

# Emcee and Game Announcer Manual

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V25-26.1	Initial 2025-26 Season Release

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## Overview

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**Roles Covered:** Emcee/Game Announcer

### Job Description

#### Emcee

**It is the Emcee's job to be a visual presence, to inform the audience, and to keep the event lively and moving forward. Game Announcer**

The Game Announcer's role is vital to a successful event. Being informed, knowledgeable, and comfortable in your role will directly translate into a better event and make the event more enjoyable for the teams and spectators. **Game Announcer/Emcee – Working Together**

The difference between the roles is critical to aid the audience in where to focus their attention. It is also crucial to work in harmony with one another to create a support structure and avoid competitive/overlapping speaking.

To have a successful event, both positions require:

- A lively, animated vocal personality.
- Good public speaking skills.
- A pleasant-sounding voice.
- A desire to help the participants have the time of their lives.
- The ability to handle unanticipated situations.
- Strong event situational awareness
- Lots of energy!

Requirements	
Technical	Low
Physical	Medium
Administrative	Low
Communication	High
Pre-event Training	Medium

### Time Commitment

Emcee and Game Announcer volunteers should expect to spend 10-12 hours at a full day event and 5-6 hours at a league meet. Approximately 6 hours of pre-event training and planning is required.

### Attire

- Comfortable closed-toe, closed-heel shoes, much of the day will involve standing and walking.
- ANSI Z87.1 certified safety glasses are required in the pit and competition areas.

### Training and Certification

Read and complete all tasks listed in the [Pre-Event Training](#) section.

Any volunteer who applies to a role will be able to get into the Learning Management System (LMS) using the 'FIRST Training' button. Roles with the training required will appear in the 'roles missing certification' area. For more help, you can [read more](#) about how to access your training.

If you have applied for a role but have not received access to the training, please email [training@firstinspires.org](mailto:training@firstinspires.org). A separate confirmation of the role assignment will come later.

The Emcee or Game Announcer should speak to the Field Supervisor to find out what additional requirements, such as meetings before the event or run-throughs of the space before the event are required. The approximate training time is 2-3 hours.

All volunteers are expected to read and comply with the [Volunteer Handbook](#).

## Roles and Responsibilities

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**FIRST is fun for all.** The most important role of a volunteer is to provide a safe, fun and welcoming environment for all FIRST participants. When executing the duties of your role, always make decisions with team experience in mind. Ask for help from event leadership if you feel your required duties conflict with the best team experience.

### Emcee/Game Announcer

The Game Announcer is a role vital to a successful event. The Game Announcer's role is working with the Emcee to:

- Introduce teams.
- Provide play-by-play commentary to the teams and audience.
- Report the scores.

The Game Announcer should primarily speak only for team introductions, play-by-play commentary, and score announcement. The Game Announcer role is to be an audible *FIRST* Tech Challenge presence at an event.

### Prerequisites for Emcee

**Minimum Age:** 18 (must be post-high school or equivalent)

- Exceptions may be granted by event Volunteer Coordinators after review and approval by the local Program Delivery Partner

**Experience:** Either *FIRST* or related experience preferred

- *FIRST* experience strongly preferred
- Prior announcing or public speaking experience highly encouraged

**Training:** Some pre-event training required

### Prerequisites for Game Announcer

**Minimum Age:** 15

- Exceptions may be granted by event Volunteer Coordinators after review and approval by the local Program Delivery Partner

**Experience:** Either *FIRST* or related experience preferred

- FIRST experience strongly preferred; prior announcing or public speaking experience highly encouraged
- Prior experience as a Game Announcer for a FIRST Program(s) is helpful
- Requires thorough knowledge or ability to learn game and match process

**Training:** Some pre-event training required

## Before the Event

### Pre-Event Training

Emcees and Game Announcers must complete the required reading in this section and are required to pass a certification test prior to serving in this role.

Resources for training and certification:

Emcee and Game Announcer Pre-event Training List	
Requirement	Resource
Required	<a href="#">Welcome to FIRST</a>
Required	Read the <a href="#">Emcee and Game Announcer Manual</a> (this document)
Required	Watch the <a href="#">game animation video</a> for a general understanding of the game.
Required	Read the <a href="#">Competition Manual</a> , specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Section 8 Game – Overview</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Section 9 – ARENA</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Section 10 – Game Details</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Section 11 – Game Rules</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Section 13 – Tournament</a></li> </ul>
Required	Read the provided template event scripts to prepare for the flow on event day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Script - Opening Ceremonies (docx)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Script - Alliance Selection (docx)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Script - Playoffs and Awards (docx)</a></li> </ul>
Encouraged	Attend an <a href="#">Emcee/Game Announcer Webinar</a>
Encouraged	Complete <a href="#">Strategies for Inspiring Success for All modules</a> .

### Pre-Event Preparation Work

Both Emcees and Game Announcers need to review the names of all participating teams using the event's page on [FTC Events](#). Make a list of team names that you are not sure how to pronounce so you can follow up with those teams at the event.

The Emcee should use the ceremony scripts to create notecards for your reference during ceremonies; avoid reading directly from the scoring system or a printout.

Smaller events may only use a single Emcee/Game Announcer volunteer. Contact your Event Volunteer Coordinator and determine if both the Emcee and Game Announcer will be filled or if you will be expected to cover both responsibilities.

## Event Day

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### Report Time

The Event Director or volunteer coordinator will confirm the time you should arrive, typically via email the week before the event. In most cases arriving at the beginning of the event time works best.

When you arrive onsite check-in with the Volunteer Coordinator and report to the Field Supervisor.

### Set-up

After checking in, report to the Field Supervisor to learn about technical requirements of the event, the venue map and event schedule for the day.

Look over the team list for the day, and if there is time, talk to the teams participating in the event and take a few notes. This ensures the Emcee and Game Announcer will have some familiarity with teams in their first matches and have little tidbits of information to share if match play gets slow throughout the event.

### Event Day Flow

The Emcee and the Game Announcer will work together to plan and announce each step in the event day so the audience can follow along. The different components of an event are set out below:

#### Opening Ceremonies

After the program delivery partner or Event Director has confirmed that all guest speakers and Judges are present, the show begins. The opening ceremonies script, which has been prepared by the Program Delivery Partner/Event Director, is used by the Emcee, A/V crew, and Program Delivery Partner to ensure synchronization. Work together with the Event Director.

#### Let the Games Begin!

During the qualification matches, after the Emcee introduces each team by number, the Game Announcer completes the introductions (full name on first intro only, short name thereafter); then the Emcee counts down "3, 2, 1, Go" to start the match. The Game Announcer provides play-by-play commentary and time remaining announcements. The referees score the match, and the Game Announcer announces the score as it is displayed by the A/V crew.

Make timed announcements at 1 minute played, 30 seconds remaining, 10 seconds remaining, and the countdown for the last 5 seconds. Additionally, work on getting a rhythm between the Game Announcer and the Emcee. Often the crowd noise is so loud that you cannot hear one another. Establishing a rhythm, such as making eye contact to connect, ensures that you do not talk at the same time.

#### Alliance Selection

The Emcee runs the alliance selection in the same area as the playing fields. The alliance selection consists of alliance captains picking partners to form permanent alliances. These alliances participate in double elimination tournaments to determine the tournament's winning alliance. The alliance selection should follow the rules in the competition manual and the flow in the alliance selection script provided.

## Closing and Awards Ceremonies

The closing and awards ceremony happen during the final matches. The Emcee/Game Announcer should work with the Event Director and Judge Advisor to ensure everyone knows the flow of the ceremony. This is a very exciting time for the teams as they not only are awarded for their performance on the field, but the finalists and winners are announced for each of the judged awards.

When the awards are announced, it is customary to announce the finalists of each award (for example, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place think award), and then to announce the winner using an optional script written by the Judges. Make sure to tell the teams ahead of time that the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place award teams should remain seated, and that the winner of the award should come to the stage for the celebration line and to accept their trophy/medal.

## Do's and Don'ts

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make the teams feel welcome on the field and show interest in all the teams.</li> <li>• Keep the audience engaged in what is going on.</li> <li>• Keep an eye on the schedule and adjust to stay on track.</li> <li>• Speak slowly and clearly. Diction is very important.</li> <li>• Use optimistic phrases to encourage poorly performing teams. Example: "Team 123 is trying to get something going", or "it looks like team 123 is having trouble getting their robot in gear, hopefully they can figure something out, there's still 1:30 remaining in the match."</li> <li>• Make the descriptions lively and interesting.</li> <li>• Behave professionally.</li> <li>• Be ready to begin each match as soon as the field is reset.</li> <li>• Use team names as often as possible rather than exclusively referring to the team number.</li> <li>• Mention something about every team in every match.</li> <li>• Pay attention to the movement of folks around the playing area to avoid collisions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Never direct strategy to the teams. Your job is to comment on the play, not to direct it.</li> <li>• Do not commentate on rules related situations (example: "That's got to be a yellow card!") or interfere or attempt to influence the referee rulings.</li> <li>• Do not emphasize winning above all else.</li> <li>• Do not play favorites or endlessly praise veteran teams over rookies (or other veterans).</li> <li>• Do not scream or talk so fast that you cannot be understood. You have 6+ hours per day to maintain the audience's attention. Screaming unintelligibly is grating.</li> <li>• Do not do "shout out's", "happy birthday" wishes, etc. to the audience. This is both unprofessional and opens the floodgates for endless birthday announcements.</li> <li>• Do not get distracted by personal business, or answering calls, messages, or notifications on your cell phone.</li> <li>• Remember to keep the focus on the teams and the students. The teams and the audience want to be entertained by both the event and the match play. Use your personality to help make the teams and event shine!</li> </ul>

## Performance Tips

- If everything sounds the same to the audience they will eventually tune out, so use vocal variety:
  - Vary your speaking style and volume throughout the event.
  - If your delivery is consistently too high energy, the audience may get anxious and will lose interest.

- An energetic, varied delivery is interesting and inviting to an audience.
- Develop your own style; do not try to be someone you are not.
- Silence is okay. Let the action speak for itself sometimes. Constant announcing will cause the audience to tune you out. Remember, you must make all 50+ matches interesting.

### Technical Tips

- Routinely check to make sure your headset is in the best position to pick up your voice and not riding too high or too low on your head.
- If using a handheld microphone, hold it close to your mouth and speak into it, not over it.

Confirm that your microphone is off before speaking off-line.

### Emergencies

The program delivery partner, Event Director and the event site host organization are responsible for having safety and security plans in place for each event. Included in the plan should be topics such as:

- A map of all the emergency exits
- Knowledge of where on-site medical support is located
- Shelter in place plans in the case of severe weather
- Evacuation plans

The Emcee or Game Announcer may need to help make announcements to notify or direct people in the case of emergency.

Teams should have their own safety plans before attending the event. Here are some team-focused recommendations for [Preparing to Safely Attend a FIRST Event](#).

### Medical Incident Reporting

Event volunteers are not responsible for diagnosing student injuries, handing out medication, or first aid equipment. You and other event volunteers should refer medical issues and emergencies to a medical professional on site, such as an EMT. If an incident or illness occurs at an event, the Event Director, Pit Administrator, or another trained delegate should do the following:

- Call 911 if there is any question whether the injured person/persons require urgent medical attention.
- Respond to the scene immediately. Bring a clipboard, pen, or an electronic device to complete the incident report on the [FIRST Reporting Portal](#).
- Complete the incident report for the injured party.



The Event Director or Pit Administration volunteers are responsible for completing incident reports.

[www.firstinspires.org/report](http://www.firstinspires.org/report)

### Youth Protection Reporting

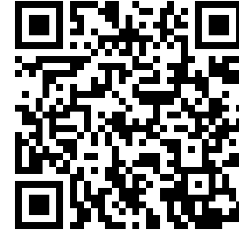
Issues that are non-medical but are of concern to a participant/participants should also be reported. Anything that happens during an event that made a youth volunteer, team member or spectator feel uncomfortable or threatened should be addressed.

As appropriate and if you feel safe doing so, speak directly with the offending party and try to quickly and calmly defuse the immediate issue. Call the Event Director and/or the Program Delivery Partner and inform them of the issue and seek assistance as needed with any immediate remediation of the issue.

Ensure all issues are reported in a timely manner using the [FIRST Reporting Portal](#). Youth Protection Concerns encompasses a wide variety of one-time or ongoing issues such as suspected abuse, bullying, harassment, discrimination, questionable behavior, or violation to the *FIRST* Code of Conduct.

#### **Reporting Other Issues or Concerns**

Feedback about issues such as game play, rule changes, awards, and event management (other than medical/safety issues) are considered program related concerns and not youth protection issues and should be shared with FIRST via [customerservice@firstinspires.org](mailto:customerservice@firstinspires.org) or by [contacting support](#).



Please note that match results and award results are final and that we will not review match videos.

[help.firstinspires.org/s/contactsupport](http://help.firstinspires.org/s/contactsupport)

#### **End of the Day**

At the end of the day the Emcee and Game Announcer volunteers should make sure they check-in with the Field Supervisor, return any tech they were wearing or using for the event and if possible, ask if they can help with any other load-out or end of the day task needed.



## Important Tools

### Public Schedule

The Program Delivery Partner or the Event Director should publish the public schedule of events before the event. This schedule will have a high-level overview of all the activities for the event. It is important that everyone at the event does their best to stay true to the public schedule so that teams and volunteers who have planned their day around these times have a good experience.

Time	Agenda
7:15 am	Doors Open for Staff & Key Volunteers
7:30 am	Judges and Inspectors Report
8:00 am	Doors Open for Teams
8:30 am	Judging & Inspection Commences
10:15 am	Team Check-in Hard Deadline (Check the Competition Manual)
10:30 am	Match schedule is generated and distributed to teams. (Check the Competition Manual) <i>Note to Scorekeeper: 6 Matches total (Check the Competition Manual)</i>
10:40 am	Drivers' Meeting with Head Referee & Opening Ceremony
11:00 am	Qualification Matches 1 - 8 <i>Note to Scorekeeper: 7-minute cycle-time</i>
12:00 pm	Lunch
12:45 pm	Qualification Matches 9 - 45 <i>Note to Scorekeeper: 5-minute cycle-times</i>
3:50 pm	Qualification Matches Projected End
4:00 pm	Alliance Selection
4:20 pm	Double Elimination Rounds 1 - 4
5:10 pm	Award Ceremonies Start & Double Eliminations Round 5
6:20 pm	Projected End of Event
7:00 pm	Doors Close
<i>Occasionally things that happen out of the event's control may impact the schedule. In these cases, work closely with the Event Director to understand the updated agenda.</i>	

Figure 1: Example Schedule for a 30 Team Event

### Registered Teams List

The Program Delivery Partner may provide a list of teams registered for the event or the scorekeeper can export a report of all the registered teams for the event. Sometimes this list may change the day of the event based on which teams show up. The Scorekeeper report will have the most accurate information about who is competing at an event. Notes that teams may be competing only in the judging portion of the event and not have a robot present.

## Test Event Teams

Number	Team Number	Name	Affiliation	City	State	Country	Rookie Year
1	1	Team Unlimited	PTC & FTC1 Team Unlimited 4-H Club	Sharon	MA	USA	2007
2	7	Tactical Sheep	TechBrick Education/DoD STEM&TechBrick Education	Aberdeen Proving Ground	MD	USA	2007
3	16	bigskyrobotics		missoula	MT	USA	2007
4	18	Techno Chix	Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson	Port Chester	NY	USA	2007
5	22	100 Scholars	100 Black Men of Atlanta/Georgia Power/Johnson Research and Development/NCR/Lockheed Martin & 100 Black Men of Atlanta, Inc.	Atlanta	GA	USA	2007
6	25	Rock N' Roll Robots	Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles/NASA&Girl Scouts	Pasadena	CA	USA	2007
7	99990	Off-Season Demo Team	Off-Season Demo Team				1992
8	99991	Off-Season Demo Team	Off-Season Demo Team				1992
9	99992	Off-Season Demo Team	Off-Season Demo Team				1992
10	99993	Off-Season Demo Team	Off-Season Demo Team				1992
11	99994	Off-Season Demo Team	Off-Season Demo Team				1992
12	99995	Off-Season Demo Team	Off-Season Demo Team				1992
13	99996	Off-Season Demo Team	Off-Season Demo Team				1992

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Figure 2: Competing Team Report

## Event Layout/Map

The Program Delivery Partner and Event Director should publish a map of the venue before the event. In some cases, details on the map might not be available until the day of the event.

The Event Layout / Map should detail the following:

- Load-In Path
- Parking for Personal Vehicles and Busses
- Team Check-in
- Volunteer Check-in
- Competition Area
- Pit Area (May include the [Pit Map](#))
- Judging Room Locations (if applicable)
- Safety Details as available (Emergency Exits, AED, Shelter in Place Locations)

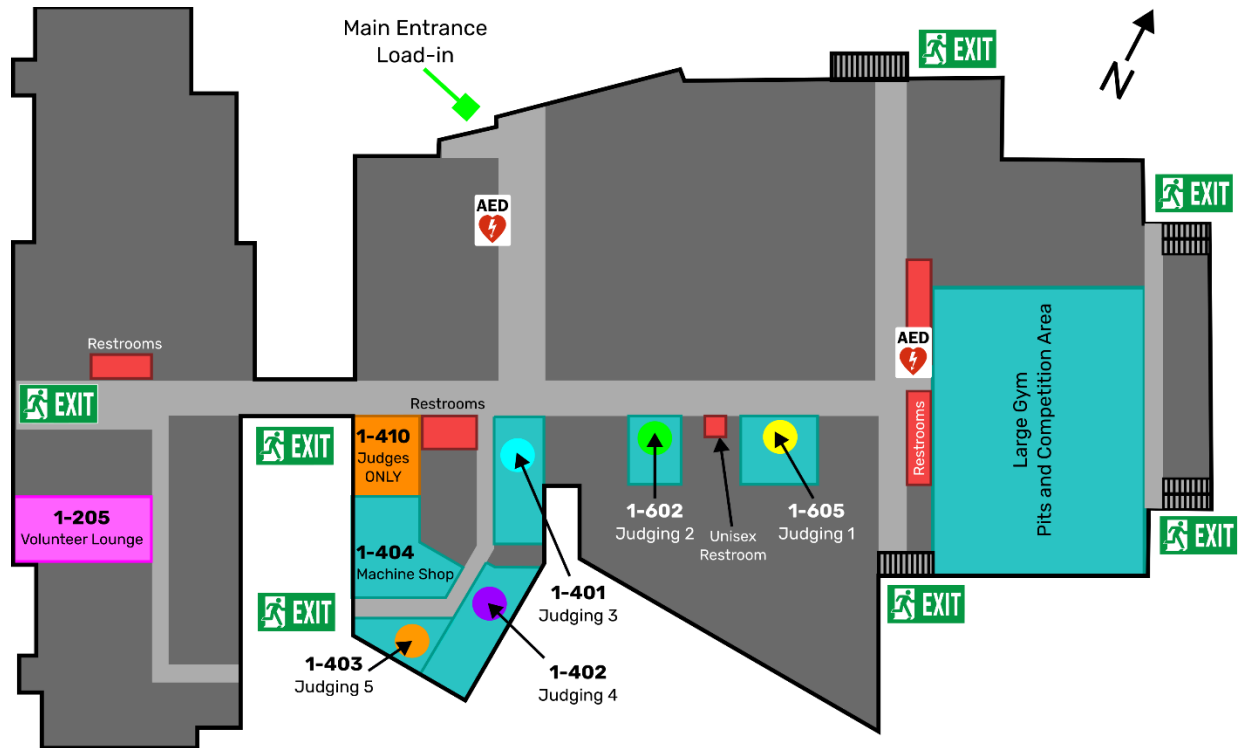


Figure 3: Example Event Map

## Judging Schedule

	Panel 1 Room 1605	Panel 2 Room 1602	Panel 3 Room 1401	Panel 4 Room 1402	Panel 5 Room 1403
08:30 AM –	22077 Marcus Minions	8204 Blue Machine	—	27534 RoboChargers - Yellow	25783 Tech Titans
08:50 AM –	13542 RoboChargers - Blue	21171 ITKAN Robotics - M12	27532 RoboChargers - Orange	23344 Technical Turbulence	27536 RoboChargers - Gold
09:10 AM –	26300 Anomaly	27533 RoboChargers - Purple	20482 Wylie E. Robote	12430 Dub East	26693 Triad Robotics
09:30 AM –	23434 Cristo Rey Dallas Robotics	7172 Technical Difficulties	18871 RoboChargers - Green	18227 Area 52	19991 Chuckieheads
09:50 AM –	26542 Apex Genesis	13537 RoboChargers - Red	19564 ITKAN Robotics - MAS	19990 Marcus de-TECH-tives	13552 RoboChargers - Pink
10:10 AM –	27531 RoboChargers - Cyan	24563 Flower Mound Firewall	26722 Tech Support	27535 RoboChargers - Silver	20483 Wall East

Figure 4: Example Judging Schedule

## Match Schedule

The match list will be generated on the day of the event after the teams have been confirmed. This schedule will list which teams will play in which alliance (Red or Blue) and it will also list a match start time see *Figure 5*. Some events will have more than one competition field. Some events will have more than one division, in which case each division will have its own schedule.

**Sample Event Schedule**

Teams: 11      Matches Per Team: 5      ALLIANCE Red or Blue      Matches: 14

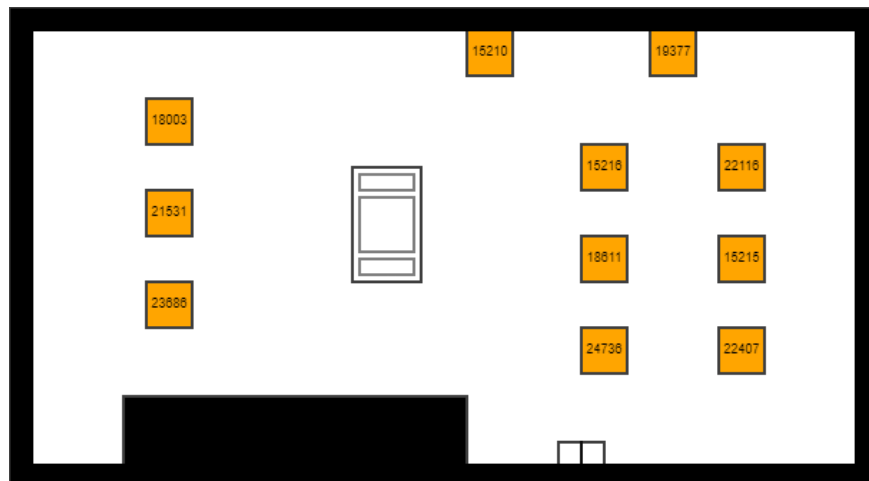
Start	Match	Field	Red 1	Red 2	Blue 1	Blue 2
8:00 AM	Qualification 9	1	12758	11536	12494	11282
8:07 AM	Qualification 10	2	12329	12622	8089	12789*
8:14 AM	Qualification 11	1	7135	7078	11780	12758

Planned MATCH Start Time      MATCH Type      Field Assignment      SURROGATE MATCH Indicator

*Figure 5: Example Match Schedule*

## Pit Map

Pit maps are typically provided by either the Event Director or by the Scorekeeper. Having a map of where each team is in the pit is key, as teams, parents or Queuers might need to find. Below are two sample pit maps in *Figure 6* and *Figure 7*. Pit Maps created in FTC Scoring will appear on the [FTC-Events](#) page.



*Figure 6: Example Pit Map for a small 12-team Qualifier Event*

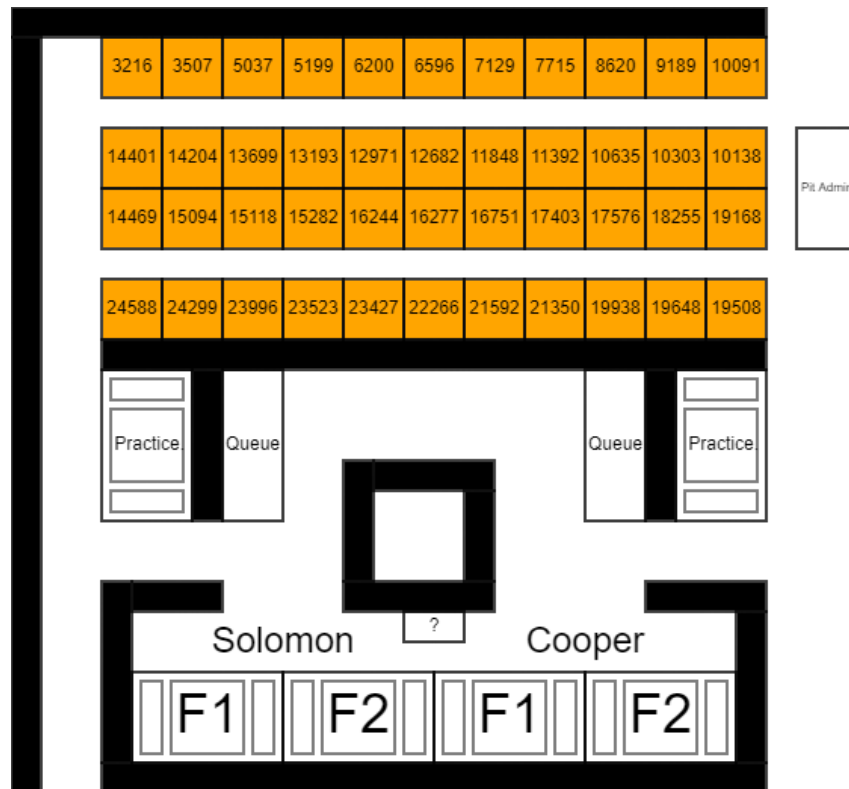


Figure 7: Example Pit Map for a Typical Regional Championship Event

## Useful Links and Information

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### On-Call Support Numbers

#### 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

### 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](mailto: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](mailto:customerservice@firstinspires.org) or by [contacting support](#). Thank you!