Team Update 04

General

Links to Judging Resources

Links to the Judging Feedback Form and Judge Interview Question Bank have been added to Section 6: Awards.

Escalation Guidelines

The Escalation Guidelines document has now been posted and updated in the Competition Manual. This document outlines escalation processes for *FIRST* Tech Challenge Volunteers and Staff and reference links have been updated in the Competition Manual.

Competition Manual

9.11 Event Management System

Table 9-1 Audio cues

Event	Timer Value	Audio Cue
FLOWER Ownership Unlocked	1:00	~~[TBD]~~ "Chime"

Team Update 03

General

Outreach Terms and Definitions

The *FIRST* Tech Challenge Outreach Terms and Definitions have been updated for this season.

Competition Manual

Section 6 Awards (A)

Links to the Judge Manual and the Judge Advisor Manual have been updated.

10.3 Setup

10.3.4 ROBOTS

ROBOTS must start the MATCH contacting 4 pre-loaded POLLEN. POLLEN may be held in or on a ROBOT or placed on the TILES fully contained on its own ALLIANCE side of the FIELD contacting the ROBOT in its starting location.

11.3 Pre-MATCH

G304 ***ROBOTS must be set up correctly on the FIELD.** A ROBOT must be positioned on the FIELD such that it meets all of the following requirements:

A. …
B. …
C. …
D. …
E. …
F. …
G. in contact with exactly 4 POLLEN pre-loads as described in Section 10.3.1 SCORING ELEMENTS fully contained on its own ALLIANCE side of the FIELD, and
H. …

Team Update 02

General

N/A

Competition Manual

10.6 Violations

10.6.4 Violation Details

Table 10-6: Violation examples

Example Violation	Expanded Interpretation
MINOR FOUL	Upon instance of violation, a MINOR FOUL is assessed against the violating ALLIANCE.
~~**MAJOR FOUL and YELLOW CARD per instance.**~~	~~Upon violation, a MAJOR FOUL is assessed against the violating ALLIANCE. After the MATCH, the team is issued a YELLOW CARD.~~
MINOR FOUL per SCORING ELEMENT.	Upon instance of violation, a MINOR FOUL is assessed against the violating ALLIANCE equal to the number of SCORING ELEMENTS used in violation of the rule.
MAJOR FOUL per instance. MAJOR FOUL per instance and YELLOW CARD per MATCH if REPEATED.	Upon initial violation in a MATCH, a MAJOR FOUL is assessed against the violating ALLIANCE per instance of a violation occurring. If the condition of REPEATED in the second statement is met – i.e., the ROBOT repeats the infraction an additional time in the MATCH, then an additional MAJOR FOUL is assessed against the violating ALLIANCE for the subsequent instance of violation and after the MATCH, the violating team is issued a YELLOW CARD for the subsequent instance of violation. Assuming no additional infractions of that rule by that ROBOT in that MATCH, the ROBOT is assessed two MAJOR FOULS and a YELLOW CARD for their team in that MATCH ~~ALLIANCE~~. Additional violations of this rule during the MATCH would increase the number of MAJOR FOULS assessed during the MATCH but not the number of YELLOW CARDS issued for the MATCH.

Example Violation	Expanded Interpretation
MAJOR FOUL and an additional MAJOR FOUL for every 3 seconds in which the situation is not corrected	Upon violation, a MAJOR FOUL is assessed against the violating ALLIANCE and the REFEREE begins to count. Their count continues until the criteria to discontinue the count are met, and for each 3 seconds within that time, an additional MAJOR FOUL is assessed against the violating ALLIANCE. A ROBOT in violation of this type of rule for 15 seconds is assessed a total of 6 MAJOR FOULS (assuming no other rules were being simultaneously violated).
VERBAL WARNING. MAJOR FOUL and YELLOW CARD per MATCH, if STRATEGIC.	Upon a general instance of violation of the rule, a VERBAL WARNING is issued to the violating team. However, if the violation is perceived to be STRATEGIC by the REFEREES, then a MAJOR FOUL per MATCH is assessed against the violating ~~ALLIANCE~~ team and after the MATCH, the violating team is issued a YELLOW CARD for the MATCH.
~~**MAJOR FOUL per instance of violation. MAJOR FOUL and YELLOW CARD if REPEATED.**~~	~~Upon the first violation, a MAJOR FOUL is assessed against the violating team. If the condition "if REPEATED" (e.g., a subsequent violation by the same team in the same MATCH) is met, then the violating team is issued another MAJOR FOUL. If these are the only violations during the MATCH: after the MATCH, the violating team is assessed a YELLOW CARD for the second violation of this rule. In total, 2 MAJOR FOULS and a YELLOW CARD were assessed during the MATCH.~~
MAJOR FOUL per MATCH. MAJOR FOUL and YELLOW CARD per MATCH, if STRATEGIC.	If one or more violations occurs by a team during MATCH, a MAJOR FOUL is assessed against the violating ALLIANCE per MATCH. However, if the violation is perceived to be STRATEGIC by the REFEREES, a MAJOR FOUL is assessed per team per MATCH against the violating ALLIANCE. After the MATCH, the team is issued a YELLOW CARD per MATCH. Only 1 MAJOR FOUL and up to 1 YELLOW CARD can be earned by a team in a single MATCH.
VERBAL WARNING. YELLOW CARD if subsequent violations occur during the event.	Upon the first instance of violation, a VERBAL WARNING is issued to the violating team. If an additional instance of violation of the same rule occurs later in the event, that is: a MATCH during the same event phase or a later event phase, then following any subsequent violation: after the MATCH, the violating team is issued a YELLOW CARD per instance.

Example Violation	Expanded Interpretation
VERBAL WARNING. MAJOR FOUL and YELLOW CARD per instance, if STRATEGIC. MAJOR FOUL and RED CARD per instance, if STRATEGIC and either CONTINUOUS opponent ROBOT is unable to drive.	Upon a general instance of violation of this rule, a VERBAL WARNING is issued to the violating team. However, if the violation is perceived to be STRATEGIC by the REFEREES, then a MAJOR FOUL is assessed per instance against the violating ALLIANCE and after the MATCH, the team is issued a YELLOW CARD per instance. However, if the violation is perceived to be STRATEGIC by the REFEREES and the opponent ROBOT is unable to drive or the entanglement persists for 10 seconds or more, then upon violation, a MAJOR FOUL is assessed per instance against the violating ALLIANCE. After the MATCH, the team is issued a RED CARD per instance. Only 1 MAJOR FOUL and 1 YELLOW or RED CARD can be earned for a single violation instance; however, multiple MAJOR FOULS and YELLOW or RED CARDS may be earned in a single MATCH if multiple instances of the violation occurred during the MATCH.

11.4 In-MATCH

11.4.5 Opponent Interaction

G420 ***Do not tip or entangle.**

The attachment to, or entanglement with, exposed or unprotected COMPONENTS or MECHANISMS in the course of normal gameplay is not likely to be considered a violation of this rule. This includes, but is not limited to:

A. exposed or unprotected wiring, or
B. a delicately constructed MECHANISM (such as an intake).

Examples of actions that are likely to be perceived as STRATEGIC include, but are not limited to:

C. using a wedge-like MECHANISM to tip over an opponent ROBOT,
D. making frame-to-frame contact with an opponent ROBOT that is attempting to right itself after previously falling over and causing them to fall over, or
E. causing an opponent ROBOT to tip over by contacting the ROBOT after it starts to tip if, as determined by the REFEREE, that contact could have been avoided.

…

11.4.6 Human

G423 ***DRIVE COACHES and other teams: hands off the controls.**

> The penalty is applied to the team to which the DRIVE TEAM member that violates the rule belongs.
>
> …

G425 ***DRIVE TEAMS, watch your reach.**

> …
>
> For G425.A and G425.B, the penalty is applied to the team to which the DRIVE TEAM member belongs regardless of whether the DRIVE TEAM member or ROBOT initiates contact.
>
> …

G426 **Humans may not enter NECTAR onto the FIELD early.** DRIVE TEAM members may not enter NECTAR onto the FIELD except:

A. for each time the HIVE of their corresponding ALLIANCE color is TIPPED, one additional NECTAR may be entered for that ALLIANCE, or
B. when 60 seconds or less remain in the MATCH, all remaining NECTAR can be entered

whichever comes first.

Violation: MINOR FOUL per NECTAR.

> The primary FIELD timer is the cue to indicate when there is 60 seconds left in the MATCH.
>
> NECTAR that leaves the FIELD may be re-entered at any time as described in G427.
>
> DRIVE TEAMS are encouraged to ensure the remaining NECTAR in their ALLIANCE AREA is visible and make it obvious and unambiguous to REFEREES that they are not entering NECTAR too early.
>
> NECTAR does not have to be entered into the FIELD immediately when a HIVE TIP occurs.

Team Update 01

General

N/A

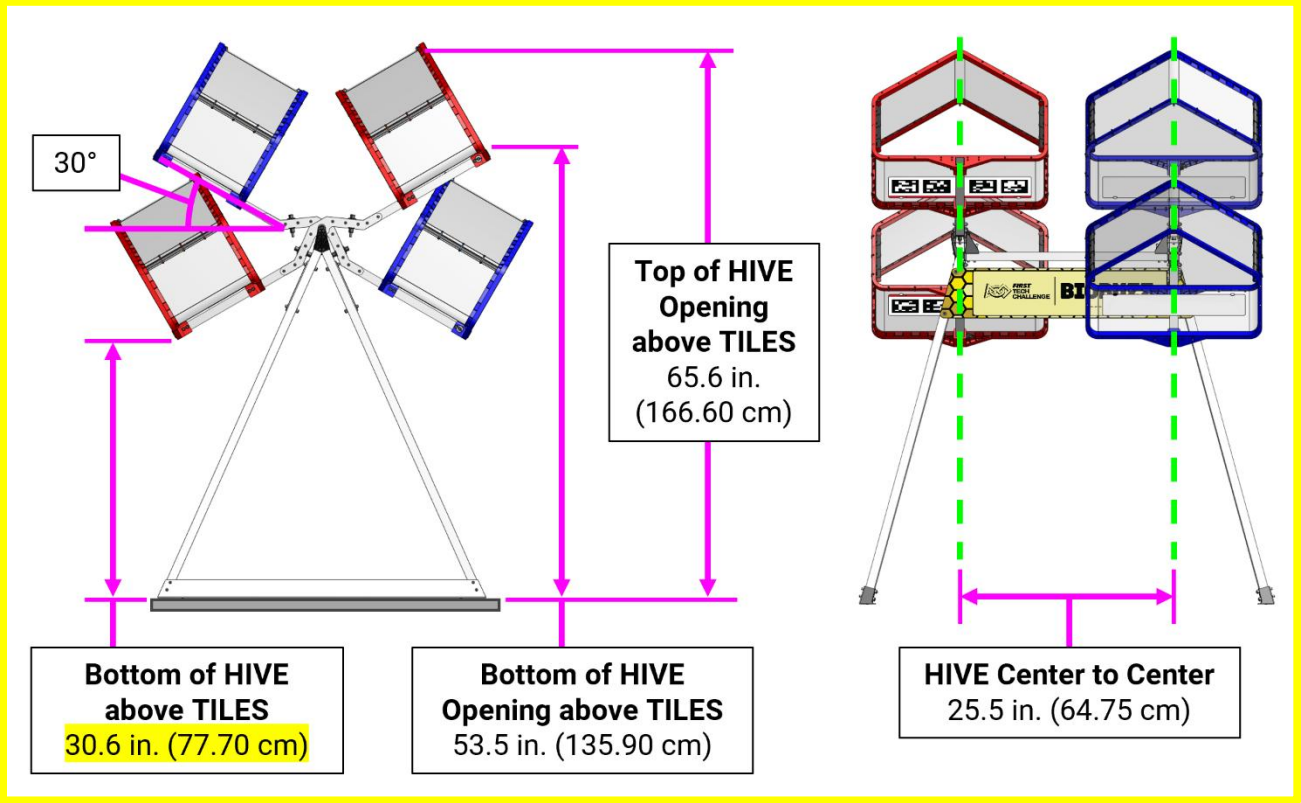
Competition Manual

9.6 HIVE

9.6.2 HIVE and CELL

Dimension in Figure 9-10: "Bottom of HIVE above TILES" has been corrected to 30.6 in. (77.70 cm).

Figure 9-10 HIVE and CELL Key Details



10.6 Violations

10.6.1 YELLOW and RED CARDS

Removed duplicated text.

11.2 Conduct

G204 ***Do not expect to gain by doing others harm.**

A. …
B. a red ALLIANCE ROBOT drives through the blue LOADING ZONE while a blue DRIVE TEAM member is introducing NECTAR to the FIELD, deflecting the blue NECTAR before it contacts the TILE in the LOADING ZONE, in violation of ~~G426~~ G427.

13.3 Clarifications on MATCH Play Results ("Question Box")

Technical questions regarding FIELD or ROBOT operation are addressed by the FTA, and additional team members are invited to participate in these conversations if necessary. If a DRIVE TEAM needs clarification on a ruling or MATCH results, per T301, up to two ~~STUDENTS~~ representatives should address the Head REFEREE after the MATCH results have been shown.

Team Update 00

General

Overview

Team Update 00 is provided as a quick reference of rule changes from last season, and updates from the V0 Preview Release. The approach taken in this Team Update is to describe changes to content only. Editorial changes to verbiage, rule and section references, game specific examples that relate to evergreen content, and formatting changes are not described.

As always, it's important to read the whole BIOBUZZ™ Presented by RTX Competition Manual at least once and become an expert on sections of the manual that directly relate to your role and responsibilities on your team. Teams are welcome to view existing questions and answers and to ask thoughtful and informed questions through the official Q&A system opening September 28, 2026, 12:00p.m. ET.

Notable Changes from Last Season

New Competition Manual Format

Rules in the BIOBUZZ Competition Manual are written to emphasize intended gameplay and make it simpler for participants and volunteers to understand the spirit and intent of the rule. Important changes include:

- Introduction of the Competition Integrity Contract (CIC) which includes a Sporting Ethics Code and Behavior Guidelines in Section 1 Introduction.
- Adding STRATEGIC as a defined term described in Section 10.6 Violations and utilizing it in many rules and violations.
    - STRATEGIC describes actions done with the aim of getting a competitive advantage.
    - Some rules prohibit specific actions if they are perceived to be STRATEGIC or provide an increased violation for actions perceived to be STRATEGIC (e.g., impeding or enabling scoring actions).
    - This includes actions that are deliberate or reckless with foreseeable consequences.
    - Accidental/unforeseeable occurrences cannot be STRATEGIC.

The BIOBUZZ manual is written to allow event volunteers to make good-faith judgement calls at events instead of writing rules that are highly detailed and overly complex that try to cover every scenario a volunteer may encounter. This philosophy is reflected throughout the Competition Manual.

Section 3 Competition Eligibility and Inspection

Changes were made to the Inspection and Re-Inspection portions of this section to move content from rules to process descriptions. Additionally:

- **I302** ***Enter only 1 ROBOT** was moved to Section 5 Event Rules.

Section 5 Event Rules

- Pit and Cart Rules have been adjusted and condensed
- **E510** ***Don't heat or cool ROBOT components to gain an advantage** has been added

Section 6 Awards

The Structured Interview is now the **Initial Interview** and the team judging experience may be different in certain events and regions. The Initial Interviews may either be: scheduled in-person, unscheduled in-person, or remote. Many portions of Section 6 have been adjusted to reflect this change.

Section 11 Game Rules

Rules in this section have been changed to reflect and point to the Competition Integrity Contract (CIC).

Many violations have been adjusted to include increased violations for specific actions if they are perceived to be STRATEGIC or provide an increased violation for actions perceived to be STRATEGIC.

Many violations utilize a **VERBAL WARNING** for non-STRATEGIC violations.

- **G202** ***Follow the Competition Integrity Contract (CIC)** has been added.
    - Teams are required to not cheat, play by the rules, and behave with integrity as outlined in the Competition Integrity Contract (CIC).
    - Multiple rules in the G2XX section have been condensed and are covered as part of G202.
- **G406** ***Do not damage or make a mess in the ARENA** combines previous rules G407 (Do not damage SCORING ELEMENTS) and G412 (Don't damage the FIELD).

Section 12 ROBOT Construction Rules

Many of the ROBOT Construction rules have been reorganized to match the new additions in Section 1. At the event, Inspectors are not expected to check every rule, but as part of the Competition Integrity Contract (CIC) teams are still expected to follow every rule.

Several rules which included recommendations for robot construction and best practices were removed and moved to other resources that can be found on the FTC-Resources and FTC-docs pages.

- Removed the rule restricting allowed gamepads (previously R903)
- **R101** ***It is your team's ROBOT** has been added to the ROBOT Construction Rules.
- **R105** ***A ROBOT must stay as one assembly, and there are limits to how much it can expand.**
    - Expansion Limits have been adjusted for BIOBUZZ with updated wording and examples.
    - Now includes deliberately detaching COMPONENTS.

    - Expansion is regulated during gameplay with **G416** ***ROBOTS have construction limits.**
- **R201** ***ROBOTS should be designed so they don't damage anything or make a mess in the ARENA** has been added and replaces content from previous rules.
- **R501** ***Only specific motors are allowed.** WATTOS Stingray has been added to the allowed motors list.
- **R503** ***ROBOTS are limited to a total of 8 motors and 8 servos**. The maximum number of allowed servos is reduced to 8.
- **R801** ***No Pneumatics is now No Pneumatic Actuators, High-Speed Blowers, or Vacuums** now includes combined content from other previous rules.

Section 13 Tournament

Section 13 Tournament has been reorganized to re-order content – rule numbers have changed.

Recommended Award break timing has been adjusted to 15 minutes.

- **T301** ***Head REFEREE Interactions** allows for up to 2 team members to talk with the Head REFEREE.
- **T701** ***Send one or two STUDENT representatives** allows for up to two STUDENT team members to participate in ALLIANCE selection.