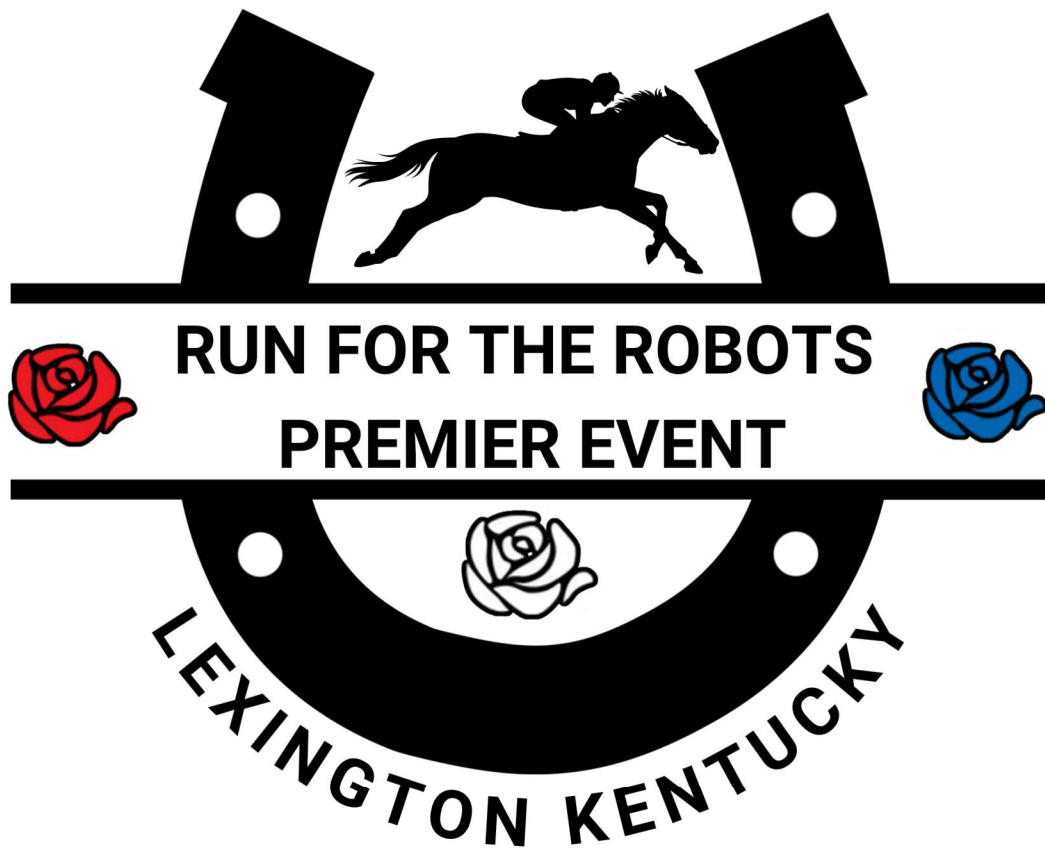


Run for the Robots

FIRST Tech Challenge Premier Event

Alltech Arena at the Kentucky Horse Park

May 28th-30th, 2026



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Kentucky Roots & Event Traditions

Details on the event theme, ties to Kentucky Derby culture, and traditions to expect.

Two Divisions

Teams will be divided into two divisions - Man O' War and Secretariat.

Man O' War was a legendary American racehorse whose career left an indelible mark on the sport. He began racing in 1919 and quickly gained attention for his incredible speed and dominance on the track. Over the course of his brief but brilliant career, he won 20 of 21 races, with his only loss coming in the Sanford Memorial due to a poor start. His victories were often overwhelming—he regularly defeated his opponents by large margins, once winning by an astonishing 100 lengths. In 1920, he capped off his career by defeating Sir Barton, the first Triple Crown winner. Man O' War retired undefeated as a three-year-old and went on to become a highly influential sire, producing champions including War Admiral, a Triple Crown winner. His combination of power, grace, and dominance made him a national icon and earned him a lasting reputation as one of the greatest racehorses of all time. His remains are located at the Kentucky Horse Park.

Man o' War LOGO Design (based on the jockey silk design):



Secretariat quickly became one of the most iconic figures in horse racing history. In 1973, Secretariat won the Triple Crown, a feat that hadn't been achieved in 25 years. He began with a record-breaking performance in the Kentucky Derby, running each quarter-mile faster than the one before and finishing in 1:59 2/5, a record that still stands. In the Preakness Stakes, he made a dramatic move from last to first and ran the race in what was later recognized as a record time of 1:53. His most unforgettable performance came in the Belmont Stakes, where he blew away the field and won by an astonishing 31 lengths, finishing the 1.5-mile race in 2:24—a world record for that distance on dirt that has never been broken. Even decades later, Secretariat remains a symbol of speed, strength, and the peak of athletic achievement in horse racing. His remains are located at Claiborne Farm in Paris, KY. Also, worth noting...ALL horses in the derby this 2025 season were descendants of Secretariat

Secretariat LOGO design (based on the jockey silk design)



Jockey Silks

Jockey silks, the colorful and distinctive jackets worn by riders during horse races, have a rich history dating back to 18th-century England. As horse racing became a popular sport among the aristocracy, there was a growing need to distinguish one horse and rider from another during the chaos of a race. In 1762, the English Jockey Club formalized this tradition by requiring riders to wear specific "colors" that represented the horse's owner. These silks featured bold and simple patterns—such as stripes, checks, and stars—to ensure visibility and recognition from a distance. The practice of wearing

owner-specific silks soon spread beyond England, becoming a standard in horse racing around the world, including in the United States, where owners register unique designs with the national racing authority. Today, jockey silks remain a central and symbolic part of the sport, serving as both a practical identifier and a proud emblem of a stable's legacy and identity.

Each team is going to be given the opportunity to design their own jockey silk! Please submit your designs using the template sent to your coach. These designs can be done electronically, or using markers, crayons, etc. We encourage you to make it fit your team's branding and identity!

How Queuing Works

Each division will have a designated queuing area with a queuing table located near the field. Teams should report to the queuing table for their division before each match.

Teams are expected to queue for their match approximately 8 to 10 minutes prior to the scheduled match start time. This allows event staff to confirm team attendance and ensure matches begin on schedule.

Once a team has checked in at the queuing table, volunteers will direct the drive team and robot to the field when it is time to enter.

Please pay attention to match schedules and listen for announcements so your team arrives at the queuing area on time. Queuing volunteers will be available to help guide teams through the process.

NEXUS Match Notifications & Event Updates

Run for the Robots will utilize [NEXUS](#) to help teams stay informed throughout the event.

Each team will receive a QR code in their team packet that can be scanned to register for real-time match notifications and event updates through NEXUS. Teams are strongly encouraged to register at least one mentor and one student representative.

NEXUS can provide:

- Upcoming match notifications
- Real-time event updates
- Match schedule access
- Alliance and field status information
- Event announcements and reminders

In addition to mobile access, NEXUS information will also be displayed on pit area screens and on screens located in the South Hall practice field area.

While NEXUS is a helpful tool, teams are still responsible for monitoring match schedules, listening for announcements, and arriving to queue on time.

Traditional Moments Leading Up to the Finals

The Kentucky Derby is known not just for the race itself, but for the rich traditions that unfold in the moments before the horses charge out of the gate. These rituals build excitement, celebrate Kentucky heritage, and signal that the main event is near. At *Run for the Robots*, we've adapted several of these iconic moments to honor that same spirit as we prepare for the final matches.

Call to Post

In the world of horse racing, the Call to Post is one of the most iconic sounds—an energetic bugle tune that signals to riders and horses that it's time to head to the starting gate. It's the moment that transitions the crowd from calm to electric, from waiting to watching. This brief but powerful tradition dates back to the 19th century and is still used today to build excitement and signal that the action is about to begin.

At *Run for the Robots*, we're bringing that same energy to our event. When you hear the Call to Post, it means it's time to prepare for something exciting. Just like in a horse race, it's the cue that something big is about to happen.

Parade of Finalists

In the Derby, horses make their ceremonial walkover to the starting gate while the crowd watches in anticipation. At *Run for the Robots*, finalist teams will take part in a Parade of Finalists, do their handshake while making their way to the field with their robots.

Drivers Up!

Just before the start of the Derby, the famous call of "Riders Up!" signals jockeys to mount their horses. We'll echo this tradition with our own call—"Drivers Up!"—inviting teams to load in their robots, take their places, and get ready to compete for the title.

My Old Kentucky Home

This beloved state song has been played at the Kentucky Derby since 1921 and remains one of the most emotional moments of the day. Before our final matches begin, a rendition of "My Old Kentucky Home" will be sung by Dr. Rachel Rogers, a local FTC

coach and talented singer, paying tribute to the state that hosts *Run for the Robots* and anchoring the moment in Kentucky tradition.

Presentation of the Garland of Roses

The winning horse at the Derby receives a garland of red roses. At *Run for the Robots*, the winning alliance will be honored with a symbolic Garland of Roses.

These traditions will help set the stage for an unforgettable finale. As the energy builds and the crowd gathers, these moments will signal that something big is coming—robotics, Kentucky-style.

Dining & Concessions

On-site food options, pre-order information, food trucks, and venue & event rules around food.

Alltech Arena Concessions

Concession stands are available inside Alltech Arena on the concourse level. The following concession stands will be available.

The Fresh Market

The Fresh Market offers a variety of fresh salads, wraps, and homemade sandwich spreads, making it an ideal stop for guests who prefer lighter or healthier meal choices.

Hours of Operation:

Friday: 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Saturday: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

High Horizon Cafe

For those with heartier appetites, the High Horizon Cafe features satisfying selections such as nachos, burgers, chili cheese dogs, pulled pork nachos and sandwiches, ensuring a filling dining experience.

Hours of Operation:

Friday: 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Saturday: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

*breakfast served from 8 AM - 11 AM

Boba Drink Stand

The Boba Drink Stand will offer a variety of refreshing specialty beverages, including fruit teas, milk teas, and flavored energy drinks, providing guests with a fun and customizable refreshment option throughout the event.

Hours of Operation:

Friday: 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Saturday: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Pack your Own

Teams are welcome to bring their own lunches and snacks. While food delivery services are not recommended for the Kentucky Horse Park or Alltech Arena, team members may choose to pick up food from nearby restaurants and bring it back to the venue.

Dining Areas

Teams are encouraged to utilize the following designated eating areas:

- North Hall tables and chairs – ballrooms A&B only. Ballroom C is for volunteers.
- Tables and seating will be available along the concourse near the arena entrance for teams and guests
- Outdoor Spaces

Small personal snacks and meals are permitted in individual pit areas at each team's own risk. While eating in pits is permitted, teams are encouraged to use designated dining and seating areas whenever possible to help maintain a clean, safe, and organized pit environment for all participants.

Explore Lexington

Recommended Attractions, Things to see and do, Where to stay

Lexington is a vibrant city full of history, horses, and hidden gems and we're thrilled to welcome you here for Run for the Robots. From scenic drives through Horse Country to museums and more, there's something for everyone. This guide highlights just a few suggestions to help you explore during your stay. If time or budget is limited, we highly recommend spending what you do have at the Kentucky Horse Park—it's the heart of Horse Country and an experience you won't want to miss.

What to Do at the Kentucky Horse Park

While you're here for Run for the Robots, we highly encourage teams and families to explore the Kentucky Horse Park. There's a lot to see, and thanks to our partnership, attendees can enjoy discounted admission and a full schedule of engaging equine experiences. Most Kentucky Horse Park attractions are within a 5–10 minute walk of Alltech Arena. Teams can easily explore the park between matches or after competition hours.

Discounted Admission for Attendees

We've arranged special group rates through the park:

- Adults: \$20
- Students (ages 5–17): \$11
- Children 4 and under: Free

Admission can be purchased individually. To receive the discounted rate, go to the Visitor Information Center and check in under Run for the Robots. Your receipt is valid for the following day as well, so be sure and hang onto it and purchase on a day that will allow you to also visit the park the following day.

Typical Daily Park Activities

General admission includes access to all daily show activities, the International Museum of the Horse, and the American Saddlebred Museum. When you check in, you'll receive a park map that includes descriptions of each show to help you plan your visit.

Main Season Show Schedule (subject to change):

- 10:00 AM – Horse Drawn Trolley
- 11:00 AM – Parade of Breeds
- 11:45 AM – Big Barn Presentation
- 12:30 PM – Facts & Fun at the Museum
- 1:15 PM – Hall of Champions Show
- 2:00 PM – Equine Academy
- 2:45 PM – Horse Drawn Trolley
- 3:00 PM – Hall of Champions Show

Recommended shows include:

- Hall of Champions Show – Retired racehorses are introduced, and their racing careers highlighted
- Parade of Breeds – Rare breeds parade through the arena with historical narration and post-show meet-and-greet
- Horse Drawn Trolley – A 10-minute narrated ride through the heart of the park pulled by draft horses

Special Event: The Premier at the Hunter Jumper Complex

Also taking place during our event is The Premier, a major equestrian competition held at the Kentucky Horse Park's Hunter Jumper Complex.

The Premier is a multi-day horse show that features several AQHA World Show qualifying events along with futurity and stakes classes showcasing top riders and horses from across the country.

Because this event is happening at the same time as our competition, you may see horse trailers, riders, and spectators moving throughout the park. It is a great opportunity to experience another aspect of the Kentucky Horse Park while you are here.

How to Get There from Alltech Arena

From the front of Alltech Arena, walk toward the main roadway and follow the signs toward the Hunter Jumper Complex. The complex is located across the roadway from the arena area and is approximately a 5–7 minute walk.

Event schedules and additional details for The Premier will be shared as they become available.

Additional Experiences Not Included in General Admission

Some activities at the Kentucky Horse Park require an additional fee and are not included with your regular admission ticket. These can be a fun add-on for families looking to enhance their visit.

Pony Rides

- **Cost:** \$6 per rider
- **Availability:** First-come, first-served; purchase tickets at the Visitor Information Center (by 2:45 PM)

- **Details:** Riders go three times around the paddock
- **Eligibility:** Ages 2–10, maximum weight 100 lbs; helmets are provided and required

Horseback Trail Rides

- **Cost:** \$30 per rider
- **Duration:** 35-minute guided ride through the park
- **Times:** Typically offered at 11:45 AM, 1:30 PM, and 2:45 PM (subject to change)
- **Eligibility:** Riders must be at least 7 years old, 4 feet tall, and no more than 240 lbs; helmets are provided and required

Note: A general admission ticket to the park is still required to participate in either activity.

What to Do while in the Lexington Area

Old Friends Thoroughbred Retirement Farm (Georgetown)

Just outside Lexington—this is a nonprofit farm where retired racehorses live out their days in peace. You can meet them up close and learn about their racing careers, rehabilitation, and care.

Perfect blend of animal science, history, and equine love.

Website: oldfriendsequine.org

Visit Keeneland (Historic Racetrack & Grounds)

Even when races aren't happening, Keeneland offers:

- Self-guided walking tours
- Stunning architecture and landscape
- A look at the *science and logistics* behind thoroughbred racing
Free to visit and a great way to understand the impact of horses on Kentucky culture.

The Living Arts & Science Center

A local gem offering a mix of art and STEM-focused exhibits. Often has hands-on installations, planetarium shows, or pop-up maker events. This is where our team social is being held on Friday, May 29th from 6:30-8:30PM.

Check for open hours and any public events.

Website: lasclex.org

The Kentucky Castle (Versailles, KY)

Yes, there's a real castle. It's quirky, photogenic, and has a cool story behind it. They occasionally host STEM workshops, ag-tech tours, and farm-to-table events. Even a quick visit makes for fun group photos and unique local lore.

Boone Creek Creamery

Address: 2416 Palumbo Dr, Lexington, KY

Schedule a free tour and tasting at one of the few urban artisan cheese facilities in the country. Visit the Hobbit Cave where the cheeses are aged, learn about the cheese-making process, and even become an honorary Cheese Minion by posing in a giant cheese-making pot.

Call to schedule: 859-402-2364

Raven Run Nature Sanctuary

For teams who want to get outside, this 700+ acre preserve features trails, river overlooks, and even a moon-themed astronomy program on some nights. A good decompression spot for tech-loving teens who need a nature recharge.

Lexington Equine Art Walk

1. Hidden Horses ("foal" sculptures)

- Tiny bronze foals (4–6 inches tall) are placed in planters, near buildings, and along sidewalks across downtown—about 20+ hidden horses for a scavenger hunt feel. Kind of like Pokemon!
- Spot them and share with #HiddenHorsesLexington. An engaging, playful activity perfect for STEM-minded teens and equine enthusiasts.
lextoday.6amcity.com+1wtvq.com+1.

2. Thoroughbred Park Bronze Herd

- Near Main & Midland Streets: a group of realistic life-size bronze horse statues, depicting racing and grazing thoroughbreds—ideal for striking photos and discussing sculptural techniques visitlex.com+1en.wikipedia.org+1.

Suggested Route (Approximately 1–1.5 miles total)

Stop 1: Lexington Visitor Center (Old Courthouse)

Address: 215 W Main St

What to do: Pick up a city art or walking tour guide here (or use this list!). Start your walk by looking around the square—Hidden Horses begin here.

Stop 2: Triangle Park

Address: 400 W Main St

Look for: Bronze “Hidden Horses” in planters, corners, or near benches.

Notes: Keep your eyes low—these foals are only 4–6 inches tall.

Stop 3: Main Street + Short Street Area (Between Limestone & Broadway)

Look for: More “Hidden Horses” in storefront planters, sidewalk corners, near public seating.

Notes: Roughly a dozen are within a 4–5 block stretch. Look near old banks, museums, and street sculptures.

Stop 4: Thoroughbred Park

Address: 100 Midland Ave (10–15 minute walk from Triangle Park)

What you’ll see:

- 7 life-size bronze racehorses with jockeys
- 3 life-size bronze mares and foals
- Fountains and educational plaques
- Design & materials: Examine bronze vs. fiberglass, miniature casting, public art techniques.

Here’s a link to a printable map:

[Lexington Equine Art Walking Tour.pdf](#)

Lexington Horse Country Scenic Drive

Take a self-guided drive through Lexington's iconic Horse Country. This loop offers stunning views of rolling pastures, black plank fences, and some of the most famous Thoroughbred farms in the world.

Route Overview

Begin in downtown Lexington and follow a loop using Old Frankfort Pike, Iron Works Pike, Newtown Pike, and Pisgah Pike. This scenic route covers approximately 30–40 miles and can take 1.5 to 2 hours depending on stops.

Featured Farms and Notable Stops:

[Claiborne Farm / Calumet Farm Area](#)

Known for Kentucky Derby legends and racing royalty, these farms are world-famous for their breeding programs and historic legacies.

[Castleton Lyons \(formerly Castleton Farm\)](#)

A beautiful estate known for its European-style barns, manicured grounds, and deep roots in equestrian history.

[Spendthrift Farm](#)

Home to top stallions and memorials to past champions, Spendthrift is one of the most active and recognized names in the industry.

[Dixiana Farm](#)

Established in 1877, this historic farm is a cornerstone of the region's horse racing story, known for producing the legendary horse "Domino."

[Mount Brilliant Farm](#)

One of the area's oldest and most picturesque farms, known for its rich heritage and commitment to sustainable land use.

Directions Summary

1. Start: Downtown Lexington
2. Take Old Frankfort Pike (KY-1681) west from town
3. Turn onto Iron Works Pike (KY-1973) near the Kentucky Horse Park
4. Head south via Newtown Pike (KY-922) or loop west onto Pisgah Pike (KY-1967)
5. Return toward town using Versailles Road (US-60) or continue exploring

Lodging

Lodging options (not required that you use these)

Campground

The Park boasts a 260-site campground attracting over 40,000 campers annually. The campground's pool, tennis courts, playgrounds, and easy bike access to Legacy Trail make it one of Kentucky's finest resort campgrounds.

<https://kyhorsepark.com/campground/>

Hotels

Courtesy room blocks and additional hotel information for the Lexington and Georgetown areas are available on the event website.

[Run for the Robots Lodging Information page](#)

Judging & Awards Information

Information on judged awards, submission requirements, and interview process

Judging

Judging for the event will follow the standard *FIRST* Tech Challenge judging format. All in-room judging will take place on the afternoon and evening of May 28.

Most judging sessions will take place on the third floor of the concourse level at Alltech Arena. Teams should plan their arrival accordingly and allow time to travel to the judging area.

Elevators should be reserved for those who require them and for up to two team members transporting a robot. All other team members are asked to use the stairs when possible to help keep the elevators available for those who need them.

If your team requires an accommodation due to accessibility needs, we have a judging room available for each division located on the same level as the arena. These rooms are used both as standard judging rooms and for accessibility accommodations. Teams who need to use this space should email angela@kyfirstrobotics.org in advance so arrangements can be made.

Judging Process: Structured Interview

Each team will participate in a standard judging session consisting of a five-minute team presentation followed by a question and answer period with the judges.

Teams should plan their presentation carefully to highlight the most important aspects of their team's work during the season. Judges may ask follow up questions about your robot design, engineering process, outreach efforts, team organization, and overall team experience.

Submitting Your Materials

Teams should bring a printed copy of their engineering portfolio to provide to the judges when entering the judging room. While submitting a portfolio is optional, it provides judges with a deeper understanding of your team and can strengthen consideration for judged awards.

Optional: It would be helpful to have a digital copy of your portfolio available to the judges as well. This is NOT a requirement, nor does it replace bringing the printed copy as stated above. This will **not** impact award consideration. If you are able to provide a digital copy, please email it to the Run for the Robots Judge Advisor, Angela Schanding, at angela@kyfirstrobotics.org.

Engineering Portfolio Guidelines

Engineering portfolios should follow the standard *FIRST* Tech Challenge guidelines.

The limit is 15 pages maximum, plus one cover page that includes the team name and team number. The content of your portfolio should highlight your team's engineering process, outreach activities, team organization, sustainability efforts, and programming work.

Keep the document clear, organized, and easy to read. Judges will not follow external links included in portfolios, so all important information should be included directly within the document.

Awards

Run for the Robots will feature the traditional *FIRST* Tech Challenge judged awards—plus a few special additions. This is a highly competitive event, so teams are encouraged to be strategic about what they highlight in their presentation videos. Be sure to clearly showcase what makes your team stand out.

Awards Structure

- **Division-Level Awards:** All standard awards will be judged and presented separately within each division.
- **Event-Wide Awards:**
 - Gracious Professionalism and Team Spirit Awards

Award Categories

For detailed criteria and examples, refer to the Award Descriptions provided by *FIRST*.

Standard *FIRST* Tech Challenge Awards:

- Inspire Award (per division – top 3 teams recognized)
- Think Award (per division – top 2 teams recognized)
- Connect Award (per division)
- Innovate Award (per division)
- Design Award (per division)
- Reach Award (per division)
- Sustain Award (per division)
- Control Award (per division)
- Judges Award (per division)

Event Judging Process: Pit Interviews

In addition to the structured interviews, teams will be visited in their pits by judges as part of the awards process. This is a very important aspect of the judging process! Additionally, it can be challenging in a large arena, so we ask teams to remain alert and respectful throughout the event.

Judges will be easy to spot in bright orange vests. If they approach your pit, be prepared to quickly gather your team so everyone can participate. Give them your full attention—this is your opportunity to share your season, your team story, and your accomplishments.

If you're visiting another team and see judges arrive, please be courteous and give them space to complete their process.

Every team will be visited by judges during the event. If your pit will be empty for a period of time (for any reason other than matches), please leave a note to let judges know when you'll return so they can plan accordingly.

Additional Event Awards:

- Gracious Professionalism Award (Event-wide)
- Team Spirit Award (Event-wide)

Award Ceremonies

- Division Awards: Announced at the end of division finals
- Event-Wide Awards: Presented before and after the event finals

Team Checklist and Packing Tips

What to bring, deadlines, and reminders

What to Bring

Team Checklist & Packing Tips

Before you head to *Run for the Robots*, use this checklist to make sure your team is prepared and ready to roll! This includes important documents, packing suggestions, and key reminders.

What to Bring:

1. Pit Items & Decorations

Each team will have a 10x10 pit space with a 6' table provided.

- If you do **not** need the table, please email Kelli at kelli@kyfirstrobotics.org.
- Canopy frames are allowed, but tops are not permitted.
- Lights, signs, and team branding are encouraged—just no top coverings.
- Food is allowed in your team's individual pit, but not in common pit areas. We recommend eating in the designated dining spaces.

Decorate your pit to show team spirit—large, visible team numbers are strongly encouraged!

2. **Extension Cords & Power Strips**

Power is available, but you'll need to bring your own extension cords and power strips.

3. **Safety Goggles**

Bring enough for your team and any guests who will want to visit the pits.

4. **No-Spill Water Bottles**

Help keep the pits and the arena clean and safe. Water filling stations will be available around the venue.

5. **Snacks**

Keep your team fueled between meals. (Just remember—no food in shared pit walkways.)

6. **Team Apparel & Pride**

Bring your team shirts, gear, and spirit wear. Let everyone know who you are!

7. **Theme Day Outfits**

- **Friday:** Celebrate Your Heritage or Hometown – Wear something that represents where you're from.
- **Saturday:** Derby Hat & Bow Tie Day – Join the fun and show off your Kentucky Derby style!

Deadlines

Be sure to complete each item below by the listed deadline to keep everything running smoothly.

- **May 10th - Jockey Silk Designs Due**

Submit your team's custom jockey silk design using [this template](#).

Email your design to teamsubmissions@kyfirstrobotics.org with your team number and "Jockey Silk" in the subject line.

- **May 10th – Rosters Due**

Submit your team's roster before the season rolls over in the dashboard! Email it to team submissions with your team number and "Roster" in the subject line.

- **May 10th – Any last submission due**

If there is any missing/incorrect information regarding your team, please have the correct information sent to us by this date. This allows us time to create the slideshows and such in a timely manner.

- **ASAP – Team & Mentor Registration for Name Badges**

Submit names for all students and mentors traveling with your team.

- Fill out the registration form exactly as you'd like names to appear on badges (no last names for students; initials are okay).
- Complete the form here: [Team & Mentor Registration Form](#)

Other Important Dates

A virtual Team Town Hall was held on May 19, 2026, at 7:00 PM EST to help teams prepare for Run for the Robots. The session included event information, important reminders, and a live Q&A opportunity for teams and mentors. A recording of the Team Town Hall will be available on the event website for teams who were unable to attend live.

Additional Reminders

- **Team Behavior & Supervision**

Teams are responsible for supervising students at all times. Please remind students to display Gracious Professionalism to volunteers, venue staff, and other teams. This is a professional and family-friendly event.

- **Load-In & Load-Out Information**

Teams will load in and load out at arena level through the South Hall entrance. Teams may either park in general parking and carry items directly into the South Hall or utilize the designated unload/load zone shown on the event website to quickly unload before immediately moving vehicles to general parking.

With approximately 70 teams arriving within a limited timeframe, teams are strongly encouraged to plan an efficient load in and load out process in advance. Bringing only the heavy carts and structures through the load-in line will help keep traffic moving smoothly for all participants. Please follow all venue signage and volunteer directions during arrival and departure procedures.

- **Venue Rules**
The Kentucky Horse Park is a public venue. Please respect all park guidelines, including restrictions on noise, equipment placement, and food in designated areas.
- **Team Communication**
Make sure at least one adult from your team is checking email regularly and monitoring the *Run for the Robots* web page for updates.
- **Emergency Contact Plan**
Each team should have a designated adult responsible for medical/emergency needs. Please bring basic first aid supplies and make sure students know who to contact in case of an emergency.
- **Lost & Found**
A lost & found will be available at the pit admin. Labeling team items is encouraged.

Merchandise & Swag

Details on pre-orders and how to buy event t-shirts, swag, and more!

Get ready to show off your *Run for the Robots* spirit with official event swag! This year's merchandise is provided by Connections Graphics and includes a wide range of items like t-shirts, hoodies, and more—all customizable with the event logo and your team number.

Shop Online:

Visit the [official swag store](#) to browse and order ahead of time. There are often more color choices and item styles available online, so we recommend shopping early!

Customize Your Look:

- The *Run for the Robots* logo can be added for free to any item.
- You'll also have the option to add all team numbers (onsite) to the back of shirts—whether you pre-order or purchase onsite.
- Be sure to scroll through all available colors and logo sizes when selecting your items. The smaller logos work great on the sleeves!

On-Site Shopping:

Connections Graphics will also be at the event with a swag booth in the concourse. While some items may be available there, selection may be more limited compared to the online store. So order now!

Social Media, Hashtags & Resources

Tag your team, share your experience, and follow the action! Includes event hashtags, and media tips and tricks.

Hashtags & Social Media

Tag your team. Share your experience. Celebrate *Run for the Robots!*

Get Social with Us

We'll be sharing highlights, team features, behind-the-scenes moments, and award announcements throughout the event. Be sure to follow and tag us so we can feature your team!

KY FIRST Robotics on Social Media:

- **Facebook:** [facebook.com/KYFIRSTRobotics](https://www.facebook.com/KYFIRSTRobotics)
- **Instagram:** [@kentucky_first_robotics](https://www.instagram.com/kentucky_first_robotics)
- **Twitter/X:** [@KYFIRSTRobotics](https://twitter.com/KYFIRSTRobotics)
- **Website:** www.kyfirstrobotics.org

Official Hashtags

Use our official event hashtag across all platforms to join the conversation and showcase your team's journey:

- **#RunForTheRobots**

Other great tags to include:

- **#KYFIRSTRobotics**
- **#MoreThanRobots**
- **#FIRSTTechChallenge**

We encourage teams to tag their own sponsors, local media, and schools—this is a great chance to show off your hard work!

Best Practices for Posting

Help us show the world how amazing *Run for the Robots* is—while making sure your posts are clear, appropriate, and impactful.

1. Tell a Story

Share moments that matter—teamwork, problem-solving, high-fives, robot drama, and celebration. A short caption with a little personality goes a long way.

2. Tag & Hashtag

Use **#RunForTheRobots** and tag **@kyfirstrobotics** on all platforms so we can find and feature your posts. Don't forget to tag your sponsors and schools too!

3. Respect Privacy

Avoid sharing full names for students.

4. Keep It Positive

Celebrate your team and others. Highlight good sportsmanship, team spirit, and gracious professionalism.

5. Credit Creators

If someone else took the photo or created the content, give them a shout-out.

6. Share Often

Post throughout the event—before, during, and after. We want to see your pit, your robot in action, your celebration, and your road trip snacks!

Photo Tips

Want your team photos featured on KY *FIRST* Robotics channels? These tips will help you capture clear, engaging moments that we can showcase. Great photos tell a story—follow the guide below to make yours stand out!

1. Show the Eyes

Aim to capture faces—not backs of heads. If you can't see someone's eyes, reposition yourself or the subject to get a better angle.

2. Avoid Back Shots

If you're seeing mostly backs but still want the moment, kindly ask the team to shift or turn so faces are visible.

3. **Fill the Frame**
Focus on your subject, not the clutter. Reposition or zoom in to eliminate distractions in the background and highlight what matters.
4. **Capture the Action**
A strong photo shows not just faces, but what people are doing. Try to capture hands, tools, robots, and interactions—not just smiles.
5. **Keep It Level**
Make sure the horizon in your photo is straight. A tilted background can make an otherwise great image look off-balance.
6. **Set the Correct Time**
Double-check your camera or phone is set to the right time, date, and AM/PM—sync with time.gov if needed. This helps us organize photos by event timeline.
7. **Shoot Horizontally**
Most media platforms are designed for horizontal photos. Use vertical shots only when absolutely necessary.
8. **Focus with Intention**
Pay attention to where your camera is focusing. Make sure the subject—not the background—is sharp and clear.
9. **Check the Corners**
Use your viewfinder or screen to check all four corners. Make sure everything you want in the photo is actually in the frame.
10. **Use Proper Color Balance**
Set your white balance appropriately. If unsure, the auto setting usually works well.
11. **Submit JPEG Files**
Please submit all images in JPEG format for consistency and compatibility.
12. **Have Fun!**
Capture the spirit of the event—joy, excitement, teamwork, and those magical in-between moments that tell the story.

Event Links

Visit the team information page on our website for the most up-to-date links for this event. <https://www.kyfirstrobotics.org/team-information>

Student Ambassadors

Ambassador roles, responsibilities and time frames needed

Student Ambassadors serve as the welcoming voice and face of KY *FIRST* Robotics during two key special guest experiences at *Run for the Robots*. These students represent the program by engaging with invited guests, sharing their *FIRST* journey, and helping others understand the impact and excitement of robotics. Their professionalism, enthusiasm, and ability to connect with others make them a vital part of how our special guests experience the event.

Role Overview

Student Ambassadors (SAs) will support two special experiences during the event:

- **Friday Afternoon: Special Guest Tours & Networking**
Ambassadors will lead invited guests—including corporate, government, and community leaders—through guided tours of the event. They'll help showcase the impact of *FIRST* programs, answer questions, and participate in a shared "*FIRST, Food & Fellowship*" session.
- **Throughout the Event**
Ambassadors will guide groups of visiting guests through the pits and field-side viewing areas. These short, guided tours will introduce guests to the full progression of *FIRST* programs and give them an up-close look at student-led robotics. These tours are for guests who could not attend the Friday afternoon tour due to scheduling conflicts.

Note: Students do **not** have to participate in both. You will provide us with your availability on Friday afternoon and throughout the event.

Time Commitments

Friday, May 29th: Guest Tours

- 1:15-4:00 PM service window

A short training session will be held before the start of ambassador shift.

Competing students have options to keep them with their team a little longer during match play on Friday.

Responsibilities

- Attend pre-event virtual training and on-site event day training
- Learn about your assigned guests
- Familiarize yourself with provided *FIRST* print resources
- Lead guests on guided tours, sharing details as discussed in the virtual training
- Represent *FIRST* with professionalism and enthusiasm
- Participate in networking and hospitality session with guests

Ideal Student Ambassadors Are:

- Knowledgeable and passionate about their *FIRST* experience
- Comfortable and articulate speaking with adults
- Good listeners and confident conversationalists
- Able to manage time and transitions based on the event schedule
- Flexible and able to adapt to guest interests or spontaneous moments
- Excited to connect others to *FIRST* and robotics

Future Pathways Zone

Be sure to visit the Future Pathways Zone during *Run for the Robots*. This interactive area will feature colleges, universities, educational organizations, and industry partners from across Kentucky showcasing opportunities in STEM, advanced manufacturing, engineering, robotics, and technology.

The Future Pathways Zone is designed to help students explore educational and career opportunities while also providing hands-on activities and interactive exhibits throughout the weekend.

Featured experiences will include:

- Interactive exhibits from Toyota, including robotics and engineering activities
- Motorsports simulator experiences
- Drone demonstrations and hands-on technology activities
- Virtual reality experiences
- Sphero robotics activities and engineering kits

- 3D printers provided by Somerset Community College, including opportunities for teams to learn more about additive manufacturing
- Interactive exhibits and educational experiences from the Challenger Learning Center

Many exhibits will offer opportunities for students to participate directly, explore emerging technologies, and connect with organizations supporting STEM education throughout Kentucky. Teams are encouraged to spend time exploring the Future Pathways Zone between matches and activities.

Sponsors

This Event Is Made Possible by the Support of Our Sponsors

This event would not be possible without the generous support of our sponsors and partners. We are especially grateful to Toyota Kentucky, our Presenting Sponsor, for their leadership and support of this event.

Because additional sponsors may be added leading up to the event, the most current list of supporters is maintained on the event [website](#). We encourage teams and guests to visit the website to see the organizations helping make this event possible and supporting robotics education in Kentucky.

