get locked out of events they need to attend?

This is unlikely. We know some teams have only one or a small number of events they can attend for financial or other reasons. We want to make sure those teams get into the events they need.

Just as in prior seasons, Regional Directors and District Management will be able to reserve slots at events. These reserved slots won't be part of the automated assignment process. The intent of these reserved slots is to accommodate later registering teams and those needing access to that particular event. We occasionally go to extreme lengths, including expanding event capacity or asking better-resourced teams already registered at the event to relocate, to fit these teams in.

Teams will have full control over which, how many, and in what priority events are added to their preference lists. If you truly can only go to a single event, you should put just that event on your list, and you are guaranteed to at least be waitlisted for that event. If you are waitlisted for the event after the assignment process is run, you should then reach out to your Regional Director or District Management explaining your situation and ask to be moved into the event. If you have a clear and compelling reason why you can only attend that one event, they will do their best to accommodate you.

Conversely, you should put as many events on your preference list that you are able and interested in attending. This increases the chance that you will get registered for an event and you can avoid the delay and uncertainty associated with waitlists.

To which events does this process apply?

This process applies only to District and Regional events, during first and second rounds. It does not apply to unrestricted registration, which will still be first-come-first-served. *FIRST* Championship and District Championships already have rules for qualification and *FIRST* Championship has a weighted randomization process for the waitlist.

Also, this does not change the rules for which teams can go to which events and the timing of sign-ups. As an example, District teams still won't be able to register for Regionals until unrestricted registration opens.

Will we know our lottery number?

No. Each team that submits first round preferences will receive a unique random number from a very large pool (think at least 1 million numbers) after the first registration period closed but before the assignment process is run. The assignment process will then be run from the smallest number to the largest, processing each team in turn. Every team will come out of their turn either being assigned or waitlisted to an event, and teams will be notified of their results.

Teams assigned a lottery number during that first preference period retain that number for the second round. Teams that did not submit a preference list during the first round but did submit during the second round will receive their lottery number after the second preference period closes but before the second-round assignment process is run. These teams, too, are assigned a unique random number from the large pool, so the lottery number for these teams will be scattered among those already assigned from the first round. The assignment process will be run again, this time from largest lottery number to the smallest.

Keep in mind that for both rounds, all teams will be able to identify a single event at which they would like to be waitlisted if there are no available slots at any of their preferenced events. This waitlist event can be any one of the events they have preferenced.

Are home events still a thing for some Districts?

Yes, Michigan, Pacific NorthWest, North Carolina, and Texas will be doing home event registration this season. Every team in these districts will be assigned a home event, and just as in prior years, when they register for their initial event, they will find it very easy to get into their assigned home events, and more difficult to get into non-home events.

What if my team does not want to attend their assigned Home Event?

That's no problem. When Michigan, Pacific Northwest, North Carolina, and Texas teams add preferences during the first event preference phase, their Home Event will be listed as the top event and highlighted green. If your team chooses not to attend this Home Event, simply select the events that your team does want to attend. All teams should make sure the events on their Event Preference List is an accurate reflection of where they want to be assigned.

The difference is that ONLY the Home Event is a guaranteed assignment. If your team chooses not to select the Home Event as your preference, all other teams who did select their Home Events will be assigned before you, regardless of what your preference number is. If there is open capacity at that event after all the teams who did select the Home Event are assigned to their Home Event, then your team will be assigned to that event. If there is no open capacity at any of the events in your Preference List, your team will be placed on the waitlist in the event that your team had selected as your Waitlist

Event.

What happens if a team gets assigned to an event that would be a problem for them to attend because of holidays or other reasons? What happens if a school has two *FIRST* Robotics Competition teams, and they get assigned to different events?

Teams will only be assigned to events they have put on their preference lists. Teams should think carefully about the events they list and be able and interested in attending any event they preference.

If a school has two *FIRST* Robotics Competition teams, and it would be too difficult for those teams to attend different events, the teams may want to consider having both putting down the same, single event on their preference list. This would guarantee that they are both at least waitlisted for that one event, and they would have a reason to give the RD or District Management as to why they both need to be in that event.

Why didn't you just stay with first-come-first-served, but improve the capacity of the *FIRST* systems to handle the surge?

First-come-first-served is inherently biased towards teams with fast internet connections and with mentors who can easily make themselves available during a weekday at the precise time the system opens. Many *FIRST* Robotics Competition teams don't live in that world. While ensuring our systems can handle the load is one reason we are moving to this new system, more importantly, this change levels the playing field in one area of *FIRST* Robotics Competition we truly *don't* want to be part of the competition.

Will all teams be treated the same in the lottery?

Yes. There is no weighting of lottery numbers for any team characteristic and *FIRST* will not be making any manual adjustments to lottery results. The reserved slots and waitlist approach discussed above will be the means by which we'll be able to handle special needs.

Does this change payment deadlines?

No. Payment deadlines are comparable to prior years, and for the 2019 season can be found here: https://www.firstinspires.org/robotics/frc/pricing-and-payment.

Will preferences for the first round have any effect on preferences for the second round?

No. The rounds are independent. Preferences are reset between rounds. You start with a clean slate in both rounds from a preferences perspective.

When will a team be placed on a waitlist?

At the end of each Event Preference Round, all teams will either be Registered for an Event or Waitlisted for an Event. Teams will ONLY be placed on a waitlist if all the events they selected as a preference are at capacity. It is imperative that teams ONLY put events they actually want to attend on their Preference List. The Preference System will check each event to see if there is capacity BEFORE a team will be placed on a waitlist.