

Start Where the Old Season Ended

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What do you do at the start of the season? If you are an experienced team, start with where you ended - last season!

Judges Evaluation. Have the students go over the judges' feedback. How did you do last season? Don't just look at what column was circled. Read the comments. We know that sometimes you don't get rubrics back and often there are no comments/no useful comments. Do your best with what you have. Perhaps you, as a coach, or a team parent could give the students additional feedback if the team didn't receive any. Ask the team these questions:

- 1) How can you implement judges' feedback into this season?
- 2) Did the judges understand what you were trying to say or do?

Self-Reflection. The most important step in improving as a team is being willing to admit that you need to improve. We began this season by asking our team to evaluate themselves. For each part of FIRST LEGO League (Robot Design, Project and Core Values), we asked them to honestly answer three questions:

One strength we have in core values is that we are a team. One weakness we have in this area is that whenever we have a problem, something I would do differently is sort out the problem on my own.
One strength we have in the robot game is that we are a team. One weakness we have in this area is that whenever it is time to play the game table. One thing I would do differently is to play the game table and see how they work out.

- 1) What did your team do well in this area?
- 2) What could your team improve on in this area?
- 3) What is something new you would like to try or learn in this area?

You can also ask these open-ended questions to help them come up with their responses:

What problems did you have? Do you want to learn any new programming techniques? Did you have time to do what you needed to do? Did you distribute the work between your teammates?

The answers to the three questions above can help the team focus on the next step - setting team goals.

Setting Goals. Every team is different and every team's goals should be different. For one team, outreach and spreading FIRST might be the most important goal. For another, completing all the missions on the table. For some, it might be to make it to States. For others, it might be to use pneumatics.

As part of setting goals, we had our team watch five robot runs and five project presentations from any previous years by other teams. You can find videos on YouTube. We had them compare themselves with the other teams. What did the other team do that you liked or you would like to learn more about? *The goal is not to copy the other team, but just for inspiration. This can be especially useful for a team that has not attended a post-season event. We do not recommend that you watch videos from the current season.*

Team	Total number of runs	Number of missions in each run	Alignment techniques	Unique Robot Features	Unique Attachment Features	Unique Strategy	Time in Base	Ease of adding attachments	Other things you noticed

We asked our team to think about what they would like to accomplish this season in each area of FIRST LEGO League. This was how we set team goals.

"For an experienced team, the season starts where the old one ended."