

Let the 2012 New FIRST FRC Season Begin . . . !



An estimated 60,000 people were up bright and early on Saturday, January 7, anxiously awaiting the announcement of the 2012 FRC Season Game Challenge. Teams across the nation, and in Canada, Israel, and Mexico, either watched the Kickoff on NASA-TV or attended one of the 73 Kickoff sites. With the growth of the number of FRC teams, Illinois had two Kickoff Events this year! Special Thank You's go out to the folks at IIT (Chicago) and Bradley University (Peoria) for being such gracious hosts! Watch the 2012 Season Kickoff Video - <http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL926CA30C6E7D9DCF&feature=plcp>.

Reflections on Kickoff

The Peoria Kickoff

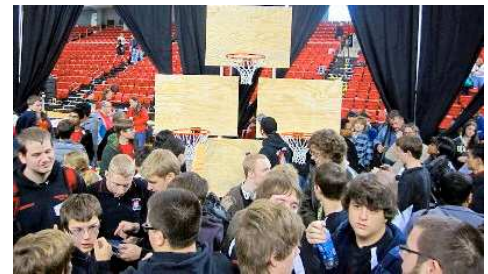
Submitted by Molly Mathes - FIRST FRC Team # 2040 - D.E.R.T. - Dunlap, IL

Over 300 people filled the Renaissance Coliseum at Bradley University on Saturday, January 7 in anticipation for the 21st FIRST Robotics Competition Kick Off. The crowd was surprisingly calm, but this crowd was not just any crowd. The gears were turning as future engineers plotted ways to get behind the black curtain that hid the 2012 FRC game field.

Fortunately, the NASA TV broadcast finally began, and all thirteen FRC teams, veterans and rookies alike, were glued to the screen as Stephen Colbert welcomed everyone to the 2012 Kick Off. The FIRST President Jon Dudas then vaguely hinted at the game while introducing what FIRST is all about: "At FIRST, as in life, everything is about balance." FIRST Chairman Walt Havenstein and former Presidents George W. Bush and Bill Clinton also discussed the importance of FIRST in the world as well as the importance of cooperating with others. At this point, the audience was quickly catching onto the importance of "balance" and "coopertition" in the 2012 game. The crowd roared with excitement when Dr. Woodie Flowers appeared and explained the importance of the creative process. Being informed is not enough, we must also think and use the creativity that we all have within us.

Finally, the one-and-only Dean Kamen, the always denim-clad founder of FIRST wanted to remind everyone why he started FIRST: the goal has been and always will be "to change the culture of the United States" as well as "to get this country, and maybe this world . . . refocused on the importance of science and technology . . . [and] to inspire kids, to convince them, of how cool it is."

After Kamen's inspirational speech, the kit was finally introduced. The crowd was humming with excitement as the big reveal grew closer and closer. After a few more messages from numerous supporters of FIRST, such as the CEO of The Coca-Cola Company, Muhatar Kent, who summed up the students of FIRST as "young, bright minds who hold the keys to our future," the moment everyone was waiting for was revealed. The gears were now wildly spinning as Rebound Rumble was explained. In 2012, FRC teams will balance their science and technology knowledge with a newfound approach to playing basketball. As soon as the NASA broadcast was finished, the black curtains came down, the game field was revealed, and confetti swirled around the Coliseum as teams ran to the drawing boards in preparation not only for their competition but also for changing the culture of our world.



Peoria Kickoff Highlighted!

from Bradley University's "In the Spotlight"

No instructions, no problem - by Abby Rhodes

Thirteen teams of high school students from Illinois and Iowa came to Bradley University Jan. 7 to receive boxes filled with motors, batteries, a control system, a PC, a mix of automation components and three basketballs. The charge: to build a robot capable of shooting basketballs – and making baskets – while balanced on a teetering bridge. What the teams didn't receive in their kits were instructions. Read more - <http://www.bradley.edu/inthespotlight/story/?id=182668>



Featured in the Article -
FIRST FRC Team # 2481
Roboteers - Tremont, IL

The Chicago Kickoff Reflections on Building the Field Elements

Submitted by Mary Kate McKeown, Team Captain
FRC Team # 2781 - Queen of Peace - Chicago

What was it like to participate in pre-building field elements?

It was extremely frustrating because I was able to see what the field looked like, and could speculate about what the game was going to be, but I couldn't know for sure. I spent hours later wondering what certain pieces were for and what *FIRST* was going to do to make the game harder. There's always a "catch". I guess the hardest part about building the field elements was not knowing exactly what certain pieces looked like or what their function was. If we misread the instructions and built a piece wrong, we wouldn't find out until way later.

Was it hard keeping the secret?

It wasn't too hard keeping the secret. I knew what the field looked like, but you never really know what exactly is going to happen, so I wouldn't want to accidentally lead anyone down the wrong path with my own speculations. Also, I only saw the field the night before the game was announced, and even though I am certainly not a patient person, I was able to hold out for a few hours. If I'd known about the field a week ahead of time, though, I'm not sure how I'd manage.



Reflections on Kickoff

Submitted by Steve Titmas, Faculty Mentor,
FRC Team # 101 - Striker - Chicago

The *FIRST* Step to a Great Career!

On January 7th at 8:30AM, eager students, mentors, engineers and parents started to fill the auditorium at IIT in Chicago waiting for the much anticipated *FIRST* FRC Kickoff to begin. Despite the cold Chicago weather, the air was electric, musing about the 2012 game. Our team members, parents and mentors positioned themselves right in the middle of the auditorium. Team 101, Striker from St. Patrick High School in Chicago, ready to roll!

"My son enrolled at St. Patrick's because of the robot team", the father of Peter Almazan, told me as we were waiting for the kickoff to start, obviously happy and proud to be there with Peter. Another parent, sitting in front of me turned around and said "My son, Joe Gurnig, is on the team this year, his brother John was on the team 4 years ago."

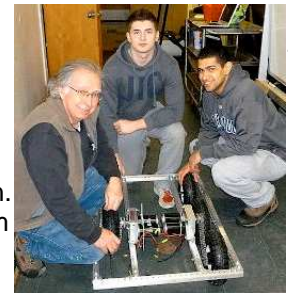
The meeting begins at 9AM with some speakers from IIT talking about the engineering programs and the opportunities for engineering graduates. Many of our students want to be engineers, some because of *FIRST*.

Our two team leads, Nick Rodriguez and Roland Najbar, who will be our primary drivers this year, stated "Wow, this is going to be hard! *Rebound Rumble!* Do we go over the 4 inch barrier, or just try for the bridge?" Nick wasn't sure about which career to pursue after high school until he got involved with team 101 during his freshman year. "Don't worry replied Ed O'Connor, our most senior team engineer, who has worked with FRC team # 101 for 13 yrs., "we'll design the robot to do both."

Toward the end of the kickoff presentation, Ed O'Connor and Mike Walsh reassured our anxious students by smiling and saying "we'll get it done." Mike, a graduate of St. Pat's, was part of the team 101 as a student, went onto college and graduated with a degree in electrical engineering. Now working in industry, he comes back to mentor our students as a full engineer. Another alumnus of St. Patrick, Tim Palermo, currently a computer engineering student at the University of Illinois in Chicago, ponders how we can use the Kinect box to control our robot.

After the kickoff, our entire team of students and mentors has begun the exciting, challenging, sometimes frustrating task of designing and building.

The mission of our team is good competition, camaraderie, and promoting our students career interests. From team 101 to all teams competing this year, best of luck!



FRC
Team #
101
members
Ed
O'Connor
Roland
Najbar
and Nick
Rodriguez

The Faces at Kickoff

Checking out the Kit of Parts . . .
4081 - Metal Masters - East Chicago



How things fit
together . . .
4296 - Blue Devil
Builders - Gurnee

Ready to go . . .
4302 - Robo-aliens - Chicago



Good Luck to All!



. . . And There was Birthday Cake too!

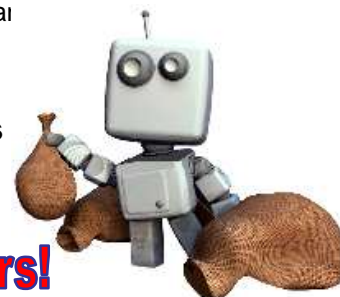
Important Dates & Info

- **02/16 - CLOSE** - Award Submissions for FIRST Dean's List, Chairman's, Woodie Flowers and Web site - NOON (EST)
- **02/17 - OPEN** - Autodesk Submissions. Go to http://students.autodesk.com/?nd=first_home&taget=FRC-2012-LA-1-6-2012 for award information. Autodesk has also formed a Facebook group to connect with teams using Autodesk technology during the 2012 season. Click here to join: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/autodesk.first/>
- **02/21 - STOP BUILD! BAG the BOT!**
- **02/23 - DUE** - Judges' Information (8 PM EST)
- **03/01-4/07 - Regional Competitions** - For a listing, visit: <http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/regional-events?id=430>.
- **03/22-3/24 - MIDWEST REGIONAL - UIC PAVILION - CHICAGO** - For information and the latest updates, click here: http://www.ilfrc.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6&Itemid=6.
- **04/26-4/28 - FIRST Championship** - St. Louis, Missouri
- **"Ask an Expert" - Informational Calls for Team, Mentors and Coaches!** Hosted by FIRST Senior Mentors, these informational calls are for everyone! - Rookie/Vet Teams, Mentors and Coaches. The calls are invaluable for those who are new to FIRST as well as those needing to brush up on their skills.
Next call: 02/09/2012 - 6 PM CST - Topic: "Robot Transportation Checklist" with expert Frank Merrick, FRC Deputy Director. Also prior training calls have been recorded and are available for listening at: <http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/frc-senior-mentor-teleconference-recordings>
- **FRC 234 - Cyber Blue has created a new team support video titled "After the Build - What's Next?"** The video focuses on what happens after the robot is built and includes information on crates, bag & tag, what to take to an event, pit layouts, getting on and off the field, field connections, alliance selections, awards and more. There is also a short segment on inspections, The video will be available as a free item from AndyMark sometime in early in Jan

Save the Date! - Saturday, February 18th

"Before the Bag" Scrimmage Hosted by the Chicago Knights

for more details and information, visit **CKSHARE**
<http://ck2009robotickickoff.groupsie.com/main/summary>



V.I.P.s



Calling All FRC Student Team Members!

- Do you want the opportunity of a lifetime?
- Do you want to meet a High Tech Executive?
- Do you want to talk about FIRST and your Team?

If the answer to any of these questions is "Yes", then I have the job for you!

YOU CAN BECOME A STUDENT AMBASSADOR FOR THE MIDWEST REGIONAL!

Your job is very simple. Ambassadors are assigned a VIP. All you have to do is take your VIP on a tour of the competition. Show them the pit area, the cheering section, talk about the robots, the game, and just be there to answer any questions he/she may have.

This gives you the opportunity to showcase your team to them. Be their personal guide. Tell and show them what this program means to you! You will also be given the opportunity to have lunch with your VIP at the VIP luncheon on Friday afternoon. This is an opportunity of a lifetime. Don't miss out!

If you are interested, please discuss this with the mentors on your team. If this is something you would like to sign up for, please register in VIMS. More information will be forthcoming. In the meantime, if you have any questions, you can contact me by email, cis71@comcast.net.

GREAT NEWS!

The game is a tough one, everyone's busy with the Bot and submitting awards. We wanted to give you the time to do your best. So...

We've extended the Deadline to March 1st!



You Design the Midwest Regional Poster!

Have fun! Get creative! Imagination Rules ...!

- Open to all teams attending the Midwest Regional.
- Teams / individual may "autograph / sign" their poster design.
- Winner will be acknowledged at the MWR.
- Winning poster design will be featured on the Midwest Regional web site and used in advertising and promotion of the event.
- A digital copy of the winning poster design will be emailed to all participating teams for their use in PR, marketing, brochures, school / community posters, invitations, newsletters, newspapers, etc.
- For the rules, details and more info click here http://ilfrc.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=33&Itemid=35 and read MWR email blast # 2.

Fabulous FLL Finale!



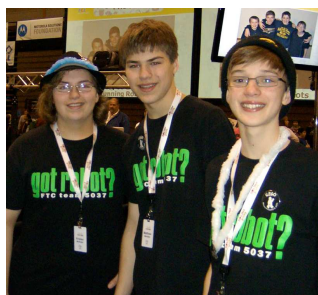
WOW! What a great event! It was a snowy, blizzard-like weekend that sixty-three teams traveled to Forest View Fieldhouse in Arlington Heights on January 20 & 21, 2012, to compete in the Illinois State LEGO Championship. Energy was high, the venue was great, the competition was fierce, but most of all every team member, mentor and coach were truly gracious professionals, displaying the *FIRST* spirit of coopertition! A great big THANKS and much appreciation to all of the many volunteers who gave their time and hard work to making this State Competition incredible! Special thanks goes out to *FIRST* FTC team # 5037 - got robot? from Elgin for being volunteers and working at the field tables and to *FIRST* FRC team # 111 WildStang from Schaumburg, who kept everyone fed at their café and whose demonstrations at the event showed parents, spectators and sponsors just how wonderful the *FIRST* FAMILY OF PROGRAMS is! And of course. . . **CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF THE WINNERS!!**



Champion's Award Winners
- Team # 12029 - Moovers



Robot Design Programming
Award - Team # 3811 -
Potato Smashers



Rookie Award Winners -
Team # 4870 - Full Power

Award Winners

Champion's Award

Team # 12029 - Moovers - Long Grove

Champion's Award 2nd place

Team # 158 - Toyminators - Palatine

Champion's Award 3rd place

Team # 10041 - iLEGO - Palatine

Inspiration Award

Team # 12785 - Cornstalkers - Woodstock

Teamwork Award

Team # 5729 - Newton Busters - Wilmette

Gracious Professionalism Award

Team # 10365 - Wonder Women - Crystal Lake

Ambassador Award

Team # 10041 - iLEGO - Palatine

Robot Performance Award

Team # 4856 - Pathogen Police - Lake Zurich

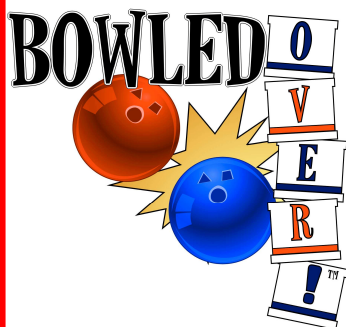
Rookie Award

Team # 4870 - Full Power - Gurnee

For a complete listing of Awards, please visit the Illinois *FIRST* LEGO League web site

http://www.ilfirst.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9&Itemid=5

Upcoming FTC Happenings



HpRobotics Second Chance Scrimmage

February 25, 2012
Highland Park High School

The tournament is a second chance to test your robot on the field of play. We will have a minimal hardware inspection and no formal judging. This is a day for robots. We will have official referees and will try to run 5-8 matches per team. Please arrive by 8 am, and the games will start at 10am and go to 3pm. We will have trophies for the best team in the elimination rounds and a playoff round. We will order out for pizza for lunch. Contact: Jonathan Weiland at JWeiland@dist113.org

Indiana State FTC Championship

March 10, 2012

Crawfordsville High School Room 500 - Crawfordsville, IN 47933

Contact: Mr. Darrin Wilcoxson at 765-632-2340 x1500 or email dwilcoxson@cville.k12.in.us