

7



Judging and Awards Criteria

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Section 7 – Judging & Awards Criteria

7.1 – Overview

This chapter provides a complete description of all of the *FIRST* Tech Challenge Awards; the judging process, criteria and philosophy that teams will need to be aware of in preparation for participating at a *FIRST* Tech Challenge Tournament.

In addition to winning points during the regional competition, the awards represent another positive way for mentors to instill important values like teamwork, creativity, innovation, and the value of the engineering design processes. These judging guidelines are a part of the road map to success.

7.2 – *FIRST* Tech Challenge Awards Eligibility

To ensure fairness to all teams and to provide equal opportunity for all teams to win an award at a *FIRST* Tech Challenge Championship Tournament, teams are only eligible to win an award at the first three Championship Tournaments that they attend. Those teams who compete in more than three Championship Tournaments do so for the purpose of being involved in the fun and excitement of the tournament and not with the intention of winning multiple awards.

7.3 – *FIRST* Tech Challenge Award Categories

7.3.1 – *FIRST* Tech Challenge Inspire Award

This formally judged award is given to the team that truly embodied the ‘challenge’ of the FTC program. The team that receives this award is chosen by the judges as having best represented a ‘role model’ *FIRST* Tech Challenge Team. They are a top contender for all other judging categories and are a strong competitor on the field. The Inspire Award Winner is an inspiration to other teams, acting with gracious professionalism both on and off the playing field. This team understands how to communicate their experiences and knowledge to other teams, sponsors, and the judges.

In past seasons, the winner of the Inspire Award at each event received an automatic invitation to the FTC World Championship Event.

Guidelines for the Inspire Award

- Team must demonstrate respect and Gracious Professionalism both for team members and fellow teams
- Engineering Notebook must be submitted, and must impress the judges
- Team must work beyond their robot to help spread awareness of the team within the community
- Team displays good communication and team work skills within the team as well as with their alliances
- Team communicates clearly about their robot design to the judges
- Team presents themselves well in the judges interview
- Robot effectively competes in the game challenge and impresses the judges

- Team and Robot consistently performs well during matches
- Team is a strong contender for all other judged awards

7.3.2 – FIRST Tech Challenge *Design* Award

New for the 2008 season, this judged award recognizes design elements of the robot that are both functional and aesthetic. All successful robots have innovative design aspects; however, the Design Award is presented to teams that incorporate industrial design elements into their solution. These design elements could simplify the robot's appearance by giving it a clean look, be decorative in nature, or otherwise express the creativity of the team. The winning design should not compromise the practical operation of the robots but compliment its purpose.

Guidelines for the Design Award

- Team must submit an Engineering Notebook
- Robot differentiates itself from others
- Design is both aesthetic and functional
- Well thought out basis for the design (why i.e. inspiration, function, etc.)

7.3.3 – FIRST Tech Challenge *Innovate* Award

The *FIRST* Tech Challenge Innovate Award celebrates a team that not only thinks outside the box, but also has the ingenuity and inventiveness to make their designs come to life. This judged award is given to the team that has the most innovative and creative robot design solution to any or all specific field elements or components in the FIRST Tech Challenge game. Elements of this award include elegant design, robustness, and 'out of the box' thinking related to design. This award may address the design of the whole robot, or of a sub-assembly attached to the robot. The creative component must work consistently, but a robot does not have to work all the time during matches to be considered for this award. The team's Engineering Notebook should be marked with journal entries to show the design of the component(s) and the team's robot in order to be eligible for this award, and entries should describe succinctly how the team arrived at that solution.

Guidelines for the Innovate Award.

- Robot or robot sub-assembly must be elegant and unique in its design
- Creative component must work reliably
- Team must submit an Engineering Notebook
- Robot is stable, robust and controllable
- Robot design is efficient and consistent with team plan and strategy

7.3.4 – FIRST Tech Challenge *Connect* Award

This judged award is given to the team that most connected with their local community and the engineering community. A true FIRST team is more than a sum of its parts, and recognizes that their schools and communities play an essential part to their success. The recipient of this award is recognized for helping the community understand FIRST, the FIRST Tech Challenge, and the team itself. The team that wins this award is aggressively seeking engineers and exploring the opportunities available in the world of engineering, science and technology. In addition, this team has a clear fundraising goal and plan to achieve that goal.

Guidelines for the Connect Award

- Team provides clear examples of outreach to community
- Team has worked to develop an in-person or a virtual connection with the engineering, science or technology community
- Team has a business plan or other way of determining their fundraising needs and a plan to achieve their fundraising goal
- Team has a plan to give back to their community

7.3.5 – FIRST Tech Challenge *Motivate Award*

This judged award celebrates the team that exemplifies the essence of the FIRST Tech Challenge competition through team spirit and enthusiasm. They show their spirit through costumes and fun outfits, a team cheer or outstanding spirit. This team has also made a collective effort to make FIRST known throughout their school and community.

Guidelines for the Motivate Award

- Team spirit is consistent throughout the team and the competition.
- Team is enthusiastic
- The team functions well as a team
- Team enthusiasm is evident in their community outreach

7.3.6 – FIRST Tech Challenge *Think Award*

This judged award is given to the team that best reflects the “journey” the team took as they experienced the engineering design process during the build season. The Engineering Notebook is the key reference for judges to help identify the most deserving team. The team’s Engineering Notebook should focus on the design and build stage of the team’s robot. Journal entries of interest to judges for this award will include those describing the steps, brainstorm, designs, re-designs, successes, and those ‘interesting moments’ when things weren’t going as planned. A team will not be a candidate for this award if they have not completed the section of the Engineering Notebook describing the team’s experience.

Guidelines for the Think Award

- Team must submit an Engineering Notebook
- Engineering Notebook must demonstrate that the team has a clear understanding of the engineering design process, with pictures or drawings and details documenting all stages of robot design
- Engineering Notebook must be organized and follow the formatting guidelines provided by FIRST
- Collaboration and co-ownership are dominant themes in the Engineering Notebook or in the judges interview

Note: Teams should review Chapter 5: Engineering Notebooks for a complete description and format specifications.

7.3.7 – FIRST Tech Challenge *Winning Alliance Award*

This award will be given to the winning alliance represented in the final match.

7.3.8 – FIRST Tech Challenge Finalist Alliance Award

This award will be given to the finalist alliance represented in the final match.

7.4 – Judging Process, Schedule, and Team Preparation

The schedules at the *FIRST* Tech Challenge tournaments may vary from site to site. Exact times for both the matches and meeting with judges cannot be given within this manual. All teams will either receive this schedule prior to or during check-in at the competition.

7.4.1 – Judging Process

At the *FIRST* Tech Challenge Championship Tournament events, there will be three parts to the judging process: 1) interview with judges, 2) evaluation performances, and 3) evaluation of the Engineering Notebook. Each team will have a “fact finding” discussion/interview with a panel of two or three judges. No awards will be determined on the basis of this interview alone. Judges will use the guidelines provided in this chapter to assess each team.

Teams should present their Engineering Notebooks at the Pit Administration Table during check-in. The Engineering Notebooks will be provided to the judges prior to the team interviews.

After the judges review the submitted Engineering Notebooks, complete the initial team interviews and evaluate the team and robot performances during matches, they will convene to review their assessments and create a list of top candidates for the various judged awards. Judges may require additional impromptu discussions with teams if necessary. Deliberations are usually completed during the elimination matches. When the judges have finished their deliberations, the Engineering Notebooks will be returned to teams.

Teams are asked to bring their robot to the judge interview. This is the best chance for teams to explain and demonstrate their robot design to the judges in a quiet and relaxed environment.

7.4.2 – Judging Schedule

The judging generally will take place in a separate area(s) away from the noise of the competition and pit. Teams will follow the schedule that outlines team interview times and locations. In some cases, teams may receive this information in advance, but more often, teams will receive this information when they check-in on the morning of the event.

Upon arrival please familiarize yourself with where the judging will occur and budget enough time to get there. To keep this process on target throughout the event, we require that all teams arrive at an adjacent queuing area five minutes before their scheduled interview.

7.4.3 – Team Preparation

Teams are encouraged to use the award guidelines to self assess where they are within an award category and help them establish higher goals. These guidelines will be the same ones used by the judges during each *FIRST* Tech Challenge event, and at the *FIRST* Tech Challenge World Championship.

Remember, this is the team's opportunity to highlight how they rallied as a team around the robot; the technical knowledge they gained along the way; and how this experience has affected the members and mentors individually and as a team. Judges will want to hear from team member representatives and mentors. Since there are several awards with different criteria, teams may want to consider appointing different team members to speak with judges on the specific topics.

The mentors' contribution during the judging process will be kept to a minimum, however, the judges will like to know the highlights about the team; its history and make up; what the team achieved during the competition season; and the experiences that were gained. Team representatives' abilities to answer the questions or elaborate on robot design functions or attributes with minimum direct assistance from the mentors will be evaluated during the team interview.

7.5 - *FIRST* Tech Challenge Championship Event Eligibility

The culmination of the *FIRST* event season is the *FIRST* World Championship Event held at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta, GA. This event represents the conclusion of the season for *FIRST* LEGO League (FLL), the *FIRST* Tech Challenge (FTC), and the *FIRST* Robotics Competition (FRC). This is a fun and exciting experience for teams in all programs to participate.

For the 2008 season, *FIRST* Tech Challenge teams will need to earn their way to the *FIRST* World Championship. Eligibility is earned by your performance on and off the field. The criteria for eligibility to the event will be announced later in the season. Teams will still be responsible for their own entry fees, lodging, and travel costs to the *FIRST* World Championship.

