



10 Things to Know As an FLL Judge

Please be sure to check out www.firstlegoleague.org for additional information, including Judging and other official Q & A from throughout the season:

Robot Game Updates: <http://firstlegoleague.org/media/twocol.aspx?id=268>

Project FAQ: <http://www.firstlegoleague.org/media/twocol.aspx?id=314>

Judging Questions: flljudge@usfirst.org

Thank you for agreeing to be a judge with *FIRST*® LEGO® League. The information in this packet is designed to help you prepare as an FLL Judge this season. It is intended to offer background information that will be useful to review prior to your tournament. You should also participate in training sessions that may be offered through your local tournament organizer and/or FLL. We hope your experience as an FLL Judge is rewarding and enjoyable!

10. Have fun – you and the kids

The most important thing to know about an FLL tournament is that it is supposed to be **FUN**. The mission of *FIRST* is to get kids excited about science and technology. A competition is a celebration of what the children have accomplished throughout the season. It should be serious and competitive, but not so much that the fun is lost.

9. Exhibit Gracious Professionalism and honor FLL Core Values

These are the basic foundations of *FIRST* LEGO League, and should always be at the forefront in everyone's minds. We offer specific awards to recognize FLL Core Values excellence, but a significant concern can impact team eligibility in *any* award category.

8. Be a good role model for technology and engineering careers

Give the kids a chance to see what makes engineers, scientists, computer programmers and educators special. Share your experiences without sharing your agendas. Be professional – show the kids that what they have accomplished is appreciated and valuable. Show interest in their presentations and discussions, and be personable.

7. Respect the children

Please keep negative comments to yourself, away from the ears of the kids, parents, and coaches. All teams should be given the benefit of the doubt when questions arise about adult involvement. If you suspect the kids did not do the work, it is your job to probe further to prove it, rather than assuming that the kids did not do the work. Remember that these are kids who worked hard all season to make it to the tournament. Treat their accomplishments with respect, and be sure that other judges do so as well. One negative comment from a judge can have a devastating effect on teams. Make it your goal as a judge to ensure that the teams know what they did well, and that they have a positive experience showcasing their achievements.

6. Respect the judging process

Stay on schedule. The kids have a more challenging schedule than you do. Remember the FLL awards philosophy. Remember that the whole judging process is subjective. Concentrate on providing a great experience for the kids and try not to get caught up in

the mechanics of the process. Do not share scores or awards discussions with the kids, coaches or parents.

5. Evaluate teams completely and fairly

Each rubric is designed to evaluate many areas of a team's performance, and gives equal weighting to several factors tied to specific awards. All Core Awards are of equal importance, except for our Champion's Award that recognizes all-around excellence. Be objective, both on a team-by-team basis and a total rubric evaluation basis. Familiarize yourself with the levels of achievement. Identify any conflicts of interest you have before the competition, and refrain from involving yourself in discussions about any team when you have a conflict.

4. Consider age appropriateness and experience

Consider age when evaluating teams. Certain skills, knowledge, and capabilities are more likely to be exhibited by the kids as they get older and more experienced in general and in FLL in particular. You may also see rookie teams that are more polished and understand FLL better than experienced teams.

3. Reward excellence and celebrate achievement

For a team to be considered for an award, they should be evaluated at an Exemplary level of achievement in that category whenever possible. Award distribution is spread as equitably as possible among the teams, with the goal of no team winning more than one judged award.

2. Provide specific and constructive feedback

Please be specific when providing feedback comments to teams. This will also help when it comes to awards deliberations – specific examples are very helpful when differentiating between teams. "This team's willingness to help other teams (by providing programming mentorship, for example) is exemplary" is more descriptive and helpful than "that team was so nice and polite and exhibited gracious professionalism." Take lots of notes if you need to!

1. See #10 again!