



Team Management: Scheduling By Asha Seshan

FLL Coach's Corner

I have been a coach for a FIRST LEGO League Team since 2011. My kids have graciously shared with thousands on EV3Lessons.com. For this upcoming FLL season, my team challenged me to share as well. I plan to share information about Team Scheduling, Running a Team Meeting, Organizing Fieldtrips, Team Budgets, Contest Day Prep, Team Resources, etc. Let me know if there is any topic you would like a coach perspective on. All opinions are my own and experiences do vary. But I hope that by sharing my 6 years of FLL fun, someone will benefit.

*“Team scheduling is
one of the hardest
tasks we face as a
coach”*

Team Management: Scheduling

One of the hardest parts of managing a large team is scheduling. The more kids/families you have, the more complicated it gets. When can everyone meet? When can they come to the fieldtrip? Here are my thoughts on what works for an FLL Team.

Try to **keep meetings to the same time each week** and let everyone know the time/date when they sign up to be on the team. This avoids confusion and allows kids to move their other activities around the robotics meetings at the start of the season. Letting parents know well in advance results in well attended meetings. We have found that kids who don't attend meetings regularly, are less engaged with the whole team and the program.

Create a Google Groups for your team. It's free and easy to set up. Just ask for all the email addresses of the kids. Google Groups allows teams to have an easy and free mailing list with no limits on the number of participants. You can set up a separate one for just the parents or a combined one for everyone together. My team used a list with just the kids to distribute “homework” and discuss and share resources they found for their research project. Even today, my team uses a Google Group to communicate with users of EV3Lessons.com.

Create and share a Google Calendar. It's also free. By using a group calendar, you eliminate confusions as to when and where the team is meeting. The students can indicate their availability. Such group communication tools will help your team keep organized.

Create a Google Form as needed. Collecting data from a large team can be a nuisance. What shirt size does each person need? Can they come to the fieldtrip on a Friday? Google Forms are free, easy, and have no limits on the number of questions you can ask. You can share the data with everyone as well. My team makes extensive use of Google Forms to collect survey data for their project, but also to collect information about teams coming to their outreach events and more.

As the students on the team get more experience and get older, the goal would be to have them manage these scheduling tools themselves. I realize this might be a challenge with 4th graders and kids who don't have email access. My own kids are very active online and manage their own lists. It seems that schools are using many of these online tools by Middle School so early exposure is not a bad thing. I do always recommend some adult supervision for online activity just in case.