Emcee and Game Announcer Manual

Thank you so much for volunteering with *FIRST* Tech Challenge!

Updated 8/8/23

Physical/Technical Requirements:

- Technical – Low
- Physical – Medium
- Administrative – Low
- Communication – High

Time Commitment:

- Pre-Event: Read through the emcee/game announcer manual and familiarize yourself with the game (Game Manuals Part 1 and 2 – Traditional Events) and teams participating in the event – approximately 2-3 hours.
- Pre-Event: Watch the Game Animation video to get a feel for this season's game.
- Event Day: Emcees/game announcers should expect that they will spend 6-8 hours at a full day event. Commitment may vary by region or type of event.

Proper Dress:

- Wear comfortable shoes, most of the day will be spent standing and walking around the competition fields.
- ANSI Z87.1 certified safety glasses are required in the competition area.

Volunteer Training and Certification

Volunteers must create an account on www.firstinspires.org and apply to the role. Upon application, training can be accessed from within the Dashboard. If you have applied for a role but have not received access to the training, please email FTCTrainingSupport@firstinspires.org. A separate confirmation of the role assignment will come at a later date. The emcee or game announcer volunteer should speak to the event director or affiliate partner to determine if there are any additional requirements, such as meetings prior to the event.

Overview of Responsibilities

Game Announcer

The game announcer's role is vital to a successful event. Being informed, knowledgeable, and comfortable in your role will directly translate into a better event and make the event more enjoyable for the teams and spectators. The game announcer's role is working with the emcee to:

- Introduce teams.
- Provide play-by-play commentary to the teams and audience.
- Report the scores.

The game announcer should primarily speak only for team introductions, play-by-play commentary, and score announcement. The game announcer role is to be an audible *FIRST* Tech Challenge presence at an event.

Emcee

It is the emcee's job to be a visual presence, to inform the audience, and to keep the event lively and moving forward. The emcee must embody the spirit and professionalism of *FIRST* Tech Challenge, while being fun, energetic, creative, and organized.

Game Announcer/Emcee – Working Together

The difference between the roles is critical to aid the audience on where to focus their attention. It is also crucial to work in harmony with the emcee to create a support structure and avoid competitive/overlapping speaking.

To have a successful event, both positions require:
- A lively, animated vocal personality.
- Good public speaking skills.
- A pleasant-sounding voice.
- A desire to help the participants have the time of their lives.
- The ability to handle unanticipated situations.
- Lots of energy!

Pre-Event Day Responsibilities

Outlined below are emcee/game announcer responsibilities for prior to event day. Make sure to check with the tournament director to see if they need help setting up before the event.

- Read the Game Manual Part 2 – Traditional Events and have a general understanding of the game rules, field elements, and scoring elements. The emcee/game announcer must be familiar with the game to describe the action on the field to the teams and audience. The emcee and game announcer do not need to learn the game rules.
- Watch the prerecorded emcee and game announcer training video located in the learning management system, BlueVolt.
- Read through the ceremony and alliance selection scripts to prepare for the flow on event day.
- If possible, the emcee and game announcer should review the names of all participating teams and get acquainted with the game before arrival.
- Watch the Game Animation Video to get a feel for the game.

Opening Ceremonies

After the program delivery partner or tournament director has confirmed that all guest speakers and judges are present, the show begins. The opening ceremonies script, which has been prepared by the program delivery partner/tournament director, is used by the emcee, A/V crew, and program delivery partner to ensure synchronization. Work together with the tournament director and technical director – they are the "directors" of the show.

Let the Games Begin!

During the qualification matches, after the emcee introduces each team by number, the game announcer completes the introductions (full name on first intro only, short name thereafter); then the emcee counts down "3, 2, 1, Go" to start the match. The game announcer provides play-by-play commentary and time remaining announcements. The referees score the match and the game announcer announces the score as it is displayed by the A/V crew.

Make timed announcements at 1 minute played, 30 seconds remaining, 10 seconds remaining, and the countdown for the last 5 seconds. Additionally, work on getting a rhythm between the game announcer and the emcee. Often the crowd noise is so loud that you cannot hear one another. Establishing a rhythm, such as making eye contact to connect, ensures that you don't talk at the same time.

Do's and Don'ts

Don't:
- Never direct strategy to the teams. Your job is to comment on the play, not to direct it.
- Do not interfere or attempt to influence the referee rulings.
- Do not emphasize winning above all else.

- Do not play favorites or endlessly praise veteran teams over rookies (or other veterans).
- Do not 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 do "shout out's", "happy birthday" wishes, etc. to the audience. This is both unprofessional and opens the floodgates for endless birthday announcements.
- Do not get distracted by personal business, or answering calls, messages, or notifications on your cell phone.

Do:
- Make the teams feel welcome on the field and show interest in all the teams.
- Keep the audience engaged in what's going on.
- Speak slowly and clearly. Diction is very important.
- Use optimistic phrases to encourage poorly performing teams. Example: "Team 123 is trying to get something going", or "it looks like team 123 is having trouble getting their robot in gear, hopefully they can figure something out, there's still 1:30 remaining in the match."
- Make the descriptions lively and interesting.
- Behave professionally.
- Be ready to begin each match as soon as the field is reset.
- Use team names as often as possible rather than exclusively referring to the team number.
- Mention something about every team in every match.
- Pay attention to the movement of folks around the playing area to avoid collisions.
- Keep an eye on the schedule and adjust to stay on track.

Remember to keep the focus on the teams and the students. The teams and the audience want to be entertained by both the event and the match play. Use your personality to help make the teams and event shine!

Alliance Selection

The emcee runs the alliance selection in the same area as the playing fields. The alliance selection consists of several rounds of selections so all alliance captains form elimination match alliances. These alliances participate in a ladder-type tournament to determine the tournament's winning alliance. The alliance selection is as follows:

- Each team chooses one student to act as the team's representative. These representatives will continue to the competition area at the appointed time to represent their teams in the alliance selection.
  - Teams can bring their scouting documents or communicate by phone with other teammates in the venue to aid them with their alliance choices. Teams must remember that if they are communicating with teammates by phone, they must be gracious and considerate and not hold up alliance selection.
- The top four ranked teams are called to the floor first. The student representative of the highest ranked team is asked to step forward as the alliance captain to invite another available team to join their alliance.
- A team is available if they are not already part of an alliance or has not already declined an alliance invitation. If a team accepts, they are moved into that alliance. **If a team declines, they CANNOT be invited to another alliance**, but are still available to select their own alliance if the opportunity arises. If a team declines, the alliance captain from the inviting team must extend an invitation to another team.
- The selection continues until all four alliance captains have been appointed and chosen one alliance partner.
- If there are more than 21 teams, the same method is used for each alliance captain's second choice. The third member of each alliance) from highest seed to lowest seed (that is, $1 \rightarrow 2 \rightarrow 3 \rightarrow 4$). Any teams remaining after the lowest seeded captain makes their choice do not compete in the elimination matches.

Closing and Awards Ceremonies

The closing and awards ceremony happen once the final matches are complete. The emcee/game announcer should work with the tournament director and judge advisor to ensure everyone knows the flow of the ceremony. This is a very exciting time for the teams as they not only are awarded for their performance on the field, but the finalists and winners are announced for each of the judged awards.

When the awards are announced, it is customary to announce the finalists of each award (for example, 2nd and 3rd place think award), and then to announce the winner using a script written by the judges. Make sure to tell the teams ahead of time that the 2nd and 3rd place award teams should remain seated, and that the winner of the award should come to the stage for the celebration line and to accept their trophy/medal.

Performance Tips
- 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 may get anxious and will lose interest.
  - An energetic, varied delivery is interesting and inviting to an audience.
- Develop your own style; don't try to be someone you are not.
- Silence is okay. Let the action speak for itself sometimes. Constant announcing will cause the audience to tune you out. Remember, you must make all 50+ matches interesting.

Technical 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.
- If using a handheld microphone, hold it close to your mouth and speak into it, not over it.
- Confirm that your microphone is off before speaking off-line.

Recap
- Be prepared.
- Stay on schedule; team intros are very fast paced to keep the competition on schedule.
- Make the event as polished and professional as you can.
- Keep the teams at ease on the field and keep the focus on them.
- Remember that the playing field is only one piece of the event – decisions made there affect all other areas.
- Utilize the experience of the *FIRST* Tech Challenge program delivery partner and technical director.
- You are representing *FIRST.*