FRC Master of Ceremonies 2020
Contents

- Responsibilities and Expectations
- Schedule
- At The Event
  - Part I - Preparation
  - Part II - Let the Games Begin
  - Part III - Performance Tips
  - Part IV - Making the Event Professional
  - Best and Worst Practices
- Gracious Professionalism
- Communication between Lead Volunteers
- Critical Review
- Conclusion
- Resources & Contact Info
- What’s Next?
Responsibilities & Expectations

• The Emcee (MC) role is vital to a successful event; the better informed, knowledgeable, and comfortable you are in your role will directly translate to the success of an event and the enjoyment of the teams and spectators.

• The teams are our “Customers”. Review all the Customer Service training materials and Volunteer behavior expectations.

• The Emcee and Game Announcer (GA) work as a team to entertain and inform the audience in an engaging fashion.

• The Emcee role is the visual FIRST presence.
Responsibilities & Expectations

• The Emcee is a performance role. The ideal candidate is a local science and engineering role model with charisma.

• This position requires:
  • a lively, animated personality
  • good public speaking skills
  • the ability to handle unanticipated situations
  • a lot of energy

• The Emcee is responsible for:
  • opening and closing the competition
  • introducing guest speakers, Judges, teams, agenda, and awards
  • imparting the FIRST vision and mission

• The Emcee must:
  • embody the spirit and professionalism of FIRST
  • be fun, energetic, accessible to the teams, and be able to clearly "drive" the event
FRC Competition Schedule

* Note: schedule varies between Events – See Event Coordinator for specifics

- Day 1: load-in day, field set-up
- Day 2: Inspection and Practice day (8am-8pm)- Emcee should review teams, robots, and get acquainted with the game. Meet with Event Manager to plan out Opening Ceremonies and scripting.
- Day 3: 8:30 am Opening Ceremonies
  9:00- 4:30 Qualification Matches
  4:45 Awards Ceremony

  - Arrive early to meet with:
    - The Event Manager to discuss the day’s agenda, Opening and Closing Ceremony protocol, list of speakers, and final event details.
    - The MC Assistant (where available) to discuss flag protocol for team intros.
    - The Game Announcer to discuss team introduction protocol.
      (ideally this should all be completed on Day 2)
FRC Competition Schedule

*Note: schedule varies between Events – See Event Coordinator for specifics

- **Day 4:**
  - 8:30 am: Opening Ceremonies
  - 9:00 - 12:00: Qualification Matches
  - 12:00: Alliance Selection
  - 1:00: Playoff Tournament
  - 4:00: Closing & Awards Ceremony
At The Event   Part I - Preparation

Day 2 and/or early Day 3

- Review the Opening Ceremonies script with the Event Manager
- Prepare your brief opening remarks
- Review pronunciation of Judge and guest speaker names and titles
- Seek out interesting local and/or team anecdotes
- Introduce yourself to teams, Judges, VIPs, Staff, Field Crew, A/V Crew
- Establish team introduction protocol with Announcer and Field Supervisor
- Establish alliance selection protocol with Technical Director, Field Supervisor, Scorer and Game Announcer
- Review all awards scripts before Award Ceremonies, edit and seek inconsistencies

FIRST Training Resource - Volunteers
At The Event
Part II - Let The Games Begin!

• After the Event Manager has confirmed that all Guest Speakers and Judges are present, the show begins with an opening video.

• The Opening Ceremonies script, which has been prepared by the Event Manager, Technical Director and the MC, is used by the MC, A/V Crew, and Event Manager to ensure a synchronized execution.

• **Use the script as a template.** Make note cards to summarize/bullet point the script and personalize it. *Do NOT just read the script straight.* The script is a working document where your experience and remarks are needed to help color the message.

• You **MUST** follow the order of the script: the Technical Director and Event Manager are staging Speakers and video rolls in order. Your job is to “tee” them up.

• Don’t wander around the playing field while speaking. Address the camera and audience. If you wander, the camera is constantly moving trying to follow you.
At The Event  
Part II - Let The Games Begin!

Match play

- Introduce each team by number starting with the Red Alliance team closest to the scoring table and proceed counter-clockwise around the field. The Game Announcer completes the introduction (first two sponsors, nickname and hometown & state; use short name thereafter).

- After all teams are introduced, and after the light tower shows robots are linked, the FTA will give you a thumbs up to start the match. Say "Drivers behind the line, and 3, 2, 1, go!" to start the match. The Emcee MUST be consistent with this countdown for each and every match.

- Do Not need say: “Red Alliance ready? Blue Alliance ready? Field ready? Referee ready?” before every match. This adds time, slowing down the event. Your visual check will tell you whether everyone is ready.

- The GA provides play-by-play commentary and announces the official score after the match.
**At The Event**

*Part II - Let The Games Begin!*

**Alliance Selection**

- The MC runs the Alliance Selection process after all Qualification matches are concluded. An Alliance Selection script is available on the MC & GA Training Material webpage. Work with the TD & FTA to set the staging process on the field.
- The Captain Armbands should be placed on the field carpet: 4 across the front of the field, and 4 across the back. Alliance Captains stand at corresponding numbers when introduced:

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**FIRST Training Resource - Volunteers**
At The Event
Part II - Let The Games Begin!

Alliance Selection

• After playing the Alliance Selection video, begin by congratulating all competing teams.

• The MC should introduce ALL top eight seeded teams beginning with #8 and building excitement to #1, placing each Capt. by an armband.

• The #1 seed gets the first pick. As you cycle thru the selection process, if a top 8 team is selected by another team, and accepts, immediately pull the next highest ranked team onto the field so they can prepare to be an Alliance Captain.

• Work thru the picking order with one pick for each Alliance from Alliance #1 to #8, then reverse the picking order and start at #8, finishing with Alliance #1.
At The Event
Part II - Let The Games Begin!

Alliance Selection

- Use the projected Selection Chart to view teams still available for selection.

- If a top eight team selects another top eight team, use this phrasing: “Would you prefer to join their Alliance or form your own?”

- At the conclusion of the Alliance Selection, remind the next highest ranked eight teams that they are the back-up teams should an Alliance elect to bring in a substitute.

- All backups must confirm with the designated Referee they will play as a back-up if needed.
At The Event
Part II - Let The Games Begin!

Playoff Tournament

- This is a double elimination bracket of the eight Alliances from the Alliance selection.

- During the break before the Playoff Tournament, do your homework about the competing Alliances. Note past histories, regional facts, etc. to use with the GA during Playoff round team introductions.

- Do the "FIRST Handshake" before playing the first Finals match, and after you introduce the teams for the first match of the Finals.

- For this intro, instruct the teams to run onto the field as they are introduced for the first match of the Finals. After all intros, instruct the teams to shake hands in front of the field, and then return to their driver stations to start the match.
At The Event
Part II - Let The Games Begin!

THE CEREMONIES

• Opening Ceremony
  - This sets the tone for the entire competition. It should be fun, upbeat, entertaining, and encouraging. You are the voice for celebrating the accomplishments of the teams and making all feel appreciated and welcome.

  - Your introductions of Special Guests and Speakers (Politicians, Sponsors, Celebrities, etc.) should be professional, mature, and polite.

  - Be sure to get correct pronunciations and titles from the Guest Speakers before the show begins. Scripts and other people are less reliable.
At The Event
Part II - Let The Games Begin!

THE CEREMONIES

• Awards Ceremony
  - Again, this is a place to honor the achievements of the teams. A polished, professional tone is appropriate. Leave the zany, goofy stuff for the team Intros.

  - Prior to the Ceremony read the awards scripts with an eye for typos, bad grammar, missing words, etc.

  - The MC should read the scripts slowly but with energy, standing in front of the Judges, or “centerstage”.

  - The Game Announcer should only read the team Short Name and hometown/state after the MC announces the winning team’s number.
At The Event
Part III - Performance Tips

- Remove your name badge prior to Opening Ceremony - it looks bad on camera.

- Let the microphone do the work. There is no need to scream, shout, or yell like the rest of the crowd - you have the microphone!

- If you push yourself vocally, assuming the audience can't hear you either, you will strain or lose your voice.

- If you can’t hear yourself well:
  - Remember that the majority of the speakers are aimed at the audience, not at the competition field.
  - The monitor speakers aimed at the playing field can be mixed by the sound engineer to remove the music to allow you to hear yourself better.
  - Inform the Technical Director - it is their job to find a solution.
At The Event
Part III - Performance Tips

• Speak slowly and clearly. Diction is incredibly important.

• Don’t scream into the mic. Really.

• To improve projection:
  - Use your diaphragm, and not your throat, for projection.
  - When inhaling, breathe in and allow your stomach/diaphragm to extend and not your shoulders to rise (try it!).
    This technique will help you preserve your voice for the entire two days of the event, not just the first two hours!

• 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 gets anxious and will also lose interest.
  - An energetic, varied delivery is interesting and inviting to an audience.
At The Event
Part III - Performance 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.

- Don’t hold the headset mic to your mouth every time you talk.

- If using a hand-held microphone, hold it close to your mouth and speak *into* it, not over it.

- Do your homework and double check that team names, team nicknames, Robot names, Sponsors, etc. are all correct.

- During the team introductions fill in pertinent performance statistics, if possible, e.g. “Currently in first place, team 88...”, or “Last year’s Southwest Regional Winner...”

  The fact that the team won a Judge’s award five years ago is *NOT* pertinent.
At The Event
Part III - Performance Tips

• Talk to teams between matches and ask to wear their uniform, carry their flag, etc.

• Team intros are very fast-paced in order to keep the competition on schedule. You will constantly be seeking to find the balance between personalizing the intros and staying on schedule.

• If you have to fill time, review the game, lead a dance, roll a video. Let the music do the work - you DO NOT have to speak/vamp the entire time. Just keep the audience informed of the schedule.

• Be sure to thank all the Volunteer efforts that contribute to the success of the Competition.

• Dress appropriately. No torn jeans, baggy-half-way-down-your butt jeans, etc.
At The Event
Part III - Performance Tips

- Work on getting into a rhythm with the Game Announcer, making eye contact and connecting with him/her. Often, the crowd noise is so loud that you cannot hear one another. Establishing a rhythm helps so that you don’t step on each other’s words (talk at the same time).

- Confirm that your microphone is off before speaking off-line.

- Stay hydrated. And time your restroom breaks wisely!

- Work together with the Event Manager and Technical Director - they are the “Directors” of the show.

- Don’t scream into the mic.

- Develop your own style - don’t try to be somebody you’re not!
At The Event
Part IV - Making the Event Professional

• The *Emcee’s* job is to be a visual presence, informing the audience, and keeping the event lively and moving forward. From Opening to Closing Ceremonies, to team introductions, the Emcee is in front of the audience.

• The *Game Announcer* should primarily speak only during team intros, play-by-play commentary, and score announcement.

**The differentiation between these roles is critical to:**

- aid the audience on where to focus their attention
- create a structure where the Game Announcer supports the Emcee
- create two specific roles without competitive/overlapping focus and speaking

*(Consider the structure and success of both Pro sports and talk-show formats.)*
At The Event
Part IV - Making the Event Professional

- The FIRST Robotics Competition is intended to be inspiring, exciting, entertaining, and most of all, as professional and seamless as you can make it.

- Be ready to begin each match as soon as the field is reset, and do not get distracted by personal business (phone calls, chatting, etc.).

- Floor access needs to be controlled- do not encourage parades, dances, tunnels, etc. unless instructed to do so by the Event Manager.

- Fun and professional are not mutually exclusive. But it does take work!

- Get beyond yourself and consider the event. Remember that the teams and audience want to be entertained by both the event and match play.
At The Event
Part IV - Making the Event Professional

- Allow some silence to emphasize what is being said.
- Periodically recap game rules and strategy between rounds.
- Do not play favorites or endlessly praise veteran teams over rookies (or other veterans for that matter.)
- Use the complete game name during Opening and Awards ceremonies, as well as during the Alliance Selection.
- *Do not* banter with the GA over the mic. This is a live event, not radio.
At The Event
Part IV - Making the Event Professional

• Don’t scream or talk so fast that you cannot be understood. You have 6+ hours per day to maintain audience attention. Screaming unintelligibly is grating on the audience.

• *Never* direct strategy to teams.

• Do not do “shout-outs”, “happy birthday” wishes etc. to the audience. This is both unprofessional and opens the floodgates for endless birthday announcements. When there are requests, use discretion about possibly working the announcement into a team intro.

• Behave, as well as sound, professional. *(For example, do not stand on your chair to gain a better sightline!)*
At The Event
Part IV - Making the Event Professional

• Remember, the students and teams are the focus, not you.

• Do not interfere or attempt to influence Referee rulings.

• Do not emphasize winning above all else.

• Thank all the Volunteer efforts that make the competition possible, from the Regional Planning Committee to the Field Reset Crew - the event could not happen without them.

• Join the receiving line during the Awards Ceremony and help lead the congratulatory spirit!
At The Event
Part IV - Best Practices

• What Works - MC
  ▪ Driving the show thru the arc of the event and feeling the energy of the audience.
  ▪ Double checking correct name and title for any speaker you’ll be introducing, even if you think you know how to pronounce it.
  ▪ Speaking clearly to the audience when introducing teams and during Opening and Award Ceremonies.
  ▪ Speaking with a positive and enthusiastic style.
  ▪ Highlighting teams that have excelled and providing positive reinforcement for teams having a difficult competition.
  ▪ Working with the DJ as unscheduled breaks occur.
  ▪ Reviewing scripts with the Event Manager the day before the event. Make index cards outlining the script so that you don’t carry the Opening Ceremony script onto the field.
At The Event
Part IV - Best Practices

• What Works

  ▪ Introduce yourself to teams, Judges, VIPs, Staff, Field Crew, A/V Crew
  ▪ Establish team introduction protocol with GA and Field Supervisor
  ▪ Establish Alliance Selection protocol with Technical Director, Field Supervisor, Scorer and GA.
  ▪ Introduce yourself to teams, Judges, VIPs, Staff, Field Crew, A/V Crew
  ▪ Review all awards scripts prior to an Awards Ceremony. Seek inconsistencies, mistakes, etc. Confirm any changes with Technical Director and Scorer.
  ▪ Establish traffic pattern and protocol for award ceremonies with Event Mgr.
At The Event
Part IV - Worst Practices

• What Does Not Work
  ▪ Monotone delivery.
  ▪ Making the event about yourself.
  ▪ Being distracted and not ready to start intros for each match in a timely way.
  ▪ Highlighting your association with a team or Announcing great things about a team you’re associated with, even though you haven’t told anyone you are associated with a certain team.
  ▪ Not studying up on the team accomplishments, where teams are from, or interesting cool fun facts about the teams.
  ▪ Not staying in sync with the GA on announcements or coordinating a plan for who will be announcing what.
Gracious Professionalism is Key

• At FIRST, Gracious Professionalism has become an expectation.
• We expect it from our students, from the Mentors and Coaches, from all FIRST Volunteers and from FIRST Staff.
• It is part of the ethos of FIRST.

“In the long run, gracious professionalism is part of pursuing a meaningful life. If one becomes a professional, and uses knowledge in a gracious manner, everyone wins. One can add to society and enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that you have acted with integrity and sensitivity. That’s good stuff!”

- Dr. Woodie Flowers, Distinguished FIRST Advisor (1992-2019)
Gracious Professionalism is Key

Encouraging high-quality work +

Emphasizing the value of others +

Respecting individuals and the community

EVERYONE WINS!
Lead Volunteer Communication

With your team of volunteers:

- As a Lead Volunteer you are a LEADER.
- Lead Volunteers must communicate with the Volunteer Coordinator(s) to get names and begin communicating with their team as soon as possible via e mail etc.
- As a team leader, you must communicate with your volunteers to create a sense of a team and teamwork.
- By doing so, questions can be answered in advance, comfort levels increased, and miscellaneous information gotten out of the way.
- There should be no surprises when you get together with your volunteer team at the event.
Lead Volunteer Communication

With the other lead volunteers at your event:
- Take the opportunity to meet with other lead volunteers and discuss your expectations.
- Discuss overlapping areas of responsibility and decide on how issues in these areas should be handled.
- Clarify each others roles BEFORE a problem arises.
- Make sure everyone understands the non-medical incident report.
Critical Review

- Be prepared
- Remember to keep the focus on the teams and students
- Use your personality to help make the teams and event shine
- Stay on schedule
- Make the event as polished and professional as possible
- Remember that the playing field is only one piece of the event. Decisions made there affect all other areas.
- Utilize the experience of the Event Manager and Technical Director
- You represent FIRST!
Conclusion

Every FIRST event is a place for celebration; a gathering of smart and dedicated students, educators, professionals, parents, and mentors.

It is the primary role of the MC to breathe life into the event, to be the leader of the celebration - illuminating all that needs to be celebrated!
Resources & Contact Info

- Resource and Training Materials:

- All FRC Event Position Descriptions:  http://www.firstinspires.org/node/5211

- FRC MC and GA Position Descriptions:
  **MC:**  http://www.firstinspires.org/resource-library/frc/master-of-ceremonies
  **GA:**  http://www.firstinspires.org/resource-library/frc/game-announcer


- Questions or concerns, please contact:  Blair Hundertmark, FIRST Lead MC
  800 871-8326 ext. #441   Blair@firstinspires.org
What’s Next?

• Now that you have reviewed the key materials to succeed in your position be sure to:
  - Review all game info and any other materials available.
  - Sign up for GA Tool and load onto the device you’ll bring to the event
  - Plan to participate in the pre and post-event training calls. These calls help volunteers at all Regional and District events be successful!
  - Complete the post-event survey