

FRC Mentor Orientation 102: Choosing a Competition

Tips and Suggestions for Successful Planning and Travel

September 25, 2008

If you have any questions following the call, please e-mail our FSM hotline:

firstseniormentors@usfirst.org

I. Now that you have a team established, where can you compete?

- Schedule of Events to be posted here:

<http://www.usfirst.org/community/frc/regionalevents.aspx?id=430>

- Tentative Schedule From Bill Miller's Blog:

<http://forums.usfirst.org/showthread.php?t=9697>

Regional Dates/Locations (Tentative):

Week 1: Feb 26-28

BAE Systems Granite State Regional
Midwest Regional
New Jersey Regional
Oklahoma City Regional
Buckeye Regional
Greater Kansas City Regional
Washington DC Regional

Week 2: Mar 5-7

Oregon Regional
Boston Regional
Finger Lakes Regional
New York City Regional -2 fields
San Diego Regional

Week 3: Mar 12-14

Los Angeles Regional
Pittsburgh Regional
Wisconsin Regional
Peachtree Regional
Silicon Valley Regional
Florida Regional
Dallas Regional

Week 3.5: Mar 16-18

Israel Regional

Week 4: Mar 19-21

Boilermaker Regional
Chesapeake Regional - TBD
Arizona Regional
Bayou Regional
NASA/VCU Regional
Waterloo Regional
New Zealand Regional (Mar 18-21)
Philadelphia Regional
St. Louis Regional

Week 5: Mar 26-28

UC Davis Sacramento Regional
Houston Regional
Palmetto Regional
SBPLI Long Island Regional
Greater Toronto Regional
Connecticut Regional
Las Vegas Regional
Colorado Regional
Hawaii Regional
Microsoft Seattle Regional

Week 6: Apr 3-4

Minnesota 10,000 Lakes Regional
Minnesota North Star Regional
Michigan State Championship

Championship Event: Atlanta, Georgia - Apr 16-18

Championship Eligibility Criteria: <http://www.usfirst.org/community/frc/content.aspx?id=944>

2. Deciding where to go:

a. Costs

- Registration Fees: Initial Regional - \$6000, Additional Regionals - \$4000, Championship Event - \$5000
- Travel: is the event local/within walking or driving distance? Does it require bussing or flying? **BOOK EARLY!**
- Overnight stay: will you have to make hotel accommodations? Can you share travel arrangements with other teams? **BOOK EARLY!**
- Meals: will you be traveling to a pricey city? Reservations far ahead for groups!
- Who pays for what? Sponsors, fundraising, team member/family contributions

b. Time Conflicts

- Some events fall during school vacation
- Mandatory state testing/SATS/ACTs
- Other big extracurricular trips/events
- Religious holidays that might pose restrictions on travel, meals, etc

c. Location

- What other things are there to do? Have team members research - attractions, events, shopping, food, etc.
- Team Social: not all regionals have one
- Safety concerns
- Climate: possibility of inclement weather, dress necessities
- State IDs/Passports (some events may require this, especially for travel)

d. Getting approval from school administration

- Reasonable location and timeframe
- Travel restrictions
- Being able to “sell” the trip to your school administration: can you pair it with other educational outings?
- Be sure to know of the general approval timeframe – start early!
- Chaperones!

e. Regional Size

- Big events: diversity, more veteran teams to learn from, greater competition
- Small events: intimate environment, more chance for success, great potential for formation of strong partnerships

f. Attending to Multiple Regionals

- Back-to-back Regionals: bad idea!
- One home and one travel event
- Time away from school/work for students/mentors
- Work with new/more teams
- Meet more teams
- Initial event may serve as practice, time to work out kinks

- Ability for greater team bonding, inter-team networking
- Can you afford it?
- Planning ahead for possible Championship qualification

NEMO: Questions to Consider When Choosing your *FIRST* Event(s):
http://www.firstnemo.org/PDF/Choosing_Your_Event.pdf

3. Who Decides - Options

- a. Simple choice - the closest, least expensive event
- b. Team members - research, discussion, and vote of any/all options
- c. Mentor's decision
- d. Parent involvement in choice and planning - hold parent meetings
- e. School administration approval - what restrictions are posed?

4. Where and When to Register

- a. Register for events using TIMS: <https://my.usfirst.org/frc/tims/>, team registration **MUST** be completed before event registration
- b. Season Timeline: <http://www.usfirst.org/community/frc/content.aspx?id=454>,
 - Initial Regional Event Registration: starts at **noon** on **Oct 2** (Payment due at *FIRST* on Dec 2)
 - Second Regional Event Registration: starts at noon on Oct 23 (Payment at due at *FIRST* on Jan 16)
 - Championship Registration:
 - Pre-qualified and veteran teams who did not compete at the 2008 Championship: starts at noon on Oct 2 (Payment due at *FIRST* on Apr 10)
 - Veteran teams who did compete at the 2008 Championship: starts noon on Oct 23 (Payment due at *FIRST* on Apr 10)

NOTE: FRC rookie teams are not eligible to attend the *FIRST* Championship via open Registration but must qualify to attend and register after qualifying

5. Additional Resources:

- a. *FIRST* website: www.usfirst.org

- b. FIRST E-mail Blast Archive:
<http://www.usfirst.org/community/frc/content.aspx?id=6616>
- b. Official Forums: <http://forums.usfirst.org/>
- d. Unofficial Forums: Chief Delphi www.chiefdelphi.com
- e. White Papers: <http://www.chiefdelphi.com/media/papers>
- f. President's Circle 2007: Resources by teams for teams (websites/handbooks):
<http://www.usfirst.org/community/frc/content.aspx?id=7006>
- g. NEMO: <http://www.firstnemo.org>