

# FIRST Robotics Kickoff

## Preparing For and Attending

### **Overview:**

The official start of the FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC) design and build season starts every season with a kickoff broadcast which includes the release of the new game and generally takes place the first or second Saturday in January. This is a very exciting time for teams as most have been waiting all fall to start designing and building their robots for competition. There are several options to participate, with your team, in the kickoff which will be discussed further below.

### **Kickoff Options:**

As previously mention there are several options for teams to participate in the FRC Kickoff, which are to attend the NASA televised kickoff in Manchester, NH, attend one of the numerous local kickoff sites around the country or plan your own local gathering to watch the kickoff.

### **Kickoff in Manchester:**

*Where* – Southern New Hampshire University, Manchester, New Hampshire

*Who Can Attend* – Attendance varies from year to year but is generally limited to 10 team members including mentors. In addition there is a Founder's Reception for adult mentors which is limited to three.

*What to Expect* – Meet other teams from around the country, share ideas, view the kickoff broadcast live, interact with the game field and components, pick up your Kit of Parts (with no charge for shipping to the teams), attend workshops and be inspired.

*How to Participate* – Teams must register to attend this event in their teams TIMS webpage by selecting 'Yes' in the 'Attending Manchester, NH Kickoff' option. Additionally you will need to supply names of all who will be attending.

### **Official Local Kickoff Site:**

*Where* – Various cities around the country and world host official local kickoffs. Currently there are 75 of these local kickoffs so chances are there is one close by your team. A full list of local kickoff can be found on the FIRST website under 'Events' and 'Local Kickoff Information'.

*Who Can Attend* – These events are generally open to all team members, mentors, sponsor and parents. Depending on the site, attendance can be limited to as few as two or as many as thirty. When you select a local kickoff site with your team's TIMS account it will list the maximum number of team member that can attend. You also have the option to have part of your team attend the kickoff in Manchester and another part attend a local kickoff.

*What to Expect* – Meet other local teams, sharing of ideas and strategies, potential connection with mentoring teams, screening of the official kickoff broadcast through NASA TV and Kit of Parts pickup (with no charge for shipping to the teams). Additionally many local kickoff sites offer workshops and will have part or all of the new field build for viewing and interaction.

*How to Participate* – Teams need to sign up to attend an official local kickoff prior to FIRST event registration payment due date, which is usually in early December. The exact date can be found under the 'Season Calendar' tab on the FIRST website.

**Unofficial Kickoff Viewing:**

*Where* – These sites can vary from a team member or mentors house to a school to a local community center or business. Sometimes the closest official kickoff sites have a small limit on the number of allowed attendees so teams will organize a location for their team (and potentially others) to gather to watch the kickoff broadcast together.

*What to Expect* – Excitement of gathering team members together, viewing of the kickoff broadcast (providing the host has made arrangements to be able to view NASA TV).

*How to Participate* – As these are not official FIRST events teams will need to make their own arrangements to plan, organize and attend these events. If your team is planning to attend an unofficial kickoff they will need to make arrangements to receive their Kit of Parts from FIRST. One option is to have it shipped directly to your school. If you choose this option your team will have to pay for shipping of the very heavy Kit of Parts. Another option is to send a few members to an official kickoff site to pick up your Kit of Parts in which case FIRST covers the shipping cost. You must indicate in your team's TIMS account which one of these options you would like to use to insure you get your team gets its Kit of Parts.

**Preparing for Kickoff:**

There are several items that need to happen prior to kickoff. The first is to register your team for one of the above mentioned options (with the exception of the unofficial kickoffs) in your team's TIMS account prior to first event registration fee due date. Additionally you will need to select where you would like your Kit of Parts sent. As previously mention this can be to an official kickoff site (free of shipping charges) or directly to your school (shipping cost must be covered by the team). If your team is planning to attend the kickoff in Manchester or an official kickoff you will need to have FIRST Consent and Release forms completed for each person attending, as there are often pictures and video being captured at these events. There are two options to complete this form for team members. The first is to use the Student Team Member Information System (STIMS), where students can sign up as part of a team and their parents can agree to the consent and release terms online. The STIMS site can be found at <https://my.usfirst.org/stims> . The second option is to print out a hard copy of the consent and release for and have the student and parents complete it.

**What to Bring to the Manchester or Local Kickoff:**

The most important item to bring to either of these kickoff options is your team's Consent and Release forms as any person that does not have one will not be allowed into the event. If you had your team members complete their consent and release form through STIMS then you will need to print out a roster and bring it with you for check in. If you used the paper forms then you will need to bring all of the filled out and signed consent forms with you for check in. As a reminder everyone that is attending a kickoff with your team must turn in a signed consent and release form, at check in, in order to be allowed in. Your team may have a combination of electronic and papers forms. For further explanation on STIMS please click on the link below. In addition to consent and release forms for your team it is advised that you bring a cart or dolly to transport your team's Kit of Parts to your vehicle. As previously mention these Kit of Parts are heavy and usually include two large plastic totes as well as a couple cardboard boxes.

You may also want to bring note pads and tape measures to take notes and measure the field components and game pieces. It is also great to show your team spirit at these events by wearing team gear. Lastly have fun and enjoy the excitement of the kickoff of the design and build season.

Important Registration Information – STIMS, FRC TMS (add link to FIRST .pdf found at [http://www.usfirst.org/sites/default/files/uploadedFiles/Robotics\\_Programs/FRC/Game\\_and\\_Season\\_Info/2012\\_Assets/Important\\_Registration\\_Information\\_STIMS\\_FRC\\_and\\_FTC\\_Team\\_Roster.pdf](http://www.usfirst.org/sites/default/files/uploadedFiles/Robotics_Programs/FRC/Game_and_Season_Info/2012_Assets/Important_Registration_Information_STIMS_FRC_and_FTC_Team_Roster.pdf))

FIRST Consent and Release Paper Form (add link to .pdf at [http://www.usfirst.org/sites/default/files/uploadedFiles/Robotics\\_Programs/2011\\_2012\\_Consent\\_and\\_Release\\_Agreement.pdf](http://www.usfirst.org/sites/default/files/uploadedFiles/Robotics_Programs/2011_2012_Consent_and_Release_Agreement.pdf))