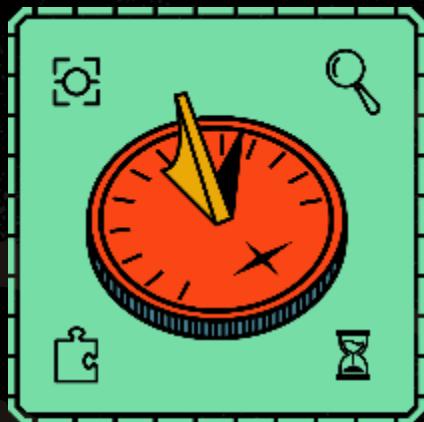


FIRST Core Values



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!

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- **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!



UNEARTHEDTM



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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

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

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

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.**

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 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
 - 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

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 1st place Inspire at a Qualifying Tournament or League Tournament **can** be considered for 2nd or 3rd place Inspire at subsequent Qualifying Tournaments or League Tournaments.
- Teams can only receive one Judged Award recognition per event (1st, 2nd, or 3rd). This allows us to celebrate the accomplishments of many teams.

Dean's List Award – New Deadlines!

December 15th, 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
December 15, 2025	Deadline for all nominations
Week of Jan. 5	AZ & FC Dean's List Interviews
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