Judge Recruitment

Thougtful and effective judge recruitment and training have tremendous potential to impact event day, possibly more than any other action within the organizer’s control. Experienced judges who return every year, know the event and understand FLL’s judging philosophy and process are able to contribute significantly to a smooth running and equitable deliberations process. They will most definitely make your life easier and the outcomes for the teams better.

Cultivating a strong judging team needs to be viewed as a long term investment. Upfront time to recruit a strong volunteer base is the key first step. Know that even small planning decisions can have a big quality impact, for example pairing experienced and novice judges on the schedule can create a great mentoring opportunity. Similarly, a thank you note to all judges after the event with a "save the date" card can reduce next year's recruiting needs.

Conflict of Interest

Teams should be judged based upon the information provided by them at the event, to you by the tournament organizer and by FLL. Personal opinions that are not based on these materials and the team’s performance should never be part of the judging process. To protect the integrity of the awards, FIRST requires that judges with any affiliation to a team advise other judges of the affiliation, refrain from commenting upon the team, abstain from voting for the team, and refrain from influencing the judges’ decisions on such team in any manner.

While it can be challenging to recruit the significant number of volunteers required to create a successful judge panel, it is important to remember to stretch outside of the immediate FLL community to minimize conflicts of interest. While careful scheduling can help address some concerns, it is often just the perception of a potential conflict that can cause a problem on event day.

Judge Assistant

Position Summary: Assists Judge Advisors and Head Judges throughout the event. Ensures judging sessions run smoothly and on time. Position manages team traffic before and after judging sessions. Responsible for keeping waiting teams quiet and ensuring teams are sent to correct judging rooms. Position serves as a role model for team members. The Judge Assistant is not a Judge, does not interview teams, or participate in awards recipient selection process.

Benefits of the Position:

- Opportunity to utilize and further develop interpersonal skills
- Interesting and varied responsibilities
- Opportunity to interact with Judges, Judge Advisors and Head Judges
- Networking opportunities
- Physically active role, involves standing for long periods of time

Activities and Responsibilities

- Participate in training opportunities
- Ensure that teams are ready to enter judging rooms on time, coordinating with the Pit Manager and Judge Queuers as needed
Assist Judge Advisor to keep judge panel on schedule; may run judging session timers for the judges

Ensure that teams leave judging rooms on time, and that the Judge Advisor is aware of any judging rooms that are not on schedule

Update judges on any schedule changes that occur throughout the day

Provide clerical assistance if needed, e.g. types awards scripts on laptop

**Experience and Skills Needed:**

- Outgoing personality; high energy
- Strong interpersonal/communication skills
- Strong writing skills
- Basic computer skills
- Strong organizational skills
- Ability to move about the facility

**Three Types of Judged Sessions**

**Core Values**

Core Values are central to FLL's mission and underlie all elements of our program. Throughout the tournament and particularly during scheduled sessions, Core Values judges will assess how well a team understands and integrates these values into their tournament experience and daily life.

**Project**

The FLL Challenge requires teams to demonstrate to the judges that all three required annual steps of the Project were completed: they identified a real-world problem, created an innovative solution and shared their findings with others.

Teams may perform a skit, a PowerPoint presentation, songs, or choose another creative way to share their Project and communicate their message. Projects must be presented "live", however, with audio/visual tools used only as an enhancement.

**Robot Design**

Robot Design is subjectively judged based upon the mechanical design and programming of each team’s robot built for the Robot Game portion of the Challenge. Interviews take place in a separate judging area, which must include an FLL Challenge table (or surface with borders) with a Field Setup Kit. Robot Design judging typically begins with a team interview initiated by the judges, although some events may choose to utilize the optional Robot Design Executive Summary format being piloted this year.

Robot Design judges should have a background in mechanical design and/or programming. Pairing judges with different technical backgrounds can be an effective way to ensure that judges have the required knowledge to choose the winners.

**FLL Deliberations and Awards**

Once all judging sessions are complete, FLL provides a range of awards to recognize and highlight what we believe matters most about the FLL experience. With the exception of the
score-based Robot Performance award, all judged awards are determined using a discussion-based ranking process referred to as FLL Deliberations.

Led by the Judge Advisor, FLL Deliberations rely on an in-depth, qualitative review of all teams eligible for awards. Utilizing observations and evaluations captured by the Rubrics as one form of input, judges consider any and all additional team information gathered through call-backs, and informal observations from judges, referees and others. Team achievements are reviewed and contrasted as the judges engage in an often intense discussion to determine which teams will be recognized with awards.