

October 2015



Are you WASTE WISE? Registrations are rolling in for the 2015/16 season. 61 teams are in the process of registering their teams 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 very soon.

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.



Trash Trek season is underway and teams are thinking about ways to make less trash or improve the way people handle the trash we make!

National registrations for Illinois teams closes on October 1. IL teams may continue to [register for IL Qualifying Tournaments](#) for the Trash Trek season until October 15.

Dates and locations for the IL qualifying tournaments are [posted](#). We have recently updated information for many qualifiers. If your team would like to change your top 3 tournament preferences, you may do so by going back

into the registration system and accessing the team edit page on the Coach Dashboard. We may be adding more qualifiers so please check the website regularly for any new tournaments. Teams will not be able to make changes to the qualifying tournament preferences after October 15. Teams will be notified of their tournament placement on or before October 31.

There will be a workshop at the Chicago Children's Museum at Navy Pier on Thursday, October 22, from 5:30pm to 7:00pm. Museum entry is free on Thursdays. Any teams who are struggling are welcome to bring their robots to the museum for assistance from the experts who will be on hand to help out.

We anticipate there will be a number of 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 events on our [website](#) as they become known to us along with information about how to register.

We wish all of you the best of luck with Trash Trek and look forward to another exciting season! Contact our Illinois FLL program partner, Diane Michalczuk, at contactflillinois@gmail.com.



FIRST[®] Tech Challenge



It looks like an exciting season with a very challenging game this year. The 2015-2016 game, Res-Q, consists of two @ 4'7" mountains to climb, debris field of balls and blocks to clear, plastic stick figures to rescue, and a hanging opportunity. Lots of scoring options and challenges to solve. Check out the [game video](#).

Northern Illinois League play organization is underway, too. We have a Northern league program and a Chicago league program. These may be in place by the time you receive this newsletter. But interested teams might still be able to register if they quickly complete a [google league form](#).

We also have regional tournaments scheduled throughout the state from Chicago to Carbondale. The [qualifier season](#) begins in Peoria on December 5, and ends with Decatur on February 6.

Teams need to make sure they practice Java programming and test their phones and its ability to communicate with the robot. Use the [Intelitek resources](#) to train yourself on programming. Read [Game Manuals Part I and Part II](#) and check out game updates on the [US FIRST FTC Game Forum](#).

Be sure to develop game strategy - have a goal for autonomous, tele-op and the end game. Let these decisions inform your design, building, and ultimately your programming.

Most of all enjoy the iterative process of engineering. Remember FTC has hundreds of solutions to the same problem. Contact our IL FTC program partners, Sue Kunzeman and Jonathan Weiland at FTC-contact@ILfirst.org.

FRC

FIRST® Robotics Competition



Most teams have already registered for their first regional event. Second event registration opens on October 22. There is a [full season calendar](#).

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

[IndyRAGE](#), an Indianapolis Robotics All Girls Event will take place on October 2-3 at Perry Meridian High School. This new off-season event has a negligible entry fee, and allows you to highlight the girls on your team, female mentors, and encourages female volunteers.

The [Gateway Robotics Challenge](#) will be held on Saturday, October 17, at Hazelwood Central High School in Florissant, MO. Teams that bring a pre-rookie team and robot will be given a 1/2 price discounted entry.



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.

ABBOTT GRANT FOR FTC AND FRC

The Abbott grant was just announced. Details [here](#).

SLINGSHOT SHOWING

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](#) will go on sale October 14.

NI DAYS

Our friends at National Instruments are holding their annual NIDays Chicago on October 15 at Navy Pier. NI is offering complimentary attendance to students of FIRST teams, but you will need to [preregister](#). Engineers and scientists will be at NIDays to discuss the latest technologies, best practices, and innovations.

NCWIT AWARD

Applications for the [NCWIT Award for Aspirations in Computing](#) are being accepted until October 26. Any H.S. young lady in grades 9-12 is eligible to apply if they meet specific criteria. Prizes include scholarship and internship opportunities, computing resources, swag, and \$500 cash.

FUNDRAISING TOOLKIT

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

MUSEUMS AND FALL STEM PROGRAMS

The [St. Louis Science Center](#) always offers free admission. They currently have a National Geographic movie on ROBOTS in their Omnimax theatre. Their First Friday events offer presentations, a planetarium show, and a sci-fi movie at 10pm ... all for free.

The [Robot Revolution](#) exhibit will be at the Museum of Science and Industry until January 3, 2016. MSI is hosting another [robot block party](#) October 10-12. Free admission days may be found [here](#) for MSI and other Chicago museums.

The [Discovery Center Museum](#) in Rockford will be hosting plastic fusing, soldering and minecraft classes. There's spooky science and catapulting of pumpkins too.

[Children's Discovery Museum](#) in Normal has a new adult Zombie Fest this year. There is an Innovation Station lab & maker space. They offer free science programs most Saturdays in October.

The [Discovery Center in Springfield](#) offers twice daily interactive demonstrations in their exploratory lab. They also offer an unpaid [internship program](#).

The [Chicago Children's Museum](#) at Navy Pier in Chicago has free nights every Thursday evening from 5:00 – 8:00 pm for all ages, and free first Sundays of each month for visitors 15 and under.

Northern Illinois University's annual [STEMfest](#) will take place on October 17. Some teams will be present for demonstrations, as we have done in the past several years. This is a fun opportunity for K-8 to enjoy a day of hands-on STEM activities.

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