

FIRST®

CANOPY™

The background of the slide is a dark teal color with a faint, light-colored topographic map pattern. The map features various contour lines, a winding river or path, and some rectangular shapes that could represent buildings or fields.

FIRSTWA FTC Coaches Meeting

August 18th, 2026

Agenda

- Kickoff Registration
- Season Registration
- 2026 - 2027 Season Calendar Updates
- Competition Manual Preview
- Control System Updates

Kickoff Registration

- FTC Kickoff is September 12th
- We have 5 kickoff events around the state. Make sure you register!
 - Bellevue
 - Kennewick
 - Lacey
 - Liberty Lake
 - Woodinville
- For more information about each event and the registration form, see our website: <https://firstwa.org/event/ftc-kickoff/>

Season Registration

Remember to register with FIRST HQ and FIRSTWA

FIRST HQ Registration

- Log in at <https://my.firstinspires.org/Dashboard/>
- Cost is **\$350** paid through the FIRST Storefront
- More information available at <https://www.firstinspires.org/robotics/ftc/cost-and-registration>

Note: FIRST updated the dashboard this year and is working through some growing pains. Please don't delay going through this!

FIRSTWA Registration

- Fill out the FIRST Washington Registration Form
 - Much shorter than previous years, please fill out as soon as you can so we have accurate numbers for planning
- Registration cost is \$925/team
- FIRST WA Grant Application opening ~early September
 - Will be need-based, no guarantee of funding for applying
- More information and link available at <https://firstwa.org/ftc-registration/>

Registration Deadlines

- Deadline for registration is **Friday, September 25th**
- All teams who register with either FIRST or FIRSTWA will be assigned to a league
 - FIRST Registration requires payment to be secured
 - FIRST Washington Registration does not require immediate payment. Invoices will be sent in early October
- A team's league assignment will not be published until they have registered with both FIRST and FIRSTWA

2026 - 2027 Season Calendar Updates

Several changes from what was presented in May

26-27 Season Calendar: What we Shared Previously in May

- Working with venues and event hosts to secure venues and dates
- No major changes planned
- We'll get back to you as things are finalized

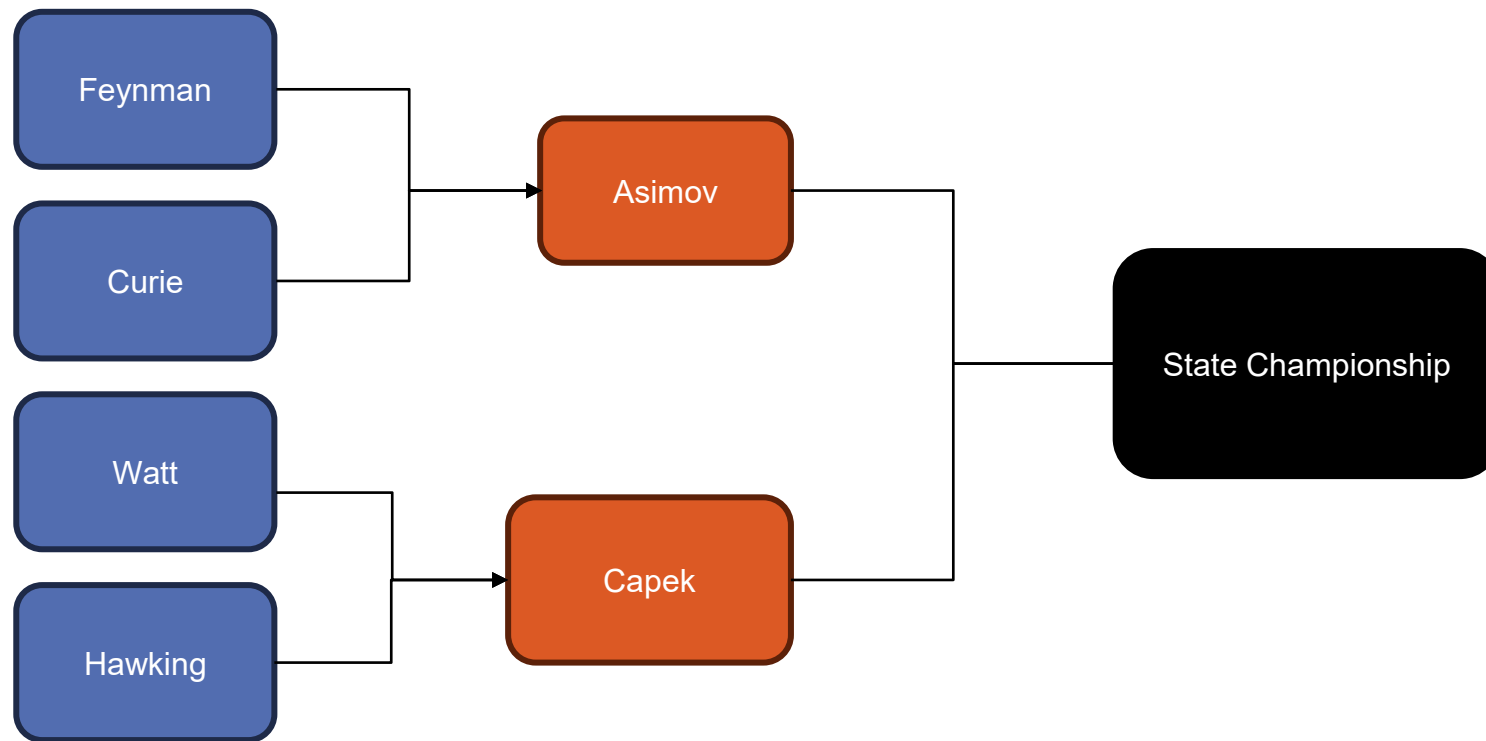
26-27 Season Calendar: What Has Changed Since May

- FIRST would like regions to work on reducing how many events a team needs to attend
 - Specifically looking at Super Qualifiers adding another layer to an already busy season for many regions
 - FIRST is adding a new event type that helps solve this, and also resolves some of our advancement awkwardness
- Venue availability was a bigger issue than anticipated
 - Specifically, the FIRSTWA State Championships at Amazon

Event Structure Changes

- For the last couple of years, Washington teams have advanced from League Tournaments -> Super Qualifiers -> State
- Problems we've observed/heard about
 - Increased event load on teams
 - Large advancement percentage from the SQ events
 - Inequality (perceived or actual) in difficulty between the SQ events

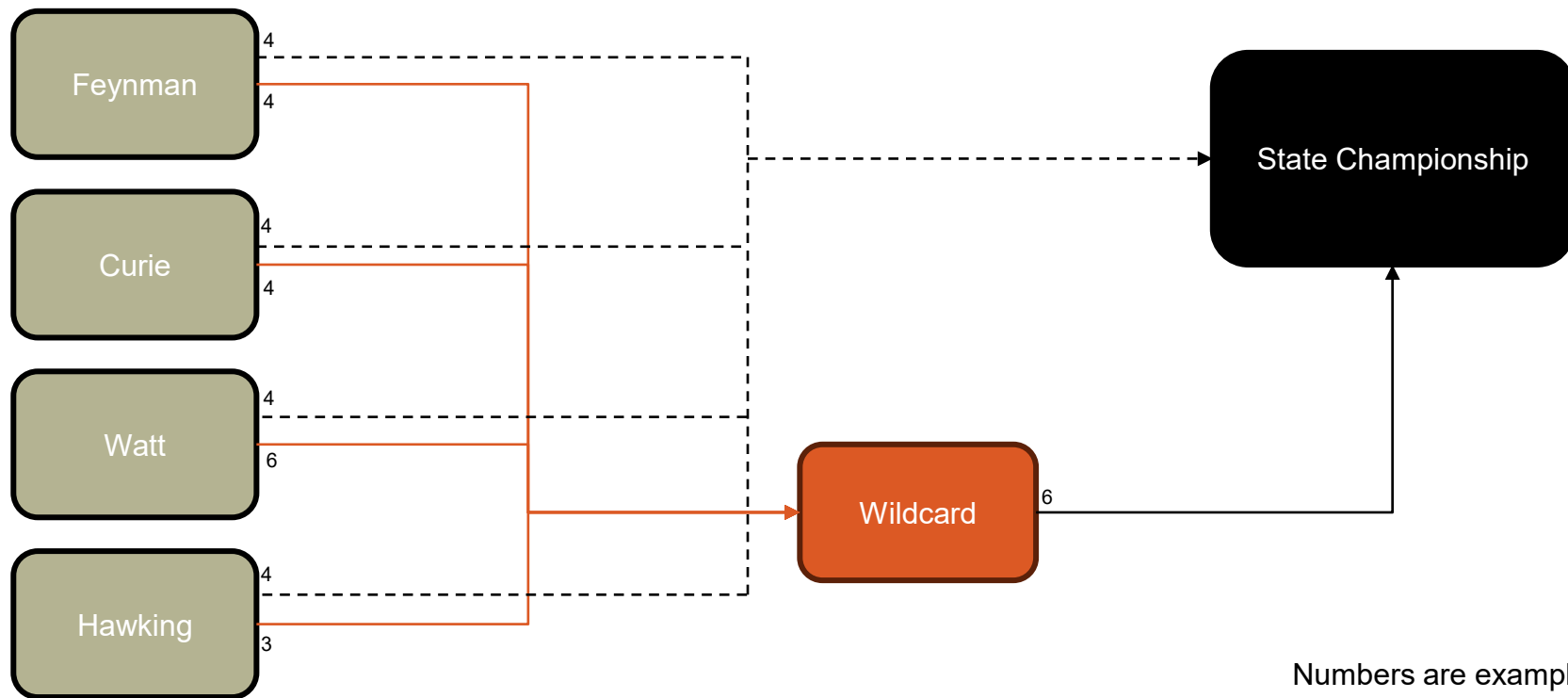
Existing Event Structure



New Event Structure: Wildcard Tournament

- League Tournaments will have two sets of advancement
 - First X teams in advancement will move on to State
 - Next Y teams in advancement will move on to Wildcard Tournament
- Wildcard Tournament runs similar to Super Qualifiers
 - No pre-existing rankings
 - Single-day event with judging, qualifications, playoffs
 - Teams advance from Wildcard to State

New Event Structure: Wildcard Tournament



Scheduling Challenges at Amazon Meeting Center

- After meeting with Amazon there were two weekends available
 - January 23rd - 24th
 - Too early for FLL, tight timeline for FTC
 - March 13th - 14th
 - Middle of FRC season, limiting available resources

Final Decision after Meeting With Amazon

- FLL Western Washington State Championship will be hosted at a different venue, date TBD
- FTC Washington State Championship will be hosted on the earlier weekend, January 23rd-24th.
- This allows us to expand FTC State for the 26-27 season
 - State will be a two-day event
 - Increased team count (final numbers TBD)
 - Improves advancement experience from State -> Worlds/Premier

2026 - 2027 Updated Season Calendar

- September 12th: FTC Kickoff
- September 25th: FIRSTWA Registration Deadline
- October 2nd: Final League Assignments Posted
 - Note: Shorter time window for event preferencing
 - Home League Assignments and Event Preferencing are before this
- October 24th - November 22nd: League Meets

2026 - 2027 Updated Season Calendar

- December 5th - December 20th: League Tournaments
- December 15th: FIRST Leadership Award Submissions Due
- Early-Mid January: FIRST Leadership Award Interviews
- January 16th: Wildcard Tournament (Maple Valley)
- January 23rd - 24th: State Championship (Seattle, Amazon Meeting Center)
- April 28th - May 1st: FIRST Championship

Group Poll: Interest in WA States Hotel Block

- This is NOT a commitment to having one, but we are exploring potential options
- If your team advanced to State (from LT or Wildcard), would you be interested in a hotel block with the following goals
 - Within 3-4 blocks of the venue
 - <\$150/night/room
 - <\$30/night parking
 - Chaperones booked on the same floor as students

Competition Manual Preview

<https://community.firstinspires.org/biobuzz-cm-preview-release>

Summary of Changes

- Section 3: Inspection
 - Simplified several rules
- Section 6: Awards
 - Expanded the allowable formats for the Initial Interview at events
- Section 12: Robot Construction Rules
 - Simplified rules
 - Updated some rules to align with Section 1 additions
 - Reduced number of allowed servos to 8
 - Removed the rule restricting what gamepads are allowed
- Section 1: The Spirit of the Competition
 - New approach to how the rules are written and how the game is designed
 - Includes a new concept, the Competition Integrity Contract (Section 1.5)

Section 6: Awards

- Formalized the judging format used at Championship last year as an option for events
- Initial Interview (formerly Structured Interview) can use one of 3 formats
 - Scheduled in-person (standard format)
 - Unscheduled in-person (pit interviews)
 - Remote (online interview done prior to the event)

Section 1.4: The Spirit of the Competition

- It's hard to create a manual that works for the lowest and highest levels of play simultaneously, especially as that gets even higher
 - If you write a basic manual targeted at those learning to play, there are a lot of potential loopholes or corner cases at higher levels
 - If you write an in-depth manual to close every possible corner case, you ask a lot more of every volunteer and team trying to learn the game
- *"There are no perfect solutions, only tradeoffs. Only compromise. We must choose the tradeoffs we believe provide the best balance of outcomes."*
- 26-27 Season reflects a deliberate change in how the game is design and how the Competition Manual is written

Section 1.4: The Spirit of the Competition

- BIOBUZZ manual will emphasize the “spirit of the rule” in how it’s written
- *“The rules are designed to allow volunteers to watch for larger behaviors and strategies that run counter to the spirit of the competition, rather than be required to watch for and record every action or incident that occurs”*
- The goal is to make it easier for teams and volunteers to understand the intent behind the rules

Section 1.4: The Spirit of the Competition

- What this means
 - Referees have more latitude to make judgement calls
 - Is the team attempting to break the intent of the rule without breaking the letter of the rule?
 - Or is the driver struggling to drive because it's League Meet 1, the robot was finished 20 minutes ago, and spherical game elements rolling out of an arbitrary zone is hard to prevent

Section 1.4: The Spirit of the Competition

- What this doesn't mean
 - Referees will get to make up the rules on their own
 - Referees will get to call penalties on things they don't like but there is no rule about
 - Defense will be made illegal because it's not in the "spirit of the rules"
 - Unless there's a rule that says "No defense"

Section 1.5: Competition Integrity Contract (CIC)

- Please go through this section with your team
- *“The CIC is divided up into two categories: Sporting Ethics Code, which all teams must follow to protect the integrity of the competition, and Behavior Guidelines, which help teams act in a way that embodies Gracious Professionalism and ensures that every team can: Have Fun, Make Friends, and Chase Excellence.”*

Section 1.5: CIC Sporting Ethics Code

- Following this means following a handful of principles
 - We Don't Cheat.
 - We Always Behave with Integrity.
 - We Play the Game as Intended.
 - We Know Our Team Doesn't Enforce the Rules.
- Main message: Don't cheat, don't try to play against the manual, don't exploit the game

1.5: CIC Behavior Guidelines

- We Focus on Journey, Before Destination.
- We Behave with Respect and Good Sportsmanship.
- We Help Each Other.
- We 'Take the High Road.'
- We Respect Property and Facilities.
- We Build a Positive Culture of Safety.
- We Make Healthy Choices.
- We're All on the Same Team.

Control System Updates

Looking ahead to the 2027 - 2028 Season and Beyond

New Control System Overview

- No changes in legal control system components for FTC 26-27
- Starting in 27-28, there are new components being introduced as an option
 - SystemCore
 - Also being used for FRC
 - Serves as the primary “robot brain”
 - MotionCore
 - FTC exclusive
 - Used to control A301 actuator
 - A301
 - New brushless motor/servo
 - Only legal actuator for the new control system
- Existing Control System components are legal for use through at least the 30-31 season

Configuration 1: Old Control System



Configuration 2: New Control System



New
Driver
Station
Device



Configuration 3: Hybrid System



New
Driver
Station
Device



Updates from Summer 2026: Sales Dates

- SystemCore is expected to go on sale Fall-early Winter 2026
 - May or may not be restricted to FRC
- MotionCore and A301 expected for sale in Spring 2027
- The “New Driver Station Device” is not expected to be available for the 2027-2028 season
 - Rev Driver Hub will still be a legal/supported option
- Pricing information not yet available

Updates from Summer 2026: A301 Motors

- MotionCore is capable of driving up to 20 A301 motors
- Do not assume that means teams will be allowed to use 20 A301 motors

Updates from Summer 2026: Batteries

- New Control System leverages 18V Tool Battery
- Test units are currently using Milwaukee M18 batteries. Final decisions have not been made on the full allowlist of brands.
- While the system is running on an 18V battery, A301 motors operate as 12V actuators
 - Consistent performance curve across the expected range of battery voltages
- Expectation is that teams will need fewer batteries, as you will likely be able to run multiple matches on a single charge

Questions / Comments / Concerns

Please send emails to

ftc@firstwa.org, not to individuals