Emcee and Game Announcer Manual

Updated 10.1.19

Job Description

Physical/Technical Requirements:

- Technical – Low
- Physical – Medium
- Administrative – Low
- Communication – High

Time commitment:

- Pre-Event: Read through the Emcee/Game Announcer Manual and familiarization with the Game (Game Manual Part I and Part II) and teams participating in the event – Approximately 2-3 hours
- Event Day: Emcees/Game Announcers should expect she/he will spend 6-8 hours at a full day event. Commitment may vary by region or type of event.

Proper Dress:

- Wear comfortable shoes, most of the day will be spent standing and walking between the pit area and the competition fields.
- ANSI Z87.1 certified safety glasses are required in the competition area.

Volunteer Training and Certification

Volunteers must create an account on www.firstinspires.org and apply to the role. Upon application, training can be accessed from within the Dashboard. If you have applied for a role but have not received access to the training, please email FTCTrainingSupport@firstinspires.org. A separate confirmation of the role assignment will come at a later date. The Emcee or Game Announcer volunteer should speak to the Event Director or Affiliate Partner to determine if there are any additional requirements, such as meetings prior to the event.

Overview of Responsibilities

Game Announcer

The Game Announcer's role is vital to a successful event. Being informed, knowledgeable, and comfortable in your role will directly translate into a better event, and make the event more enjoyable for the teams and spectators. The Game Announcer's role is working with the Emcee to:

- Introduce teams.
- Provide play-by-play commentary to the teams and audience.
- Report the scores.

The Game Announcer should primarily speak only for team introductions, play-by-play commentary, and score announcement. The Game Announcer role is to be an audible *FIRST* Tech Challenge presence at an event.

Emcee

It is the Emcee's job to be a visual presence, to inform the audience, and to keep the event lively and moving forward. The Emcee must embody the spirit and professionalism of *FIRST* Tech Challenge, while being fun, energetic, creative and organized.

Game Announcer/Emcee – Working Together

The differentiation between the roles is critical to aid the audience on where to focus their attention. It is also crucial to work in harmony with the Emcee to create a support structure and avoid competitive/overlapping speaking.

To have a successful event, both positions require:

- A lively, animated vocal personality.
- Good public speaking skills.
- A pleasant-sounding voice.
- A desire to help the participants have the time of their lives.
- The ability to handle unanticipated situations.
- Lots of energy!

Pre-Event Day Responsibilities

Outlined below are Emcee/Game Announcer responsibilities have before event day. Make sure to check with the Tournament Director to see if they need help setting up before the event.

- Read the [Game Manual Part 2](#) and have a general understanding of the game rules, field elements, and scoring elements. The Emcee/Game Announcer must be familiar with the game to describe the action on the field to the teams and audience. The Emcee and Game Announcer do not need to learn the game rules.
- Watch the prerecorded Emcee and Game Announcer training video located in the learning management system.
- Read through the ceremony and alliance selection scripts to prepare for the flow on event day.
- If possible, the Emcee and Game Announcer should review the names of all participating teams and get acquainted with the game before arrival.

Event Day Responsibilities

- Arrive early to meet with the *FIRST* Tech Challenge Affiliate Partner or Tournament Director to discuss the day's agenda, list of speakers, final event details, and opening/closing ceremonies.
- Establish coordination between the Emcee and Game Announcer for team introduction protocol.
- Review the opening ceremonies script with the *FIRST* Tech Challenge Affiliate Partner or Tournament Director.
- The Emcee should review pronunciation of Judge and guest speaker names and titles.
- Introduce yourself to teams, Judges, and guest speakers.
- Game Announcers should double check that team names, team nicknames, robot names, sponsors, etc. are all correct. You can work with the check-in volunteers to confirm team information.
- Try to keep the drive teams at ease and the audience focused on the game play.
- The Emcee and Game Announcer should establish team introduction protocol with the Field Manager.
- When unexpected difficulties occur, it is the Emcee and Game Announcer's job to present to the audience an "under control" attitude and give the technical staff time to resolve the issue. For example, the Emcee and Game Announcer should discuss a backup plan if displays fail. In this instance, it will fall on the Game Announcer/Emcee to communicate scores and match numbers to the teams to maintain the flow of the event.

Opening Ceremonies

After the Affiliate Partner or Tournament Director has confirmed that all guest speakers and Judges are present, the show begins. The opening ceremonies script, which has been prepared by the Affiliate Partner/Tournament Director, is used by the Emcee, A/V crew, and Affiliate Partner to ensure synchronization. Work together with the Tournament Director and Technical Director – they are the "Directors" of the show.

Let the Games Begin!

During the qualification matches, after the Emcee introduces each team by number, the Game Announcer completes the introductions (full name on first intro only, short name thereafter); then the Emcee counts down "3, 2, 1, Go" to start the match. The Game Announcer provides play-by-play commentary and time remaining announcements. The Referees score the match and the Game Announcer announces the score as it is displayed by the A/V crew.

Make timed announcements at 1 minute played, 30 seconds remaining, 10 seconds remaining, and the countdown for the last 5 seconds. Additionally, work on getting a rhythm between the Game Announcer and the Emcee. Often the crowd noise is so loud that you cannot hear one another. Establishing a rhythm, such as making eye contact to connect, ensures that you don't talk at the same time.

Do's and Don'ts

Don't:

- Never direct strategy to the teams. Your job is to comment on the play, not to direct it.
- Do not interfere or attempt to influence the Referee rulings.
- Do not emphasize winning above all else.
- Do not play favorites or endlessly praise veteran teams over rookies (or other veterans).
- Do not scream or talk so fast that you cannot be understood. You have 6+ hours per day to maintain audience attention. Screaming unintelligibly is grating.
- Do not do "shout out's", "happy birthday" wishes, etc. to the audience. This is both unprofessional and opens the floodgates for endless birthday announcements.

Do:

- Make the teams feel welcome on the field and show interest in all the teams.
- Keep the audience engaged in what's going on.
- Speak slowly and clearly. Diction is very important.
- Use optimistic phrases to encourage poorly performing teams. Example: "Team 123 is trying to get something going", or "it looks like team 123 is having trouble getting their robot in gear, hopefully they can figure something out, there's still 1:30 remaining in the match."
- Make the descriptions as lively and interesting as possible (without making it sound like a death match!).
- Behave professionally.
- Be ready to begin each match as soon as the field is reset, and do not get distracted by personal business (phone calls, chatting, etc.).
- Use team names as often as possible rather than exclusively referring to the team number.
- Mention something about every team in every round.
- Pay attention to the movement of folks around the playing area to avoid collisions.
- Keep an eye on the schedule and adjust to stay on track.

Remember to keep the focus on the teams and the students. The teams and the audience want to be entertained by both the event and the match play. Use your personality to help make the teams and event shine!

Alliance Selection

The Emcee runs the alliance selection in the same area as the playing fields. The alliance selection consists of several rounds of selections so all alliance captains form elimination match alliances. These alliances participate in a ladder-type tournament to determine the tournament's winning alliance. The alliance selection is as follows:

- Each team chooses one student to act as the team's representative. These representatives will continue to the competition area at the appointed time to represent their teams in the alliance selection.
    - Teams can bring their scouting documents or communicate by phone with other teammates in the venue to aid them with their alliance choices. Teams must remember that if they are communicating with teammates by phone, they must be gracious and considerate and not hold up alliance selection.
- The top four ranked teams are called to the floor first. The student representative of the highest ranked team is asked to step forward as the alliance captain to invite another available team to join their alliance.
- A team is available if they are not already part of an alliance or has not already declined an alliance invitation. If a team accepts, they are moved into that alliance. **If a team declines, they CANNOT be invited to another alliance**, but are still available to select their own alliance if the opportunity arises. If a team declines, the alliance captain from the inviting team must extend an invitation to another team.
- The selection continues until all four alliance captains have been appointed and chosen one alliance partner.
- If there are more than 20 teams, the same method is used for each alliance captain's second choice. The third member of each alliance) from highest seed to lowest seed (that is, $1 \rightarrow 2 \rightarrow 3 \rightarrow 4$). Any teams remaining after the lowest seeded captain makes their choice do not compete in the elimination matches.

Closing and Awards Ceremonies

The closing and awards ceremony happens once the final matches are complete. The Emcee/Game Announcer should work with the Tournament Director and Judge Advisor to ensure everyone knows the flow of the ceremony. This is a very exciting time for the teams as they not only are awarded for their performance on the field, but the finalists and winners are announced for each of the judged awards.

When the awards are announced, it is customary to announce the finalists of each award (for example, 2nd and 3rd place Think Award), and then to announce the winner using a script written by the Judges. Make sure to tell the teams ahead of time that the 2nd and 3rd place award teams should remain seated, and that the winner of the award should come to the stage for the high five line and to accept their trophy/medal.

Performance Tips

- If everything sounds the same to the audience they will eventually tune out, so use vocal variety:
    - Vary your speaking style and volume throughout the event.
    - If your delivery is consistently too high energy, the audience may get anxious and will lose interest.
    - An energetic, varied delivery is interesting and inviting to an audience.
- Develop your own style; don't try to be someone you are not.
- Silence is okay. Let the action speak for itself sometimes. Constant announcing will cause the audience to tune you out. Remember, you must make all 50+ matches interesting.

Technical Tips

- Routinely check to make sure your headset is in the best position to pick up your voice and not riding too high or too low on your head.
- If using a handheld microphone, hold it close to your mouth and speak into it, not over it.
- Confirm that your microphone is off before speaking off-line.

Recap

- Be prepared.
- Stay on schedule; team intros are very fast-paced to keep the competition on schedule.
- Make the event as polished and professional as you can.
- Keep the teams at ease on the field and keep the focus on them.
- Remember that the playing field is only one piece of the event – decisions made there affect all other areas.
- Utilize the experience of the *FIRST* Tech Challenge Affiliate Partner and Technical Director.
- You are representing *FIRST.*

Appendix A – Resources

Game Forum Q&A

http://ftcforum.usfirst.org/forum.php

Anyone may view questions and answers within the *FIRST®* Tech Challenge Game Q&A forum without a password. To submit a new question, you must have a unique Q&A System User Name and Password for your team.

Volunteers that apply for a specific volunteer role will receive an email from FTCTrainingSupport@firstinspires.org with their username and password to the forum. You will receive access to the forum thread specific to your role.

FIRST Tech Challenge Game Manuals

Part 1 and 2 - https://www.firstinspires.org/resource-library/ftc/game-and-season-info

FIRST Headquarters Pre-Event Support

Phone: 603-666-3906
Mon – Fri
8:30am – 5:00pm
Email: Firsttechchallenge@firstinspires.org

FIRST Tech Challenge Event On-Call Support

*These numbers are available for event personnel only. Please **do not** call these numbers if you are a team looking for a ruling, a decision, or assistance. We trust that you will not misuse this resource.*

Day of Event Robot Control System Support: 603-206-2450
All other Day of Event support: 603-206-2412

FIRST Websites

FIRST homepage – www.firstinspires.org

FIRST Tech Challenge Page – For everything *FIRST* Tech Challenge.

FIRST Tech Challenge Volunteer Resources – To access public Volunteer Manuals.

FIRST Tech Challenge Event Schedule – Find *FIRST* Tech Challenge events in your area.

FIRST Tech Challenge Social Media

FIRST Tech Challenge Twitter Feed - If you are on Twitter, follow the *FIRST* Tech Challenge Twitter feed for news updates.

FIRST Tech Challenge Facebook page - If you are on Facebook, follow the *FIRST* Tech Challenge page for news updates.

FIRST Tech Challenge YouTube Channel – Contains training videos, Game animations, news clips, and more.

FIRST Tech Challenge Blog – Weekly articles for the *FIRST* Tech Challenge community, including Outstanding Volunteer Recognition!

FIRST Tech Challenge Team Email Blasts – contain the most recent *FIRST* Tech Challenge news for Teams.

Feedback

We strive to create support materials that are the best they can be. If you have feedback about this manual, please email firsttechchallenge@firstinspires.org. Thank you!