



FOR INSPIRATION & RECOGNITION OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

2022 FIRST® TECH CHALLENGE MUSIC STRATEGY GUIDE

Introduction

Our goal is to provide a consistent musical atmosphere for all **FIRST**® events. Please review the Strategy guides prior to your event. These guides will help make your event sound “professional”.

Taking into account that music is a very subjective area, and everyone’s tastes are different, we try to stay in the genre of “sports music”, which encompasses every genre of music. Sports music has different atmospheric vibes, from walk-in music, to game-on music, to award music, and everything in between.

Our aim is to enhance the event by cheerleading, not only reacting. The guides will help identify areas that need audio attention and the choices in the playlists accurately reflect those needs.

The Objective

To create playlists of music that will not only be inspiring, motivating, and uplifting but one that will also create a positive atmosphere that promotes *Gracious Professionalism*® and *Coopertition*®. We accomplish this by identifying as many different situations and finding audio elements for them.

The Game and the Pattern

Each **FIRST** Tech Challenge event is divided into Walk In, Inspection Ambiance, Opening Ceremonies, Match Play, Lunch, Alliance Selection, Playoffs, and Awards.

This year **FIRST** has decided to go with a more atmospheric approach rather than song specific for each area of playback...therefore the playlists will reflect that as well, with a section called Continuous mix for most of the day, and playlists for Walk In, Lunch, Awards and Walk out.

At the end of the day, organizers usually go into Award mode, during which time the DJ plays an "Awards Song" after a team has been announced, and fades the music off when the last person "high-fives" the last judge in line.

2022 PLAYLISTS

I have yet to come across a musical genre that does not work at a **FIRST** event. Even international songs have made it into our mix during an event. Our demographic is not only Elementary School Students; mentors, parents, family, and other spectators also make up the audience. Not everyone will be happy with every song that is played, but hopefully everyone will have a good time by the end of the event.

In our current times, the traditional broadcasting formats have almost disappeared under newer formats of delivering content, more like splinter-casting, where each group interest can have an audience, therefore trying to find a consensus to popularity, especially in music is becoming more difficult. In the past I've used Billboard Top 100 charts, and a few others like Rolling Stone magazine, or some of the trade magazines.

Today, not only is Billboard still among the leaders, but other listening sources are developing their own charts, including Spotify, TikTok, Amazon, even Google.

Google's chart is one of the more interesting ones, and it began last year [2020], it's called "Most Hummed songs in 2020"... so I take a look at all of them, listen to everything on those lists and then compile our playlists and more importantly the Do Not Play list, as most of the current offerings that are also popular are NOT appropriate to play at a FIRST event. Mostly because of the language, but sometimes it can be the content. For example many Country songs subjects are about drinking, breakups, and ballads.

Today we also have to take into account the current climate of sensitivities among groups and individual attitudes towards certain songs, therefore, we've decided to put some songs we've played in the past into the DO NOT PLAY list, which would include the #1 FIRST dancing song for the past 20 years, Cotton Eye Joe, as well as Jump on It, and a few others. Thankfully, there are not very many songs that have moved over... PLEASE CHECK THE DO NOT PLAY list. It is in the accompanying excel file.

**To play it safe, if a song has a "Radio-Edit" or "CLEAN version",
don't even listen to it, just don't play it.**

I found a little over 85% of today's popular music would not be **FIRST** friendly. That's a lot of mining to get to the gems.

***Songs that use profanity in their lyrics, Please Don't Play,
Even if they're the most popular songs out there***

***Songs with content about Sex, Drugs, Bullying,
Taunting, or Violence should also be avoided***

These guidelines and suggested playlists are meant to keep our events consistent with each other, however it does not preclude any event from playing music that is regional to that area. Keeping in mind always, that we are an **all-ages family sporting event**, and some very popular songs may not be appropriate to be played at a **FIRST** event, such as anything from the Hip Hop or Country genres.

THEME

In the 2021-2022 season, **FIRST**® FORWARDSM presented by Qualcomm, **FIRST**® teams will explore the future of transportation. From the shipment of packages in rural and urban areas, to disaster relief delivery and high-tech air transit, teams will re-imagine faster, more reliable, inclusive, and sustainable transportation innovations that better connect and grow communities and economies around the world.

This year, *FIRST* teams will address today's global challenges related to United Nations Sustainable Development Goal #9, focused on building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and fostering innovation. By encouraging *FIRST* participants to think about future transportation sustainability, we're also empowering them to be the next generation of leaders and innovators, tackling the world's toughest challenges.

The Challenge this season is called Freight Frenzy. In *FREIGHT FRENZY*SM presented by Raytheon Technologies, teams and their robots must navigate a complex transportation system by traversing barriers and racing against time to load and deliver essential items to those who need them most.

WALK IN MUSIC

Doors open early morning, and the many of the participants are eager to get to their pits, while the supports & public find their way into their seats. The morning music mix feel should feature the theme of the season, if possible, and have an easy tempo and uplifting groove.

Most teams, mentors, staff, etc. have probably had long night's prior, therefore blasting high-octane music at this point may not be highly advised. But playing very slow music isn't the right choice here either. Current and popular songs would work best here; it eases everyone into a rhythm of familiarity and sets a positive tone for the day.

LUNCH MUSIC

Similar to walk in music, it's a part of the day that would be considered "downtime". The morning of competitions have concluded, and everyone is in need of a break. Not only do the robots need to recharge their batteries but also us humans. The feel again is slightly subdued and very easy going.

Usually the breaks last for approximately an hour, but it's good to have a little extra put aside. We've tended to go with songs about the theme and lean more to current music during the lunch break.

CONTINUOUS MIX

After the opening ceremonies, and lunch it's time to go into the continuous mix section, which is to create more of an atmosphere rather than being specific to actual matches, or team introductions.. the fun part of having a continuous mix is that it feels more like a commercial-free radio station, so mixing up different genres, and tempos is fine. In the past we had labeled such songs as Team Intros, Inbetweeners, or crowd rallies. Now you can mix and match throughout the entire day!

AWARDS CEREMONIES

After the games have concluded for each day, there is an Awards Ceremony to recognize those teams that have been chosen to receive them. The Emcee usually describes the award, and then the merits of the team and then the team(s) name. Everyone cheers at the announcement, and begins to clap as the teams make their way down to the floor area.

The music played here is usually the upbeat, energetic variety. Think celebratory songs from your favorite sports team.

There are approximately 11 Awards given out at a *FIRST*Tech Challenge Event.

REQUESTS

Everybody wants to hear their favorite music, regardless of where they are it seems. Because we play so many different types of music, and so many different songs, some guests think that it's an all-request radio station.

Some fail to realize that we are trying to create an atmosphere. Their intentions are great; they are probably having a good time and also want to contribute. If someone approaches, be as diplomatic as possible, most of the times they ask for something that is already on the playlist.

The problem that arises is that many DJ Booth locations are not in a fan-friendly accessible area, and safety issues become a major concern. Therefore, for the present time, **WE WILL NOT BE TAKING ANY REQUESTS** from the floor.

If there are songs that are not on the playlist, especially International or Regional songs, and you think they'd be a good fit with our presentation then send those requests via email to **requests@firstmusicdjs.com** and I will listen to them and slot them in when possible.

Conclusion

Pace yourself, it is a LONG day, and you will have to be on your toes the whole time. It's a non-stop show as far as the music is concerned. Hopefully I've programmed the music so they will be singing YOUR praises. It's a win-win for everybody!