

2025 - 2026 Event Preferencing FAQ

What are the dates for Event Preferencing?

- [First Event Registration - Round 1 Preference:](#)
 - o Occurs Sep. 25 – Oct 2, 2025
 - o All teams are able to select events to preference for their 1st Regional Event or 1st District Event for the 2026 *FIRST*® Robotics Competition Season.
- [Second Event Registration - Round 2 Preference:](#)
 - o Oct. 16-23, 2025
 - o All teams are able to select events to preference for their 2nd Regional Event or 2nd District Event for the 2026 *FIRST* Robotics Competition Season.

When will closing times for preference submission be?

Closing times will be Noon Eastern. Teams will have seven days to enter their preferences. The best way to ensure you are on time is to be early. With teams around the world, it's not possible for us to pick a time that is convenient for everyone. You may want to consider setting an internal deadline for your team before the *FIRST*® deadline.

Please remember you can adjust your preferences as many times as you wish until the deadline without penalty. You could submit a preliminary list shortly after the preference window opens to ensure you don't miss the deadline completely, then adjust if necessary before the window closes.

Doesn't this mean local teams may get locked out of events they need to attend?

This is unlikely. We know some teams have only one or a small number of events they can attend for financial or other reasons. We want to make sure those teams get into the events they need.

Program Delivery Partners will be able to reserve slots at events. These reserved slots won't be part of the automated assignment process. The intent of these reserved slots is to accommodate Rookie teams that register after event preferencing and those needing access to that particular event. We occasionally go to extreme lengths, including expanding event capacity or asking better- resourced teams already registered at the event to relocate, to fit these teams in.

Teams will have full control over which, how many, and in what priority events are added to their preference lists. If you can only go to a single event, you should put **only** that event on your list, and you are guaranteed to at least be waitlisted for that event. If you are waitlisted for the event after the assignment process is run, you should then reach out to your Program Delivery Partner explaining your situation and ask to be moved into the event. If you have a clear and compelling

reason why you can only attend that one event they will do their best to accommodate you.

Conversely, you should put as many events on your preference list that you are able and interested in attending. This increases the chance that you will get registered for an event and you can avoid the delay and uncertainty associated with waitlists.

To which events does this process apply?

This process applies to District and Regional events, during first and second rounds of event preferencing. It does not apply to unrestricted registration. *FIRST* Championship and District Championships already have rules for qualification.

Also, this does not change the rules for which teams can go to which events and the timing of event registration. As an example, District teams still won't be able to register for Regionals until unrestricted registration opens. See dates specific to registration on the [Season Calendar](#).

Will all teams be able to preference for events?

Only "event ready" teams are able to preference events and be assigned or waitlisted to an event. Event ready refers to teams with two (2) listed lead coaches and, if they are in Canada or the U.S., both must have a completed background check. Teams should also complete information related to the team profile if listed as an outstanding task. If a team switches out lead mentors during preferencing, it could affect the team being assigned to an event if they are not event ready by the close of preferencing.

Will we know our lottery number?

No. Each team that submits first round preferences will receive a unique random number from a very large pool after the first registration period closes but before the assignment process is run. The assignment process will then be run from the smallest number to the largest, processing each team in turn. Every team will be either assigned or waitlisted to an event, and teams will be notified of their results.

Teams assigned a lottery number during that first preference period retain that number for the second round. Teams that did not submit a preference list during the first round but did submit during the second round will receive a randomized lottery number (that will be scattered among already assigned numbers) during this process. The assignment process will be run again, this time from the largest lottery number to the smallest.

Keep in mind that for both rounds, all teams will be able to identify a single event at which they would like to be waitlisted if there are no available slots at any of their preferenced events. This waitlist event can be any one of the events they have preferenced.

What should my team do if we didn't preference events during round 1?

If a team misses the first round of preferencing, the team should login to the Dashboard and register/waitlist for their 1st event during [1st late registration](#). Teams will need to have 1 registered or waitlisted event before they can preference for second round. Any team that registers during the 1st late registration will be issued a random lottery number before the preference/lottery system is run for the second round of preferences.

What are 'home events'?

Home Event is a term used to describe the event closest to the zip code that the team is in. This terminology is only used for registration for specific Districts. All teams within *FIRST* in Michigan (FIM), *FIRST* North Carolina (FNC), Pacific Northwest *FIRST* (PNW), and *FIRST* Indiana (FIN) are assigned a home event. When teams in these districts go to add events to their preference list, they will see their "home event" at the top of the event list and highlighted in green. "Home Event" is only guaranteed during the first round of event preference.

What if my team does not want to attend their assigned Home Event?

If Indiana, Michigan, Pacific Northwest, and North Carolina teams choose not to attend their Home Event, select the event(s) that your team does want to attend. All teams should make sure the events on their Event Preference List is an accurate reflection of where they want to be assigned.

If your team chooses not to select the Home Event as your preference, you are no longer guaranteed a spot at the Home Event and all other teams who did select their Home Events will be assigned first, regardless of what your preference number is. If there is open capacity at that event after all the teams who did select the Home Event are assigned it, then your team will be assigned to that event. If there is no open capacity at any of the events in your preference list, your team will be placed on the waitlist in the event that your team had selected as your Waitlist Event.

What happens if a team gets assigned to an event that would be a problem for them to attend because of holidays or other reasons? What happens if a school has two *FIRST* Robotics Competition teams, and they get assigned to different events?

Teams will only be assigned to events they have put on their preference lists. Teams should think carefully about the events they list and be able to attend any event they preference.

If a school has two teams, and it would be too difficult for those teams to attend different events, the teams may want to consider putting down the same, single event on their preference list. This would guarantee that they are both at least waitlisted for that one event, and they would have a reason to give the Partner as to why they both need to get into that event.

Will all teams be treated the same in the lottery?

Yes. There is no weighting of lottery numbers for any team characteristic and *FIRST* does not make any manual adjustments to lottery results. The reserved slots and waitlist approach discussed above will be able to handle special accommodations or requests.

Will preferences for the first round have any effect on preferences for the second round?

No. The rounds are independent. Preferences are reset between rounds.

When will a team be placed on a waitlist?

At the end of each Event Preference Round, all teams will either be Registered for an event or Waitlisted for an event. Teams will **ONLY** be placed on a waitlist if all the events they selected as a preference are at capacity. It is imperative that teams **ONLY** put events they actually want to attend on their preference list. The Preference System will check each event to see if there is capacity **BEFORE** a team is placed on a waitlist.

How soon until my team gets off the waitlist?

If your team received notice of placement on the waitlist for your desired event, this is due to event capacity. *FIRST* keeps information regarding the waitlist for all *FIRST* Robotics Competition events strictly confidential.

If additional spots become available and we are able to promote teams off the waitlist, we will notify the lead coaches via email as quickly as possible because we understand that teams need to know in a timely manner for planning purposes.