



November 2015



Are you WASTE WISE? Registrations are rolling in for the 2015/16 season. 79 teams have registered so far in Illinois for this year's challenge. Encourage your friends to bring the excitement of Jr.FLL to their schools, organizations and neighborhoods.

The Jr.FLL Planning Committee is laying the groundwork to create a central registration process for all Jr.FLL Expos in Illinois. Through this process we hope to streamline the registration process for coaches, remove some of the administrative burden for Expo Coordinators, and have a consistent Expo experience for our students. Details will be revealed THIS MONTH.

We are currently putting together a new Jr.FLL Coach Training program for Illinois coaches. If you have a particular "hot topic" you'd like for us to address, email it to jrfl-contact@ilfirst.org or post it to the new Yahoo Group described below. The training will be in the form of a webinar and/or online information.

We encourage coaches and parents to join the new Illinois Jr.FLL Yahoo group to post questions about the Jr.FLL program or challenge, and to share coaching strategies and resources. Go to [Yahoo! Groups](#), search for [jrfl_illinois](#), and request a login. Our Illinois Jr.FLL program partner, Mary Buchanan, may be reached at jrFLL-contact@ilfirst.org.



Registrations for the Trash Trek season have closed and 520 Illinois teams have begun preparing their robots and projects for the qualifiers. All of the teams will compete in one of [33 qualifiers](#) throughout the state beginning on November 21st and finishing up on December 20th.

The top 25% of teams in Illinois will advance to one of two championship tournaments.

tournaments are held on January 16th at Elgin Community College and on January 23rd at the University of Illinois in Champaign. New this year is that each championship tournament in Illinois will nominate one team from the teams attending the tournament as a regional nominee to be considered for the Global Innovation Award (GIA). This is a change in the process for determining the GIA and we are excited to see the results.

We are also excited to tell teams about all of the scrimmages or scrambles being held throughout the state that teams may wish to attend. These are not 'Official Events'. However, we hope teams will take advantage of the opportunity to see what other teams are doing and practice before the qualifying tournaments. We will list the events on our website as they become known to us along with information about how to [register for the scrimmages](#).

We wish all of the teams the best of luck at the upcoming qualifiers. Our Illinois FLL program partner, Diane Michalczuk, may be reached at contactflillinois@gmail.com.



FIRST® Tech Challenge



Getting ready to get your game on? League tournaments are just around the corner. Regionals begin in December. Remember to give your programmers at least a week of programming time. If your robot can't drive, you can't score any points. 50% of the game 100% of the time should be your goal in the beginning.

Check out the [Get Ready for Competition resources](#).

Does your team have safety glasses? Teams must bring safety glasses for all team members including coaches & mentors. They must be worn in the pit and at the competition field.

[Game Manual Part 1](#) contains important competition information. Have questions about game rules, robot building rules, programming, and more? Check [the game forum](#) and then post a question. Your team's Q & A password is on the team summary page in [TIMS](#).

FIRST Illinois robotics has [first year rookie grants](#) available. We want to invest in your program and develop a strong base. Second-year team support is available for teams that had rookie grants last year. Contact our IL FTC program partners, Sue Kunzeman and Jonathan Weiland at FTC-contact@ilfirst.org.



FIRST® Robotics Competition



On November 5, the unrestricted regional event registration opens. Registration for all events closes on November 23, which happens to be the same date when payment is due for your 1st regional event. The [calendar of events](#) is on the FIRST website.

The Central Illinois Regional held at Bradley University in Peoria, is a week 3 competition – March 16-19. The Midwest Regional held at the University of Illinois in Chicago, is a week 5 competition – March 30 – April 2.

Mentors and students should keep up with the [FRC Blog](#) (a/k/a Frank's Blog ... named after Frank Merrick, the Director of FRC). Here you will learn about a process change with 2016 trophies, being able to set up pits early at some regionals, announcement of the new radio for field connection, advice to stock up on pool noodles for bumpers, etc. This information is not repeated in the weekly FRCteams email, so you have to go seek it out to be in the know.

Thanks to all teams for completing and returning your recent surveys. The information will be valuable to the district planning committee. We encourage more teams to have a member on the planning committee.

Michigan has 410 FRC teams, California 262, and Minnesota just broke the 200 mark. For those teams looking for an outreach activity, please consider recruiting a team at a nearby school district. A set of simple [PowerPoint slides](#) are available for your use.



SENIOR MENTOR CORNER

The Senior Mentor Corner is a potpourri of events and activities that may be of interest to teams or students of our Illinois FIRST teams. Some events or information may not necessarily be sanctioned by FIRST or FIRST Illinois Robotics but may be of general interest to our teams regarding fun events, fundraising, etc.

NEW NAME & LOGO

No more InSCite Illinois nor Illinois FIRST. Our new name is now FIRST Illinois Robotics. Our new logo may be found at the top of this newsletter. Expect to see the new logo on our social media, website, and other places around Illinois.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

All FIRST expos, qualifiers, tournaments, and competitions are open to the public and are FREE. We

encourage you to attend an event in your area to support our students. FIRST is a volunteer driven organization. Events can only be successful with the help of many volunteers. I encourage you to log in to the [Volunteer Information and Matching Systems \(VIMS\)](#) on the FIRST website and volunteer today. Training is available for key positions, and some roles merely require a willingness to show up to help. In some instances, students may be able to volunteer for specific roles at certain events. Parents, co-workers, sponsors ... all are welcome as volunteers.

ACKNOWLEDGING SPONSORS

Depending on the value of what a sponsor provides your team, whether in cash or in-kind, may determine if you send them a thank-you note, put their name on a team shirt, buy them a plaque, or provide them with an award won at a competition (extras can be ordered ... for a price). Definitely invite all your sponsors to the expos, qualifications, tournaments, or competitions your team will attend. Please let your sponsors know your team appreciates their support.

FTCteams and FRCteams EMAILS

Watch your inbox for emails from FTCteams and FRCteams emails. They contain information on grants, registration, important dates, technical tips, etc. Mail is sent to registered team mentors. Depending on the dynamics of your team, mentors may choose to forward the information to parents and students.

SLINGSHOT SHOWING & FUNDRAISER

FIRST FRC team #2781 will be hosting a screening of the Dean Kamen documentary, SlingShot, on November 20 at their school, Queen of Peace High School, in Burbank. [Tickets](#) are now available for purchase. This is a great way to support a fellow FIRST team while enjoying a super movie about Dean Kamen, the founder of FIRST and a brilliant inventor. I give it two thumbs up.

FUNDRAISING TOOLKIT

FIRST has put together a collection of videos and documents they call the [Fundraising Toolkit](#). Be sure to check it out.

WANTED: ASTRONAUTS

NASA will soon be accepting [applications](#) for their next astronaut class. NASA is seeking explorers for future space missions. Pilots, engineers, scientists, doctors ... a wide variety of candidates will be considered. Applications will be accepted December 14 thru mid-February. Details may be found [here](#).

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