



Judging at the Regionals

What to expect when talking to the judges in the pits

- Judges wear blue polo shirts. There are usually different teams of judges looking at different aspects of your team. They may return more than once on Friday/Saturday. If one of the technical judging teams comes around, and the person in the pit is not experienced at explaining the robot, ask the judges if they can return in 5 minutes and find the person who is good at explaining. Judges will not expect everyone to know everything, so the team might have designated people to talk about the specific judging areas.
- Try to always have someone available on Friday/Saturday in the pit area. If there is no one in the pit (because the 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. They might try to find the drive team in the queuing line, but don't depend on it.
- 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.
- The pits are loud. There will be music and machine noises. Students need to speak up, and there may only be enough room to have 2 students interviewed by 2 judges at a time.
- First impressions count. How your pit looks does matter.
- Some judging teams will place a sticker on the pit number sign indicating they have visited, or may just make notes to take back to the deliberation room.
- 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. 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.
- Some teams prepare short handouts/brochures about their team for the judges to take away, highlighting what the team does well. These highlights could include specifics about teamwork, technical or business. These handouts can also be used for recruiting sponsors and publicizing the team.

- Some teams give the judges binders and scrapbooks, and other documentation to take back with them to the deliberation room. This is especially true for the Chairman's Award presentations. These items can be returned to your pit area on Saturday, often during the final Awards ceremony. Let the judges know.
- Judges will be observing your team throughout the competition. There are field judges watching both performance and attitude on the field. What the team members say in the halls, stands, and bathrooms will reflect back on the team. Judges may also ask the other volunteers, such as the referees and field crew for their input. "Gracious Professionalism" means all the time.
- 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.

Where to find information

- 2010-See Section 5 in the Manual for a description of all the awards.
<http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/content.aspx?id=452>
- Awards page on the FRC website:
<http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/content.aspx?id=440>
- 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>

Remember

- 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. There are judges who return each year and look forward to participating. Be sure to thank them.
- Being a judge is hard work, and there are many difficult decisions to be made in a short amount of time. There are many more deserving teams than awards given. Regardless of which teams take home a trophy be proud of what the team has accomplished.

Good luck and have fun!