

Run for the Robots Premier Event Competition Manual Supplement

Welcome to the *FIRST*® Tech Challenge *Run for the Robots* (RFTR) Premier Event. From the planning committee, the field staff, and all of the dedicated volunteers, we are excited to host all the teams from across the world to show off the Alltech Arena, Kentucky Horse Park, and the Kentucky spirit!

In most cases we will be strictly adhering to the Official *FIRST*® Tech Challenge Competition Manual. However, this Supplement contains some additional clarity around event specific procedures and some small exceptions to the Competition Manual.

Thanks again for choosing to come to *Run for the Robots*. We're looking forward to seeing you at the field.



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Revision History	
Revision	Description
V25-26.1 (02-10/2026)	Initial Release

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1 Introduction

Run for the Robots is a dual division capstone event focused on celebrating the DECODE season with *FIRST*® Tech Challenge teams from across the globe.

With few exceptions, game play and judging will follow the standard format described in Sections 1 through 13 of *FIRST*® Tech Challenge [Competition Manual](#). However, the experience will be anything but standard, with Kentucky-themed touches throughout the Alltech Arena at Kentucky Horse Park.

There will be a maximum of 72 teams, split equally across two divisions named, Secretariat and Man O' War, after two legendary thoroughbred racehorses.

Division matches will take place concurrently and each will hold their own awards ceremony to recognize competition on and off the field.

The event will conclude with the cross-divisional RFTR event final followed by an awards ceremony recognizing the Inspire Award Winner, Inspire Award Finalists and the Event Champion Alliance and Event Finalist Alliance.

Any exceptions or clarifications to the *FIRST*® Tech Challenge Competition Manual are contained in the following sections of this document.

2 *FIRST*® Season Overview

As described in Section 2 of the Competition Manual

3 Competition Eligibility and Inspection (I)

As described in Section 3 of the Competition Manual, except as follows:

3.3 Match Eligibility Rules

I303, *Get inspected before playing a Qualification/Playoff MATCH.

Information: Teams are reminded they are not allowed to compete in the qualification rounds until a complete initial inspection has been passed.

Robot inspection may be pre-scheduled as a guide only. Inspections will be performed on a first-come-first served basis on Thursday evening (May 28), and teams are strongly encouraged to inspect early so that they may then utilize the practice fields. Inspected robots will receive a passed inspection sticker to display on their bot.

If required, some final re-inspections may be conducted early Friday morning (May 29th) prior to issuing the match schedule. Inspections on Friday must be pre-arranged with the Lead Robot Inspector.

4 Advancement

Run for the Robots is a *FIRST*® Tech Challenge capstone event. There are no advancements.

5 Event Rules (E)

As described in Section 3 of the Competition Manual, except as follows:

5.1 General Rules

E107 *Practice only when/where permitted.

Information: Four (4) practice fields will be available for teams during the event

E116 *Inspection required for practice FIELD access.

Information: A team may only use a practice FIELD with a ROBOT that has passed an initial, complete inspection

Practice field time will be on a first come, first served basis. A minimum of two teams are permitted on each practice field at one time.

In an act of Gracious professionalism, teams should use the practice field space for no more than 10-minutes at a time. Please respect the needs of other teams waiting in a queue while you are on the practice field.

5.5 Pits

Information: Each team will be provided with a designated floor space of 10 feet by 10 feet (~3 m x 3 m), where they may work on their robot and speak to judges and other teams throughout the event. Pits will be laid out in numerical order within their division based on team numbers. Exceptions may be granted upon request.

In your pit space, your team will have access to:

- One standard-sized rectangular table clearly marked with the team number
- Two (2) chairs
- Access to one electrical outlet.

Teams may not build any structure that supports the weight of people or stores items overhead.

Due to fire codes, please do not place anything above 10 feet. Tent canopy tops are not allowed as they may block the fire sprinklers, but you may use a tent structure with no top. No helium balloons. No highly flammable materials. No tools that would generate sparks.

We recommend that your team brings the following to your Pit Area:

- Your robot and all your robot supplies (batteries, chargers, tools, spare parts etc.).
- A rolling cart to transport your robot to the competition area (and serve as a repair station).
- Laptop computers, monitors, and power cords.
- An extension cord, power strip and surge protector.
- One-page sheet of things your team/robot excels at, for use when other teams are scouting.
- A team banner or other sign – to hang from your pit table.
- A bin or large bags (like trash bags) to store personal belongings, like coats, under your table.
- Items to share with other teams (optional) – Team flyers, buttons, candy etc.

If you need help with your robot, programming, or need a spare part, reach out for help from other teams. You can also ask for help at Pit Admin, and they will make an announcement in the pits. Teams in this program help one another- that's gracious professionalism and that's the spirit of *FIRST*® !

5.7 Ceremonies

Prior to the start of the Robot Competition, join us for the Opening Ceremony! This is a fun celebration that introduces the spectator portion of the event.

Closing ceremony elements will be integrated into and presented between the Division Playoff Matches and after the Event Grand Finals.

6 Awards (A)

Information: The Judging Process will be detailed at a later date in a separate document provided by the RFTR Event Judge Advisor. The intent is to follow Section 6 of the Competition Manual, with the following awards presented:

6.1 Standard Judged Awards

Award	Accomplishment
The Inspire Award (Presented at the Event Finals)	1st Place, 2nd Place and 3rd Place
Think Award - Secretariat Division	1st Place and 2nd Place
Connect Award - Secretariat Division	1st Place
Reach Award - Secretariat Division	1st Place
Sustain Award - Secretariat Division	1st Place
Design Award - Secretariat Division	1st Place
Innovate Award - Secretariat Division	1st Place
Control Award - Secretariat Division	1st Place
Judges Choice Award - Secretariat Division	Optional
Think Award - Man O' War Division	1st Place and 2nd Place
Connect Award - Man O' War Division	1st Place

Reach Award - Man O' War Division	1st Place
Sustain Award - Man O' War Division	1st Place
Design Award - Man O' War Division	1st Place
Innovate Award - Man O' War Division	1st Place
Control Award - Man O' War Division	1st Place
Judges Choice Award - Man O' War Division	Optional

6.2 Alliance Awards

Award
RFTR Event Champion Alliance
RFTR Event Runner Up Alliance
Winning Alliance – Secretariat Division
Winning Alliance – Man O' War Division
Finalist Alliance – Secretariat Division
Finalist Alliance – Man O' War Division

6.3 Run for the Robots Event Specific Awards

RFTR Volunteer Award
RFTR Compass Coach Award
RFTR Team Spirit Award
RFTR Gracious Professionalism

7 Game Sponsor Recognition

As described in Section 7 of the Competition Manual, plus

Thank you to the 2025-26 FIRST® Tech Challenge Run For the Robots Premier Event presenting sponsor:



8 Game Overview

The number, type, and distribution of SCORING ELEMENTS may be adjusted for the RFTR Premier Event. Any game modifications will be published in this document before the last regularly scheduled Team Update in mid-April.

Information: At this time, there are no game modifications planned. The Game, Arena and Game Details will remain consistent with Sections 8 - 10 of the Competition Manual.

9 The Arena

As described in Section 9 of the Competition Manual

Information: Note: Game fields will not be elevated. They will be set up according to the Initial Field Element Assembly Guide and Event Field Setup Guide. These can be found on the [FIRST® Playing Field Resources Web Page](#).

10 Game Details

As described in Section 10 of the Competition Manual, except for:

Information: Run for the Robots is a capstone event featuring many of the top FIRST Tech Challenge teams in the world. The DECODE Ranking Point Thresholds will therefore be consistent with the requirements established for FIRST® Championship. The values will be published 2 weeks prior to FIRST® Championship in Table 10-3 of the Competition Manual

11 Game Rules (G)

As described in Section 11 of the Competition Manual

G301 *Be Prompt.

Information: Matches will run to the starting times shown on the Match Schedule provided to Teams on Friday morning prior to Opening Ceremony. Teams are expected to be queued up in the competition arena shortly (~5 minutes) before their scheduled time.

Be ready! It is the Teams' responsibility to avoid missing their match. The volunteers who assist in team queuing will help, but the teams must watch the schedule and be ready. It is recommended that someone from the team is assigned to watch the time and match progression.

At the end of each match, teams will go back to Pit area or watch other teams from the spectator viewing area.

12 Robot Construction Rules (R)

As described in Section 12 of the Competition Manual.

13 Tournament (T)

13.2 Tournament Rules

T205, *During optional FIELD measurement and calibration time(s), ROBOTS may not practice on the FIELD.

Information: The competition fields will be available for Robot calibration and measurements during selected time periods on Thursday evening, Friday morning and prior to the Event Grand Finals on Saturday. Teams may survey and/or measure the competition field and bring robots to the field to perform sensor calibration. However, teams will not be permitted to run their auto routines or Drive their Robot on the competition fields other than during Qualification rounds and Playoffs.

13.5 Practice Matches

Information: There will be no scheduled practice matches before the Qualifying rounds. However, a few teams may be invited to participate in some referee event acclimation/practice on Thursday evening on one of the competition fields.

13.6 Qualification Matches (and Driver's Meeting)

Information: There will be a total of ten (10) Qualification Rounds. It is anticipated that teams will complete 6 or 7 matches on Friday with the balance remaining on Saturday morning.

Qualification matches will start immediately after Opening Ceremony

A 30-minute Driver's meeting will take place on Friday morning before the Qualification matches and the opening ceremony. The Event Head Referee will introduce key volunteers, discuss the match flow and talk about some important game rule observations from the season. There will be some time at the end for Q&A.

13.7 Playoff Matches

Per T703, *There are no backup teams in Playoff MATCHES. An ALLIANCE may not request a backup team in a Playoff MATCH.

Exception: A backup team and robot may be used in the cross-division event finals if it can be shown to the Head Referee and FTA that one of the alliance robots is inoperable and cannot be fixed in a timely manner. If this is the case, the Alliance Captain may invite the Finalist Alliance Partner from their respective Division Playoff final to participate in the Event Final.

The backup robot is not required to play in every match following the replacement action. If the original robot can subsequently be fixed, it may rejoin the remaining matches in place of the backup robot.

If the backup robot becomes inoperable, no other robot may replace it, other than the original one.

In the event that the eligible Division Finalist Alliance Partner declines to participate as a backup team, no further backup teams or robots will be made available.

If a backup team participates in the event finals, they will be recognized as part of the respective alliance.

T704, *During Playoff MATCHES, teams may have more ARENA access.

Information: During the Playoff, MATCHES teams are expected to remain at the queuing tables in the arena and not return to their pit area. To facilitate this, teams are permitted to have up to 3 additional pit crew members to help with any needed robot repairs or maintenance during the playoffs. These additional team members may not participate in any match play.

13.7.1 Alliance Selection Process

Information: Alliance selection will take place shortly after the last Qualification match, with a break of no less than 10 minutes.

The selection process will follow the standard procedure outlined in section 13.7.1 and will run concurrently across the 2 divisions.

When selecting an alliance partner, teams should not only consider the strengths of a team and the performance of their robot, but it is also important to consider reliability of any robot following 2-days of enduring competition. There will be no backup teams or robots allowed in the division playoffs.

Immediately after Alliance Selection, the Head Referee will remind teams of the procedures to follow in the playoff rounds. Then there will be a minimum of a 15-minute break before the first Playoff match starts.

13.7.2 Playoff Match Bracket

Information: Consistent with Table 13-2 in the Competition Manual, each Division Playoff Bracket will consist of six (6) 2-team alliances.

The division double-elimination playoffs will be held concurrently in accordance with Section 13.7.2 and 13.7.5 of the Competition Manual.

After the divisional playoff matches and award ceremony have concluded, the two division winning alliances will compete in the cross-division RFTR event final.

For the RFTR event finals, the division winners will have their win-loss records reset and proceed to play a 2-team alliance double elimination bracket as described in section 13.8.2 of the Competition Manual. The first alliance to win 2 matches in the event finals will be the RFTR event champion.

Refer to the Competition Manual, Figure 13-7: 2-ALLIANCE grand finals playoff bracket (Dual Division)

14 Contact Information

Feel free to contact your Event Head Referee or the Event Coordinator at the addresses below

Paul Smith, Event Head Referee – psmith@firstpartners.org

Kelli Gowan, Event Coordinator and Kentucky *FIRST*[®] PDP – kelli@kyfirstrobotics.org

Good luck, saddle up, and have the time of your lives reaching the finish line!