Dean's List Award

Program Delivery Partner Guide

Contents

Revision History	
Revision	**Description**
V25-26.1	Initial 2025-26 Season Release
V25-26.2	• Added "Interview Timeline" section • Added "Editing Interview Dates" section
V25-26.3	Removed France and Cyprus from number of advancing finalists
V25-26.4	Removed Puerto Rico from international list, as they are part of the USA.

What is the *FIRST*® Tech Challenge Dean's List Award?

In an effort to recognize the leadership and dedication of the most outstanding secondary school *Students* from *FIRST*®, the Kamen family sponsors awards for selected 10th or 11th grade* *Students* known as the *FIRST*® Robotics Competition and the *FIRST*® Tech Challenge *FIRST* Dean's List Award.

There are three (3) levels of *FIRST* Dean's List Award *Students*.

1. *FIRST* **Dean's List Semi-finalists** – comprised of the two (2) *Students* in their 10th or 11th school year nominated by each *Team*.
2. *FIRST* **Dean's List Finalists** - The *Students* selected for each Regional Championship.
3. *FIRST* **Dean's List Winners** - comprised of the ten (10) *FIRST* Robotics Competition and ten (10) *FIRST* Tech Challenge *Students* selected from the applicable *FIRST* Dean's List Finalists.

The students who earn *FIRST* Dean's List Award status as either a Semi-finalist, Finalist or Winner, are great examples of student leaders who have led their teams and communities to increased awareness for *FIRST* and its mission, champion *FIRST* Core Values such as Inclusion, and embody *Gracious Professionalism*®. It is the goal of *FIRST* that Dean's List Award Winners will continue, post-award, as great leaders, student alumni, and advocates of *FIRST*.

In 2019, the Woodie Flowers Memorial Grant was established for Dean's List Award Winners pursuing STEAM fields of study.

Student Eligibility

Every registered *FIRST* Tech Challenge team can submit up to two (2) students as *FIRST* Dean's List Award semi-finalists.

- Students must be a sophomore (grade 10) or junior (grade 11) to be eligible for this award.

  > ***Note***: For regions of the world that do not use grade levels such as this to identify years of schooling: This award is intended for students who are two (2) to three (3) years away from entering college or university. Students that would be attending college or university in the next academic year are not eligible. Mentors will be asked for the year of graduation during the nomination process.

- The coach or mentor nominating the student(s) must submit an essay explaining why the student should receive this award. The essay must be 4,000 characters or less.

Dean's List Award Criteria

Criteria for selection of the *FIRST* Dean's List Award shall include, but not be limited to a student's:

- Demonstrated leadership and commitment to the *FIRST* Core Values
- Effectiveness at increasing awareness of *FIRST* in their school and community
- Demonstrates passion for a long-term commitment to *FIRST*
- The student's individual contributions to their team contribute to the overall success of the team
- Proven experience in areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)
- The student is a role model and can motivate and lead fellow team members

Important Dean's List Season Dates

Dean's List Important Dates	
September 6, 2025	Nominations open
December 15, 2025	Nominations due
February 15, 2026	Finalist selections due to *FIRST*
Various	RCMP's announce finalists
April 2026	Winners announced at *FIRST* Championship

Dean's List Events

New in the 2025-2026 season, Program Delivery Partners are no longer required to create their own Dean's List Interview Only event. Events will be created by *FIRST* for all regions prior to Kickoff. All regions will follow the same deadline for all Dean's List nominations, as outlined in the next section.

Program Delivery Partners, however, must access their Dean's List event using the *FIRST* Tech Challenge scoring system to set up the window in which the region will be holding interviews. The interview windows must only happen within the date ranges of December 15, 2025 through February 15th, 2026. Please be aware that Finalists are due to *FIRST* on February 15th, so interviews should be schedule prior to this date to provide enough time for finalist selection.

To select the window for your region, please see Dean's List Events – Editing Interview Dates section of this document for step-by-step instructions.

What is the Deadline for Team Nominations?

The deadline for all teams to nominate students is December 15th, 2025 at 11:59pm **Eastern time**.

DECEMBER 2025 calendar with December 15 highlighted and a note: "All regions will have a nomination deadline of December 15th at 11:59pm eastern time."

Interview Timeline

DECEMBER 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
30	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3

Nominations Due → (December 15)

Interview Window

JANUARY 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Interview Window

FEBRUARY 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Interview Window

Finalists Due → (February 15)

Dean's List Award Evaluation Structure

The chart below is a visual aid to show how each category feeds into specific levels of competition, starting with the coach making the nominations. Dean's List interviewers are responsible for interviewing semi-finalists (nominees). Interviews are done either in person at a traditional event, or remotely (this will be region dependent, please check with your local program delivery partner). The Dean's List reviewer will then review the nominations and the interviewer notes within a state/region to determine which students will move to the next level as Dean's List finalists. Depending upon the size of the region, there will be 2-4 Dean's List finalists within each state or region (see Number of Advancing Finalists by Region for further details). These finalists will be announced at the Regional Championship Tournament. A separate panel called the Dean's List Award Committee will review the Dean's List finalists and choose the 10 *FIRST* Tech Challenge Dean's List winners.
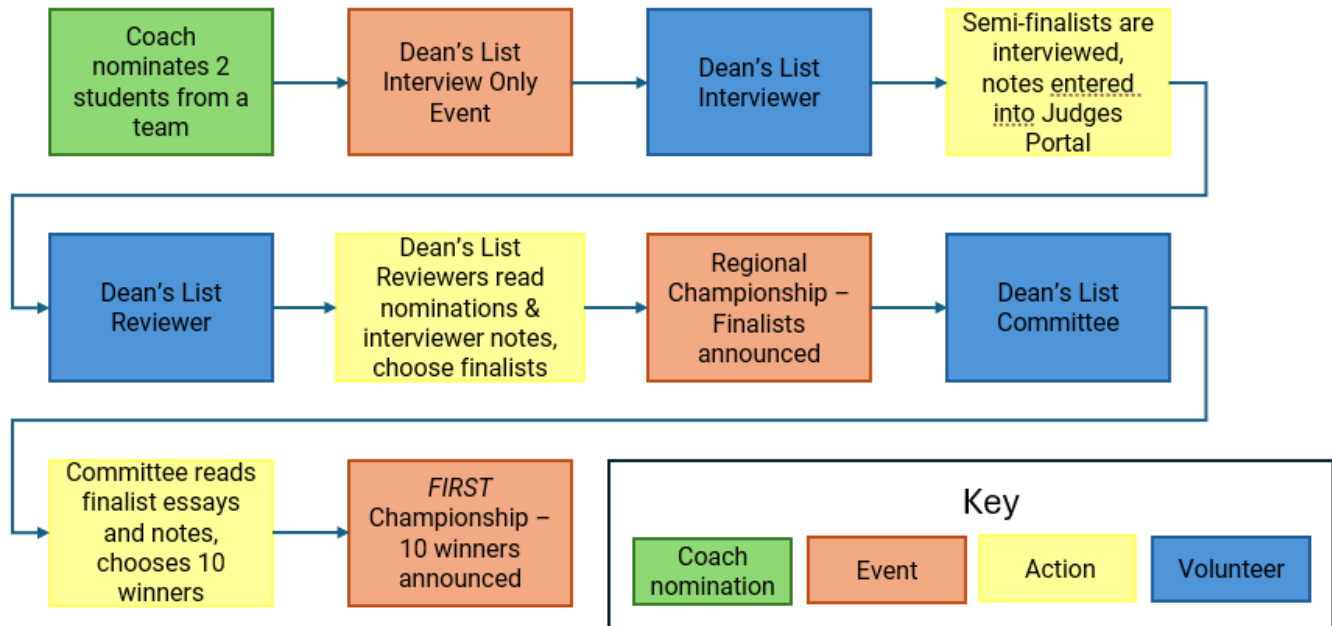
Dean's List Volunteer Roles

Overview

There are two volunteer roles that are required to evaluate the Dean's List Award; the Dean's List Interviewer and the Dean's List Reviewer.

Dean's List Interviewer

Dean's List Interviewers main responsibility is to interview semi-finalists; however, there are other responsibilities the interviewer must take on before and after the event. These responsibilities include:

- Review nominations prior to the event.
- Interview the Semi-finalist during the event.
- Write a narrative about the interview after the event.

The Dean's List interviewer is not responsible for selecting the finalists for their region. Interviewers gather information to pass along to the Dean's List Reviewers via a written narrative to assist the Reviewers in their role of selecting the region's Finalists.

Dean's List Reviewer

The Dean's List Reviewers are responsible for selecting the Dean's List Award Finalists. There will be at least two reviewers in a region that work together to select the finalists for that particular region. The reviewers must access the Judges Portal to view the original nomination as well as the notes from the Dean's List interviewers. Once all of the nominations and notes have been taken into consideration, the reviewers are responsible for choosing the number of Finalists allocated for that region. Dean's List reviewers do not need to be present at the event; rather they review each semi-finalist and enter the Finalists in the Judges Portal. This information will feed up to the regional championship PDP.

Number of Advancing Finalists by Region

The number of semi-finalists that will move onto the next level as finalists depends upon the region. Regions with larger team numbers will have additional spots to advance students. Prior to the start of each season, finalist numbers are reevaluated. The following chart shows how finalist numbers are determined:

Number of Teams	Number of Finalists
0 – 49	2
50 – 139	3
140 +	4

The lists below outline the number of advancing finalists by region:

North America

2 Finalists	3 Finalists	4 Finalists
• Alabama • Alaska • Arkansas • Connecticut • Delaware • Four Corners • Hawaii • Idaho • Kentucky • Louisiana • Montana • Nebraska • Nevada • Newfoundland and Labrador • New Mexico • New York – Long Island • North Dakota • Puerto Rico • Quebec, Canada • Rhode Island • South Carolina • Tennessee • Texas – South* • Utah • Vermont • Wyoming	• Alberta, Canada • Arizona • British Columbia, Canada • California – San Diego • Colorado • Indiana • Mexico • Mississippi • New Hampshire • New York – Excelsior • New York – NYC • Ohio • Oklahoma • Ontario, Canada • Oregon • South Carolina • Texas – West and Panhandle* • Wisconsin	• California – LA • California – NorCal • Chesapeake • Florida • Georgia • Illinois • Iowa • Massachusetts • Minnesota • Missouri • New Jersey • North Carolina • Pennsylvania • Texas – Central* • Texas - Houston • Texas – North* • Washington

*Although these regions are now merged, they will continue to have separate allocations for the Dean's List award.

International

2 Finalists	3 Finalists	4 Finalists
• Chinese Taipei • Germany • Greece • Hungary • Indonesia • Italy • Lithuania • Malaysia • Morocco • New Zealand • Nigeria • Poland • Qatar • Saudi Arabia • Thailand • Vietnam	• Australia • Benelux (Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg) • Brazil • China • DoD • India • Israel • Jamaica • Libya • Republic of Korea • South Africa • Türkiye	• Kazakhstan • Romania • United Kingdon and Ireland

Judges Portal

The Judges Portal is the tool used to track nominations, interviewers' notes, and selected finalists. https://my.firstinspires.org/Judging/ See the Judges Portal Instructions for more details.

Partner Access to the Portal

Program delivery partners have been granted access to the portal and should be able to view all of their events within the region. This will allow each partner to track the nominations, recruit enough volunteers based on the number of nominations, and ensure that notes have been submitted for each nomination.

Granting Access to Volunteers

In order to allow a volunteer access to the portal, they must first apply to the role of Dean's List interviewer or Dean's List reviewer in the Volunteer Registration System. Once they have applied, they must be assigned by the PDP or volunteer coordinator to the role in the Volunteer Management System (VMS). The assignment in the VMS is what grants the Volunteer access to the Judges Portal.

Once the volunteer has been assigned to the role, they will only be able to access the event in which they have been assigned.

> **Note:** If the Volunteer will be fulfilling the role at multiple events, they must be assigned to each event.

Recruiting Volunteers

Since partners have access to all nominations within their region, they should be sure to check the number of nominations when the nomination timeframe closes. Knowing how many nominations there are for an event is necessary to recruit enough volunteers to interview the semi-finalists.

Recruiting Interviewers

Dean's List interviewers have two very important responsibilities: interviewing the semi-finalist and writing up notes after the interview. When recruiting for this position, keep in mind that the interviewer should have strong writing skills, and experience with interviewing is preferred. College admissions officers, or someone in a similar field, would make a great interviewer.

At a minimum, there must be two Interviewers on staff to conduct Dean's List interviews. A panel of two interviewers should be able to interview up to five Semi-finalists. If there are more than five interviews, an additional panel of interviewers may be needed.

Recruiting Reviewers

The reviewers have the important task of reading through multiple nominations, notes from the interviewers, and making a decision on which candidates should move to the next level of competition as finalists. There are no rules that state an interviewer cannot serve as a reviewer, however it's important to remind them to keep an open mind to all of the candidates and choose the candidates that most closely match the award criteria.

There must be at least two reviewers assessing the candidate's essays and interview notes. Some regions choose to form a committee to work through all the nominations and make the decision on the Finalists.

Recognition at Events

Semi-finalist Recognition

Students nominated as semi-finalists should be proud of their accomplishments and should be recognized for these accomplishments. Below are two ways to recognize semi-finalists at the event.

Semi-finalist Pins

FIRST has created semi-finalist pins to be given out to students interviewed at an event. These can either be provided after the interview, or if the PDP chooses, can be handed out at the closing ceremony to recognize the student in front of their peers.

> **NOTE**: The pins will be mailed in December 2025 directly to the Program Delivery Partners. PDPs should arrange to have pins sent to their event hosts who have Dean's List Semi-finalists at their event.

Closing Ceremonies Recognition

PDP's and event hosts are encouraged to invite their semi-finalists to the center stage for recognition at the closing ceremonies if time allows. This is a very public way for the student to be recognized for their nomination. Some events also choose to announce the names of the semi-finalists and have them stand in the audience for applause. This should only be done at qualifying tournaments or league

tournaments. The awards scripts created for the Emcee include a script for the Dean's List semi-finalists.

However, inviting students to the stage should **not** be done at a Regional Championship Tournament. Since Finalists are announced at the State/Region Championship, the Semi-finalist(s) that do not advance should not have to walk off the stage after not moving to the next level. Only do this at Qualifying Tournaments or League Tournaments.

Finalist Recognition Certificates

Each Finalist should receive a certificate in honor of their achievements. *FIRST* will send out the appropriate number of finalist certificates to each region along with certificate folders to present to the finalists at the award ceremonies. The event host or PDP will need to fill in the finalist's name and the date of the event prior to passing out the certificate. If you have not received blank certificates, please email FTCDeansList@firstinspires.org.

> **NOTE**: The certificates will be mailed in December 2025.

Dean's List Award FAQ's

Can a student be nominated for both *FIRST* Tech Challenge and *FIRST* Robotics Competition Dean's List?

Both *FIRST* Robotics Competition and *FIRST* Tech Challenge students are eligible to be nominated as a Dean's List semi-finalist within their program. There are no rules that state that a student that participates in both programs cannot be nominated for the Dean's List for both programs.

Do Semi-finalists get a second interview at the Regional Championship?

No, semi-finalists for *FIRST* Tech Challenge will only have one interview before the regional championship tournament.

Do Finalists get a second interview at the *FIRST* Championship?

No. The Dean's List Award Committee for *FIRST* Tech Challenge reviews all the finalists nominations essays and interviewer notes prior to the *FIRST* Championship. The winners of the award are selected prior to the event and announced at the *FIRST* Championship.

Can Submissions Be Made Past the Deadline?

There will be no exceptions to the deadline. *FIRST* Tech Challenge will not accept submissions after the deadline unless there is a verifiable issue with the Team's dashboard. Please forward any requests to FTCDeansList@firstinspires.org.

Who Submits the Nomination?

Please refer to the [Dean's List Nomination Guide](#) for info on who can submit the nomination, as well as a walkthrough of submitting the nomination through the dashboard.

Judges Portal Instructions

Review Nominations

Link to Portal: ***https://my.firstinspires.org/Judging/***

- Click "Login" at the upper righthand corner. This will redirect to the www.firstinspires.org login page.
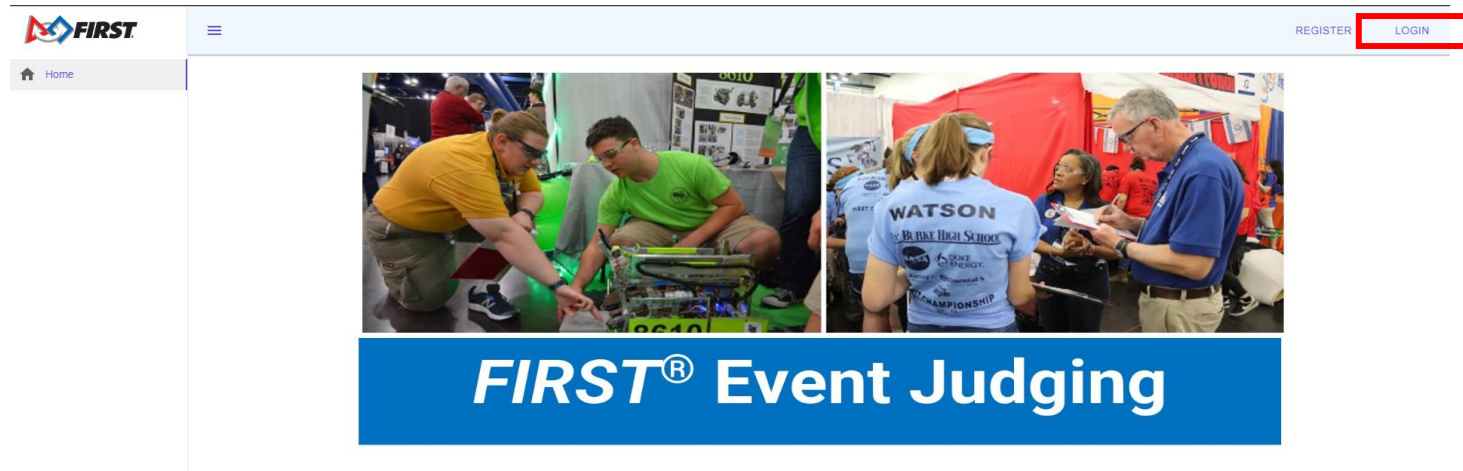
- Log in using your username and password for your www.firstinspires.org account.

- Once logged in, click "FTC – Dean's List Award"

- Click "Edit/View" to access the nominations for the event.

- Click "Details" to access each individual nomination

FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC)
Dean's List Award System

2022 Dean's List Award - CHS Remote Dean's List Interview Event 2   ◄ Back to Event Summary

Semi-Finalists to be Judged at this event

Semi-Finalist	Summary		🖶 Print All ⓘ Contact Info
Nominee #1 Owings Mills, MD Modified: 04-Nov-2022	Team: **1234** Team Name: Ledge Street School		ⓘ Details
Nominee #2 Owings Mills, MD Modified: 04-Nov-2022	Team: **1234** Team Name: Ledge Street School		ⓘ Details

- The student information, along with the essay from the coach will be shown on this screen. Make sure to read through the nomination essay prior to interviewing each student.
- **NEW! Preferred Name** – If the student has a preferred name, it will be listed in parenthesis next to their legal name.

> **Important:** If a preferred name is present, please be sure to use the preferred name when addressing the student during their interview.

View Submission

🖨 Printable Page   ‹ Back

2023 NH Test DLA Interview Only Event Remote - Team 8845 - John (Jack) Smith 12-Oct-2023

Team				🔒 Unlock
Team Number	8845	# Student on team		
City,State	Concord, NH			

Dean's List Award Nominee

First Name	John (Jack)	Last Name	Smith
Year of graduation	2025	How long has the student been involved in *FIRST*?	5 years

Judging Venue

Judge Nominee At	NH Test DLA Interview Only Event Remote

Submitter Contact Information

Submitted By		Coach Name	
Phone	6036663906	Email	coach1@gmail.com

Explain how the student embodies the philosophies of *Gracious Professionalism*® and *Coopertition*® through the *FIRST* Core Values: Discovery, Innovation, Impact, Inclusion, Teamwork and Fun. Please provide examples.

Essay Test 1

How has the student increased the awareness of *FIRST*? Describe the student's interests and/or plans to continue to engage with *FIRST* beyond high school. Please provide examples.

Essay Test 2

How does the student's individual contribution to the team benefit the team as a whole? Please provide examples.

Essay Test 3

Describe the students' experience in areas of STEM. This could include but is not limited to skills in engineering, software, CAD, fabrication, etc. Please provide examples.

Essay Test 4

Explain the student's leadership to their fellow team members. How do they motivate others? What is their leadership style? Please provide examples.

Essay Test 5

Please share anything else you would like us to know about the student, including academic performance, specialized skills, or extracurricular activities.

Specialized skills, extracurricular activities, etc.

Select Finalists

- Locate the regional championship event from the Judges Portal and click "Edit/View".

2023 Dean's List Award Summary

2023 FTC Events			
Event Name	**Due Date**	**Winners / Finalists**	
September			˅
October		↑ Back to top	˅
November		↑ Back to top	˅
December		↑ Back to top	˄
CA-LA DLA Test Champiosnhip Hybrid LA, CA USA	Dec 18, 2023	(not selected) 1 Completed Submissions	✏ EDIT/ VIEW

- The finalist must be selected in the portal to be reported to *FIRST*. Select each finalist from the dropdown and click "save".

Assign Award			
Select Finalists			
Finalist Please Select ⌄	Finalist Please Select ⌄		💾 Save

Finalists will receive a notification email from *FIRST* after the event has taken place, and after the student has been announced as a finalist at the regional championship.

Dean's List Events – Editing Interview Dates

To edit the dates in your Dean's List Interview event, follow these steps:

1. Log into https://ftc-scoring.firstinspires.org
2. Select your region using the hyperlink once you are logged in.
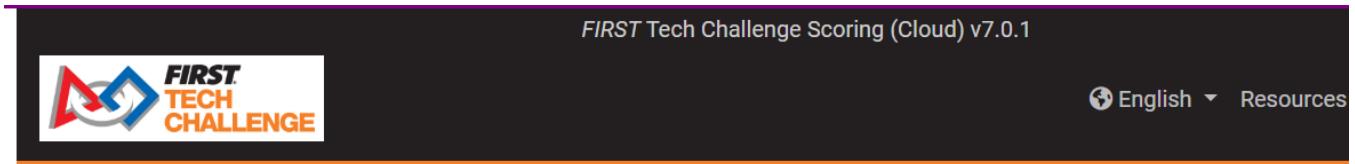
Regions

Mississippi (USMS)

3. Select your Dean's List Interviews event from the event list. Note that prior to selecting your interview date window, this will show "Unscheduled".

Code	Name	Type		City	End Date	
USMSDL	Mississippi Dean's List Interviews	Dean's List Interview Only	Remote	Remote Event	⚠ Unscheduled ⚠	

4. Once the Dean's List Interviews event is selected, the following popup window will appear. Enter the interview start date, interviews end date, and your local time zone.

Some important things to consider when selecting your dates:
    a. If the date range is more than 7 days, only the last 7 days will be visible in VMS, Event Search Results, and in the Volunteer dashboard.
    b. Finalists are due to *FIRST* on February 15th, 2026. Make sure to provide enough time for interviews to be completed, and for the Dean's List Reviewers to make Finalists selections prior to the deadline.

Edit Interview Dates and Timezone for Dean's List Event ✕

If a date range of more than 7 days is chosen, only the last 7 days will be visible in VMS.

Interviews Start Date

| mm/dd/yyyy | 🗓 ⓘ |

Interviews must start no earlier than December 16.

Interviews End Date

| mm/dd/yyyy | 🗓 ⓘ |

Interviews must end no later than February 15.

Start date cannot be empty. End date cannot be empty

Timezone

| -- Select Event Timezone -- | ⓘ ⌄ |

Cancel   Save

---

5. Click "Save".

Edit Interview Dates and Timezone for Dean's List Event ✕

If a date range of more than 7 days is chosen, only the last 7 days will be visible in VMS.

Interviews Start Date

01/19/2026

Interviews must start no earlier than December 16.

Interviews End Date

02/01/2026

Interviews must end no later than February 15.

Timezone

America/Chicago - Central (most areas)

Cancel   Save

6. If the interview dates selected are more than 7 days, only a 7 day window counting back from the end date will be shown

FIRST Tech Challenge
Mississippi Dean's List Interviews

EVENT LOCATION: -
Remote Event, MS

EVENT DATE(S):
01/26/2026 - 02/01/2026

SET UP DATE:
TBA

TEAR DOWN DATE:
TBA

VOLUNTEER

MISSISSIPPI DEAN'S LIST INTERVIEWS
Date: Jan 26 - Feb 1 2026
Event: Dean's List Interview Only Event Remote
Program: FIRST Tech Challenge

-
Remote Event
Remote Event, MS 0 USA

Volunteer Now!

Useful Links and Information

On-Call Support Numbers

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On-Call Support

These numbers are for *volunteer support only*. Teams should not use these numbers to call about rulings or technical assistance.

Administrative, Judge, Referee and Non-Technical Issues: (603)206-2412

Scoring System (FTC Live) or other Technical Issues: (603)206-2450
Call or use the **built-in chat feature on FTC Live** available for events with internet access

</div>

Pre-Event Support

Mon – Fri   8:30am – 5:00pm Eastern Time (UTC-4 or UTC-5)

Contact Support including live chat or email customerservice@firstinspires.org

Program Resources

FIRST Tech Challenge Website   Event Search

Game and Season Resources   FIRST Tech Challenge Blog

Volunteer Resources   Team Email Blasts

Feedback

We strive to create support materials that are the best they can be. If you have feedback about this manual, please email customerservice@firstinspires.org or by contacting support. Thank you!