

Rookie Conference Call #3

Attendance:

<u>Team #</u>	<u>Contact Person and city</u>
4368	Pete and Amanda Chesney, Vicksburg
4362	Andy, Brighton
4377	Dale Tomason, Boyne City

KICKOFF and WEEK 1

Q: What should we expect from the Kickoff?

A: *The kickoff is like the “opening day” ... expect excitement and fear!*

- *The first hour of the kickoff is usually a report from Dean Kamen, Woodie Flowers, the President of FIRST and others. They will explain a bit about FIRST.*
- *They will discuss scholarship information – it is unbelievable.*
- *The highlight is when they release the new game!*
- *Good idea to have parents watch the kickoff! They REALLY benefit from this experience.*
- ***Who should attend: EVERYONE- students, parents, mentors***

Q: What do we do with this permission slip stuff (Consent and Release forms)?

A: *You will need to have the **Permission Slips (Consent and Release forms) all ready for the Kickoff.** However, there is some flexibility!*

- *Permission slips need to be turned in (print off team roster – TIMS)*
- *Don't forget to get a hard copy of the team roster and any C & R forms not done online to take to the kickoff*
- *If you need help, there are tutorials on the Rookie Website:
<http://www.frcrookies.com/tutorials.html>*
- *Be sure to go into TIMS to “invite” your mentors to the team. Then the mentors will need to accept and the fill out the release form online. Team Contacts - “Edit and View” > Team Mentor - “Invite Contact” (near bottom)*
- *Students need to go into STIMS to apply for release. You will need to “accept” them, their parents will need to approve them.*
- *If you cannot get this all done prior to kickoff – be sure to print off copies of the release form and have the parents fill out and sign.*

- You can “add” anyone who has not completed the online form at the bottom of the printed version of your team roster (found on the TIMS site).

Q: What if I don’t have a full team yet – what do I do about the permission form?

A: As you add members to the team, be sure they log on and get them added to your roster. Then be sure to bring an updated copy of your team roster to your first competition.

Training Sessions: Many of the Kick-off sites are going to have training sessions. For instance, Kettering is offering 2 sessions before the kickoff and 1 afterwards. So, look into your kickoff and find out what they have. There may be a great session for you! Check your local Kickoff for available training sessions and workshops.

Q: Where do we get the broadcast online?

A: You can watch the Kickoff via Kickoff sight, on NASA tv, or webcast via NASA

- Go to <http://usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/kickoff> to see where the information is on the kickoff (navigation: FRC ->EVENTS->kickoff)
- **Kickoff officially starts at 10:30** – please remember that the game does not get released until the END of the kickoff (last year it was over by 11:30)
- You should try to watch the entire broadcast (not just tune in at the end to see what the game is), it introduces a lot of valuable information about FIRST (especially if you’re not familiar with the program)
- PRIOR to kickoff, **download the manual**. You will get the encryption code at the END of the kickoff. It will be posted online as well.
<http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/competition-manual-and-related-documents?id=452>
- After Kickoff (likely on Sunday or Monday), download the un-encrypted version of the manual so you don’t have to enter passwords each time you open it.
- You can also download the files to Android/i-products:
 - Android: <http://www.appdelegates.com/frc>
 - iPhone: <http://itunes.apple.com/app/id488793605?mt=8>

Manual

Q: When will FIRST put the rest of the manual on the website?

A: Chapters 1-6 are already available for you to download.

<http://usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/competition-manual-and-related-documents>

(navigation: FRC ->Game & Season Info ->Competition ->Competition Manual and Related Docs)

- You can download chapters 1-6 on your computer today (and start reading)
- The rest of the Manual are the Encrypted Sections which are available for download. The FRC Game Manual can be found here: <http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/competition-manual-and-related-documents>. To download the encrypted sections, you will right-click on the .pdf file and select "Save Link/Target As...". The password for accessing these documents will be available at the end of the Kickoff broadcast.
- Prior to Kickoff, make sure that your computer has the proper software by following the instructions for the 2012 Decryption Test found here: <http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/2012DecryptionTest> This prevents ALL the teams from downloading at the same time on Saturday – you will just need the code.

Q: Does the rules manual get changed?

A: Yes, they can. They are called, "Updates", and are clarifications or changes to the rules. Assign a team member to rules updates and have them check regularly.

Q: How do we know about updates?

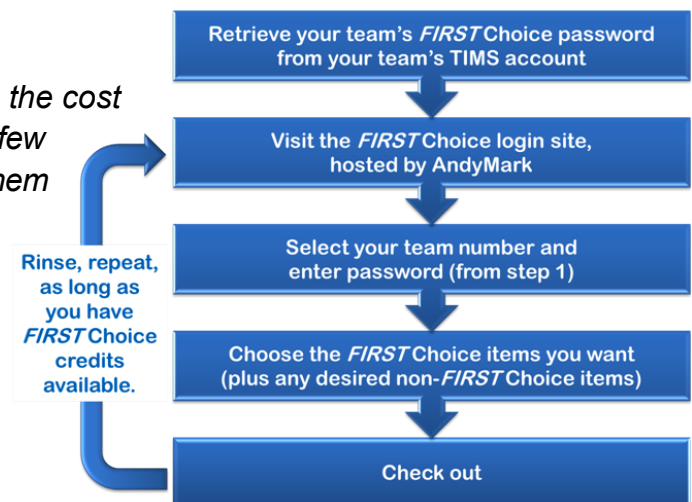
A: FIRST posts the updates 2/week (Tuesday and Friday by 5 pm)

- <http://usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/team-updates> (navigation: FRC ->Game & Season Info ->Competition -> Team Updates)
- Make sure your team is checking the rules – don't pay attention to Chief Delphi comments or other website interpretations – the official rules are ONLY posted on the official FIRST competition
- Follow Bill's Blog <http://frcdirector.blogspot.com/>
- Add Bill's Blog as an RSS feed - so you will get them sent directly to you!
- You have to manually update them (FIRST will not always e-mail them out to you). Check for the updates at www.FRCrookies.com

Q: What is this "FIRST CHOICE"?

A: FIRST Choice is a new way to try to keep the cost of the kits down by allowing teams to pick a few items for free from a list, instead of putting them all in the kit.

- Go to <http://www.andymark.com/firstchoice> to read more about FIRSTChoice



- See some of the available items go to <http://www.andymark.com/FIRST-Choice-Public-s/411.htm>
- Supplies may run out, so get registered and ready now.
- Teams will log into the website using their secure user name and password (provided to the teams closer to Kickoff) to see the items, select the items they wish to receive, and choose a shipping option.
- FIRST Choice opens January 9th.
- Remember that your FIRST Choice “points” do not carry over to next year. You must use them all by April 30th, 2012 or you lose them
- FIRST Choice Ordering Rules: <http://usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/first-choice-ordering-rules>

Kit of Parts

Q: Should we bring a cart to transport our Kit of Parts (KoP)?

A: Absolutely, if you can. Bring a dolly or a little cart to help take your kits out.

- Expect two large, heavy totes filled with materials and one large box with your chassis
- There may be other unexpected totes or boxes as well

Q: How do we know what we have received in the Kit of Parts (KoP)?

A: You will need to inventory the kit.

- Inventory list, with pictures, is in the online manual
- FIRST will make it so anyone can inventory (pictures to match objects)
- Inventory does NOT have to happen prior to leaving the kickoff – but don’t delay due to Tuesday’s deadline.
- By Tuesday, if parts are missing, you contact FIRST, fill out the paperwork (as noted in the kit) and they will send you the replacement parts.
- **You only have until next Tuesday to contact FIRST on missing parts.**
- **Please note** – your shipping contact must be updated on TIMS in order to have ANYTHING shipped to the team

Investigate what is in the Kit –

- This is a great opportunity for the students to learn and explore ... start asking, “What might we do with this?” ...
- Have your students label all parts with the 2012 dates (it helps to know later that it was the “kit” piece) and your team number
- You can see last year’s kit here:
http://www.usfirst.org/uploadedFiles/Robotics_Programs/FRC/Game_and_Season_Info/2011_Assets/Kit_of_Parts/2011%20Kit%20of%20Parts%20Checklist%20Rev%20E.pdf

Game Objects

- If there are no game object in kit – purchase at least one right away
- Use Google to determine where you can buy them in the short-term. Places like AndyMark will likely carry them later on, and you can order them online.
- You may want to buy a few extra game pieces to have on hand when testing, designing (depending on the game)
- Have a parent help find the field pieces
- If you cannot find one and there wasn't one in the kit, be sure to check Chief Delphi to see where field pieces may be found! www.chiefdelphi.com

Q: Do you need to build a playing field to practice?

A: *You can practice anywhere*

- *You do not need an entire field to practice.*
- *Depending on the space that you have available, think of using only the field components.*
- *If you have a space – create a field! It is a great place to practice driving and testing your robot.*

Q: Playing field – where can we find the information on creating a field?

A: *FRC Game Manual - in the manual, you can find 2 versions of the field:*

- *The Official FIRST field (very costly, but exact)*
- *The low-cost playing field (made of pvc, wood, 2x4's, etc)*
- *After you determine what strategy you are going after, make the low cost playing field components for testing and validation*
- *Be careful if you need an exact measure for your robot!*
- *HINT: You REALLY need to physically simulate the game to understand it – suggestions*
 - *Physically “mock” up the game with human robots*
 - *Make a scale model to play the game*
 - *Let your kids wild with technology and create a Flash simulation of the game!*

Q: How much access do you need for a computer for the team?

A: *We believe there should be at least 2 computers for the team;*

- 1 for programming
- 1 for the rules and manual updates

You can simulate the game on a board game (like Team 2337 does), or you can physically act out the game to get an idea of how to play the game (like Team 27). Either way, you need to know how to play the game!

First Week

The RUSH Toolkit covers the first week very extensively – use it as a resource; <http://teamrush27.net/requesttoolkit.html> specifically, look at chapter 7, Build. This section includes the kickoff and weekly details of the 6-week process.

Kickoff – Saturday’s objective needs to be:

- Learn to play the game
- Know the rules
- Know how to score
- Know how to play offensively and defensively

Strategy

- EngiNERDs Strategy Workshop - This Sunday from 10:00am - 5:00pm
<http://www.team2337.com/strategy-workshop.html>
- Our next Tuesday meeting we will talk strategy ... both offensively and defensively in more detail
- Start with the HOW to play the game
- Once strategy of HOW is established, start brainstorming the WHAT a robot might look like that would “play that game”
- In understanding the game, be sure you also understand the 3 critical phases:
 - Hybrid or Autonomous mode: beginning of round with robots moving on their own
 - Regular play: called tele-operated mode, where humans drive the robots
 - End game: last few seconds of the round where bonus points are earned
- FIRST is known to make a BIG WOW at the end of the game – to swing the match. Pay close attention to all 3 parts of the game (if there are 3).

Q: What is autonomous mode?

A: Autonomous mode is a pre-programmed mode that your robot will perform a task.

- *If you can score during this time, you will definitely have an advantage over other teams. Don't blow this part of the game off!*
- *The value of auton/hybrid mode changes each year. Sometimes it is a determining factor in the score, other years it helps level the playing field.*

Decision making – start thinking about HOW your team is going to make decisions ... do you make them or will the kids? If you make all the decisions be prepared to hear, “this is your robot – not ours”. Find a happy middle where the students are making the decisions with your influence on resources, etc.

- Go for a consensus, not a vote.
- Create an environment or culture where everyone agrees that the decision that is made is what is in the best interest of the team.
- People have a tendency to “fall in love” with their design idea, but they need to set aside their feelings and do what is best for the team
- No such thing as a final design - “Every part you make becomes scrap, it’s just a matter of when”.

**Q: How do you have the teams communicate ideas and make decisions?
Student to student, mentor to student, sub-teams?**

A: Ideas for communication –

- *Reserve some time per meeting to “review” what the groups are doing*
- *Create a “design review” for once a week sub-team communication*
- *Have the mentors meet 1/week to discuss how things are going without the students – to help guide the process*
- *Start thinking about HOW your team is going to make decisions ... do you make them or will the kids? If you make all the decisions be prepared to hear, “this is your robot – not ours”. Find a happy middle where the students are making the decisions with your influence on resources, etc.*

Weekly business update

Important Communications

- Reminder – you really need to keep your sponsors informed of what is going on (and your community)
- Prior to kickoff keep the following people in the loop:
 - Your sponsors,
 - The local press/media
 - Your school board administrators
 - ANYONE who you think may be interested that the game is to be unveiled and you are getting started!
- Update social media and website
- Update sponsors on progress (website, newsletter or eblast)
- Take pictures and video – DOCUMENT ALL YOU DO! We will talk more about this later, but it is important that you document what you do – if not for anything else but a recollection of the journey you are about to travel.

- If you can, assign someone to take pictures or video throughout the season. If you can't buy a team camera, use someone's camera phone and upload them to a Team Facebook.

Next meeting:

Tuesday, January 10, 2012

6pm – 7pm

Call – in number: 877-251-8582

Pass Code: 8582