

13 **FIRST** Championship Tournament (C)

At the 2026 *FIRST* Championship presented by BAE Systems, teams are split into 8 divisions. The process used to assign teams to their division is as follows:

1. Teams requesting accessible seating are split amongst the divisions.
2. Rookies are randomized and then assigned sequentially to divisions, skipping a division for each rookie assigned in Step 1 (i.e. a team in Division 1, a team in Division 2, a team in Division 3, a team in Division 4, a team in Division 5, a team in Division 6, a team in Division 7, a team in Division 8, then back to Division 1 again, until Rookies are all assigned to a division).
3. Step 2 is repeated with veteran teams, with additional assignments as necessary to balance the total teams in each division.

Each division plays a standard tournament as described in section [10.5 Qualification MATCHES](#) and section [10.6 Playoff MATCHES](#) to produce the division Champions. Those 8 division Champions proceed to the Championship Playoffs, on the Einstein FIELDS, to determine the 2026 *FIRST* Robotics Competition Championship Winners, per section [13.4 FIRST Championship Playoffs](#).

13.1 Advancement to the *FIRST* Championship

Details on how teams earn eligibility to attend the *FIRST* Championship can be found in section [11.5 FIRST Championship Eligibility](#) and section [12.2 FIRST Championship Eligibility](#). Teams that are pre-qualified can be found on the [FIRST Championship eligibility webpage](#).

13.2 4-ROBOT ALLIANCES

There is no provision for BACKUP TEAMS at the *FIRST* Championship.

Instead, before each division Playoff Tournament, ALLIANCES are selected per the process as described in section [10.6.1 ALLIANCE Selection Process](#), however the process continues with a third round of selection as follows.

Round 3: The same method is used for each ALLIANCE CAPTAIN'S third choice except the selection order is reversed again, with ALLIANCE 1 picking first and ALLIANCE 8 picking last. This process results in 8 ALLIANCES of 4 teams each.

ALLIANCES may start with any 3 of the 4 ROBOTS on their ALLIANCE during division Playoff MATCHES and during the Championship Playoffs. ALLIANCES submit LINEUPS for their MATCHES as described in section [10.6.4 LINEUPS](#).

13.3 FIRST Championship Pit Crews

FIRST distributes buttons to the ALLIANCE CAPTAINS during the ALLIANCE CAPTAIN meeting, which takes place on the division FIELDS. These buttons provide the necessary access to the ARENA for pit crew members.

C301 *Wear your buttons. Only team members wearing proper buttons are allowed on the ARENA floor during division and Playoff MATCHES.

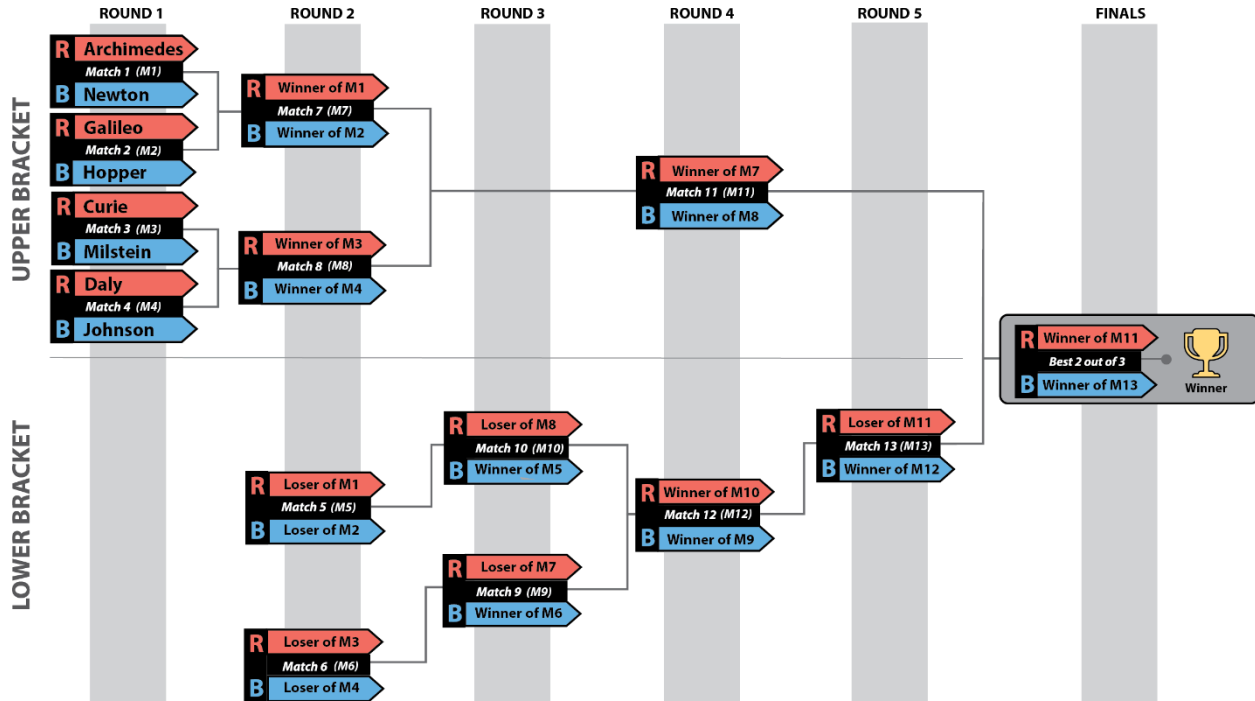
Violation: MATCH won't start until the situation is corrected. Those not displaying identification must leave the ARENA.

Teams should assume they may be chosen for an ALLIANCE and think about the logistics of button distribution and set a plan prior to the ALLIANCE selection process. It is each ALLIANCE CAPTAIN'S responsibility to distribute buttons to their pit crew members.

13.4 FIRST Championship Playoffs

The 8 division Champions play a Double Elimination style tournament as described in section [10.6 Playoff MATCHES](#) to determine the 2026 FIRST Robotics Competition Champions. Exact MATCH timing is provided to FIRST Championship Playoff teams. ALLIANCES are paired as shown in [Figure 13-1](#).

Figure 13-1 FIRST Championship playoff bracket



During the Einstein Finals, if the MATCH score of each ALLIANCE is equal, the MATCH is replayed. In this circumstance, the LINEUP may be changed.

