

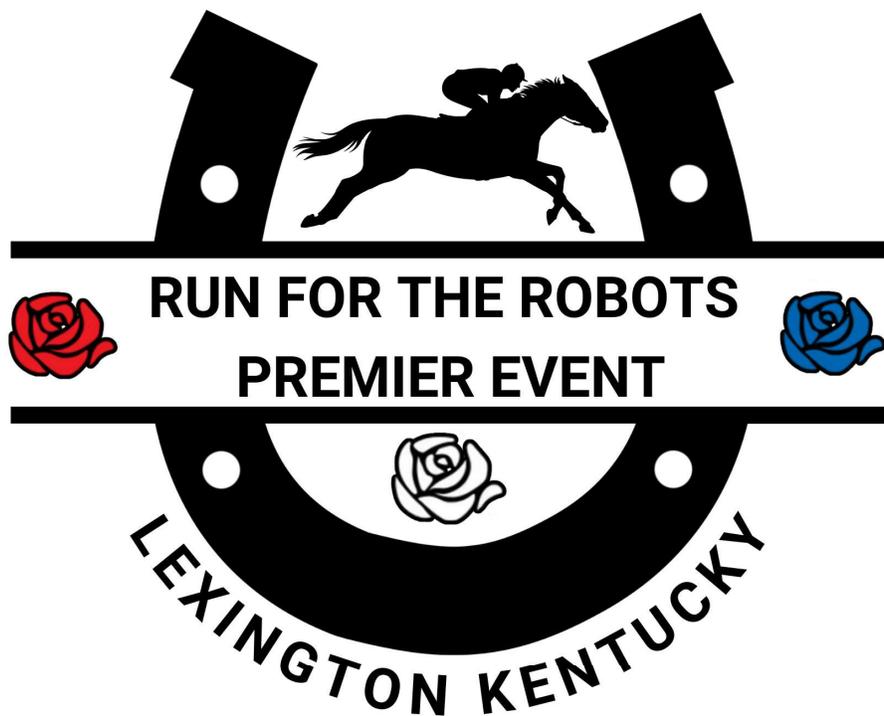
Run for the Robots

FIRST Tech Challenge Premier Event

Volunteer Guidebook

Alltech Arena at the Kentucky Horse Park

May 27th-30th, 2026



Driven by **TOYOTA** | KY



DECODE

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**FIRST
TECH
CHALLENGE**

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Welcome!

To all our amazing volunteers,

From the bottom of our hearts—thank you.

We know “we couldn’t do this without you” is often said, but in this case, it is completely, genuinely true. *Run for the Robots* is an ambitious, high-energy, and globally significant event, and it would not be possible without your time and commitment.

Whatever your role is, you are making a difference. You are the friendly face at the door, the steady hands behind the scenes, and the spirit that keeps this event running smoothly. You are what makes this event feel not just professional, but welcoming.

We’re hosting teams from across the world, welcoming hundreds of students, and sharing the excitement of *FIRST* with new visitors and long-time supporters alike. Behind all of that, there’s you—our volunteer team, showing up, stepping up, and making it all happen.

So again, sincerely, thank you. We are so glad to have you on this team.

Warmly,

The *Run for the Robots* planning team.

Volunteer Registration Required

To receive your volunteer t-shirt, badge, and any event swag, you must be registered in the *FIRST* Volunteer System. This ensures that we have the required forms and can officially assign you to your role.

Here's What You Need to Do:

1. Log in or create an account at firstinspires.org
2. Complete the following:
 - a. *FIRST* Consent & Release form (acknowledgement form)
 - b. Youth Protection Screening (required for adults)
(Note: We cannot assign you to a role until both are complete.)
3. Navigate to the Volunteer Dashboard
 - a. Choose *FIRST* Tech Challenge as your program
 - b. Filter for Kentucky events
 - c. Locate *Run for the Robots*
4. Select your preferred roles and enter your availability

If you have any trouble navigating the system, we're happy to help—just email us at info@kyfirstrobotics.org. Thank you for making this event possible!

Training Reminder

Please make sure you check your volunteer dashboard to ensure you are up to date on any training or certification that is needed for your role.

All event volunteer roles have access to *FIRST*® Training upon application. You will see a blue "*FIRST* Training" button in the "Volunteer Registration" tab of the *FIRST* Dashboard. Clicking this button will grant you access to the *FIRST* Training platform.

If your role requires online training, you will be automatically enrolled into the training upon application or assignment into the role. A "Roles Missing Certification" section will appear on your Volunteer Dashboard. Click on "Review Outstanding Tasks," then click the "Resolve" button. This will take you directly to the training site.

Volunteer Community

We have a private Facebook group just for *Run for the Robots* volunteers. This space is designed to help build community before, during, and after the event.

In the group, volunteers can:

- Connect with each other ahead of the event
- Share plans, tips, and logistics, including finding roommates for the duration of the event
- Coordinate after hours activities and explore what Kentucky has to offer, like bourbon tours, local restaurants, and attractions
- Ask questions and support one another throughout the event

This group is for volunteers 18 and older only.

One of our goals at *Run for the Robots* is to create an experience that goes beyond the competition. We hope you walk away with great memories, meaningful connections, and maybe even lifelong friendships. That starts with this online community, and we're excited to have you as part of it.

Join the Volunteer Community on Facebook:

[Facebook Group Link](#)

Event Snapshot

Run for the Robots is a Premier International *FIRST* Tech Challenge (FTC) Event, and we are incredibly proud to host it right here in Kentucky. One of only twelve events like this worldwide, Premier Events showcase high-level international competition. Teams had to qualify to attend by performing well at their state, regional, or national championship events.

Hosting this event is a major milestone for Kentucky. While we are still small in terms of *FIRST* footprint, we are growing rapidly. It is a chance for us to welcome the world to Kentucky and show what makes our community so special.

This event features two divisions, which will operate independently through qualification matches, playoffs, and division-level awards. However, the event will culminate in combined finals, where top alliances from each division face off, as well as combined

event awards including the Inspire Award, Team Spirit Award, and Gracious Professionalism Award.

The event spans four action-packed days:

- **Wednesday** –
 - Setup throughout the day, ending at a reasonable hour. We need a lot of volunteer help this day!
- **Thursday** –
 - Setup throughout the day
 - Teams arrive for check-in, judging, and robot inspections in the afternoon (3:00 PM)
- **Friday** –
 - Opening Ceremonies begin at 9:00 AM
 - Qualification matches begin after opening ceremonies and continue throughout the day
 - Special guests will participate in Behind the Bots tours in the afternoon
- **Saturday** –
 - Remaining qualification matches in the morning
 - Alliance selection, playoffs, and division awards in the afternoon
 - Combined event finals and final award presentations
 - Tear down (We need your help!)

Across the venue, there's more to see and experience:

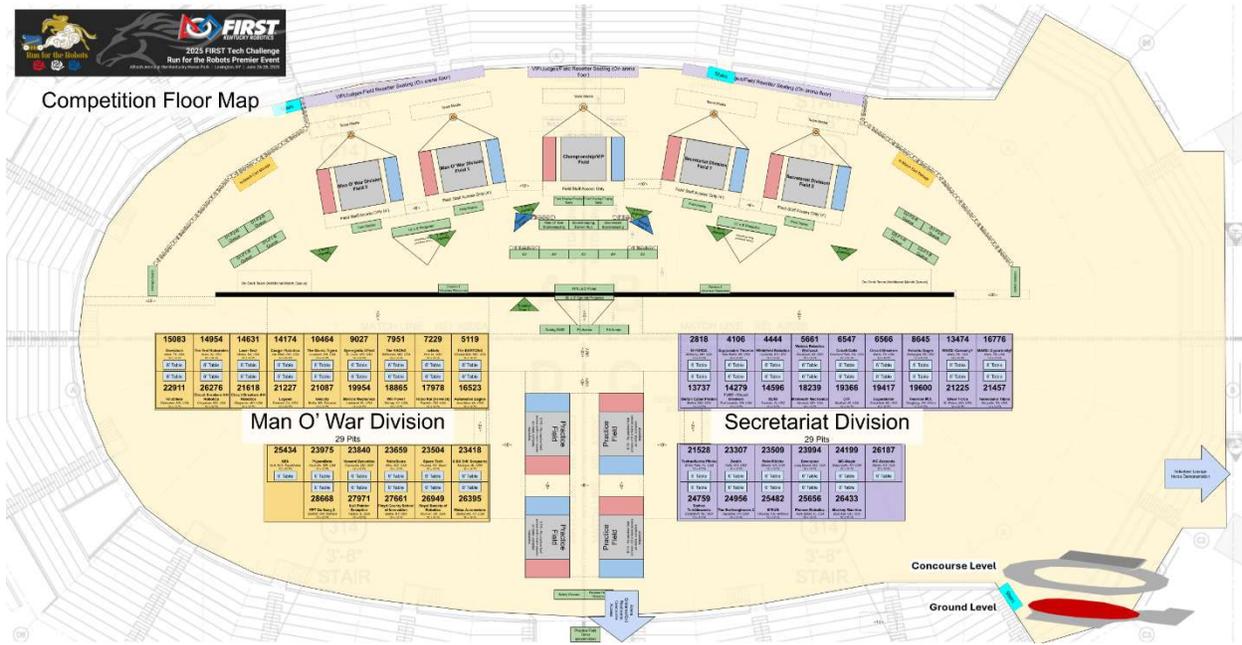
- The North Hall will feature the full progression of *FIRST* programs
- Sponsor booths and industry partners will be set up throughout the concourse
- Colleges will be setup in the concourse for College Row

You will also see our heritage and derby traditions throughout the event—from division names inspired by the Kentucky Derby to jockey silks designs and other touches that

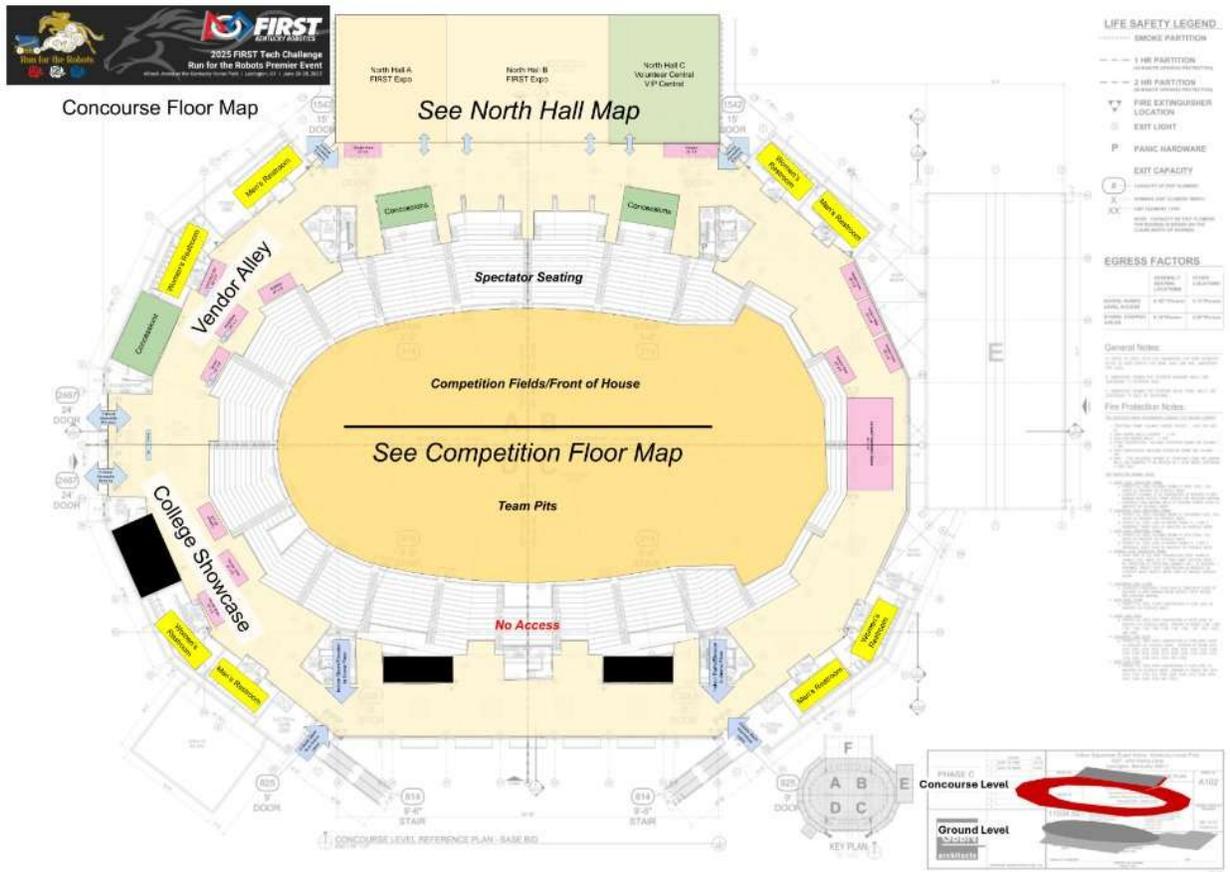
blend robotics with regional tradition. It's our way of giving *Run for the Robots* a personality that is uniquely Kentucky.

This event will be high energy and inspiring to everyone involved- from competitors to volunteers to guests. Thank you for being part of this and helping make it a success.

Arena Map (2025 Maps for reference – UPDATE COMING SOON):



Map of the Concourse and North Hall



Volunteer Orientation & Check-In

Orientation Webinar

All volunteers are strongly encouraged to attend the Volunteer Orientation Webinar prior to the event.

The session will cover key logistics and role-specific tips to help you prepare.

- Webinar Link: **Link here once available**
- Date & Time: TBD
- Link to the Webinar recording: **Once recorded**

A recording will be available for those unable to attend live.

Check-in at the Event

Check-In Opens: Your specific time to check-in depends on your role. See chart below:

Wednesday, May 27th Check-in

Time	Role(s)	Check-In Person	List of People in Role
7:30 AM	Operations Team		
8:00 AM	Unload Trucks (Anyone Available)	Kelli Gowan	Everyone who is able (we welcome your wagons & hand trucks)
11:00 AM	Electrical	Dan Leathers	
9:30 AM	Field Builders	Mannie Lowe & Brent Schanding	
10:00 AM	North Hall Volunteers – Volunteer Room	Jackie Caudill	
10:00 AM	Volunteer Area, Volunteer & Team Check-In, South Hall, Judging Room, Parking & Outside (meet in Volunteer room)	Kelli Gowan	
12:00 PM	A/V Setup	Andrew Gowan	
11:00 AM	Move tables & chairs	Kelli Gowan	

Thursday, May 28th Check-in

Time	Role(s)	Check-In Person	List of People in Role
8:30 AM	Operations Team		
9:00 AM	A/V Setup	Andrew Gowan	
10:00 AM	Concourse Volunteers	Lin Moody	
10:00 AM	North Hall Volunteers	Jackie Caudill	
3:00 PM	Check-in Volunteers	TBD	

3:00 PM	Inspectors, Judges, Practice Field & Machine Shop volunteers	Kerry & Angela	
3:00 PM	Load-in Volunteers / Traffic control	TBD	Going to be outside so bring hats, sunscreen, and/or umbrellas – EVERYONE WHO IS ABLE

Friday, May 29th Check-in

Time	Role(s)	Report to Person	List of People in Role
6:30 AM	Operations Team		
7:00 AM	Load-in Volunteers / Traffic control	TBD	
8:00 AM	North Hall/Concourse	Jackie & Lin	
8:00 AM	AV Crew, Emcees & Announcers, Referees, FTAs, CSAs, field managers, FTA Assistants, Field Resetters, Queuers	Soren, Andrew, Paul	
8:30 AM	Judge Team	Angela	Judge Advisors, Judges, Judge Advisor Assistants
9:00 AM OR 1:30 PM	Ambassadors	Jackie	

Saturday, May 30th Check-in

Time	Role(s)	Check-In Person	List of People in Role
6:30 AM	Operations Team		
7:15 AM	All Volunteers	Sam as Frida y	

5:00 PM	Load-out	Everyone & hopefully a fresh crew to help
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What to Bring

Safety goggles or safety rated glasses with side shields are required when accessing the team pits or competition area. Extras will be available on site if needed.

Water bottle

Comfortable close-toed/heel'd shoes—there may be lots of walking or standing

What to Wear

- You will receive a black volunteer shirt upon check-in for your event days. You may purchase a second shirt from our onsite vendor if you'd prefer a fresh one for the second day. **Here is last year's shirt, an updated photo with this year's shirt coming soon!**



- Wednesday & Thursday Setup Day: Volunteers should wear KY *FIRST* Robotics shirts if they have one. If not, we will provide a shirt as long as supplies last.



- You will want to wear comfortable pants and close-toed shoes. Any role-specific items such as vests, referee shirts, etc. will be provided to you.
- *FIRST* events ARE FUN! These students work hard and these events are where they celebrate the season. You are welcome to wear funny hats, ties, shoes, etc. – especially those volunteering on and around the field.
- Safety glasses (or safety rated glasses side shields) are required on the arena floor & in certain areas in the North Hall.
- All volunteers will receive a badge with a name tag, and it will be pulled from the *FIRST* database so ensure that your preferred name is correct there.

Parking Instructions

You will park in the main lot outside the front of the Alltech Arena. Please drive all the way to the front of the building.

Day 1 Entry Instructions

Driving Directions to the Kentucky Horse Park – Alltech Arena
For *Run for the Robots* Volunteers

Location: Alltech Arena, Kentucky Horse Park
Address: 4089 Iron Works Pkwy, Lexington, KY 40511

From the North (I-75 Southbound):

- Take I-75 South toward Lexington.

- Exit 120 for Iron Works Pike / KY-1973.
- Turn left (east) off the exit onto Iron Works Pike.
- The main entrance to the Kentucky Horse Park will be on your right after about 0.3 miles.

From the South (I-75 Northbound):

- Take I-75 North toward Georgetown/Cincinnati.
- Exit 120 for Iron Works Pike / KY-1973.
- Turn right (east) off the exit onto Iron Works Pike.
- The main entrance to the Kentucky Horse Park will be on your right after about 0.3 miles.

Entering the Horse Park – Volunteer Parking Instructions

As you enter the Kentucky Horse Park grounds, you will approach a parking attendant booth.

Important:

Please present a printed copy of your *Run for the Robots* volunteer parking pass that we emailed to you. This is how they will verify your access.

Once you provide your printed pass, you will receive a physical parking permit that is valid for all four days of the event.

A note on parking passes:

KY *FIRST* Robotics covers the cost of these parking passes specifically for our event volunteers. We know that some of you are arriving with your teams, but we kindly ask that these passes be used only by volunteers. Our budget is very tight this year, and your cooperation helps ensure we can continue offering these resources.

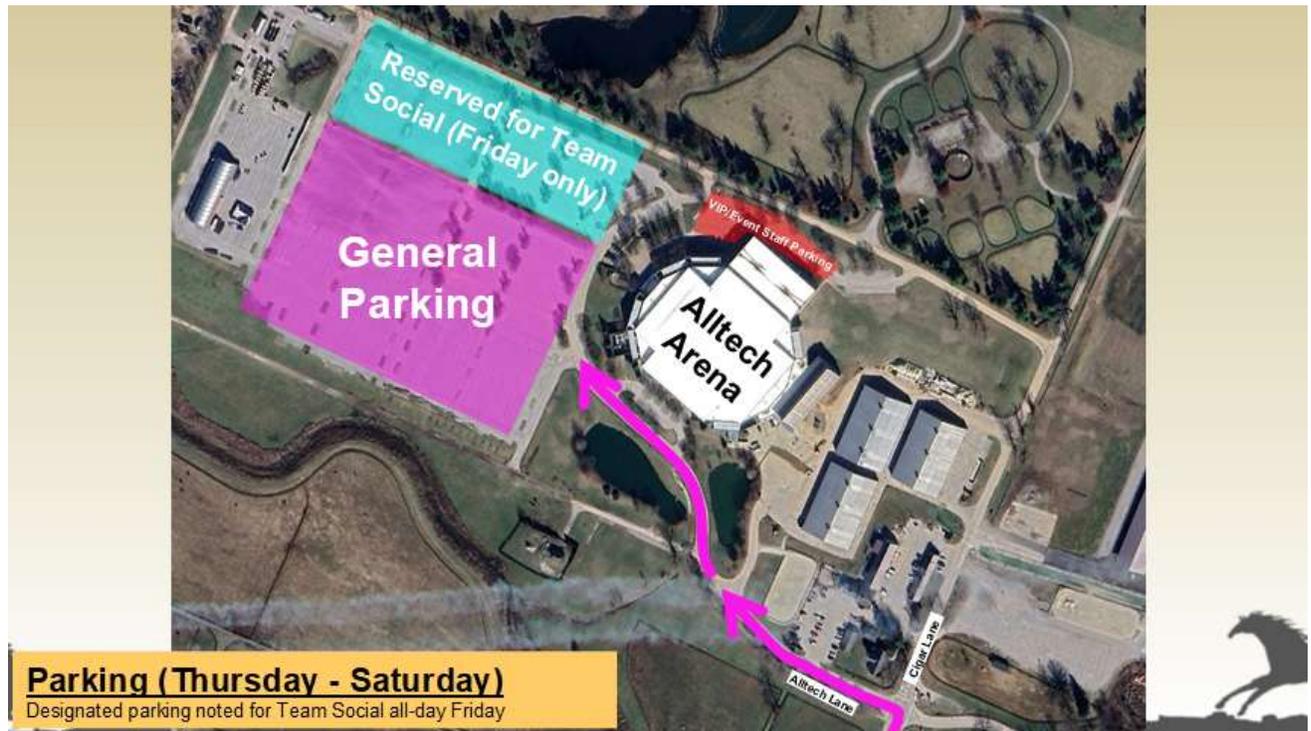
To Alltech Arena (Once on Horse Park Grounds)

After passing through the main gate and receiving your parking permit:

- Follow signage or volunteer directions to Alltech Arena.
- Volunteer parking areas are shown on the attached map.
- Park in the designated lot and proceed to the arena entrance for check-in. You may proceed to the main entrance close to the parking lot and then navigate down to the arena floor, or you may walk around outside to the south hall and

enter there. The map of volunteer check-in shows the location from the south hall entrance, but there will be signs at the venue pointing out the way from the main entrance.

Parking Map (From 2025, Updated maps coming soon!)



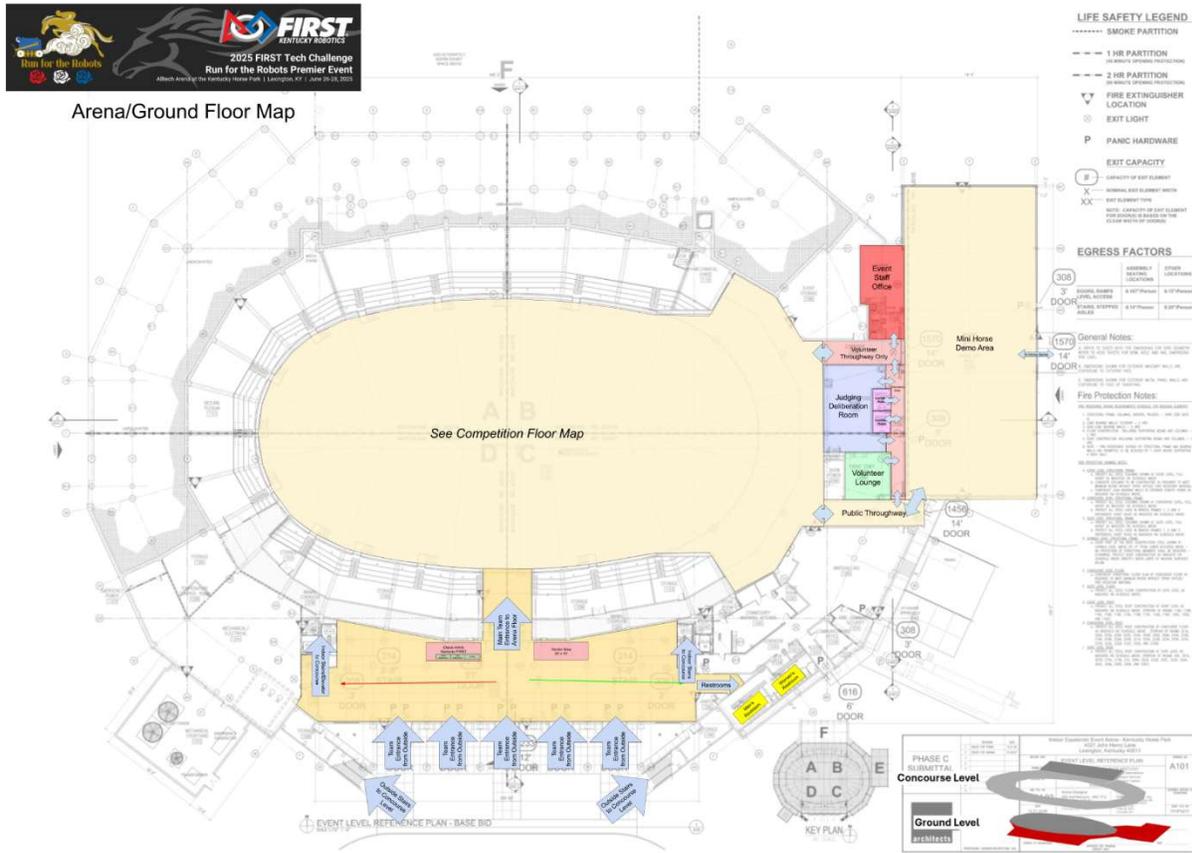
Volunteer Lounge & Food

Volunteer Lounge Locations

There are two volunteer lounges available to support you throughout your time at *Run for the Robots*.

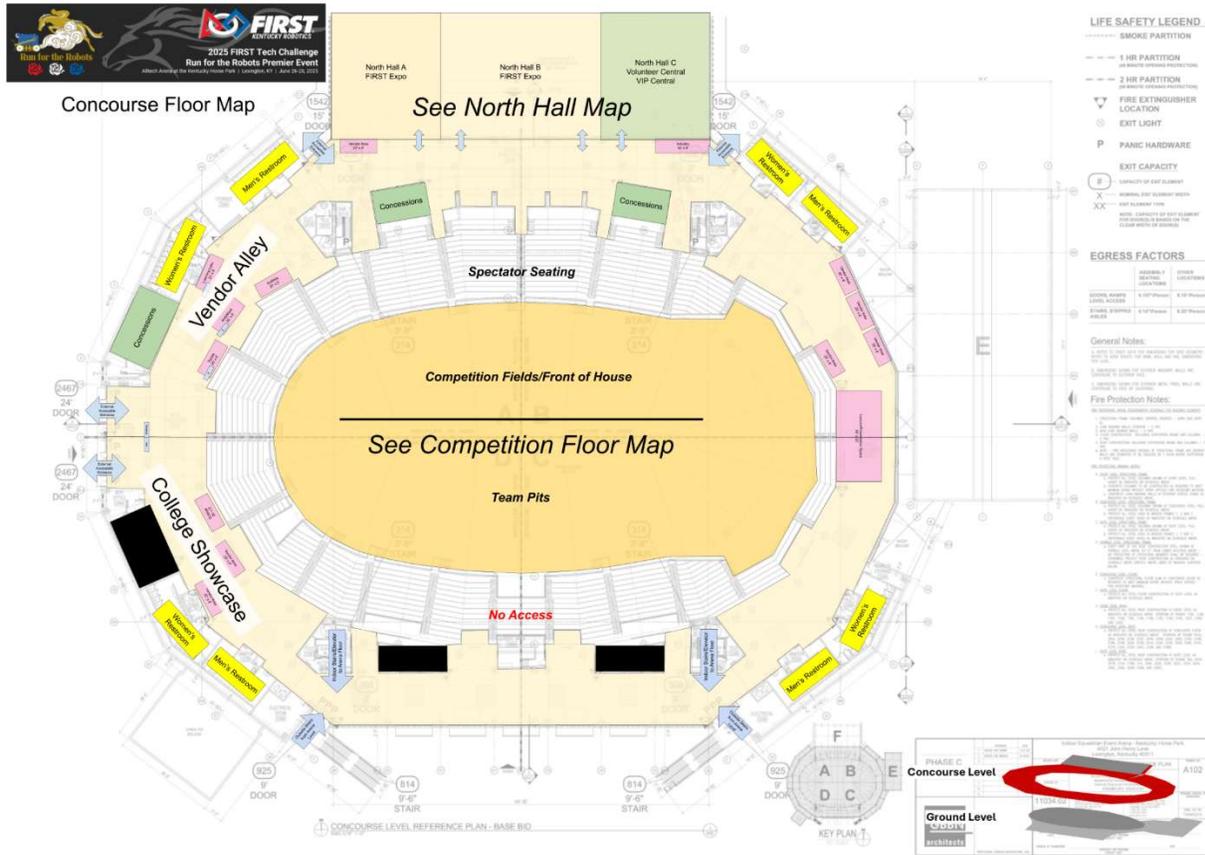
The arena floor lounge is where all volunteers will check in upon arrival on their first day to receive badges and volunteer swag. There will also be some volunteer pins, passports with stamps, and other items you are welcome to take for your collection. This lounge is stocked with snacks and drinks throughout the day for volunteers working in the competition area who need a quick break or pick-me-up.

Arena Floor Map with Volunteer Check-in & Hospitality Room



The larger volunteer lounge is located in Ballroom C of the North Hall. This is the main volunteer lounge and the location where all meals will be served. Snacks and drinks will also be available throughout the day. This space offers a quieter area to rest, recharge, and connect with fellow volunteers.

Concourse level map with Volunteer Hospitality Room



These lounges are reserved for event volunteers and shared with special guests and student ambassadors. We ask that you help us maintain a welcoming environment by demonstrating gracious professionalism and respecting the intended use of these spaces.

We recommend that you store personal items in a safe place near your volunteer station, as the lounges are not secure storage areas.

Meals will be provided on the days you are scheduled to volunteer. If you have dietary restrictions or specific needs, please let us know as soon as possible and we will do our best to accommodate them.

Access Badges

Each volunteer will receive an access badge at check-in. Badges are assigned to the individual whose name is printed on them and should not be shared. They serve as your pass into volunteer-only areas, including lounges and certain event zones.

Badges will be provided on lanyards, and we encourage you to make them your own—add your favorite pins and flair to show off your personality and *FIRST* spirit!

Special Guests & Event Access

You may see special guests throughout the event, including educators, sponsors, community leaders, and partners. These guests are invited to learn more about *FIRST* programs and see the impact of your work firsthand.

Main experiences are scheduled:

- Behind the Bots: Friday, May 29 time TBD in Alltech Arena and the pit areas

But if we have special guests attending other times during the event, they will be badged and guided by student ambassadors.

Guests and ambassadors may access areas that are not open to the public, including some volunteer spaces and field-side viewing. Please help us make them feel welcome and supported during their visit.

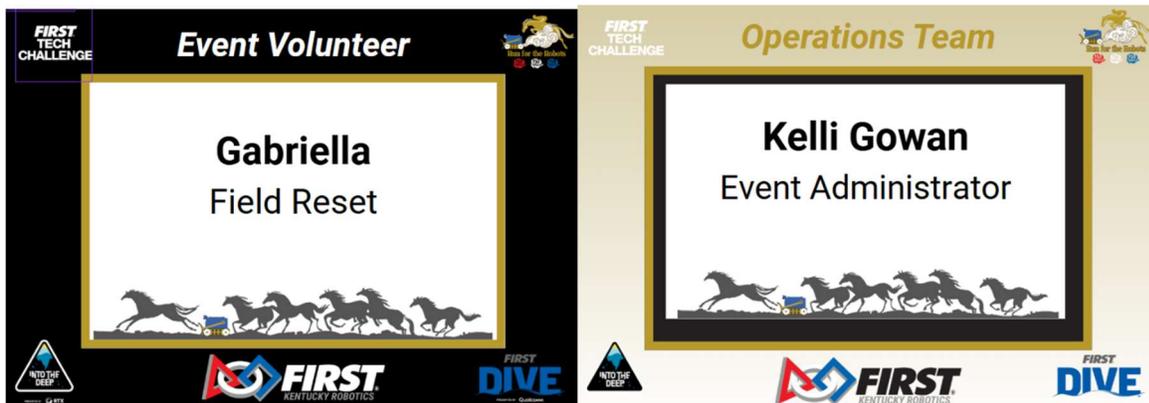
Operations Team:

If you have questions or need assistance, reach out to the Operations Team. You can easily identify members of this team with the gold/cream badges. The person you report to each day will be wearing an Operations Team Badge.

Volunteer Badges

(Example from 2025): 

Operations Team Badges (from 2025)



Event Schedule Overview

The schedules in this section are provided to help you understand the general flow of each day. Volunteers should refer to their individual check-in times and role assignments for exact arrival and shift information.

The team match schedule and overall event timeline can give you a sense of how long you'll likely be on site for your assigned role. If you have any questions about your schedule, please check with the lead for your role.

Team Schedule (FYI)

2026 Team Schedule

Time	Teams				
	Thursday	Friday	Saturday		
7:00 AM					
7:30 AM		Pits Open	Pits Open		
8:00 AM					
8:30 AM		Driver's Meeting	Qualification Matches		
9:00 AM		Opening Ceremonies			
9:30 AM					
10:00 AM					
10:30 AM		Qualification Matches			
11:00 AM					
11:30 AM					

Toyota Tours

Educational Tours

Wednesday & Thursday

12:00 PM			Alliance Selection		
12:30 PM		Lunch	Lunch		
1:00 PM					
1:30 PM		Qualification Matches	Division Playoffs		
2:00 PM					
2:30 PM					
3:00 PM			Division Awards		
3:30 PM					
4:00 PM	Pits Open		Event Finals followed by Event Awards		
4:30 PM					
5:00 PM	Team social & Open Pits				
5:30 PM					
6:00 PM	Inspections, Judging & Social Events	Team social & Open Pits	Load out and Pits Close		
6:30 PM					
7:00 PM					
7:30 PM		Pits Close			
8:00 PM					
8:30 PM	Pits Close				

9:00 PM					
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Spectator Schedule (FYI)

We're excited to welcome spectators during the public hours of *Run for the Robots*. These windows are when the venue will be most active with families, supporters, and community guests exploring the event.

- Friday, May 29th – Spectators expected from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM
- Saturday, May 30th – Spectators expected from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM

As a volunteer, your presence helps make the event a memorable experience for everyone. If you're approached with questions, feel free to assist or help connect guests with someone at the Information Table just to the left of the main entrance into the arena.

Themed Activities and Extras

Jockey Silks

You'll see colorful jockey silk designs throughout the venue—they're part of the fun and tradition woven into this Kentucky-themed event.

- Division Themes
 - Each competition division is named after a legendary racehorse:
 - Man o' War Division
 - Secretariat Division

Each has its own custom jockey silk design that you'll see on signage, field banners, and more.

- Special Guest & Ambassador Badges
 - Special Guest and Student Ambassador badges feature jockey silks inspired by Triple Crown winners.
 - Educators and their ambassadors will wear badges with a design based on Seabiscuit's silk—a nod to resilience and impact.
- Team Creativity
 - Each team was encouraged to design their own jockey silk to showcase their

unique identity. Keep an eye out for some truly imaginative and creative designs from teams across the event!

Explore the Concourse & North Hall

When you have a break in your shift, we encourage you to take time to explore more of what this event has to offer.

- **Industry & Innovation Zone (Concourse):**
Visit local industry partners and *FIRST* vendors showcasing exciting technologies, career pathways, and support for robotics teams & events.
- **College Row (Concourse):**
Meet representatives from Kentucky colleges and universities
- **North Hall:**
This area highlights the progression of *FIRST* programs, from elementary through high school, along with sponsor booths, hands-on activities, and interactive displays.

If you or a guest has questions during the event, visit the Information Tables, located on both the Concourse and in the North Hall.

Theme Days

We're bringing some extra personality to the event with daily themes—and volunteers are absolutely encouraged to join in!

- **Friday: Hometown Pride**
Wear something that represents your hometown, state, or country. Show off your roots and celebrate where you're from!
- **Saturday: Derby Day**
Embrace the Kentucky spirit with Derby hats and bow ties. Whether you go bold or subtle, it's all about joining the fun.

No pressure—just a great way to add energy and community spirit to the event. We can't wait to see what you come up with!

Safety & Conduct

Creating a safe and respectful environment is a shared responsibility, and your role as a volunteer is a key part of that. *Run for the Robots* brings together students, families, and community members from all over the world, and we want everyone to feel welcome and supported.

Quiet Spaces

There will be a few alcoves available during the event as quiet spaces for anyone needing a break from the noise and activity. These areas are intended to be calm, respectful, and restorative.

While these spaces will not be continuously supervised, spot checks will be made throughout the day by event staff. Please help us ensure:

- There are no one-on-one interactions between adults and students in these spaces (except for parent/child).
- These areas remain appropriate for quiet use and are respected as shared spaces.

If you see anything that raises concern, please notify a member of the Operations Team (yellow badge) or the Info Table right away.

Behavior & Professionalism

FIRST students are known for practicing Gracious Professionalism, and we're proud of the way they represent their teams and communities. Still, everyone can use a reminder from time to time. If you observe behavior that's off-track, a friendly and respectful reminder is often all it takes to bring things back into line.

You might say:

- "Let's make sure we're representing our teams in a positive light."
- "That's not really appropriate for a robotics event—can we do better?"
- "Hey, remember this is a shared space—thanks for keeping it respectful."
- "Let's reset and make sure we're staying professional out here."

Safety Glasses

Safety glasses are required:

- On the arena floor
- In designated areas of the North Hall

If someone forgets, offer a polite reminder.

Event Team contact Information

Kelli Gowan – 859-354-7678 or kelli@kyfirstrobotics.org