

FIRST 2026 **CHAMPIONSHIP**

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FIRST[®] **TECH CHALLENGE** **ADDENDUM**

Updated 4.21.26

FIRST **AGE** PRESENTED BY
Qualcomm

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Welcome to the FIRST[®] Championship presented by BAE Systems

The 2026 FIRST[®] Championship presented by BAE Systems will bring together thousands of students from around the world for the ultimate celebration of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) and innovation. Join our archaeology-inspired robotics season. In this 2025-2026 season, FIRST[®] AGE[™] presented by Qualcomm, every artifact we uncover holds a story. Each tool, each innovation, each work of art connects us to the people and ideas that came before us. Using STEM skills and teamwork, today we can dig deeper into discoveries than ever before.

The information in this event guide outlines our overall event goal to provide a unique, transformative experience for all teams, sponsors, volunteers, and supporters of FIRST in a fun and safe environment. Join us as we celebrate a future that's built better together at FIRST Championship. Get ready to have fun and be part of something extraordinary.

Teams may also reference the [FIRST[®] Tech Challenge FIRST Championship webpage](#) for event information. The webpage will be updated as soon as information is available, while this document is updated every few weeks and may not have last-minute updates.

Teams are expected to read the [Competition Manual](#) and understand modifications to the standard event experience as outlined in [Section 15: FIRST Championship \(C\)](#) of the Competition Manual. There will be additional [Team Updates](#) which may change this and other sections up to 2 weeks before the event.

The FIRST Championship is a unique and rewarding experience, but it is also significantly different than what your team has experienced up until now and to ensure everyone on your team has a great experience, please take time to explore the provided resources so you can be prepared for the experience.

This guide contains helpful information, but if you have additional questions or concerns, please contact us at customerservice@firstinspires.org. Please also reference the [FIRST Championship Event Guide](#) for info that is applicable to all attendees such as information about badging, Conferences, Innovation Faire, and more!

Schedule

Teams can reference the [FIRST Tech Challenge Team Schedule](#) for FIRST Tech Challenge specific event details. Additional event-level schedules are also available on the [FIRST Championship website](#) and in the FIRST Championship App. The [FIRST Championship App](#) can be downloaded from our website, or you may search for "FIRST Championship" in the App Store or Google Play Store.

High level event summary by day:

Date	Venue Hours	High Level Activities
Wednesday	7:30 AM – 7:00 PM	Robot Inspection, Robot Calibration and Field Measurements, Drivers' Meeting, and Practice Matches
Thursday	7:30 AM – 6:30 PM	Robot Calibration and Field Measurements, Opening Ceremonies, and Qualification Matches
Friday	7:30 AM – 6:30 PM	Qualification Matches
Saturday	7:30 AM – 5:00 PM	Alliance Selection, Divisional Playoff Matches and Awards, da Vinci Playoff Matches

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Floor Plan

You can find the *FIRST* Tech Challenge [floor plan here](#).

Accessibility

FIRST is committed to *STEM for Everyone*[™] and as such, *FIRST* strives to make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities that request accommodation. If a participant needs an accommodation for an event, we ask them to complete the form included with their invitation to the *FIRST* Championship or contact *FIRST* via customerservice@firstinspires.org to ensure the request is addressed. See more details in the [FIRST Championship Accessibility Event Guide](#).

Accommodations are considered reasonable if they do not create an undue hardship, cause safety concerns, or fundamentally alter the nature of the event.

Accessible Seating

Accessible seating is available for all divisions. If your team needs accessible seating, please indicate this when you register for badging to help us with planning. There will be space for the person in need plus up to 3 additional members from their team. Due to space constraints, most of the team will need to sit in the reserved stands behind the accessible seating. If a student is the one in need, we ask that at least 1 adult sit in the reserved area. Please see a volunteer for directions to seating.

If your team would like to request an accessible pit, [please fill out this form](#). Teams may submit accessible pit requests no later than April 22, 2026. Late requests will be considered on an "as available" basis for requests submitted between April 23 and April 26. *FIRST* may not be able to accommodate all requests. If more accessible pits are requested than are available, accessible pits will be assigned randomly. Pit assignments will be made no later than April 27, 2026.

Lactation Pods

Two [Mamava lactation pods](#) are conveniently located on the North and South side of Mezzanine Level 2. Nursing parents can access these private, clean, and comfortable spaces to breastfeed or pump using the [free Mamava app](#) available on the Apple iOS Store or Google Play Store.

Prayer Room

There will be two prayer rooms available for anyone wishing to observe religious practice onsite during event hours. Prayer rooms will be located in the Marriott hotel; Montgomery A & B.

Quiet Room

A Quiet Room is available for those needing a decreased noise space. If you would like to donate items (things like playing cards, board games, stress balls, puzzles) for the room, please bring them to the room. The Quiet Room is open Wednesday – Saturday 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM. The location of the Quiet Room is on Level 3 of the George R. Brown Convention Center, room 362CF.

Single Stall Restrooms

Single stall restrooms will be available as shown in the layouts on the [FIRST[®] Tech Challenge FIRST Championship webpage](#) as well as layouts on the [FIRST Championship website](#).

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Health and Safety

Please check the [FIRST Championship Guide](#) for full Health and Safety details.

Safety Glasses

Teams are expected to bring enough safety glasses to ensure that all of their team members and guests can wear safety glasses as required.

All individuals are required to wear safety glasses when:

- In the practice field area
- When near the Playing fields (on the carpeted area)
- In their pit when working with power tools or operating their robot

Security / Event Entrances

The perimeter of the screening area is expanded this year to include parts of Discovery Green and Avenidas de las Americas. Security entrances will all be located at these outdoor perimeters, along with the previous GRB/Hotel walkway entrances. There will be metal detection screening at all event entrances.

Teams should plan for wait lines entering the venue. Just like a concert or show, we highly recommend that teams show up 10-15 minutes prior to wanting to enter the venue to ensure they have time to go through security and get to where they want to be.

Teams with their robots may go through any entrance. The ground level entrance at Hall A (nearest the Marriott) will have secondary screening available that will make entering the venue with a robot the most efficient.

Badging & Hotels

All teams traveling to FIRST Championship will be required to book their housing accommodations (hotels) within designated hotel blocks using the FIRST housing partner, ConferenceDirect. Upon team assignment to the FIRST Championship, teams will receive an email from ConferenceDirect (FIRSTteams@conferencedirect.com) to begin the process to book their event housing.

Find more details including available hotels on the [FIRST Championship Event Housing webpage](#).

Load In & Load Out (Robot Shipping)

Robot Shipping

Teams attending the 2026 FIRST Championship can choose to **either** ship their robot using the FedEx voucher or hand-carry to the event.

Once you register for FIRST Championship, you are sent an email asking if you want to bring your robot to the event yourself or ship it via the FedEx voucher. You must select one or the other, as there will be no 'default' option. Teams can reference the [FIRST Tech Challenge FIRST Championship webpage](#) for more information.

- If you opt to hand carry your robot yourself, you must bring your competition robot to FIRST Championship along with all your other pit equipment.

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- If you opt to ship your robot, we provide a FedEx shipping voucher and a ship-not-later than date. Teams must ship no later than that date or risk their robots not arriving at *FIRST* Championship in time for the event.
 - Teams who choose to ship their robot must follow the [Shipping Crate Instructions](#).
 - Teams may not use a FedEx Voucher for pit equipment/other non-robot items. Using a voucher in this way is considered an abuse of the donor's intent and generosity. If you are shipping using the FedEx voucher, only your robot and batteries may be in the crate. If you'd like to ship additional equipment, you must coordinate, ship, and pay for it on your own.

A big thanks to FedEx for once again sponsoring robot shipments to *FIRST* Championship!

Load In

All teams must follow the Load-In process as outlined in the [Team Load-In Instructions](#) in order to bring materials into the Pits from their vehicles. Teams may only unload from the 3rd Floor Loading Dock or the North Transit Station. Teams cannot leave vehicles unattended at any time.

Team vehicles that are small personal vehicles are allowed to enter the 3rd Floor North Ramp via Chartres Street to unload directly into the venue.

Team vehicles that are oversize including charter buses, box trucks, and vehicles with trailers, will all be required to Load-In through the North Transit Station. Teams take their materials into the venue through either escalator or elevator.

It is highly recommended that teams consolidate their materials into one vehicle (or into as few vehicles as possible) to reduce overall wait times for all teams.

Load Out

All teams must follow the Load-Out processes as outlined in the [Team Load Out Instructions](#) in order to carry out materials from the Pits to their vehicles. Additionally, Load Out rules change the way a team's robot will return from Championship.

For teams that shipped their robot to *FIRST* Championship, your return shipping labels will hand delivered to you in your pits on Thursday.

Please be respectful of other teams and the public on your departure, leave your area clean and be safe. Once your team has finished competing in the matches on Saturday, have an Adult Mentor visit Pit Admin to confirm the team's intent to Load Out. The mentor will be given an Access Code which can be given to the team vehicle's driver. The team vehicle may then enter the same area used to Load In: either the 3rd floor North Ramp via Chartres Street or the North Transit Station. Once the driver is in place, they can let the team know to bring all materials out to load. Vehicles without access codes will not be allowed to queue.

Team Check-in

Team Lead Coach 1 or 2 must check-in at Pit Admin in Hall A3 to receive their team's name badges and team registration packet. Check-in times are Wednesday, April 29 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM.

FIRST requires every *FIRST* Championship attendee to be registered and badged, including adult team mentors, youth team members, parents, family members, chaperones, etc. who are participating in the event. Attendee registration grants access to participant-only activities and increases the security of the event.

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Robot Help and Inspection

The Robot Help and Inspection Center (“Robot Hospital”) is a central location to get help with technical issues. This is where teams will go for Robot Inspection, reinspection, getting Robot Troubleshooting (CSA) help, and Vendor parts support. This year’s Robot Help Center is powered by AndyMark, goBILDA, REV Robotics, and Studica who are providing technical experts and parts support. Also, a special thank you to SWYFT for providing robot team signs and special printing services.

Inspection

Inspection opens at 10:00 AM on Wednesday at the Robot Hospital. Teams should start the inspection process as soon as possible to help every team get through it in a timely manner. The inspection process does not need to happen all at once and we encourage teams to check-in and measure their robot early in case any issues are identified. During inspection, if your inspector is unable to explain a decision or if you think there is an error, you can (and should!) ask for the Lead Robot Inspector (LRI) to assist.

Robots must pass inspection prior to competing in Qualification Matches which begin on Thursday morning.

Judging and Awards

Judging for this event will occur in the pits, and teams will not receive an interview schedule. Teams are responsible for being available to meet with the Judges during the judging times listed on the Team Schedule. It’s suggested that teams should do their best to keep a team member in their pit area who can communicate with the rest of their team to coordinate meeting with the Judges. Judges will not expect to interview your team during matches, or during the scheduled lunch break for the division they are assigned to.

Please review [Section 15: FIRST Championship](#) for information about FIRST Tech Challenge judging. FIRST has also shared information about this year’s updated Judging Experience in our recent blog post, [“A New Team Judging Experience for the FIRST Championship”](#).

Tournament Information

Arena Access Buttons (Drive Team, Media, Translator and Pit Crew)

Each team receives 1 Drive Coach, 3 Drive Team, and 1 Media button in its registration packet. Teams should keep track of these buttons and not lose them as they are required for access to the competition fields ([G207](#)).

There are also Translator buttons available upon request. Pit Crew buttons will be provided for teams advancing to the Playoff Matches ([T704](#)).

The Team Media button and related instructions/caveats will be in the team registration packet. Team media are permitted in designated media access boxes around the playing field only during their team’s Qualification and Playoff Matches. Team Media are not permitted on the actual playing field surface, in areas marked off for human players, in any private venues or VIP/Volunteer areas, or the FIRST Media Center.

Robot Sensor Calibration and Field Measurements

There is time reserved each day of the competition for teams to inspect the playing fields and calibrate their robot sensors. Check the [team schedule](#) for the specific hours the fields will be open for calibration and measurement.

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Drivers' Meeting

All teams should plan to send representatives to the Driver's Meeting on Wednesday Afternoon. This meeting is an opportunity for the event Key Volunteers to introduce themselves and cover event procedures. Drive team members and adult coaches from each team should plan to attend. No live questions will be accepted. All questions must be submitted in advance by [completing this form](#) before 12:00 PM CDT on Wednesday April 29th.

Match Queueing

Teams are responsible for knowing their match schedule and are expected to queue 20 minutes prior to their matches. Teams should plan for a minimum of 10 minutes to travel to move from their pit space to the playing fields. No audible announcements will be made for teams who are missing from their matches.

While *FIRST* will make every attempt to run matches per the published schedule, teams should pay close attention to the currently playing matches. There will be "now queuing" TVs located in several locations around the venue.

FIRST will be using the [FTC Nexus](#) application at the 2026 *FIRST* Championship Event. Nexus is a web-based application, developed by Evan Forbes, and has been widely used since 2023. Nexus is not owned or managed by *FIRST*, and personal data (PII) collected by Nexus is not covered by the *FIRST* Privacy Policy. Participants should always review the privacy practices of third-party sites and applications before submitting any personal data. The [Nexus Privacy Policy](#) can be found on their website.

Nexus allows teams to sign up and receive notifications of their upcoming matches, which helps teams manage their time and makes teams aware of potential field delays.

It's important to note that while all 6 divisions will be using Nexus, it is completely optional for teams to opt-in to receiving notifications. The pit displays will still be available and will show the current match and how far ahead/behind the field is running. Teams that choose to opt-in to receive notifications from Nexus are still responsible for making it to their matches on time. **Matches will not be postponed or replayed because of a delayed or missed notification from Nexus.**

Practice Matches

Teams will each be scheduled for at least 2 practice matches on Wednesday afternoon ([check the schedule](#) for timing details). Teams are not required to pass inspection to participate in their scheduled practice matches, but teams who want to use the filler line must have passed complete initial inspection. Check 3.3 MATCH Eligibility Rules for details.

Match Schedule

The official team schedule will be generated by the end of the day on Wednesday, April 29. Once the schedule is generated it will be available online on the [FTC Event Site](#).

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Individual divisional schedule links are also available:

Edison	Qual Matches	Rankings
Franklin	Qual Matches	Rankings
Goodall	Qual Matches	Rankings
Jackson	Qual Matches	Rankings
Lovelace	Qual Matches	Rankings
Ross	Qual Matches	Rankings

Alliance Selection

Alliance Selection takes place at each division first thing on Saturday morning (check the [public schedule](#) for times). Each team must send 1 representative to the floor in front of their division fields before the start of Alliance Selection. Each representative should check in with the designated volunteer when they arrive. The status of teams checked in for Alliance Selection will be shown on the audience display.

At FIRST Championship, Alliances are comprised of 3 teams. This and other details are different about Alliance Selection at the FIRST Championship, please check [Section 15: FIRST Championship \(C\)](#) for more information.

Divisional Playoff Matches and Awards

Divisional Playoff matches will start after a short calibration break following Alliance Selection (check the [public schedule](#) for times). As described in [Section 13: Tournament \(T\)](#), the playoff bracket will consist of 8 alliances playing in a double elimination bracket (Section 13.7.6). Per [Section 15: FIRST Championship \(C\)](#) of the Competition Manual, each alliance will consist of 3 teams. Divisional awards will be presented during playoff match breaks.

During Playoffs teams can have an additional 3 pit crew members with arena access ([T704](#)).

Individual Divisional playoff brackets can be found on the [FTC Event Site](#).

Edison	Playoff Info
Franklin	Playoff Info
Goodall	Playoff Info
Jackson	Playoff Info
Lovelace	Playoff Info
Ross	Playoff Info

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da Vinci Playoffs and Awards Ceremony

The 6 Division winning alliances (Division Winners) will advance to play in the da Vinci Tournament to determine the overall event winners. Additional details about the format of this tournament will be included in [Section 15: FIRST Championship \(C\)](#) of the Competition Manual and announced as a [Team Update](#).

da Vinci Reserved Seating Area

Teams that are part of the Division Winning Alliances or win Inspire 1st Place in their Division will have reserved seating for the da Vinci playoff matches and Awards Ceremony. Each team will receive 20 wristbands when can be worn to access the reserved seating. Division Winners will receive their wristbands during the da Vinci Drivers' meeting and the Inspire Award Winners will receive theirs when they collect their trophy.

Please arrive at reserved seats no later than 1:45 PM. Any open areas in the bleachers after 2:00 PM become open to the public for seating.

Pits

Check out Section 5.5 Pits from the Competition Manual for more pit guidelines. Each team is allocated a 10 foot by 10 foot (3.05 x 3.05 x 3.05 meter) pit space. Extending beyond your pit space is not allowed, and you must set up your pit within your pit area (using the aisles is not allowed).

There is a 10-foot (3.05 meter) height limit. Structures, signage, or banners cannot be higher than ten feet above the floor. Do not build any structure that supports people or stores items above the work area/pit space. If the height exceeds 10 feet, you will be asked to take it down. No advance placement requests are available.

Each pit area will be provided with one six-foot table but will not be provided with chairs. Each pit will have access to one electrical outlet in a dual outlet box. Teams should know they get one outlet and should bring a power strip that doesn't infringe on the other team's access to the outlet box. If you have any issues with your power, please report it to Pit Admin.

Aisles must be kept clear for robot movement, safety, and queueing, so we suggest that team members watch the matches and cheer on the teams at the fields instead of overflowing the pit stations and congregating in the aisles.

No requests for displays, additional tables, pit locations, division assignments, meeting rooms, or additional space will be considered. Pit information is outlined in detail in [Section 5.5 of the Competition Manual](#).

Allowed Equipment

For the *FIRST* Championship there are additional restrictions about what kinds of tools and equipment can be brought or used within your pit:

- No power tools which plug into 120V A/C outlet
- No overnight operations of equipment (like 3D printers)

Pit Announcements

Most pit announcements will be made through the [Nexus system](#). When [teams sign up](#) for queuing notifications, they can also opt into Pit Announcements and parts Request Notifications. To reduce noise in the venue only critical announcements will be broadcast by overhead audio. Teams who do not wish to opt into Nexus to receive pit announcements can see the current announcements on the Pit Announcement TV at Pit Admin.

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If your team needs to make a part request, write your division, team number, and needed part on a piece of paper and give it to Pit Admin staff.

Division Playoff Pits

There will be assigned pits for Division playoff matches closer to the fields to be shared by the 3-team alliances. Division Playoff Pits are 3 foot x 8 foot (0.9 m x 2.4 m). These pits will not have any tables and no electricity is provided. On-deck queuing tables will have limited power available. Alliances must work together to share the space accordingly including tools and equipment. Teams may move to these spaces immediately after Alliance Selection.

Practice Fields

There will be 14 Practice Fields available, with 6 on risers and 8 on the ground. Please check the [Public Schedule](#) for when the practice fields are open. Practice fields can only be used by teams after they have completed their initial inspection ([E116](#)).

On Saturday Practice Fields are only open for Division Playoff Alliances.

Webcast

Each division will be streaming on the [FIRST Tech Challenge YouTube channel](#) and individual match videos will be linked on the [FTC Events](#) site.