

# ***FIRST*** Core Values



## ***DECODE***

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If your team hasn't already talked about your goals for the DECODE Season, take some time this week to think about how your season goals will help build towards your life goals!

- **Discovery:** *We explore new skills and ideas.*
- **Innovation:** *We use creativity and persistence to solve problems.*
- **Impact:** *We apply what we learn to improve our world.*
- **Inclusion:** *We respect each other and embrace our differences.*
- **Teamwork:** *We are stronger when we work together.*
- **Fun:** *We enjoy and celebrate what we do!*



**UNEARTHED**



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**REBUILT**  
PRESENTED BY HANS

# Key Contacts

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# General Season Information

<https://aznmfirsttechchallenge.blogspot.com>

- Links
- Resources
- Grant information
- Event information
- Advice for teams from key volunteers
- Packing lists
- Event rosters and results
- Weekly memes 😊
- ***No really, you should read the BLOG every week!***



## Key Season Dates

- **September 22:** Team Q&A Opens
- **October 27:** Earliest date for official events (League Meets, League Tournaments, or Qualifying Tournaments)
  - Your local season timeline may start later
- **November 17:** Total of registered teams per region helps set *FIRST* Championship Allocations
- **March 15:** Last date for Regional Championship Events to advance to the *FIRST* Championship
  - Your local season timeline may end earlier
- **March 30:** Last day to complete payment and housing registration for the *FIRST* Championship
  - Payment and housing is a 2-week rolling deadline from when the team is first invited to attend
- **April 29 - May 2:** *FIRST* Championship
- **May 2:** Storefront closes, last day to use restricted grants



Key Season Dates Blog

## Season Resources – Quick links

<a href="https://ftc.game">ftc.game</a>	Game and Season Page
<a href="https://ftc.game/manual">ftc.game/manual</a>	Competition Manual PDF
<a href="https://ftc.game/cm-html">ftc.game/cm-html</a>	Competition Manual HTML
<a href="https://ftc.game/cm-html#R104">ftc.game/cm-html#R104</a>	Direct Rule Linking (Example Rule R104)
<a href="https://ftc-resources.firstinspires.org/ftc/field">ftc-resources.firstinspires.org/ftc/field</a>	Playing Field Resources, Field CAD
<a href="https://ftc-resources.firstinspires.org/ftc/team">ftc-resources.firstinspires.org/ftc/team</a>	Team Resources, StarterBot Links
<a href="https://ftc-resources.firstinspires.org/ftc/volunteer">ftc-resources.firstinspires.org/ftc/volunteer</a>	Volunteer Resources (coming soon)
<a href="https://ftc-resources.firstinspires.org/ftc/event">ftc-resources.firstinspires.org/ftc/event</a>	Event Resources (coming soon)
<a href="https://ftc-events.firstinspires.org/">ftc-events.firstinspires.org/</a>	FTC Event Listing and Results
<a href="https://ftc-scoring.firstinspires.org/">ftc-scoring.firstinspires.org/</a>	Avatars, Hybrid Judging, Premier Event Preferencing
<a href="https://ftc.game/calculator">ftc.game/calculator</a>	Practice Scoring Calculator

# Competition Manual Structure and Updates

The Competition Manual is broken down into sections which are mostly self-contained.

- Not everyone needs to review every section, but the team as a whole is responsible to know and understand the rules.
- Sections with a letter in parentheses “(A)” have specific rules, sections without the letter, are overview or process sections.
- Words in ALL CAPITAL LETTERS have specific meanings, check [Section 16: Glossary](#) for details.

# Competition Manual Sections


<a href="#"><u>Section 1: Introduction</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>About <i>FIRST</i> and <i>FIRST</i> Culture</li> <li>How the manual is set-up and how to interpret it</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Section 2: <i>FIRST</i> Season Overview</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short description of the season theme and other <i>FIRST</i> Programs</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Section 3: Competition Eligibility and Inspection (I)</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What teams need to do before competing to be eligible "I Rules"</li> <li>Includes ROBOT Inspection</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Section 4: Advancement</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do teams earn advancement</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Section 5: Event Rules (E)</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall event rules (not game specific) "E Rules"</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Section 6: Awards (A)</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describes the Awards Process</li> <li>Provides specific rules about Awards and Judging "A Rules"</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Section 7: Game Sponsor Recognition</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thank you to <a href="#"><u>RTX</u></a> for being our presenting sponsor for DECODE</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Section 8: Game Overview</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High level "story of the game"</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Section 9: ARENA</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overview of the playing field</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Section 10: Game Details</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overview of the game and match set-up and process</li> <li>Scoring and Violations</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Section 11: Game Rules (G)</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific Game Rules "G Rules"</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Section 12: ROBOT Construction Rules (R)</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rules about what is allowed when building the ROBOT "R Rules"</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Section 13: Tournament (T)</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qualification and Playoff Match process</li> <li>Playoff brackets</li> <li>Tournament Rules "T Rules"</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Section 14: League Play (L)</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional rules for League Play</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Section 15: <i>FIRST</i> Championship (C)</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Processes specific to the <i>FIRST</i> Championship</li> <li>Specific Championship rules "C Rules"</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Section 16: Glossary</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All DEFINED TERMS</li> </ul>



## AI Rules Assistant

**New this year:** AI Chatbot available to help find answers to rules questions

- <https://ftc-cmchatbot.firstinspires.org/>
- The chatbot is trained specifically on the current version of the Competition Manual and will update throughout the season.
- The chatbot can help you find what you're looking for, but it's still **up to you to review and verify the answers.**

With grant support from Google.org

## Team Updates and Team Q&A

- Competition Manual is updated frequently throughout the season to improve the clarity and intent of rules, and to fix any errors found.
  - When the manual is updated a Team Update (TU) is published which shows a summary of the changes.
  - Adults can sign up to get an email notification for all Team Updates.
  - [ftc.game/tu-combined](https://ftc.game/tu-combined) links to a PDF of all the team updates this season.
- Team Q&A is available for teams to ask questions about things they believe are not already clarified by the rules.
  - Answers may point teams to a specific rule or sometimes questions will result in a Competition Manual update.
  - At events, the Head Referee and Event Director make the final decision based on the Competition Manual Rules.
- Team Q&A opens on Sept 22nd.
  - Instructions: [ftc.game/q-a-help](https://ftc.game/q-a-help)
  - Log in here: <https://ftc-qa.firstinspires.org/>



**Coaches:** Sign up here to get  
Team Update emails

## Team Update 00

- The first Team Update of the season is out now!
- TU 00 includes:
  - Major changes from last season's INTO THE DEEP to this year's DECODE manual
  - Updates from the V0 Preview Release
- Find it at: [ftc.game/tu-00](https://ftc.game/tu-00)

# Team Calls

- These are for *YOU!*
- Register to join a call and get help from *FIRST* Tech Challenge experts

Topic	Date	Time
Dean's List	Wednesday, November 12th	8-8:55 PM ET
	Wednesday, December 10th	8-8:55 PM ET
Judging, Gameplay and General Support	Thursday, October 16th	8-8:55 PM ET
	Thursday, November 13th	8-8:55 PM ET
	Thursday, December 11th	8-8:55 PM ET



Team Call Schedule

## **FIRST Mentor Development Initiative**



- Training, Resources & Certification for coaches, mentors, and volunteers
- New adult role: Team Support (not a coach or mentor, could help with meals, transportation, logistics, etc)
- New title: Lead Coach 1 & 2
- Badges, recognitions, gifts
- Encourage ALL mentors on your team to do this!
- Available soon through your Dashboard

## CocoNuts Registration Grant

*To discount your qualifier registration fees (\$225 for 2, \$300 for 3 events)*



## FTC Hardship Grant

*For use on your dashboard (season entry fee, robot kits, field elements...funding is half gone!)*





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# Advancement and Judging

## Points-based Advancement Model

- Everything a team does well at an event helps contribute to their advancement points.
- Teams will be ranked based on the points they earn at an individual event.
- This model rewards **well rounded teams** who do well with Awards and Robot performance.
- Check out the [Advancement & FIRST Championship Update](#) blog more information.
- No math required! The scoring system will do the math, but you can see how points are calculated in [Section 4: Advancement](#).



Advancement Changes  
Announcement Blog



# ***FIRST* Championship and Premier Event Opportunities**

- As announced in the [Advancement & FIRST Championship Update](#) blog, the *FIRST* Championship will have 336 *FIRST* Tech Challenge teams this year (up from 256 last year).
- *FIRST* Tech Challenge Premier Events are back and bigger! We have several returning and new locations:

**New England** Premier Event

**Mexico** Premier Event

**Michiana** Premier Event Presented by GEARS

**Run for the Robots** Premier Event

**European** Premier Event

**Chicago Robotics Invitational** Premier Event

**Canadian Rockies** Premier Event @ K Days

Canada Cup - **Niagara** Premier Event

**Istanbul** Premier Event

**Western Edge** Premier Event

**Cowtown Invitational** Premier Event

# ***FIRST* Championship and Premier Event Selection Process**

- Specific details will be announced in a blog by November.
- General Process Notes:
  - Teams will be able to submit a ranked choice event list for which events they would like to attend in [FTC Scoring](#).
  - Teams will be able to indicate if they have sibling teams for travel logistics.
  - If there are unfilled spots at an event, teams will be able to indicate if they would like to attend more than one event.

## Section 6: Awards (A)

- Formal Interviews are now called “Structured Interviews”. There is no format change.
- PORTFOLIOS may only include content from Jan 1, 2025 or later. This universal date helps Judges and Teams understand what content can be included in the Portfolio.
- The Motivate Award has been retired. It has been replaced with two new awards: **Sustain** and **Reach**, so we can better celebrate the required and suggested achievements the Motivate Award represented.
- All non-Inspire awards, in Section 6.3, are given same number of advancement points. This includes the Judges’ Choice Award!
- Teams who have won 1<sup>st</sup> place Inspire at a Qualifying Tournament or League Tournament **can** be considered for 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> place Inspire at subsequent Qualifying Tournaments or League Tournaments.
- Teams can only receive one Judged Award recognition per event (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup>). This allows us to celebrate the accomplishments of many teams.

# Dean's List Award – New Deadlines!

December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025 is the deadline for all Dean's List Award nominations, for all regions.

## Dean's List Award – Important Dates

September 6, 2025	Nominations open
<b>December 15, 2025</b>	<b>Deadline for all nominations</b>
<b>Week of Jan. 5</b>	<b>AZ &amp; FC Dean's List Interviews</b>
February 7 (FC) February 21 (AZ)	Finalists announced at Regional Championship Tournaments
May 1, 2026	10 Winners announced at FIRST Championship



Dean's List Changes  
Announcement Blog