

## COACH ORIENTATION, 102

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### TEAM MANAGEMENT

#### Resources for management of teams:

**FIRST NEMO:** [www.firstnemo.org](http://www.firstnemo.org)

[http://www.firstnemo.org/PDF/organizational\\_tips.pdf](http://www.firstnemo.org/PDF/organizational_tips.pdf)

**FIRST:** <http://www.usfirst.org/community/fl/content.aspx?id=788>

**HiTECH Kids Minn:** <http://www.hightechkids.org/?2-1-1071>

<http://www.hightechkids.org/?2-1-1054> ;

**Curriculum:** <http://www.usfirst.org/community/fl/content.aspx?id=798>

**General questions:** *First Senior Mentor Hotline*. The hotline will provide a means and opportunity for teams, coaches, and mentors to direct their questions, and quickly obtain information and/or request other assistance from First Senior Mentors. All correspondence and inquiries should be addressed to [FIRSTseniormentors@usfirst.org](mailto:FIRSTseniormentors@usfirst.org).

**TechBrick:** <http://www.techbrick.com>

#### 1. Things to keep in mind regarding team management.

- a. No two teams will be alike – no cookie cutter teams in FLL!!  
Every team will develop its own personality!!
- b. What works well for one team may not work well for another.
- c. Many factors will influence how you manage your team.
  - i. Size of the team – there is a major difference between a team with 10 members and a team with 4 members.  
Remember that 10 is the maximum. [A good size is 6-8.]
  - ii. Ages of team members – does your team have mixed ages or are all team members the same age.
  - iii. Boys vs. girls vs. boys and girls.
  - iv. New members vs. veteran members vs. mixed members
  - v. Combine all of these factors and throw in multiple personality types and WOW – it gets interesting!!
  - vi. Recruitment:  
[http://www.firstnemo.org/PDF/Recruiting\\_Students.pdf](http://www.firstnemo.org/PDF/Recruiting_Students.pdf)
- d. Managing the administrative aspect.
  - i. Important to track and maintain the team's schedule of milestone events.
  - ii. This can be done by the coach or the coach can designate a parent, assistant, etc.

- iii. Events such as registration, arrival of the kits, tournament registration, etc.

## **2. Team Building – why important – what are the goals.**

- a. Team members first need to get to know one another; some may not even know each others names.
- b. This is especially important in new teams or existing teams that add in new members.
- c. Team members need to feel comfortable with each other so they are willing to share ideas with each other.
- d. To get the team communicating with each other in a more relaxed environment at first.
- e. For all members to feel that they are part of the team and their ideas will be listened to and respected by everyone.
- f. HAVE FUN – one of the most important things!!

## **3. Team Building reminders.**

- a. Team Building is an ongoing process – it will not happen in one or two meetings.
- b. Some meetings you will feel like you have taken two steps forward and one step backward (or vice versa). This is part of learning to be a team and how to solve problems when there are differing opinions. It is an important step for them to learn.

## **4. Team Building activities – can really vary!**

- a. Structured team building activities such as ice breakers and/or games. You can get ideas from books from the library, the internet, or maybe activities you have done in schools, Scouts, etc.
- b. Fun structured activities such as bowling, laser tag, etc.
- c. Non-structured activities. Fifteen minutes of Frisbee, tag, or soccer during every meeting can go a long way!! Each meeting it is important to provide a chance for them to just have fun in a relaxed fashion.
- d. Team Spirit type activities during a meeting:
  - i. Picking a team name
  - ii. Naming the robot and/or the project

- iii. Designing a team shirt
- iv. Writing a team cheer
- v. Making a team banner
- vi. Building a team mascot
- vii. Making little items to trade at the competition
- viii. Team building activity related to the theme – give example.
- ix. Activity where they write down strength about each team member. Makes them realize that everyone is a valuable member.

**5. Brainstorming – a great way to engage the entire team.**

- a. Have someone write down all the ideas during the session.
- b. Remind the team that during the brainstorming session all ideas are good ideas. There are no stupid ideas.
- c. Crazy ideas are good as well; you never know where one may lead!
- d. Remind them that everyone listens when a team member is talking. All ideas deserve respect!!
- e. Go around the table and have each person give one or two ideas. Continue to go around for as long as necessary.
- f. This is a good way to include everyone on the team such as the quiet member.
- g. This is a good way to handle the difficult member as it helps them realize that everyone's ideas are just as important as theirs.
- h. Brainstorming can be used for LOTS!!
  - i. Team name
  - ii. Shirt design
  - iii. Research topic
  - iv. Robot design
  - v. Presentation format
  - vi. Etc.

**6. Voting and/or Consensus –** On way to allow the entire team to make the decisions is for them to vote. It is important for the team to make the decisions since the focus in FLL is the kids!! Some teams may not

officially “vote”, but work on getting consensus among the team members.

7. **Orchestrating work among members** – dependent on those team management factors.
  - a. To begin the season it is important that every team member has a basic understanding of the robot (building and programming), the mission rules, and the “Climate Connection” topic.
  - b. Have the team members verbalize what is meant by working as a team and what is meant by teamwork. [as well as Gracious professionalism: the value of sharing with others.]
  - c. As the season progresses members may begin to spend more time specializing in specific roles.
  - d. There is no right way, but what is necessary is that every team member understands their roles and responsibilities.
  - e. Be sure that more than one person is knowledgeable about a specific task.
  - f. To save meeting time members can do some research or activities at home and bring in their findings.
  - g. May want to split the team into two workgroups for some meetings. This can be a very efficient use of time.
  - h. You can spend one day for the research portion and one day for the robot/technical portion.
  - i. Rotate some roles such as keeping notes in a composition notebook each week about the robot/technical portion.
  - j. Constantly ask the team questions. Your role is to facilitate and encourage the process, not the content. By asking questions you will push their thinking and problem solving, especially at times when they get “stuck” or frustrated.
  
8. **Basic Meeting 101 – what will your first meeting look like?**
  - a. It is very helpful to have an initial meeting before the challenge is announced (September 5<sup>th</sup>). If this is a new team or a team with new members, you may want to include parents at this meeting.
  - b. The purpose will be to give the team and parents an overview of FIRST and FLL.
    - i. What is FIRST, what is FLL

- ii. What are the basic FLL values
- iii. Basic schedule of the season
- iv. Components: Robot and Research Presentation
- v. Importance of Teamwork
- vi. Explain some of the roles and responsibilities that the team members may be taking
- vii. Explain the roles and responsibilities that the parents will be taking
- viii. Remind everyone that the two most important things are to HAVE FUN and THE KIDS DO THE WORK!!

9. **Involving parents** – don't be afraid to ask the parents to help!! With a large team, a new team, a younger team, any team some days it seems that it is going to take a village to raise the team!!

[http://www.firstnemo.org/PDF/101\\_ways\\_parents\\_can\\_help.pdf](http://www.firstnemo.org/PDF/101_ways_parents_can_help.pdf)

Parents can:

- a. Provide snacks
- b. Order the shirts
- c. Make photocopies
- d. Help at meetings
- e. Carpool to meetings or field trips
- f. Act as a panel of judges before the competition. Have the team perform their presentation and the parents can ask questions.
- g. Help the day of the competition – many hands are good!!

## **10. Communication:**

- a. Internal communication :
  - i. Helping the members of the team [students and adults] communicate with each other is critical.
  - ii. Often each meeting should start with a “team building” exercise and then a review of what needs to be done both at the meeting and in the future.
  - iii. Having a list of tasks as well as a “season” calendar on display is very helpful. A chart pad works well as well as having sticky notes for ideas to be added as they come up.
  - iv. Before the meeting ends a review of what will need to be done next time or before the next team meeting should be

added to the calendar so at the next meeting these uncompleted tasks can be addressed.

- v. Have an “opening” as well as a meeting closing run by the students.
- b. Community Communications: Members of the team should be making an effort to contact members of the larger community for help and support. Under this topic are public relations as well as resource development [\$\$, materials, etc.]

**11. Team roles:**

- a. Have the members of the team select specific areas of need and have individuals take on the role of being that tasks “chairperson”.
- b. It is the chairperson’s job to track how this task is coming along but not to do it by themselves. It is the job to just remind the team that this is at such a stage.
- c. Use the Coach’s manual suggestions for a list of potential assignments. Team members take pride in knowing they were specifically responsible in making certain things happen so give them a job to do.