

Preparing for an FLL Event

Hosted by Senior Mentor, FLL Coach and FLL Partner
November 4, 2009

Coaches' Handbook – Chapter 7 & 9

Events on the FLL website: www.firstlegoleague.org

Regional FLL website created by the local FLL Partner

FLL Forums – opportunity to talk to other coaches and learn from veterans but keep in mind these are not official answers

Please contact your local FLL Operational Partner for the specifics for the FLL program locally including training and tournaments. To find your FLL Partner go to the *FIRST* LEGO League website and click on 'Regional Contacts' in the left hand navigation.

1. FLL Event: Overview

- a. Significance of Events-All FLL events are designed to be fun and exciting so that teams can be rewarded for their hard work; FLL aims to allow all teams to participate in an event but cannot guarantee this
- b. FLL Partners and volunteers coordinate qualifiers/regionals and Championships; local volunteers organize local events/scrimmages/rumbles
- c. Teams will be recognized for a variety of aspects of their work as a team
- d. Best way to understand what an event entails is to participate
- e. Set goals for each event – these goals should not include awards but should enhance the event experience and reinforce that what we learn is more important than what we win
- f. Varying cost range to attend events – contact your local Partner for this information
- g. Be prepared to have fun!

2. Event Types

- a. Local Events-smaller tournaments with a variety of styles regarding format, judging process, and awards (for example-in NYC we have borough wide tournaments)/no bearing on qualifying for a Championship
- b. Qualifying Tournaments or Regionals - medium size event similar to a Championship with some flexibility regarding format/teams may qualify for the Championship
- c. Championship Tournaments-large events with rigid standards in format, judging, awards, and overall quality that involve teams from any number of regions
- d. Open Championship not held every year, host determines who is invited and use the same standards as the Championships
- e. FLL World Championship (April 2010 in ATL)-takes place every year in conjunction with the *FIRST* Championship. Some Championship tournaments are invited to send a team, but not all. There is a lottery and applications submitted by FLL Partners nominating Core Value teams.

3. Other *FIRST* Programs

- a. Note that Jr.FLL teams sometimes attend and/or have an expo at an FLL event. This is a great opportunity for your team to demonstrate their robot and Project to Jr.FLL team members and get them excited about being on an FLL team when they are older. It is also a

great way for your team to share the FLL Core Values and their team spirit by reaching out to these Jr.FLL teams.

b. Many FLL tournaments host demonstrations by FTC and FRC teams. This is an opportunity for your team members to get excited about future robotic opportunities.

3. Tournament Applications

a. Rookie teams-even if the team is not completely “ready” for the event, the team should compete anyway.

b. Registering a team and applying for an event are separate,

c. Complete Consent and Release forms for all students/mentors/coaches for each tournament

d. Championship Tournament Application-Many FLL Partners coordinate their own application process so check local guidelines, make sure your teams contact info is correct so you can be notified accordingly

e. Logistics

1. After registering check for changes/updates regularly

2. Most FLL events are free and open to the public so encourage parents, siblings, sponsors, school staff, and other to cheer on the team

4. Preparing

a. Read the Coaches’ Handbook! Then ask questions of your tournament directors; see sample questions on page 78

b. Have a parent meeting before the tournament to help parents understand what to expect

c. Remind team it is okay to make quantitative comments (our robots uses five sensors, and other teams use four) but not qualitative comments (ours is better than that one)

d. Use checklists-items to bring (batteries, cables, laptop, face paint, etc.)

5. At the Event

a. Parents/Guardians-Adult supervision is key to a successful tournament

1. Parents should understand that events are designed for youth to exhibit what they have achieved (an overbearing parent can serve as a photographer!)

2. Are parents allowed in the pit? Who is coordinating lunch? Who’s watching the jackets? What section is the team reserving?

3. Talk ahead of the event with everyone about Adult Intervention and the negative impact it will have on the team. See page 71.

b. Familiarize the team to the area

c. Registration Area-have the *Team Introduction* page with you and expect to be given your pit station

d. The Pit-a specific location where your team can setup displays and work on the robot (bring an extension cable in case an outlet isn’t nearby)

d. Practice Fields-teams can practice, but respect other teams’ needs as well

e. Competition Area-tables setup for the official robot competition

f. Judging rooms-separate areas where judging technical awards, teamwork, and Project usually take place

g. Be aware of time-review the schedule for the day and be prompt!

h. Scoring Confirmation-after each match the two robot operators should confirm the score with the referee

6. Schedule basics

- a. Opening Ceremony-high energy start to the day, teams not immediately scheduled should return to pit to listen for queuing and/or meet with judges
- b. Robot Rounds-usually three rounds based on the day's schedule
- c. Judging-varies by tournament, may be scheduled evaluations or informal
- d. Closing Ceremony

7. Question/Comments