

# Emcee and Game Announcer Manual

## Overview

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**Roles Covered:** Emcee/Game Announcer

### Job Description

#### 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.

#### 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.

#### Game Announcer/Emcee – Working Together

The difference between the roles is critical to aid the audience in where to focus their attention. It is also crucial to work in harmony with one another 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!

Requirements	
Technical	Low
Physical	Medium
Administrative	Low
Communication	High
Pre-event Training	Medium

### Time Commitment

Emcee and game announcer volunteers should expect to spend 10-12 hours at a full day event and 5-6 hours at a league meet. Approximately 6 hours of pre-event training and planning is required.

### Attire

- Comfortable closed-toe, closed-heel shoes, much of the day will involve standing and walking.
- ANSI Z87.1 certified safety glasses are required in the pit and competition areas.

- As one of the event leaders, comfortable professional wear is encouraged

## Training and Certification

### Training and Certification

Volunteers must create an account on [www.firstinspires.org](http://www.firstinspires.org) and apply to the role. If you apply to an event role requiring training and certification, the 'Roles Missing Certification' section will appear on your Volunteer Dashboard. Click on 'Review Outstanding Tasks', then click the 'Resolve' button. This will take you directly to the training site. Alternately, you may also click on the 'Trainings/Certification' button on the top right of the screen. If you have applied for a role but have not received access to the training, please email [FTCTrainingSupport@firstinspires.org](mailto:FTCTrainingSupport@firstinspires.org). A separate confirmation of the role assignment will come later.

Emcees and Game Announcers are required to complete the *FIRST* Data Protection and Privacy Training for volunteers, which is accessible through the [Volunteer Dashboard](#). This training provides information about how to properly handle personally identifiable information that may be received at events.

Emcee and Game Announcer volunteers should speak to the Volunteer Coordinator to find out what additional requirements, such as meetings before the event or run-throughs of the space before the event are required. The approximate training time is 2 hours.

All Volunteers are expected to read and comply with the [Volunteer Handbook](#).

## Roles and Responsibilities

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**FIRST is fun for all.** The most important role of a volunteer is to provide a safe, fun and welcoming environment to all *FIRST* participants. When executing the duties of your role, always make decisions with the team experience in mind. Ask for help from event leadership if you feel your required duties conflict with the best team experience.

### Emcee/Game Announcer

The Emcee role is responsible for becoming 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.

The Game Announcer is a role vital to a successful event. 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.

### Prerequisites for Emcee

FIRST experience preferred, but not required. BlueVolt training course.

**Minimum Age Requirement:** 18 years of age or older *and* post high school or equivalent.

### Prerequisites for Game Announcer

FIRST experience strongly preferred, but not required. BlueVolt training course.

**Minimum Age Requirement:** 15 years of age or older.

## Before the Event

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

- Read the [Competition Manual](#) 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](#) under “Videos and Promotional Materials” to get a feel for the game.

## Event Day

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### Report Time

The event director or volunteer coordinator will confirm the time you should arrive typically via email the week before the event. In most cases arriving at the beginning of the event time works best.

When you arrive onsite check-in with the Volunteer Coordinator and report to the field Supervisor.

### Set-up

After checking in, report to the field supervisor to learn about technical requirements of the event, the venue map and event schedule for the day.

Look over the team list for the day, and if there is time, talk to the teams participating in the event and take a few notes. This ensures the emcee and game announcer will have some familiarity with teams in their first matches and have little tidbits of information to share if match play gets slow throughout the event.

## Next Responsibility

The emcee and the game announcer will work together to plan and announce each step in the event day so the audience can follow along.

The different components of an event are set out below:

### Opening Ceremonies

After the program delivery partner or event 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/event director, is used by the emcee, A/V crew, and program delivery partner to ensure synchronization. Work together with the event 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.

### Alliance Selection

The emcee runs the alliance selection in the same area as the playing fields. The alliance selection consists of alliance captains picking partners to form permanent alliances. These alliances participate in double elimination tournament to determine the tournament’s winning alliance. The alliance selection should follow the rules in the competition manual and the flow in the alliance selection script provided.

### Closing and Awards Ceremonies

The closing and awards ceremony happen once the final matches are complete. The emcee/game announcer should work with the event 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, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place think award), and then to announce the winner using an optional script written by the judges. Make sure to tell the teams ahead of time that the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

## Do’s and Don’ts

### 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.

#### **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 the audience’s 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.
- 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!

#### **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.

### **Team Interaction and Support**

When interacting with teams please always consider the team’s perspective. The teams have put significant time and effort into preparing for this event and may be feeling very stressed about

everything working out as they have planned. **Today is a very big deal for the team and we are here to help!**

While it’s our job to help guide the teams to a successful event, it’s their responsibility to follow the rules and be on time for judging and matches.

If you feel there is an issue with an individual or individuals from a team that warrants specific intervention beyond just a kind reminder, please ensure the correct stakeholders for the team are aware. Here is a generally acceptable process when working with a student or team who you need to change their behavior:

The ABCs of Managing Team Behaviors	
<b><u>A</u>sk for an Adult</b>	Do not directly reprimand a student one-on-one without an adult from their team present. Ask the student to bring an adult who is responsible for the team to meet you, before moving forward with any discussion about the concerns at hand.
<b><u>B</u>e aware of the Environment</b>	Is the environment conducive for the feedback you are about to give? Is it loud in the area where you are? Are there other teams around that may hear the reprimand? Moving the conversation to a quieter, more private space as needed can be helpful.
<b><u>(Offer a)</u> Clear Explanation</b>	Explain the concern to the team and offer clear examples of the behavior that is concerning.
<b><u>D</u>iscuss any Questions</b>	Offer the opportunity for students and adults to ask clarifying questions
<b><u>E</u>xplain Next Steps</b>	Outline with the students and adults what the next steps are if the issue is not corrected. Certain behaviors may include the risk of yellow cards

**Note:** the only person at an event who can give an official warning or issue a yellow/red card is the head referee. Please refer these more severe issues to the head referee and notify the program delivery partner.

Be cautious about passing on any negative feedback about any teams directly to the Judges or Judge Advisor(JA), because it’s not possible to know all the contributing factors around such a complaint or observation. If there are issues which are repeated or egregious follow the [Non-Medical Incident Reporting](#) process and inform the Program Delivery Partner. The judge advisor may seek feedback from the event director to determine if there is any relevant information to provide the judges for their evaluation process.

Teams may only be completely disqualified from awards consideration for very rare egregious actions and only with approval from FIRST HQ. The event director and/or JA should call the on-call number to discuss the issue.

## Emergencies

The program delivery partner, event director and the event site host organization are responsible for having safety and security plans in place for each event. Included in the plan should be topics such as:

- A map of all the emergency exits
- Knowledge of where on-site medical support is located
- Shelter in place plans in the case of severe weather
- Evacuation plans

Teams should have their own safety plans before attending the event. *FIRST* provides a few resources to help teams plan including:

- [Team Member Safety at Events](#)
- [Preparing to Safely Attend a \*FIRST\* Event](#)

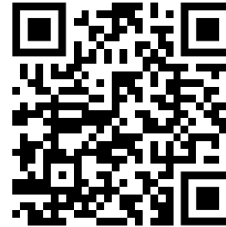
Two important links to have handy are the issue reporting link and Youth Protection Policy pages:

### Report a Concern



[www.firstinspires.org/report](http://www.firstinspires.org/report)

### Youth Protection Policy



[www.firstinspires.org/ypp](http://www.firstinspires.org/ypp)

## Lost Children

*FIRST* Tech Challenge events can be very hectic, and it can be easy for a child to get lost amongst the shuffle of a busy event. Ensure you have a plan prior to the event in the instance of a lost child.

In some cases, the team roster will list Coach phone numbers which can be used to reunite team members, in some regions they collect “Day-of” cell phone numbers from each team at check in. Coordinate your plan with your program delivery partner.

Code Adam Guidelines ([www.missingkids.com/CodeAdam](http://www.missingkids.com/CodeAdam)) are also a great resource.

## Medical Incident Reporting

Event volunteers are not responsible for diagnosing students, handing out medication, or first aid equipment. You and other event volunteers should refer medical issues and emergencies to a medical professional on site, such as an EMT. If an incident or illness occurs at an event, the event director, pit administrator, or another trained delegate should do the following:

- Call 911 if there is any question that the injured person/persons require medical attention.
- Respond to the scene immediately. Bring a clipboard, pen, or a tablet to complete the incident report on the [FIRST Reporting Portal](#).
- Complete the incident report for the injured party.



The event director or pit administration volunteers are responsible for completing incident reports. The incident reporting person should follow the best practices for incident reporting:

Best Practices for Incident Reporting	
<b>Be Calm</b>	Anyone handling incident reporting should have a calm demeanor. They should be able to collect information and talk to witnesses without assessing fault
<b>Be Concise</b>	In all conversations with the injured, witnesses, spectators, and/or media always say "the incident is being investigated" without any further comment. It is not the job of the report collector to provide any opinions on the situation at hand.
<b>Be Risk Conscious</b>	Do not imply liability or any payment, as no one knows for sure until all the facts are collected.
<b>Be Prepared</b>	Those taking in incident reports should be able to communicate with the insurance company if necessary. They should also be aware of who they need to share incidents with, including the local Program Delivery Organization or the event director.

Although most incidents will not result in a claim, it is better to act on the side of caution and report them. Should an incident result in a claim after the event, the documents will be on file, complete with witnesses and a written report.

### Non-Medical Incident Reporting

Issues that are non-medical but are of a concern to a participant/participants should be reported. Anything that happens during an event that made a volunteer, team member or spectator feel uncomfortable or threatened should be addressed.

As appropriate and if you feel safe doing to, speak directly to the offending party and try to quickly and calmly defuse the immediate issue. Call the event director and/or the program delivery partner and inform them of the issue and seek assistance as needed with any immediate remediation of the issue.

Ensure all issues are reported in a timely manner using the [FIRST Reporting Portal](#). Have the participant select the correct category for their report:

- **Youth Protection Concern:** encompasses a wide variety of one-time or ongoing issues such as suspected abuse, bullying, harassment, discrimination, questionable behavior, or violation to the FIRST Code of Conduct. Must involve a youth participant otherwise use the 'other' category.
- **Other:** For issues which do not fall under the Medical or Youth Protection Concern Categories.

### Safety

An important priority for all volunteers is to observe their event areas to help promote a safe and orderly space for all the participants. It's likely that various volunteers and event participants will bring concerns to your attention, but you should also be proactive in identifying areas of concern.

Prioritize working with the teams to help identify and correct potential safety issues in the area. Please review the section about [Next Responsibility](#) [The emcee](#) and the game announcer will work together to plan and announce each step in the event day so the audience can follow along.



The different components of an event are set out below:

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- 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.

#### **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).
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- 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.
- 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!

#### **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.

Team Interaction and Support for the best ways to work with teams on making changes.

#### **Safety Glasses and Closed Toe Shoes**

All volunteers, teams, coach/mentors, and spectators are required to have safety glasses and wear closed toe shoes while in the pit and competition areas. It is important to watch out for anyone entering these areas without proper personal protective Equipment (PPE) and to ask them to put on proper PPE before entering. Some events will have volunteers staffed at the pit entrance with spare safety glasses to pass out. Other events may not have spares to provide.

#### **Pit Spaces**

Specific rules governing what teams can have and do in their pit space are covered in the game manual, but the event directors may add additional restrictions which must be published before the event based on limitations set by the venue.

Common areas where teams need help to stay safe and within the rules:

- No open flames or sparks
- Power tools are generally permitted as long as they are not causing damage to the venue
- Aisles, walkways, and doors should be clear of obstructions
- Teams may set-up practice spaces as long as they are fully within their designated space
- No structure may be taller than 10'

### End of the Day

At the end of the day the emcee and game announcer volunteers should make sure they check-in with the field supervisor, return any tech they were wearing or using for the event and if possible, ask if they can help with any other load-out or end of the day task needed.

## Important Tools

### Public Schedule

The program delivery partner or the event director should publish the public schedule of events before the event. This schedule will have a high-level overview of all the activities for the event. It's important that everyone at the event does their best to stay true to the public schedule so that teams and volunteers who have planned their day around these times have a good experience.

*Figure 1: Sample Public Schedule for a Typical FIRST Tech Challenge Event*

Time	Agenda
7:15am	Doors Open for Volunteers
8:00am	Doors Open for Teams
8:30am	Judging & Inspection Commences
10:35am	Inspection Deadline
10:40am	Opening Ceremony & Driver's Meeting
11:00am	Qualification Matches Commence
12:00am	Lunch Time
12:30pm	Qualification Matches Resume
3:15pm	Alliance Selection
3:45pm	Elimination Matches
5:30pm	Closing Ceremony, Awards and Advancement Announcement

On occasion things that happen out of the event's control may impact the schedule. In these cases, work closely with the event director to understand the updated agenda.

### Event Layout/Map

The Program Delivery Partner and Event Director should publish a map of the venue before the event. In some cases, details on the map might not be available until the day of the event.

The Event Layout / Map should detail the following:

- Load-In Path
- Parking for Personal Vehicles and Busses
- Team Check-in
- Volunteer Check-in
- Competition Area
- Pit Area (May include the [Pit Map](#))
- Judging Room Locations (if applicable)
- Safety Details as available (Emergency Exits, AED, Shelter in Place Locations)

### Match Schedule

The match list will be generated the day of the event after the teams have been confirmed. This schedule will list which teams will play in which Alliance (Red or Blue) and it will also list a match start time see Figure 2. Some events will have more than one competition field and/or more than one division and each division will have its own schedule.

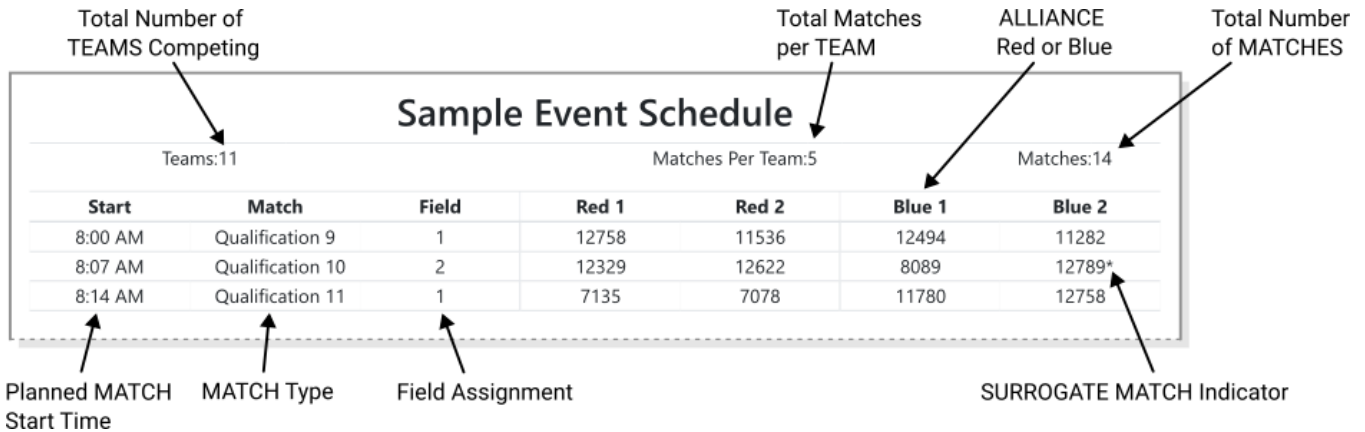


Figure 2: Example Match Schedule

### Pit Map

Pit maps are typically provided by either the event director or by the scorekeeper. Having a map of where each team is in the pit is key, as teams, parents or queuers might need to find. Below are two sample pit maps in Figure 3 and Figure 4:

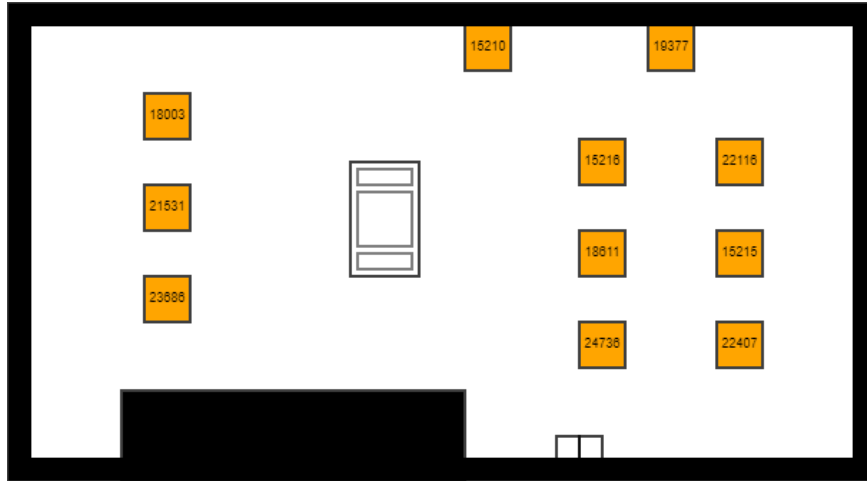


Figure 3: Example Pit Map for a small 12-team Qualifier Event

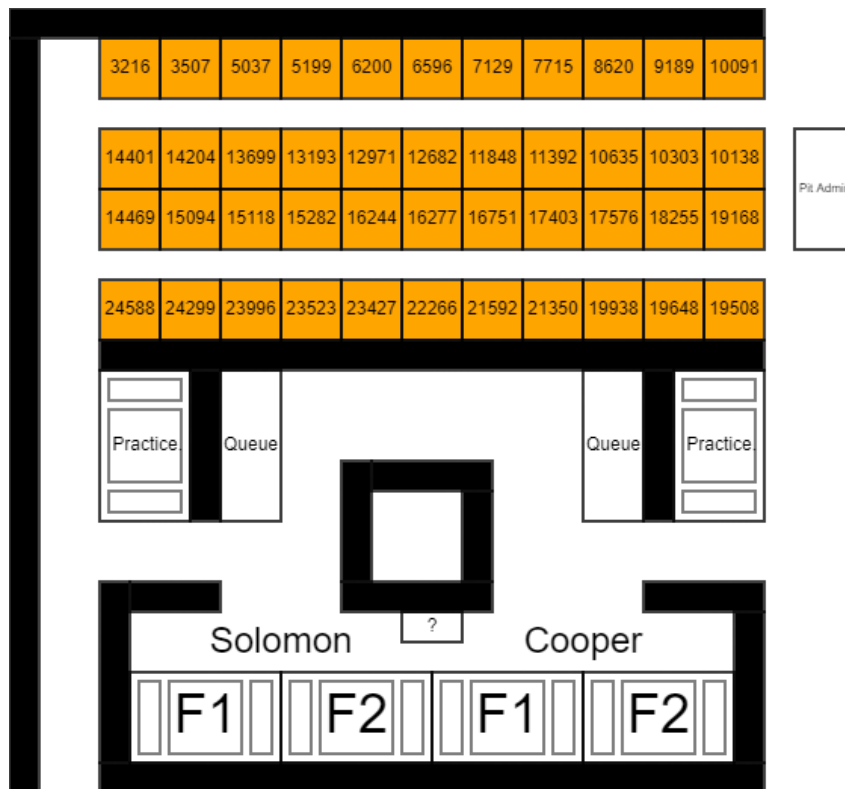


Figure 4: Example Pit Map for a Typical Regional Championship Event

## Useful Links and Information

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### On-Call Support Numbers

#### On-Call Support

These numbers are for *volunteer support only*. Teams should not use these numbers to call about rulings or technical assistance.

Administrative, Judge, Referee and Non-Technical Issues: (603)206-2412

Scoring System (FTC Live) or other Technical Issues: (603)206-2450  
Call or use the built-in chat feature on FTC Live

### Pre-Event Support

Mon – Fri 8:30am – 5:00pm Eastern Time (UTC-4 or UTC-5)  
Phone: (603)666-3906  
Email: [firsttechchallenge@firstinspires.org](mailto:firsttechchallenge@firstinspires.org)

### Program Resources



[FIRST Tech Challenge Website](#)



[Event Search](#)



[Game and Season Resources](#)



[FIRST Tech Challenge Blog](#)



[Volunteer Resources](#)



[Team Email Blasts](#)

### Feedback

We strive to create support materials that are the best they can be. If you have feedback about this manual, please email [firsttechchallenge@firstinspires.org](mailto:firsttechchallenge@firstinspires.org). Thank you!