



## 2021 *FIRST*<sup>®</sup> Robotics Competition Rookie Team Criteria Guidelines

The formation of new *FIRST* Robotics Competition teams is critical to *FIRST*<sup>®</sup> Founder Dean Kamen's vision of changing the culture and creating the spirit of Gracious Professionalism<sup>®</sup> that is open and friendly to new participants. We recognize the commitment teams and mentors must make to get a first-year team "off the ground" and for this reason *FIRST* grants qualifying first-year teams "Rookie" team status, which comes with specific incentives and recognition including:

1. **Grants** - To help teams get financially off the ground. For more information regarding Grants please click on the following link:  
<https://www.firstinspires.org/robotics/frc/grants>
2. **Rookie-only Awards** – Specific Rookie awards will be available and all Rookie teams will be eligible.

As *FIRST* continues to grow and teams expand, it is important for us to have guidelines for qualifying a Rookie Team. For the 2021 season, these guidelines are:

1. A New Team that starts in a school/organization/alliance, or as a non-affiliated team, that has never run a *FIRST* Robotics Competition team before would be considered a Rookie Team, unless it fails guidelines #5 or #6. (Note: Most teams are formed within a single school, but some comprise two or more schools, or are formed in partnerships with organizations such as Scouts, Boys & Girls Clubs, home schools, etc.).
2. A Returning Team that has not been in a competition for three years would be considered a Rookie Team; that is, going into the 2021 season, the Returning Team cannot have competed in seasons 2020, 2019 or 2018. Returning Teams, whose last competition season was 2017 or earlier, can return during the 2021 season as a Rookie with a 2021 Rookie Team Number, OR, they can continue as a Veteran Team with their Original Team Number. Returning Teams that choose to register as a Veteran *are NOT* eligible for the above listed Rookie incentives and recognition.
3. For any single Team that wants to separate into different teams, the New Teams do not qualify as Rookie Teams unless the requirements set forth above in guideline #2 are met. These teams will need to register as a New Team in the Team Registration System by clicking on the "CREATE NEW TEAM(S)" button and following all steps accordingly. See [2021 Team Combines/Separations Rules](#) in the Resource Library for additional details.
4. Where multiple Returning Teams want to combine into one team, the New Team does not qualify as a Rookie Team unless the requirements set forth above in guideline #2 are met for all teams. The New Team will need to register as a New Team in the Team Registration System by clicking the "CREATE NEW TEAM(S)" link and following all steps accordingly. See [2021 Team Combines/Separations Rules](#) in the Resource Library for additional details.
5. If two (or one) full-time mentors with prior experience on a *FIRST* Robotics Competition team start a team at a new school/organization/alliance, or as a non-affiliated team, that team qualifies as a Rookie Team. A 'full-time mentor' is one that



will be participating in most team meetings for the upcoming season. Mentors that only participate occasionally or participate in a series of meetings but only during a limited period (over a college break, for example) are not considered full-time. 'Prior experience' includes both time as a student and time as a mentor on a *FIRST* Robotics Competition team during a prior season. If more than two mentors from an existing team or teams start a new team, that team is not a Rookie.

6. If five or fewer individual students with prior experience on *FIRST* Robotics Competition teams start a team in a new school/organization/alliance, or as a non-affiliated team, that team also is generally considered a Rookie Team providing it meets guideline #1 and does not involve enough students to be considered a version of guideline #3. If 6 or more students with prior experience start a New Team, that team is not a Rookie. 'Prior experience' means the student was on a *FIRST* Robotics Competition team during a prior season. If a team is started with both experienced mentors and experienced students, both guidelines #5 and #6 must be passed for the team to qualify as a Rookie team.

It is important to remember that these are guidelines only and *FIRST* will review special situations on a case-by-case basis as they are brought to our attention. Teams that do not meet the guidelines and wish to submit a petition for Rookie Status may do so by writing to us at [firstroboticscompetition@firstinspires.org](mailto:firstroboticscompetition@firstinspires.org). We ask the following to be added to the subject line: **"Request for 2021 Rookie Status"** along with a full description of the situation.