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1 Introduction



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1.1 WHAT IS THE FIRST® ROBOTICS COMPETITION® (AKA FRC®)?

FRC pairs high school students with adult mentors (primarily engineers and teachers) to design and build robots that compete against one another in this high energy “Varsity Sport for the Mind™”. Each January at the Kickoff, a new, challenging game is introduced. These exciting competitions combine the practical application of science and technology with the fun, intense energy and excitement of a championship-sporting event. Teams are encouraged to display Gracious Professionalism® and to cooperate while competing – known as Coopertition™.

In 2014, FRC will reach 71,000 high-school students representing approximately 2,850 teams. FRC teams come from nearly every state in the United States, as well as many other countries. FRC teams will participate in fifty-four Regional Competitions, about forty FRC District Competitions, four District Championships, and approximately 400 deserving teams will qualify to go to the *FIRST* Championship in the Edward Jones Dome in St. Louis, MO.

This year’s challenge will be presented at the 2014 FRC Kickoff on **Saturday, January 4, 2014**. At the Kickoff event, all teams:

- see the 2014 game field for the first time;
- learn about the 2014 game rules and regulations; and
- receive their Kickoff Kits.

1.2 GRACIOUS PROFESSIONALISM®, A FIRST CREDO

Dr. Woodie Flowers, *FIRST* National Advisor and co-founder of FRC, coined the term **Gracious Professionalism®**.

Gracious Professionalism is part of the ethos of *FIRST*. It's a way of doing things that encourages high-quality work, emphasizes the value of others, and respects individuals and the community.

With Gracious Professionalism, fierce competition and mutual gain are not separate notions. Gracious professionals learn and compete like crazy, but treat one another with respect and kindness in the process. They avoid treating anyone like losers. No chest thumping tough talk, but no sticky-sweet platitudes either. Knowledge, competition, and empathy are comfortably blended.

In the long run, Gracious Professionalism is part of pursuing a meaningful life. One can add to society and enjoy the satisfaction of knowing one has acted with integrity and sensitivity.

1.3 PROMINENT FRC AWARDS

FIRST values and acknowledges team performance, both on field and off, that promotes our mission to change culture. The three (3) most prominent FRC awards that celebrate our culture are described below.

Additional awards recognize outstanding technical expertise, community involvement and safety practices. A complete list and description of awards available to teams can be found in [Section 6 - Awards](#) of the manual.

1.3.1 The Chairman's Award

Every year, veteran FRC Teams have the opportunity to compete for *FIRST*'s most prestigious award; i.e., the Chairman's Award, which represents the spirit of *FIRST*. This award was created to maintain *FIRST*'s focus on changing culture in ways that would inspire greater levels of respect and honor for science and technology, as well as encourage more of today's youth to become scientists, engineers and technologists. The Chairman's Award honors the team that best embodies the goals and purpose of *FIRST* and is a model for other teams to emulate.

FIRST will present a Chairman's Award at each regional and district event. Chairman's Award recipients from district events will go forward to be considered at the State or Region Championship. The recipients from the Regional events and the State or Region Championships will be eligible to be considered for the Chairman's Award presented at the *FIRST* Championship.

1.3.2 The Woodie Flowers Award

The Woodie Flowers Award, founded in 1996 by Dr. William Murphy, celebrates outstanding mentors who lead, inspire and empower their team. Woodie Flowers Award winners demonstrate effective communication in the art and science of engineering and design.

Students submit an essay that nominates one (1) mentor from their team for consideration.

1.3.3 The Dean's List Award

Now in its fifth year, this award celebrates outstanding student leaders whose passion for, and effectiveness at, attaining *FIRST* ideals is exemplary. Finalists are chosen by a panel of judges at each FRC regional and District Championship. From this pool of finalists, the Dean's List Award Committee will select 10 Winners at the Championship in St. Louis, MO.

Student winners are invited to a summit at *FIRST* HQ and DEKA which coincides with the FRC Supplier's Summit held over the summer.

Mentors submit an essay nominating a maximum of two (2) students, preferably in their sophomore or junior year, from their team for consideration.

1.4 SAFETY: A FIRST CULTURE

Safety is critical within *FIRST* and must be observed continuously by all participants. As a part of the “Safety Awareness and Recognition Program”, teams are observed and evaluated at many levels and by many individuals at the events and the Championship.

Key People in this Process:

Safety Advisors - evaluate team safety behavior and practices at Regional Competitions.

Referees and other Field Personnel - observe safety on the playing field as well as adherence to the game rules.

Judges - evaluate how teams have integrated safety into their robot designs when considering the team for technical awards.

Teams - Safe practices at the competitions are mandatory. Teams are required to adopt safe habits throughout the entire competition season including during travel to and from events and while working in their shops at home, etc...

More information on our safety program can be found here:

<http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/safety-video-and-manual>



PLEASE take the time to read the sections of this manual. It was prepared with YOU in mind and is a great resource for important information you will need throughout the season.