

# **FIRST** 2026 **CHAMPIONSHIP**

PRESENTED BY

**BAE SYSTEMS**

## **FIRST**<sup>®</sup> TECH CHALLENGE **EVENT GUIDE**

**Updated 3.13.26**

**FIRST** **AGE** PRESENTED BY  
Qualcomm

# FIRST<sup>®</sup> 2026

# CHAMPIONSHIP

PRESENTED BY **BAE SYSTEMS**

## Contents

Contents.....	2
Welcome to the FIRST <sup>®</sup> Championship presented by BAE Systems.....	3
Schedule.....	3
Floor Plan .....	4
Accessibility.....	4
Accessible Seating.....	4
Lactation Pods.....	4
Prayer Room .....	4
Quiet Room .....	4
Single Stall Restrooms.....	4
Badging & Hotels.....	5
Tournament Information.....	5
Arena Access Buttons (Drive Team, Media, Translator and Pit Crew) .....	5
Robot Sensor Calibration and Field Measurements.....	5
Drivers' Meeting.....	5
Match Queueing.....	5
Practice Matches.....	6
Match Schedule.....	6
Judging & Awards.....	6
Alliance Selection.....	6
da Vinci Playoffs and Awards Ceremony.....	6
da Vinci Reserved Seating Area.....	6
Health and Safety.....	7
Safety Glasses.....	7
Load In & Load Out (Robot Shipping).....	7
Robot Shipping .....	7
Load In.....	7
Load Out.....	7
Pits.....	8
Allowed Equipment.....	8
Pit Announcements.....	8
Division Playoff Pits .....	8
Practice Fields.....	8
Robot Help and Inspection.....	9
Inspection .....	9
Team Check-in.....	9
Webcast.....	9

**FIRSTCHAMPIONSHIP.ORG**

# FIRST<sup>®</sup> 2026 CHAMPIONSHIP

PRESENTED BY

**BAE SYSTEMS**

## Welcome to the FIRST<sup>®</sup> Championship presented by BAE Systems

The 2026 FIRST<sup>®</sup> Championship presented by BAE Systems will bring together thousands of students from around the world for the ultimate celebration of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) and innovation. Join our archaeology-inspired robotics season. In this 2025-2026 season, FIRST<sup>®</sup> AGE<sup>™</sup> presented by Qualcomm, every artifact we uncover holds a story. Each tool, each innovation, each work of art connects us to the people and ideas that came before us. Using STEM skills and teamwork, today we can dig deeper into discoveries than ever before.

The information in this event guide outlines our overall event goal to provide a unique, transformative experience for all teams, sponsors, volunteers, and supporters of FIRST in a fun and safe environment. Join us as we celebrate a future that's built better together at FIRST Championship. Get ready to have fun and be part of something extraordinary.

Teams may also reference the [FIRST<sup>®</sup> Tech Challenge FIRST Championship webpage](#) for event information. The webpage will be updated as soon as information is available, while this document is updated every few weeks and may not have last-minute updates.

Teams are expected to read the [Competition Manual](#) and understand modifications to the standard event experience as outlined in [Section 15: FIRST Championship \(C\)](#) of the Competition Manual. There will be additional [Team Updates](#) which may change this and other sections up to 2 weeks before the event.

The FIRST Championship is a unique and rewarding experience, but it is also significantly different than what your team has experienced up until now and to ensure everyone on your team has a great experience, please take time to explore the provided resources so you can be prepared for the experience.

This guide contains helpful information, but if you have additional questions or concerns, please contact us at [customerservice@firstinspires.org](mailto:customerservice@firstinspires.org). Please also reference the [FIRST Championship Event Guide](#) for info that is applicable to all attendees such as information about badging, Conferences, Innovation Faire, and more!

## Schedule

Teams can reference the [FIRST Tech Challenge Team Schedule](#) for FIRST Tech Challenge specific event details. Additional event-level schedules are also available on the [FIRST Championship website](#) and in the FIRST Championship App. The [FIRST Championship App](#) can be downloaded from our website, or you may search for "FIRST Championship" in the App Store or Google Play Store.

High level event summary by day:

Date	Venue Hours	High Level Activities
Wednesday	7:30 PM – 7:00 PM	Robot Inspection, Robot Calibration and Field Measurements, Drivers' Meeting, and Practice Matches
Thursday	7:30 AM – 6:30 PM	Robot Calibration and Field Measurements, Opening Ceremonies, and Qualification Matches
Friday	7:30 AM – 6:30 PM	Qualification Matches
Saturday	7:30 AM – 5:00 PM	Alliance Selection, Divisional Playoff Matches and Awards, da Vinci Playoff Matches

**FIRSTCHAMPIONSHIP.ORG**

# **FIRST** 2026 **CHAMPIONSHIP**

PRESENTED BY

**BAE SYSTEMS**

## **Floor Plan**

Coming soon.

## **Accessibility**

*FIRST* is committed to *STEM for Everyone™* and as such, *FIRST* strives to make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities that request accommodation. If a participant needs an accommodation for an event, we ask them to complete the form included with their invitation to the *FIRST* Championship or contact *FIRST* via [customerservice@firstinspires.org](mailto:customerservice@firstinspires.org) to ensure the request is addressed.

Accommodations are considered reasonable if they do not create an undue hardship, cause safety concerns, or fundamentally alter the nature of the event.

## **Accessible Seating**

Accessible seating is available for all divisions. If your team needs accessible seating, please indicate this when you register for badging to help us with planning. There will be space for the person in need plus up to 3 additional members from their team. Due to space constraints, most of the team will need to sit in the reserved stands behind the accessible seating. If a student is the one in need, we ask that at least 1 adult sit in the reserved area.

Please see a volunteer for directions to seating.

## **Lactation Pods**

Two [Mamava lactation pods](#) are conveniently located on the North and South side of Mezzanine Level 2. Nursing parents can access these private, clean, and comfortable spaces to breastfeed or pump using the [free Mamava app](#) available on the Apple iOS Store or Google Play Store.

## **Prayer Room**

There will be two prayer rooms available for anyone wishing to observe religious practice onsite during event hours. Prayer rooms will be located in the Marriott hotel; Montgomery A & B.

## **Quiet Room**

A Quiet Room is available for those needing a decreased noise space. If you would like to donate items (things like playing cards, board games, stress balls, puzzles) for the room, please bring them to the room. The Quiet Room is open Wednesday – Saturday 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM. The location of the Quiet Room is on Level 3 of the George R. Brown Convention Center, room 362CF.

## **Single Stall Restrooms**

Single stall restrooms will be available as shown in the layouts on the [FIRST® Tech Challenge FIRST Championship webpage](#) as well as layouts on the [FIRST Championship website](#).

**FIRSTCHAMPIONSHIP.ORG**

# **FIRST** 2026 **CHAMPIONSHIP**

PRESENTED BY

**BAE SYSTEMS**

## Badging & Hotels

All teams traveling to *FIRST* Championship will be required to book their housing accommodations (hotels) within designated hotel blocks using the *FIRST* housing partner, ConferenceDirect. Upon team assignment to the *FIRST* Championship, teams will receive an email from ConferenceDirect ([FIRSTteams@conferencedirect.com](mailto:FIRSTteams@conferencedirect.com)) to begin the process to book their event housing.

Find more details including available hotels on the [FIRST Championship Event Housing webpage](#).

## Tournament Information

### Arena Access Buttons (Drive Team, Media, Translator and Pit Crew)

Each team receives 1 Drive Coach, 3 Drive Team, and 1 Media button in its registration packet. Teams should keep track of these buttons and not lose them as they are required for access to the competition fields ([G207](#)).

There are also Translator buttons available upon request. Pit Crew buttons will be provided for teams advancing to the Playoff Matches ([T704](#)).

The Team Media button and related instructions/caveats will be in the team registration packet. Team media are permitted in designated media access boxes around the playing field only during their team's Qualification and Playoff Matches. Team Media are not permitted on the actual playing field surface, in areas marked off for human players, in any private venues or VIP/Volunteer areas, or the *FIRST* Media Center.

### Robot Sensor Calibration and Field Measurements

There is time reserved each day of the competition for teams to inspect the playing fields and calibrate their robot sensors. Check the team schedule for the specific hours the fields will be open for calibration and measurement.

### Drivers' Meeting

All teams should plan to send representatives to the Driver's Meeting on Wednesday Afternoon. This meeting is an opportunity for the event Key Volunteers to introduce themselves and cover event procedures. Drive team members and adult coaches from each team should plan to attend. No live questions will be accepted. All questions must be submitted in advance by either using this form (link coming soon) or in writing to Pit Admin before 12:00 PM on Wednesday April 29<sup>th</sup>.

### Match Queueing

Teams are responsible for knowing their match schedule and are expected to queue 20 minutes prior to their matches. Teams should plan for a minimum of 10 minutes to travel to move from their pit space to the playing fields. No audible announcements will be made for teams who are missing from their matches.

While *FIRST* will make every attempt to run matches per the published schedule, teams should pay close attention to the currently playing matches. There will be "now queuing" TVs located in several locations around the venue.

*FIRST* will be using the [FTC Nexus](#) application at the 2026 *FIRST* Championship Event. Nexus is a web-based application, developed by Evan Forbes, and has been widely used since 2023. Nexus is not owned or managed by *FIRST*, and personal data (PII) collected by Nexus is not covered by the *FIRST* Privacy Policy. Participants should always review the privacy

**FIRSTCHAMPIONSHIP.ORG**

# FIRST<sup>®</sup> 2026

# CHAMPIONSHIP

PRESENTED BY **BAE SYSTEMS**

practices of third-party sites and applications before submitting any personal data. The [Nexus Privacy Policy](#) can be found on their website.

Nexus allows teams to sign up and receive notifications of their upcoming matches, which helps teams manage their time and makes teams aware of potential field delays.

It's important to note that while all 6 divisions will be using Nexus, it is completely optional for teams to opt-in to receiving notifications. The pit displays will still be available and will show the current match and how far ahead/behind the field is running. Teams that choose to opt-in to receive notifications from Nexus are still responsible for making it to their matches on time. **Matches will not be postponed or replayed because of a delayed or missed notification from Nexus.**

## Practice Matches

Teams will each be scheduled for at least 2 practice matches on Wednesday afternoon ([check the schedule](#) for timing details). Teams are not required to pass inspection to participate in their scheduled practice matches, but teams who want to use the filler line must have passed complete initial inspection. Check 3.3 MATCH Eligibility Rules for details.

## Match Schedule

The official team schedule will be generated by the end of the day on Wednesday, April 29. Once the schedule is generated it will be available online here: <https://ftc-events.firstinspires.org/2025/FTCCMP1>.

Individual divisional schedule links are also available (*coming soon*).

## Judging & Awards

Additional information about FIRST Championship Judging and awards is coming soon.

## Alliance Selection

Alliance Selection takes place at each division first thing on Saturday morning (check the [public schedule](#) for times). Each team must send 1 representative to the floor in front of their division fields before the start of Alliance Selection. Each representative should check in with the designated volunteer when they arrive. The status of teams checked in for Alliance Selection will be shown on the audience display.

At FIRST Championship, Alliances are comprised of 3 teams. This and other details are different about Alliance Selection at the FIRST Championship, please check [Section 15: FIRST Championship \(C\)](#) for more information.

## da Vinci Playoffs and Awards Ceremony

The 6 Division winning alliances (Division Winners) will advance to play in the da Vinci Tournament to determine the overall event winners. Additional details about the format of this tournament will be included in [Section 15: FIRST Championship \(C\)](#) of the Competition Manual and announced as part of a future Team Update.

## da Vinci Reserved Seating Area

Teams that are part of the Division Winning Alliances or win Inspire 1<sup>st</sup> Place in their Division will have reserved seating for the da Vinci playoff matches and Awards Ceremony. Each team will receive 20 wristbands when can be worn to access the reserved seating. Division Winners will receive their wristbands during the da Vinci Drivers' meeting and the Inspire Award Winners will receive theirs when they collect their trophy.

FIRSTCHAMPIONSHIP.ORG

# FIRST<sup>®</sup> 2026

# CHAMPIONSHIP

PRESENTED BY **BAE SYSTEMS**

Please arrive at reserved seats no later than 1:45 PM. Any open areas in the bleachers after 2:00 PM become open to the public for seating.

## Health and Safety

Please check the [FIRST Championship Guide](#) for full Health and Safety details.

### Safety Glasses

Teams are expected to bring enough safety glasses to ensure that all of their team members and guests can wear safety glasses as required.

All individuals are required to wear safety glasses when:

- In the practice field area
- When near the Playing fields (on the carpeted area)
- In their pit when working on or operating their robot

## Load In & Load Out (Robot Shipping)

### Robot Shipping

Teams attending the 2026 FIRST Championship can choose to **either** ship their robot using the FedEx voucher or hand-carry to the event.

Once you register for FIRST Championship, you are sent an email asking if you want to bring your robot to the event yourself or ship it via the FedEx voucher. You must select one or the other, as there will be no 'default' option. Teams can reference the [FIRST Tech Challenge FIRST Championship webpage](#) for more information.

- If you opt to hand carry your robot yourself, you must bring your competition robot to FIRST Championship along with all your other pit equipment.
- If you opt to ship your robot, we provide a FedEx shipping voucher and a ship-not-later than date. Teams must ship no later than that date or risk their robots not arriving at FIRST Championship in time for the event.
  - Teams who choose to ship their robot must follow the [Shipping Crate Instructions](#).
  - Teams may not use a FedEx Voucher for pit equipment/other non-robot items. Using a voucher in this way is considered an abuse of the donor's intent and generosity. If you are shipping using the FedEx voucher, only your robot and batteries may be in the crate. If you'd like to ship additional equipment, you must coordinate, ship, and pay for it on your own.

A big thanks to FedEx for once again sponsoring robot shipments to FIRST Championship!

### Load In

All teams should plan to load-in on Wednesday, April 19 between 7:30 AM and 2:00 PM. Detailed load-in instructions are *coming soon*.

### Load Out

Teams must load-out on Saturday, May 2, between 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Detailed load-out instructions are *coming soon*.

**FIRSTCHAMPIONSHIP.ORG**

# FIRST<sup>®</sup> 2026

# CHAMPIONSHIP

PRESENTED BY

**BAE SYSTEMS**

## Pits

Check out Section 5.5 Pits from the Competition Manual for more pit guidelines. Each team is allocated a 10 foot by 10 foot (3.05 x 3.05 x 3.05 meter) pit space. Extending beyond your pit space is not allowed, and you must set up your pit within your pit area (using the aisles is not allowed).

There is a 10-foot (3.05 meter) height limit. Structures, signage, or banners cannot be higher than ten feet above the floor. Do not build any structure that supports people or stores items above the work area/pit space. If the height exceeds 10 feet, you will be asked to take it down. No advance placement requests are available.

Each pit area will be provided with one six-foot table but will not be provided with chairs. Each pit will have access to one electrical outlet in a dual outlet box. Teams should know they get one outlet and should bring a power strip that doesn't infringe on the other team's access to the outlet box. If you have any issues with your power, please report it to Pit Admin.

Aisles must be kept clear for robot movement, safety, and queuing, so we suggest that team members watch the matches and cheer on the teams at the fields instead of overflowing the pit stations and congregating in the aisles.

No requests for displays, additional tables, pit locations, division assignments, meeting rooms, or additional space will be considered. Pit information is outlined in detail in [Section 5.5 of the Competition Manual](#).

## Allowed Equipment

For the *FIRST* Championship there are additional restrictions about what kinds of tools and equipment can be brought or used within your pit:

- No power tools which plug into 120V A/C outlet
- No overnight operations of equipment (like 3D printers)

## Pit Announcements

To submit an announcement request, write your division, team number, and needed part on a piece of paper and give it to Pit Admin staff. Announcements will be made via the Nexus system.

## Division Playoff Pits

There will be assigned pits for Division playoff matches closer to the fields to be shared by the 3-team alliances. Division Playoff Pits are 3 foot x 8 foot (0.9 m x 2.4 m). These pits will not have any tables and no electricity is provided. On-deck queuing tables will have limited power available. Alliances must work together to share the space accordingly including tools and equipment. Teams may move to these spaces immediately after Alliance Selection.

## Practice Fields

There will be 14 Practice Fields available, with 6 on risers and 8 on the ground. Please check the [Public Schedule](#) for when the practice fields are open. Practice fields can only be used by teams after they have completed their initial inspection ([E116](#)).

On Saturday Practice Fields are only open for Division Playoff Alliances.

# **FIRST** 2026 **CHAMPIONSHIP**

PRESENTED BY

**BAE SYSTEMS**

## Robot Help and Inspection

The Robot Help and Inspection Center (“Robot Hospital”) is a central location to get help with technical issues. This is where teams will go for Robot Inspection, reinspection, getting Robot Troubleshooting (CSA) help, and Vendor parts support. This year’s Robot Help Center is powered by AndyMark, goBILDA, REV Robotics, and Studica who are providing technical experts and parts support. Also, a special thank you to SWIFT for providing robot team signs and special printing services.

### Inspection

Inspection opens at 10:00 AM on Wednesday at the Robot Hospital. Teams should start the inspection process as soon as possible to help every team get through it in a timely manner. The inspection process does not need to happen all at once and we encourage teams to check-in and measure their robot early in case any issues are identified. During inspection, if your inspector is unable to explain a decision or if you think there is an error, you can (and should!) ask for the Lead Robot Inspector (LRI) to assist.

Robots must pass inspection prior to competing in Qualification Matches which begin on Thursday morning.

## Team Check-in

Team’s Lead Coach 1 or 2 must check-in at Pit Admin in Hall A3 to receive their team’s name badges and team Registration packet. Check-in times are Wednesday, April 29 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM.

*FIRST* requires every *FIRST* Championship attendee to be registered and badged, including adult team mentors, youth team members, parents, family members, chaperones, etc. who are participating in the event. Attendee registration grants access to participant-only activities and increases the security of the event.

## Webcast

Information coming soon!

**FIRSTCHAMPIONSHIP.ORG**