

Second Qualifying Tournament

Beginning at 8am on Saturday, November 1, teams may register for a second qualifying tournament BUT, only the first tournament in which they compete can they be eligible for advancement to a regional. So if you are currently registered for a January tournament, and now register for a December one, the December tournament is the only one where you can receive a bid to a regional, not the January tournament. To register, go to <http://flrobotics.org/tournaments/default.html> There are quite a few December openings as well as January openings in South Florida.

What to expect at a tournament:

Above all, expect noise and excitement! Most tournaments begin with a coach's meeting at 8:30am with important announcements and details for the day. Your Tournament Host will let you know what time the doors open to get your team checked in. You will also receive a Team Schedule for the day that tells you when the team is to be in a competition run or in a judging session.

Don't forget to download your team roster from your TIMS page. If you have team members attending who are not listed on your roster, handwrite them in and bring their consent form. You must also bring 4 copies of the Team Info sheet with a photo of the team, preferably in team shirts. These are provided to the judges and the MC for information and recollection during deliberations.

ROBOT RUNS

Your team will be provided a table for their pit (work) area, generally in a cafeteria and sometimes in a gym. There will either be power access or a charging station for your computer and robot. Some teams choose to display a poster board about their research project but this is not required. Many teams also bring small items to share with other teams -- again this is optional. Please do not bring anything that creates a mess sticking to the walls, etc.

The competition area will have 2 FLL tables with another table available as a practice table. For practice, please bring any of the loose elements your team needs. They will be provided for the competition runs but not for practice. Anyone bringing a table or field setup is required to share it with all teams at the event. Teams will be running 3 matches -- either in the morning or afternoon. The highest score for the day determines your team's placement in the matches. Remember, only two team members can be at the table at any time but they can switch out during a run. The coach is not allowed at the table and should not be giving directions to the team during the run.

Pay attention to the number of motors allowed. This includes all the motors that are installed on attachments brought to the competition area. Make sure you are only using LEGO parts. There are sensors produced by others that are not

allowed. Be sure to read the Robot Game Updates on the Challenge website for clarifications of some of the rules. These are updated weekly on Friday afternoon.

At the conclusion of the robot run, the referee will fill out a score sheet that records the missions completed. A team member must review and sign this sheet. I recommend the team also fill out a score sheet so they can calculate their score after the run. The score sheet we use is <http://flrobotics.org/coaches/Scoresheet%202014.pdf> and the scoring software to evaluate it is at <http://tinyurl.com/worldclassfl>. If the team has a disagreement with how the scoresheet was filled out, the team should discuss it with the referee and if there is still a disagreement, they should talk with the head referee. The coach and/or parent is not to be the one to take the disagreement forward. The coach can raise any issue with the Tournament Host.

JUDGING

The team will also participate in 3 judging sessions in the other half of the day -- Core Values, Research Project and Robot Design. There is a panel of at least 2 judges who will be evaluating the team using the rubrics available on the Challenge website. Each judging session is 10 minutes long. You are allowed to have a videographer in the room recording while the team is in the room. It must not be a coach. All of the team members must attend and participate in all three judging sessions. Since judging time is limited, teams should not come in and introduce all of the members and shake hands. This takes up valuable time. They can come in and say something like we're team 1234 the Robot Designers from the XYZ Elementary School. Plan on having the team outside the judging room 5 minutes before their scheduled time or in a waiting area assigned by your tournament director. If waiting outside of a judging room, try to keep the team quiet. The judges are deliberating and need to concentrate. Avoid doing chants, singing and cheers near the judging rooms.

Core Values:

The session begins with a 5 minute hands on project for the team to demonstrate how they work as a team. Completion of the project is not being evaluated -- just how the team interacts while working the project. The coach participates in this activity as a coach, not a participant. This is followed by a 5 minute Q&A session where the coach is present but does not answer any questions. Questions will range from how the team makes decisions to how they share their interest in STEM areas with others in their school or community.

Research Project:

The session begins with the team's 5 minute presentation. The 5 minute time includes the setup, so don't plan elaborate props. Teams are expected to bring in and setup their own props. Tournament hosts have been told NOT to provide any A/V support or internet access. This type of support will definitely not be provided at Regional or State competitions. Any video used should be a short

segment of the presentation. DO NOT plan to pre-record and play the presentation for the judges. This is not allowed. If the team has videos or power point, we recommend putting the laptop (with the software one click away from running) in front of the judges rather than bringing a projector that would require extra time to setup. The session is concluded with a 5 minute Q&A session. If they have a research project notebook they can bring it with them for reference and/or to be able to show references to the judges. (The research project notebook is a compendium of their research, references, data, etc.) While the judging will generally be in a classroom, plan on an open area of about 8 to 10 feet square for the presentation.

Robot Design:

This session begins with a 2 1/2 minute timed robot run. The team should be prepared to begin the run when they enter the room. They should also have either a printout of the programs or a laptop with the programs so they can explain their programs to the judges. To save time, if they are bringing in a laptop, have the programs loaded before entering the room. Also be sure the robot is on. Bring any attachments. The team should be prepared to answer questions about how they decided on their robot design, any alternatives they considered, etc. If they have maintained a robot design logbook (showing different approaches attempted, why designs were chosen, problems encountered, etc) they can bring it with for reference and to show the judges some alternative approaches they tested.

Champion Award Selection: This is based on the average ranking in the three judged areas AND requires the team be in the top 40% of teams in the robot run scores. For a typical 16 team tournament, this means they must be one of the top 6 teams in robot scores. They must also have had a valid and complete research project, meeting all of the elements specified in the challenge document. If the team has had any major core values issues during the day, the judges have the prerogative to choose a second team for the award. (Note that the Gracious Professionalism of all team members, coaches, mentors and parents is evaluated throughout the day.)

Robot Performance Award: This goes to the team with the highest robot score who has also participated in all three judging areas. (A team that does not have a research project presentation is not eligible for this award.)

Region Bids: We will be awarding invitations to compete at regional tournaments to 25% of the competing teams at each competition. The selection is similar to the way the Champion is selected but the teams must be in the top 48% of the teams in robot scores.

Pre-Qualifying Tournaments Only: One coach will be allowed in the room with the team in all three areas. This coach is not allowed to speak while the team is in the room but can stay for 2-3 additional minutes for the judges to provide

verbal recommendations for improvement for the team for the Qualifying Tournament. The judges will NOT discuss specific rubric scores and this is not an opportunity for you to sell the judges on the strong points of your team. You are there to get their opinions, not give them yours.

At the Awards ceremony, each team member will receive a participant pin, the awards will be distributed with a "HIGH 5" line. You will then be given all of your robot run scores and your rubric sheets for the day. If you receive a Region Bid, you will receive a certificate and a letter instructing you how to register for the Region tournament. You will be able to select which region tournament you want to attend (if there are openings). All regionals are being held between Jan 31 and Feb 7. Teams receiving bids at the January 17 tournaments may have to travel to their regional.

If you have specific questions about setup at your tournament, please send them to your tournament host. Facilities vary between tournaments and I don't know what you will find at yours. (Your tournament host contact info was included in your invoice.)

Good luck and have fun at your competition.

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