



FRC Judging & Awards 101

**Jenny Beatty-Nov. 5, 2011
Baltimore Area Alliance Workshop Day**

Jenny Beatty

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Former FIRST judge-FRC and FLL.

Former National Judge Advisor for the VEX Robotics Competitions and judge for eCybermissions for the Army and 4-H robotics.

Should I take notes?

- www.mdfirst.org

This presentation with all links will be posted on the mdfirst website under the BAA section.

Go for it!

This presentation contains hints for how to be a great Ambassador for your team and maybe even help win some awards.



Information in this slide show was gathered from best practices as published by FIRST representatives and at other workshops.

Chairman's Award information taken from call on Oct. 25 2011 led by National Judge Advisors for FIRST.

NOTE: Information about individual awards are subject to change for 2012-not yet updated by FRC.

The process of preparing for judging can help your team and in the bigger picture, help the students prepare for important tasks such as interviewing for internships, writing essays and interviewing for college. Learning the "elevator pitch" is a valuable experience.

Judges wear **blue** polo shirts.



They usually travel in pairs.

Most will be happy to add your flair. Feel free to hand them buttons, handouts and give-aways.

Leaving stuff on the judges' chairs may not be an effective delivery system. Better to hand to them in the pits.

Judging at the Regionals is hard work.



So help the Judges understand what your team is about. Tell YOUR story.
Each team runs like it's own little company.
Figure out which awards your team may be "competitive" for and go for it.
Target those awards and have a plan.



There are usually different teams of judges looking at different aspects of your team.

This may vary based on Regional but there are usually Technical Judges & Non-technical Judges.

If the judge says “tell me about how you designed the widget” they are judging technical awards.

If the judge asks “tell me about your business plan” they are judging non-technical awards.

Some awards, including the Entrepreneurship award, will be given out on Friday night. That means the judges need to interview and judge in a few short hours on Friday.



Try to always have a student available on Friday & on Saturday morning in the pit area. If there is no one in the pit (because the entire team is on the field, for example) post a sign saying when a representative will be back.

Judges work under a very tight time schedule.

If there is a minor crisis going on (something needs to be fixed fast), be polite and ask the judges if they can stop back after the next match.

If the judges want to ask technical questions, and your technical spokesperson is not in the pit, ask the judges if they can return in xx minutes and go get this person.

Judges will not expect that every member of the team know everything.

The **judges** will want to talk to the students.
They may engage the mentors/parents after
they talk to the students. The mentors/parents
need to hang back unless invited to join the
discussion.



Mentors/parents can be passionate about their involvement.
But the judges usually want to interview the students first.



Often the judges will only have 5 minutes to spend in the pit with the team.

Have the students jump in and “sell” the team. Learn to do the “Elevator Pitch”

Have the students practice their “elevator” speech: about *FIRST*, their role, the drive system, the control system, their community, their partners, their appreciation for engineering, why they designed something the way they did, their biggest challenge this year, their fundraising strategies.

Explain to the students that this is the same process used for college or job interviews.

This could be a great role to engage parents and mentors who want to help with the team.

Wait for the judges to ask the leading questions and then have the students answer in short answers, allowing time for the judges to ask follow-up questions. Have students learn how to introduce themselves and speak enthusiastically. They can be honest about the challenges, but even better if they can then talk about how they figured out how to overcome.

**The pits are LOUD. Have the students
practice speaking up.**



When a judge enters the pit, have the student stand up. Get rid of the gum.

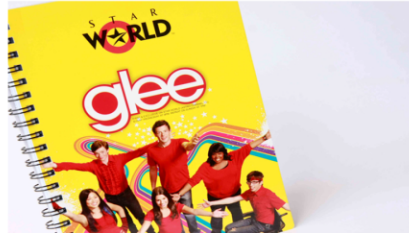
Eye contact.

Offer to shake hands (some judges may not want to). Bumped elbows during H1N1 season 2 years ago.

Smile.

Lots of students are shy. This is ok.

But if someone can practice with them before the event, this life skill will carry over to job and internship interviews.



- **Some teams prepare short handouts/brochures about their team for the judges to take away highlighting what the team is proud of.**
- **Some teams give the judges binders and scrapbooks, and other documentation to take back with them to the deliberation room.**

These highlights could include specifics about teamwork, technical or business. These handouts can also be used for recruiting sponsors and publicizing the team. This is especially true for the Chairman's Award presentations.

Binders and scrapbooks can be returned to your pit area on Saturday, often during the final Awards ceremony. Let the judges know. But remember that there always a slight risk these could get lost!

Did your team design something special to assist with community outreach-Tangible examples showing the scope of the effort?
If so-make sure the judges see an example.



**Judges will be observing your team
throughout the entire competition.**

There are field judges watching both performance and attitude on the field. What the team members say in the halls, stands, and restrooms will reflect back on the team. Judges may also ask the other volunteers, such as the referees, field crew and team queuers for their input.

“Gracious Professionalism” means all the time.

Works for both positive and negative feedback.

Rookies Awards:

Most judges will not have seen copies of the Chairman's Award entry, if your team submitted one on-line. Feel free to hand the judges a copy in the pits.



Judges may or may not use this for consideration for Rookie All-Star award.

Pay attention to the deadlines!



DO NOT WAIT until the last few hours before submitting. There have been many teams who missed out because of computer problems, uploading issues, etc. These are hard deadlines!

What do these dates have in common?



- 12/15/11
- 2/23/12 at 8pm



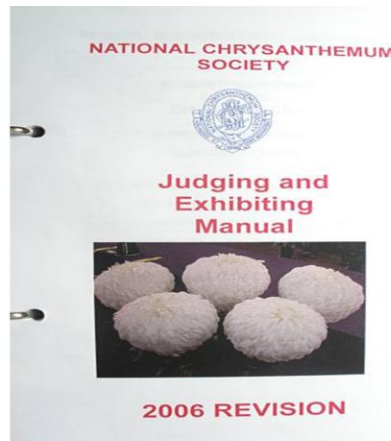
- 2/16/12 at noon



- 12/8/11 at noon
- TBA

DEADLINES NOTE: These are always subject to change!

1. All info downloaded for program books.
2. Team essays/robot pictures due for Judge's info book.
3. RCA, Dean's List, WFA, Website all due and downloaded
4. Safety animation due
5. Autodesk animation and 3D design due



**Read the Game Manual for the
description of all the Awards!**

2011-See Section 6 in the Manual for a description of all the awards.

Awards page on the FRC website:

<http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/awards>

Visit the Mentor Resources Library for links to resources:

<http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/content.aspx?id=14044>

Judging for the Entrepreneurship award will occur on Friday and teams must prepare an Executive Summary.

<http://www.usfirst.org/uploadedFiles/KPCB%20Entrepreneurship%20Criteria.pdf>

Make sure you have an example of your business plan to share with the judges on Friday. If your team does not have a documented business plan there are resources available from the Mentor Resources Library and the chiefdelphi forums.

Awards discussion on the chiefdelphi forums:

<http://www.chiefdelphi.com/forums/forumdisplay.php?f=158>

Section 6.2 (2011)

Team

*RCA * Engineering Inspiration *Coopertition *Entrepreneurship *Imagery
*GP *Industrial Safety *Spirit *Judges
*Rookie All-Star *Rookie Inspiration

Performance

*Winners *Finalists *Highest Rookie Seed

Technical

* Creativity *Engineering Excellence *Control *Quality *Industrial Design

Pre-Judged

*Excellence in Design-CAD *Animation *Website *Dean's List-Student
*WFFA-Mentor *Safety Animation

Team

RCA
Coopertition
Entrepreneurship
Imagery

EI
GP
Safety
Spirit
Rookie All-Star
Rookie Inspiration
Judges

Performance

Winners
Finalists
Highest Rookie Seed

Technical

Creativity
Engineering Excellence
Controls
Quality
Industrial Design

Pre-Judged

Excellence in Design-CAD
Website
Dean's List-Student
WFFA-Mentor

2012 Regional Chairman's Award



This information came from a call hosted by the National Judge Advisors in Oct. 2011
<http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/content.aspx?id=10124>

Interview and written submission are just 2 of the tools. The award is based on what the team is about.

Interview, written submission, team website, notes from previous year, fact checking all go into process. May have other judges ask questions. Will look at notes from previous years. RCA judges will arrive early on Friday and check out the pits and the robot.

NOTE: Doesn't matter where you submit. No hometown advantage.

- **Chairman's DVD -**
- **You MUST hand RCA judges a copy of your DVD when you enter the judging room or you will not be interviewed!**



You don't need to show the 3 minute DVD or use it in your presentation. You just need to hand it over to the judges. The team who earns the RCA will have their DVD shown at the closing ceremonies. No minors should be identified by name or location and music must be non-copyright or you must have permission.

Written submission



The Written submission gives you multiple opportunities to tell the story of your team. Use all areas of written submission for separate information. Don't repeat. This part of the jigsaw puzzle includes the Executive Summary, the Essay, and Photos or illustrations.

Have at least one other person read and edit your submission. Grammar? Spelling? Punctuation? Did you answer the questions honestly?

Do not say anything misleading and take credit for something that you did not do. Avoid embellishment. Answer the questions.

Executive Summary. Very important. Give your best first impression. Include team name and number. Did you do a good job answering the questions? Be concise. Emphasis on 2011-2012 and the prior two years.

- Share the impact FIRST has had on your community with the judges
- Demonstrate what you have done differently or improved on from last year to this year

Key criteria. Be specific. Avoid general statements.

Q1. Impact on team members. Must address this. Interest in STEM? College? GPA? Life skills?

Q2. Point out things you have done as role models. BE SPECIFIC. Mentoring, GP, volunteering,

Q3. Impact with results. Avoid general statements. Specifics on community outreach. FLL?

FTC? FRC mentors? Curriculum? Other programs? Other impact?

Q4. Innovate. Opportunity to shine. Looking for something new and way to distinguish your team. Numbers are good. Volunteering. Fundraising, Presentations, Workshops, Off-seasons.

Q5. Partnership. Look at all constituencies. YOU define who your partners are. Mentors?

Sponsors? Internships? Parents? Alumni? Other support?

Q6. Communications. Include all. Websites. Sponsor and mentor recognition. Newsletters,

**Pictures. Use pictures and CAPTIONS
to reinforce. Use effectively.**



Include photos as illustrations and be sure to write good captions.

Interview How to be prepared.



You can ask to look at room ahead of time on Thursday. Figure out where the power strip is.

Interview schedule: some Regionals will assign time and others let you sign up. Teams are not ranked if assigned!

Come at least 10 minutes early.

Practice your entire presentation before hand.

Practice setting up before you arrive at Regional and make sure you time the presenters. Practice! Practice!

Don't use drive team on interview team.



De-conflict with match schedule.

Interview



1. Enter room and quick introductions. Not on the clock.
2. Set-up and Presentation. 5 minutes. No template and no best formula. Best method matches your team's personality. Judges don't care if ppt, poster, skit, DVD and no extra credit for fancy graphics.
3. Q & A. 5 minutes. No typical question asked. Judges may ask something out of the blue and nothing to do with your presentation but something they want to follow-up on from another source.

Interviewing



Hints: Be enthusiastic. Practice answering questions ahead of time. Answer quickly and succinctly. Try to relax and be yourself. Tell your story the best way you can. Very important to cover the impact on community. Doesn't matter if many small events or one big one.

Also what have you done differently or improved on this year over previous years? Don't repeat what is already in your written submission. Elaborate or add to what you have already written.

Feedback forms can be picked up in pit admin after final ceremonies (sometimes are dropped off in pit).

Other written submissions

- Woodie Flowers Finalist Award (WFFA)
- Dean's List Award

Last year was the second time a mentor from Maryland won a WFFA.

A student rep from Team 768 who helped to write the submission is going to talk for a couple of minutes.

Also a mentor from Team 2534 will talk about the Dean's List Award.

New in 2012!

Winners will have their written submission posted on the usfirst.org site within a week of earning the award.

Be sure to say thanks!



Judges are taking time off from work to spend time at the Regionals because they are

genuinely interested in what the teams are doing and believe in what *FIRST* is doing

QUESTIONS?

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