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BIOCORE[™]

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ADVANCE SCIENCE EDUCATION

2026 / 2027 SEASON

SoCal *FIRST* Tech Challenge Kickoff and Welcome! 2026



Theresa Klemme, Bob Meinhard
SoCal FTC Program Delivery Partners

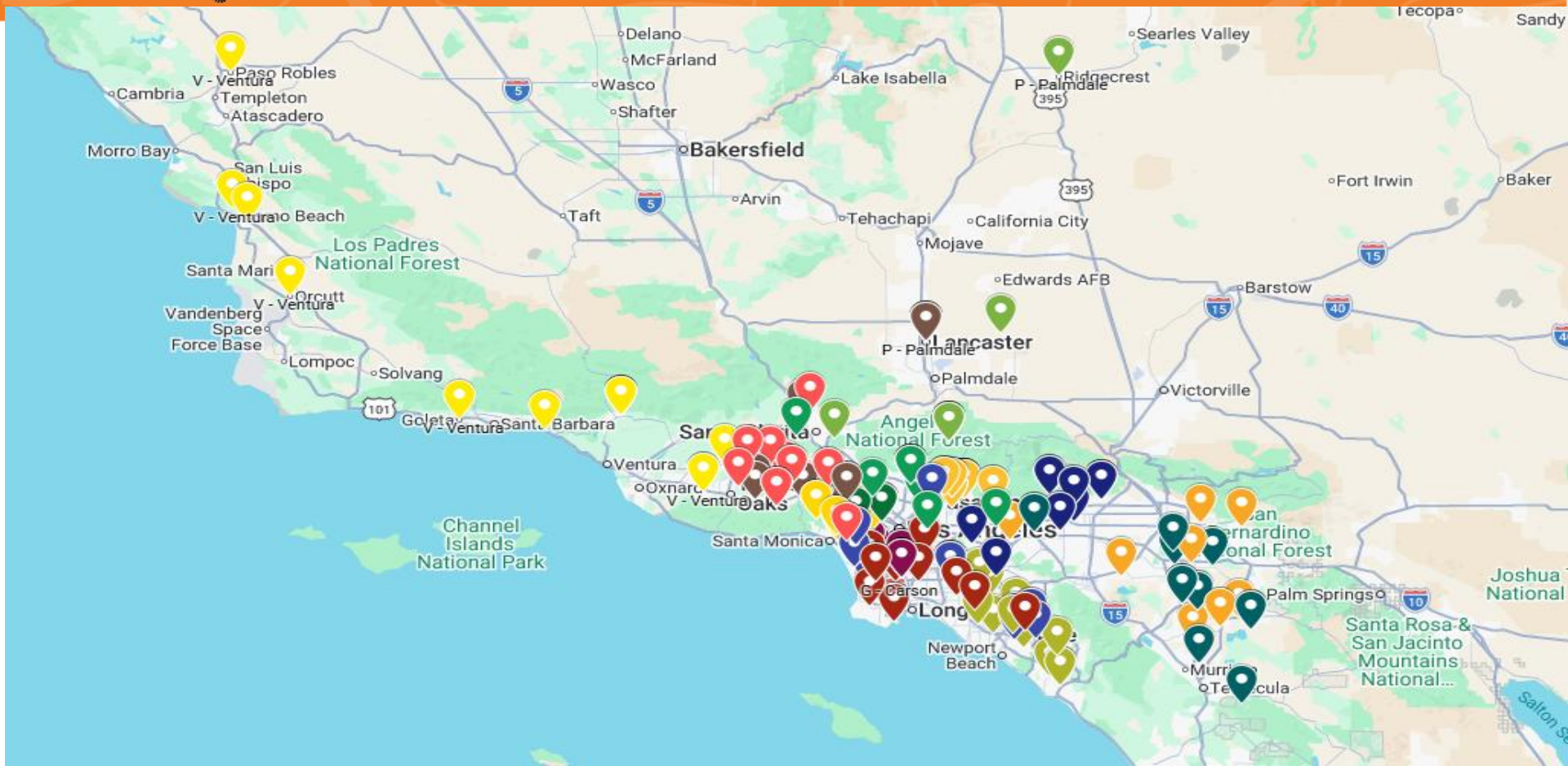
Welcome to SoCal FTC!

*In-person Game Play
15 Leagues with 4 Scrimmages each
8 Qualifiers Tournaments (1 per team)
A WILDCARD Tournament
and a SoCal Championship Event*

We encompass 8 Counties in SoCal. 300 miles from San Luis Obispo to San Juan Capistrano, and 100 miles from Santa Monica to Palm Springs! 95+ schools, 30+ community groups!

- 2024-25: 206 teams, 45 were Rookies (21%)
- 2025-26: 219 teams, 36 were rookies (16%)
- **2026-27 154 teams started to register (40 Rookies), expect 250 teams!**

new email: socalftcinfo@gmail.com



Grant Opportunities check <https://socalftc.org/grants/#page-content>

FIRST HQ Sibling Grant if your school is adding a second team, HQ registration is reduced to \$175.00. Contact Michele at MSchneider@firstinspires.org

Panasonic Foundation is again awarding \$300 grants to 40 SoCal FTC Teams. Applications are open **NOW** through Thursday, **October 8, 2026**. Questions should be directed to socalftcinfo@gmail.com

2025-2026 FIRST® Tech Challenge Hardship Grant (North America) The funds can only be used for FIRST Tech Challenge season registration and products in the FIRST Tech Challenge Storefront. Application link on grant page. **Closes September 30**



Panasonic



Agenda

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 08:30 am | La Cañada USD School Board Welcome |
| 08:40 am | Season Overview <i>Theresa Klemme and Bob Meinhard,</i>
<i>FIRST Program Delivery Partners for SoCal FTC</i> |
| 09:00 am | Game Reveal Video |
| 09:30 am | Field Open (until 12pm for teams to look and see) |
| 09:45 -10:30 am | Workshop Session #1 |
| 10:30 -10:45 am | Break /Transition |
| 10:45 -11:30 am | Workshop Session #2 |
| 11:30am | End |

Our Planning Committee (Thank you!!)

- **Theresa Klemme** – Co-*FIRST* Program Delivery Partner, Event Director
- **Bob Meinhard** – Co-*FIRST* Program Delivery Partner, Purchasing Lead
- **Amanda Sullivan** – Kickoff Coordinator, Discord Administrator
- **Abigail Rehard** – Team Registration Lead, Webmaster, Administrative Assistant
- **Brian Bugert Sr** – Technical Director
- **Corey Porter** – Regional Judge Advisor
- **Devi Bhatti** – Event Food Coordinator
- **Eddie Shek** – *FIRST* Leadership Award Coordinator
- **Ellen McIsaac** – Regional Judge Advisor, SoCal Youth Robotics Board Member
- **Erin Rehard** – POD Day Coordinator
- **Ian Johnson** - Co-Head Referee
- **Nathan MacPherson** – Co-Head Referee
- **Patrick Brophy** – SoCal Youth Robotics Board Secretary
- **Rachel Johnson** - Regional Head Judge Advisor, Equipment Manager
- **Stacey MacPherson** – Lead Volunteer Coordinator, Field Manager
- **Sung Choi** – Mentor Support Lead
- **Kat Regencia** – Social Media Coordinator
- **Tom Dobson** – Head Robot Inspector



Theresa Klemme



Bob Meinhard



Amanda Sullivan



Abigail Rehard



Brian Bugert



Patrick Brophy



Stacey MacPherson



Ellen McIsaac



Ian Johnson



Rachel Johnson



Sung Choi



Nathan MacPherson



Eddie Shek



Tom Dobson

Breakout Sessions

Presenter	Title	Room	Session
Curiosity	Impactful Initiatives: The 4 Cs of Community Outreach	608	S1, S2
Marlbots	Computer-Aided-Design (CAD) & Your Team; How to create a winning robot backed by CAD	609	S1, S2
Corey Porter	"You Be the Judge"	Main Gym	S1 (Main)
Nathan MacPherson	Ask a Ref: Rules Explained	Main Gym	S2 (Main)
Theresa K	Tournament Structure and Season Overview	605	S1, S2
Sung Choi	FTC Coaching & Mentoring	603	S1, S2
Axle-otls	Building Industry Connections & Organizing an Outreach Event	115	S1, S2
techATTACK	Hands-on Block Programming for Beginners and Rookie Teams	115A	S1, S2
FTC 49 Seven Squared	Design for Manufacturing and Assembly (DFMA)	607	S1
FTC 49 Seven Squared	Programming Troubleshooting Workshop	607	S2
51 NerdHerd Singularity	Integrating a Top-Down Design Workflow; Masterketches + Crayola CAD	711	S1, S2
Brainstormz	Planning a Successful Season: Tips, Tricks, and Brainstormz's Methods and What's Worked for Us	713	S1
Brainstormz	An Intro to Neuron Pathing: Brainstormz Custom Path Planning and How You Can Use It	713	S2



Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81851232098?pwd=9qsPqenF76Pjdsr8YArMKIRIVzKopi.1>

Passcode: 217045

SoCal FTC Season Structure

Scrimmage League Play:



- 4 Scrimmages, 5 matches per Scrimmage, half days Saturdays or Sundays from Oct 24 to Jan 16
- Team must be fully paid (both FIRST and SoCal FTC) to play

Qualifier Tournament (QT) Play:



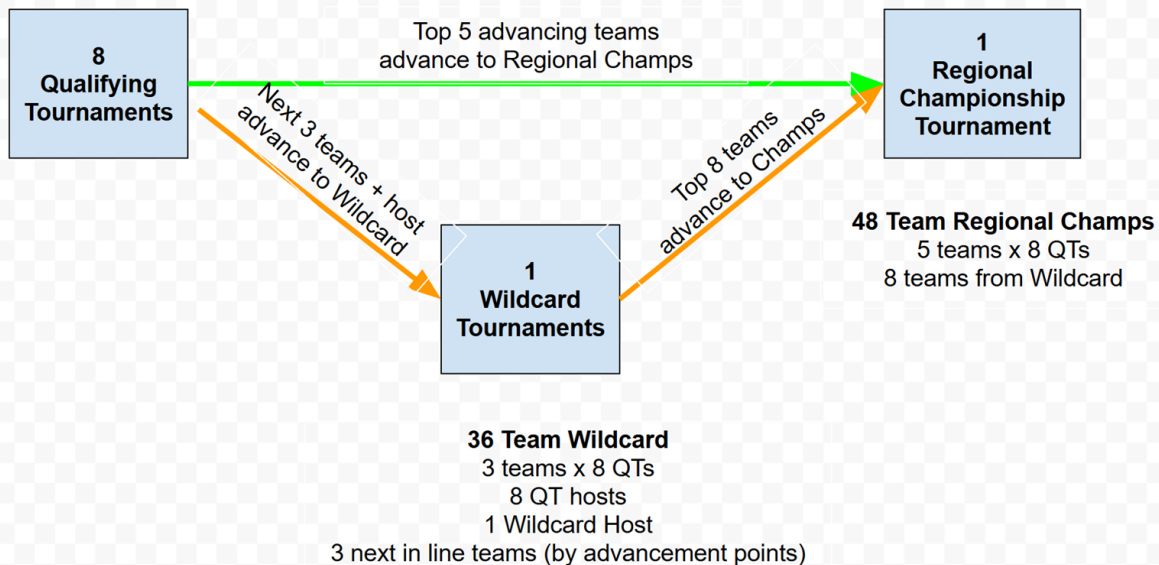
- 8 QTs, 6 matches per QT, full day Saturdays or Sundays, late Jan to Feb
- 1 QT per team, 30-35 teams in a QT, **your Tourney date is assigned**
- League scores **DO NOT** follow you to QT
- Judging, advancement to Championships



- Wild Card / Second Chance Tournament **Fee of \$100.00**
- SoCal Champs – (**increased from 42 to 48, fee the same at \$300.00**) top teams advance to Worlds or a Premier
- FIRST Worlds
- Premier Events – several locations and times in US and abroad

SoCal WILDCARD Tournament

SoCal FTC Advancement



Direct to Champs:

- Top 5 teams (based on FIRST criteria) from each of the 8 QTs proceed to the SoCal Championships.

To Wildcard:

- The next 3 teams (per award advancement order) from each of the 8 completed QTs will be invited
- The hosts from QTs 1-8 will advance one team to the WILDCARD.
- + 3 additional teams (next in line by RP points)
- Event will have judging, awards and advancement, similar to QTs 1-8.
- Fee for Wildcard is \$100.00

To Champs:

- The top 8 teams (based on FIRST criteria) will advance to SoCal Championships.

Team Assignments



Leagues:

- Teams are assigned to your previous League. If new, you will be assigned to a nearby League
- Read and know the rules, follow the FTC Forums – there WILL BE referees at League Play



Qualifier Tournaments:

To Be announced no later than October 30.

If you are a Host of a Tournament, your teams must play a Tournament



Your Commitment as a Team:

At League Scrimmages: **1 volunteer per Team for each Meet to work the event** ⁽¹⁾

At Qualifier Play: requested not required ⁽²⁾

At Championship: requested not required ⁽²⁾

*Show up and play at each League Scrimmage,
even if you are not 100% ready – you Will Learn!!*

And it helps others learn!

Provide a volunteer and take the HQ training.



- (1) Roles needed : 1 volunteer coordinator, 1 team and volunteer check-in, 2 referees, 2 scorers, 1 head referee, 1 field manager, 1 FTA, 1-2 querers, 1 scorekeeper, 2 robot inspectors, 1-2 field reset, set up and clean up.
- (2) In addition to (1), need pit manager, game announcers, judges, emcee, lead queries, and volunteer food planners

Know your League and your League Host <https://socalftc.org/leagues/>

A – Los Angeles (A.Whitman)

B – Compton / Inglewood (**D.Platt**)

C1 – La Canada (B.Mendoza)

C2 – Monrovia (T.Dobson, B.Bugert)

D – Sherman Oaks (S.Chanduri)

E – Webb (A.Hamilton)

F1, F2 – **Moreno Valley am and pm (R.Mac.)**

G - Carson (T.Harder)

H – El Segundo (S.Shapiro)

O – Orange County (S.Veera)

P – Lancaster (B.Edwards, J.Germita)

S – Calabasas (T.Salazar)

V – Ventura (C.Westcott)

W – Westside (J.Landa, D.Dragon)

**** Red - NEW**

If you want to change Leagues (depending on space) – email socalftcinfo@gmail.com

HQ Season **Game Structure** Summary



Competition Manual Structure

- broken down into self-contained sections



AI Rules Assistant

- AI Chatbot available to help find answers to rules questions



HQ Team Q&A and Team calls available

- Judging, Game Play, general support



Team Avatars - make one for your team



Advancement

- continuing points-based model (Section 4 Game Manual)

6. Robot Construction



- Android device and gamepad restrictions have been lifted. Rules such as “no other wireless communication” still apply.
- The maximum number of allowed servos is reduced to 8.
- Expansion limits are back! Expansion limit rules are: R105 and G415



Competition Manual V1.0
available 9/12, 12pm here:
<https://community.firstinspires.org/topic/ftc>

Our Season

- September 12th  SoCal FTC Kickoff and registration is already open
- Sept 14th  Leadership Award submissions open (last day Dec 14)
- October 12th  Last day to pay Registration fees
- Oct 24 - Jan 16  League Scrimmage Play (check website for dates or call your Host)
- Jan 24 - Feb 20  8 - Qualifier Tournaments + WildCard
 - * All day either Saturday or Sundays
- Feb 27th (Sat)  SoCal Championship, 48 Teams - Rancho Cucamonga High School
- April 29 – May 1  Worlds – Houston ; TBD Teams
- April – Summer  Premier Invitational Events!



***FIRST* Championship and Premier Event Opportunities**

- *FIRST* Championship will continue to have 336 *FIRST* Tech Challenge teams this year.
- *FIRST* Tech Challenge Premier Events are back and bigger! We have several returning and new locations:



New England Premier Event

Mexico Premier Event

Michiana Premier Event Presented by GEARS

Run for the Robots Kentucky Premier Event

European Premier Event

Chicago Robotics Invitational Premier Event

Canadian Rockies Premier Event @ KDays

Canada Cup - Niagara Premier Event

China Premier Event

Almaty TechCup Kazakhstan Premier Event

Western Edge Premier Event

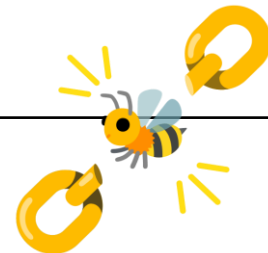
FIRST Tech Challenge Australia Premier Event

***FIRST* Championship and Premier Event Selection Process**

- Specific details will be announced in a blog by November.
- General Process Notes:
 - Teams will be able to submit a ranked choice event list for which events they would like to attend in [FTC Scoring](#).
 - Teams will be able to indicate if they have sibling teams for travel logistics.
 - If there are unfilled spots at an event, teams will be able to indicate if they would like to attend more than one event.



Resources – Quick links



https://community.firstinspires.org/topic/ftc	HQ FTC BLOG
ftc.game	Game and Season Page
ftc.game/manual	Competition Manual PDF
ftc.game/cm-html#R104	Direct Rule Linking (Example Rule R104)
ftc.game/field	Playing Field Resources, Field CAD
ftc.game/team	Team Resources, StarterBot Links
ftc.game/volunteer	Volunteer Resources (coming soon)
ftc.game/event	Event Resources (coming soon)
ftc.events	FTC Event Listing and Results
ftc-scoring.firstinspires.org/	Avatars, Hybrid Judging, Premier Event Preferencing
ftc.game/calculator	Practice Scoring Calculator

RAFFLE TIME!

