

I know that many of you have been waiting for further clarification on the plans for the 2023-24 season. Please keep in mind that we are continuing to learn new things. Some things have worked, some could be improved, so we are making changes to provide a great experience to the students of Idaho to move their STEM learning forward in the spirit of FIRST. It is okay to discover something didn't work and to shift gears to another plan. Your passion and understanding have been so appreciated as we navigate through this.

A number of factors went into the decision to modify the season plans:

- Build a pipeline for students from FLL through the progression of programs through FTC and on to FRC. Your students will get to meet and work with local teams so that when they age up, they are comfortable moving to one of the local FTC or FRC teams because of this early activity and interaction.
- Provide for FLL teams to travel to other locations across Idaho for FIRST Idaho-Sanctioned Scrimmages. Your FLL team isn't relegated to participating in a local event, but can now travel to other areas in the state, to as many events as you want! Make friends, learn new things, see new sights and bond as a team!
- Providing opportunities to local FTC and FRC teams to add to their resume of community outreach and FIRST Idaho support for their applications to the Inspire and Impact Award opportunities. This year's plan will allow the local teams to help organize and run the scrimmages this fall.
- The previous partner (University of Idaho) sent one team from the north or the south, alternating years, to Championships in Houston. While at first we thought this didn't show the best of what Idaho has each year, and thus instituted the virtual head-to-head competition, we have discovered that this hasn't really been fair in the past two years and that in the spirit of FIRST and the "Share the Love" where everyone has an opportunity, we're reverting back to that plan for this season.
- More FLL teams in Idaho will increase the number of invitations we can extend to World Championships so your help in growing teams in Idaho would open up another opportunity for teams to compete at Worlds for next season.
- Cost to FIRST Idaho. There are costs associated with every event. Last year, the costs outweighed the income from registration fees and grants.

FIRST Idaho-Sanctioned Scrimmages:

- You **MUST** be a registered and paid team with FIRST to be able to participate.
- FLL teams will register directly with FIRST Idaho for available FIRST Idaho-Sanctioned Scrimmages and the State Competition (North or South) they want to participate in. This protects Personally Identifiable Information for coaches as required by FIRST policies. No teams or individuals not employed by FIRST Idaho will have direct access to your personal information unless you personally give it to them. All communications will be sent through FIRST Idaho to afford that protection, ensure communications across the state and keep necessary parties in the loop.
- FIRST Idaho-Sanctioned Scrimmages will occur October through to the 9th of December.
- FIRST Idaho-Sanctioned Scrimmages are free to participate in.
- No teams will be allowed to just “drop in” and compete. You **MUST** be registered for the event. This is a dress-rehearsal for State Competitions and will be run like a Qualifier.
- Space may be limited at FIRST Idaho-Sanctioned Scrimmages. If you register and find that you are not able to participate, you **MUST** let FIRST Idaho know at least a week in advance so that another team may be invited from the waitlist and/or to assist the hosting team in the logistics of the event if there isn’t a waitlist. Please be mindful when you register. There are a lot of moving parts to an event and someone canceling at the last minute can cause issues with scheduling, pit space, volunteer needs, etc.
- These events will be a dress-rehearsal for the State Competitions. They will consist of:
 - 1 practice match and 3 matches. Scoring sheets will be returned.
 - 30-minute Judging session - with feedback. 2-3 Adult (over age 19) Judges will be present and will share feedback sheets following the event.
 - No trophies or certificates will be issued.
 - All events will begin with Opening Ceremonies at 9:00 a.m. and will conclude by 4:00 p.m.
 - Locations and dates will be on the registration portal sent to you by FIRST Idaho.
 - All FIRST Idaho-Sanctioned Scrimmages will be uniform across the state with guidelines and checklists for the hosting teams to adhere

to in order to give the same experience to the students no matter their location, as FIRST directs all events provide.

- All Idaho FTC and FRC teams will be sent a link to apply to host a FIRST Idaho-Sanctioned Scrimmage. It is first-come, first-served. If there are multiple requests for a day, those requests will be offered an opportunity to share the event hosting duties.
 - Hosting team(s) will secure a location (with approval from FIRST Idaho);
 - Recruit and assign Volunteers based on “Key Volunteers” list provided by FIRST Idaho;
 - Recruit Judges (1 Judge for every 2 teams) that are not affiliated with a current team (Adults from Industry, Sponsors or businesses in your area, FTC or FRC mentors or parents are allowed but should not be affiliated with an FLL team participating anywhere in Idaho this season). No FIRST Board of Director shall be recruited to Judge;
 - Require that all volunteers sign into the Volunteer Management System (VMS) and successfully pass the background check to be in compliance with FIRST YPP directives;
 - Provide a modest breakfast and lunch to volunteers;
 - Borrow or provide 2 FLL Challenge sets (Masterpiece Season) and tables;
 - Print enough copies of scoring sheets for each team for each match (emailed from FIRST Idaho). 4 per team plus 10;
 - Print enough copies of judging rubrics for each team and each judge (emailed from FIRST Idaho). 1 set per team plus 4;
 - Gather and return all scoring and judging rubrics to each team at the close of the event;
 - Set up and take down event.
 - No trophies or certificates will be handed out.

FIRST Idaho State Championships:

- All registered FIRST FLL teams will be advancing directly to a State Competition this year. One in the North and one or possibly two (depending upon team numbers) in the South. These events will occur January 13, 20, and possibly 27th.

- State registration fees are to be determined. We are waiting on venue availability and associated costs as well as team counts before determining these amounts. More to come.
- Any FLL teams north of McCall will compete in the North State Championship. Those south of McCall will compete in the South State Championship.
- If you register and find that you are not able to participate, you **MUST** let FIRST Idaho know at least a week in advance to assist the hosting team in the logistics of the event. Please be mindful when you register. There are a lot of moving parts to an event and someone canceling at the last minute can cause issues with match and judges scheduling, pit space, volunteer needs, etc.
- All registration fees are **NON-REFUNDABLE**.

Invitations to Invitationals and other Off-season events:

We receive invitations to other events (Invitationals) in other locations. These will continue to be offered out to teams as they become available. South Champion will have first right-of-refusal for this season. Should additional invitations be shared from other locations, these will be offered to Runner Up for North, followed by Runner Up for South.

It's going to be a fun year showcasing our students in the 2023-24 Masterpiece Season! Thank you all for continuing to be a part of our family and bringing these opportunities to students in your area. Your commitment and passion is inspiring and I appreciate you all!