



Future Edition Grades 3-8/Ages 8+ Event Planning Guide

Introduction

FIRST® LEGO® League Future Edition events are designed to celebrate innovation, collaboration, and engineering. Teams participate in judging, compete in collaborative game matches, build relationships with other teams during networking sessions, and celebrate one another's accomplishments. Event planning decisions should prioritize an equitable, welcoming experience that allows every team to demonstrate what they have learned.

This guide was created for all event hosts and contains resources to use while planning your *FIRST* LEGO League Future Edition Grades 3-8/Ages 8+ official events and outlines program requirements and best practices. Items that are marked as "  Requirement!" should be implemented as written to ensure consistent event experiences for all teams, regardless of where they are competing.

While this guide may be useful to refer to when planning scrimmage or classroom events, some information may not apply. Any requirements found in the sections below do not apply to unofficial events.

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Venue

FIRST LEGO League events are often hosted in schools, community centers, or other large venues with enough rooms and space to host all required activities. When selecting an event venue, refer to the required spaces below. The team size of your event will determine your venue needs.

Required Spaces

Ceremonies

● **Requirement!** Official Events must host a closing/awards ceremony. When choosing your ceremony space, plan seating for team members, coaches, volunteers, and family members of the team. This may be the same place where you have your game tables during matches.

It is *recommended* that events have an opening ceremony to welcome teams and provide event safety and schedule information before judging and games begin.

Game

● **Requirement!** Official game matches must take place on official game tables with border walls. Events must have a minimum of one (1) full table per 12 teams, though we *recommend* two (2) tables. One full table consists of a red and a blue half-field where two teams will play side-by-side during a single match.

It is *recommended* that events have seating for spectators to view game matches. Plan or mark off enough space around and between game tables for teams and referees to participate in matches without disturbing or bumping into nearby tables or spectators.

Judging

● **Requirement!** Judging should take place in a private or semi-private space to ensure that judges and teams can easily communicate without disruptions.

We *recommend* that official events have a minimum of four (4) judging rooms per 12 teams. Judging rooms should have one table and chairs for judges, plus an additional table for teams to display their materials during their presentations.

Team Pits

● **Requirement!** Teams will need a dedicated place to gather as a team, display their work, and network with other teams. These spaces are called team pits.

We *recommend* that teams have access to power (outlet or power strip) near their pits. It is not required to provide power at each team pit, but events should provide power access somewhere in the venue for teams to charge their hardware and devices.

When planning your pit spaces, consider providing tables, seating, and how much space each team will need so that team members can comfortably gather in or near their pit.

Communicate pit size and details to teams ahead of the event, so they can plan their pit space accordingly.

Judging Spaces & Tables by Event Size

The following table summarizes the *recommended and required* number of judging rooms and game tables with volunteer needs for a typical 12-team or 24-team event.

Teams	Judging Spaces	Judges	Game Tables	Referees
12	4 recommended (min. 2 required)	12 recommended (min. 4 required)	4 recommended (min. 2 required)	3 recommended (min. 2 required)
24	6 recommended (min. 4 required)	18 recommended (min. 8 required)	4 recommended (min. 3 required)	9 recommended (min. 4 required)

Additional Spaces

Check-in Area

You will need to designate a place for teams and volunteers to check in upon arrival. This is when you can provide teams and volunteers with a copy of their event day schedule, venue maps, and any other helpful on-site information.

Volunteer Room

Provide a room or area away from teams that volunteers can use when on a break. Events will typically provide food for their event day volunteers, and this room usually doubles as a place for volunteers to eat. Make sure to let your volunteers know what to expect of this space on site, like whether they can store their belongings in this space, if this is where they will check-in, etc.

Practice Tables

If your event provides practice tables separate from the official game tables for teams to use, make sure to communicate their location and any sign-up processes for teams during check-in.

Volunteers

Below is a list of Key Volunteer roles that are **required** at every official event and a brief description of each role. A full list of event volunteers and role descriptions is available on the *FIRST* website here: [Event Volunteer Roles Library | FIRST](#).

Planning Roles

- **Program Delivery Partner (PDP):** Assigns teams to events and provides regional guidance for event implementation. Ensures all event standards are upheld.
- **Tournament Director (also referred to as Event Admin/Event Director):** Oversees all aspects of the tournament and reports to the region's *FIRST* LEGO League PDP.
- **Judge Advisor:** Oversees all judges, including any pre-event communication and training. Ensures that global standards for judging and awards are followed, and Future Edition Rubrics are used. Requires familiarity with the advancement policy and training to use the Official Judging Spreadsheet or official Event Management System.
- **Head Referee:** Helps recruit, train, and oversee all tournament referees. Has comprehensive knowledge of the game field setup, missions, rules, and updates. Responsible for tracking and timing game matches and coordinating referees and other game field volunteers. Performs quality assurance on official game fields and any practice tables before and after the event.
- **Volunteer Coordinator:** Responsible for recruitment and onsite management of event volunteers, including volunteer registration, assignments, managing walk-on volunteers, and problem-solving. Works closely with the Tournament Director and venue on all volunteer logistics, including pre-event planning and communication.

Required Roles

- **Judges:** Facilitate the judging session according to the Future Edition Judging Flowchart, including listening to team presentations, interviewing and scoring teams according to the Rubrics, and providing feedback. Judges also participate in the allocation process to select award winners.
 -  **Requirement!** Judges must work in groups or pairs – never as an individual. At least two (2) judges must be assigned per judging group/room. Official Events must have a minimum of two (2) judging groups per 12 teams; and a minimum of two (2) judges per judging group. Judges must complete judge training prior to their first judging session.
 - We *recommend* recruiting at least three (3) trained judges per judging group to account for last-minute cancelations.
- **Referees:** Facilitate game matches including equipment inspection and set up, observing gameplay, scoring missions according to the scoresheet, and assessing team's use of Core Values at the game table.
 -  **Requirement!** At least two referees must be assigned per official game table – one (1) for each half of the field. Referees must complete referee training prior to their first match.
 - We *recommend* recruiting at least one (1) additional trained referee at official events to account for last-minute cancelations.

Additional Judging and Game Roles

Additional judging roles include a Judge Advisor Assistant, Lead Queuer, and Judging Queuer. Additional roles at the game field include Field Manager, Assistant Field Manager, Field Resetters, Emcee, Score Keeper, Time Keeper, Lead Queuer, and Game Queuer.

A full list of volunteer role descriptions for *FIRST* LEGO League events is linked at the top of this section.

FIRST Volunteer Management System

The [FIRST Volunteer Management System \(VMS\)](#) is designed to assist in management of event volunteers across all *FIRST* programs. Volunteers will also need to complete a [Volunteer Registration](#) and background screening (where applicable) to be assigned a role in VMS for your event.

Regions outside of the US and Canada that would like to utilize VMS must use the Event Management System for their events.

Volunteer Training

[FIRST Training](#) is an online catalog of training modules available for teams, coaches, and event volunteers. Event volunteers who are assigned in VMS will be automatically assigned relevant training modules for their role.

Training modules are available for the following Future Edition Grades 3-8 volunteer roles (no login is required to access these courses):

- Future Edition Judge
- Future Edition Referee
- Future Edition Judge Advisor
- Future Edition Head Referee

Volunteer Communications

FIRST provides a Volunteer Information Packet for customization, available from your regional PDP. The following information should be shared with volunteers ahead of the event:

- Event Date and Location
- Report times and locations
- Parking, food, and other logistics

Upon arrival at the event, volunteers should receive any remaining details about the event, including a detailed schedule for their judging and game match times.

Resources (including links to documents, videos, and training modules) for event volunteers can be found on the [FIRST LEGO League Volunteer Resources](#) page. Event organizers and Key Volunteers should share this link or download these resources to share with volunteers at their event.

Event Day Schedule

On event day, teams compete in game matches, participate in judging, network with other teams, and celebrate the work that they have done during the season.

● **Requirement!** All official events must have a schedule visible to all teams and event attendees. This can be a printed paper schedule or available digitally.

Schedule Activities

For official Future Edition Grades 3-8 events, every competing team must be scheduled for a judging session, game matches, and networking sessions. Scheduling requirements and best practices for each area are listed below.

Scheduling: Judging

Work with your Judge Advisor to create a judging session schedule. Refer to the Judging Toolkit for best practices.

● **Requirement!** All teams attending an official event must be scheduled for the same amount of time for their judging session. The minimum time for a team's judging session is 25 minutes, followed by at least 15 minutes for judges to discuss the team and complete the rubrics after the team has left.

We *recommend* scheduling each team's judging session in blocks of 30 minutes to accommodate transition time or in case the session runs over. Additional time beyond 15 minutes for judges to complete rubrics is also recommended.

Scheduling: Game

Game matches are scheduled for teams to play semi-cooperative matches. One team must be scheduled on the red half-field and one team on the blue half-field of a single table for each match. Work with your Head Referee to create your match schedule. Refer to the Referee Toolkit for best practices.

● **Requirement!** All teams must be scheduled for the same number of official matches at an event. Events must hold a minimum of three (3) and up to a maximum of six (6) official game rounds per event.

- We *recommend* that events have 3 official game rounds for an optimal team experience. It is best practice to create your schedule so that each team is not paired with the same team for more than one official match.

● **Requirement!** The minimum cycle time for each match is 10 minutes (for example: 2 minutes inspection > 1 minute setup for match > 2.5 minutes gameplay > 2.5 minutes scoring > 2 minutes reset).

- We *recommend* a minimum of 15 minutes per match to accommodate additional time for team and referee questions, late arrivals, and transition time. Schedules may stagger match times so that some tables compete while others score and reset to reduce “downtime” for spectators and create a continuous flow of matches.
- Teams should arrive for queuing at least 10 minutes before the match start time.

Practice matches are optional, and a maximum of three practice rounds should be scheduled. Practice matches should mirror the official match schedule so that teams have an opportunity to play with the teams they will compete with for official scores. Teams should play no more than six (6) total matches at a single qualifier event, or nine (9) total matches at a Championship event, which includes all practice and official matches.

As you plan your game rounds, keep in mind that teams must have networking time to meet and prepare with the other teams before official matches are played (see below).

Scheduling: Networking Sessions

Teams must have scheduled networking time to meet and discuss strategy with their teammates for each official match. This time allows teams the opportunity to get to know the other teams, share knowledge, and strategize before their matches.

● **Requirement!** Networking time must be a minimum of 10 minutes per official match. For example, if you have 4 official game rounds at your event, you must schedule 40 minutes of networking time for teams to meet with the teams they will play in matches with. Networking time must be scheduled prior to when a team’s matches are played.

We *recommend* that all networking time is scheduled before or after an opening ceremony to allow every team with equal time to network with other teams prior to the start of the official matches.

Scheduling: Transition Time

● **Requirement!** Event schedules must include enough transition time for teams to move between and queue for scheduled activities. No activity should be scheduled within 10 minutes before or after a team's judging session or official game match.

Organizers should consider the physical distance between activity areas and increase the transition time when teams need to travel across a large venue.

Additional Scheduling Considerations

Schedules should account for the following elements:

- Volunteer Arrival/Check-in
- Team Arrival/Check-in
- Coaches' Meeting
- Opening Ceremony
- Lunches or Breaks
- Award Allocations
- Awards Ceremony

Consider the following when creating your schedule: team photos, team pit clean-up, guest speakers, games and activities, etc.

Sample Schedules

Exact schedule details will vary depending on the number of teams, judging rooms, game tables, and overall timing for your specific event. Sample schedules that can be edited to suit your event needs are available through your PDP.

Scoring and Awards

Judging & Match Scores

Judging Scores

● **Requirement!** Official events must adhere to the official *FIRST* LEGO League Future Edition judging materials to be eligible to advance teams, including:

- Awards List & Allocation Instructions
- Rubric
- Flowchart

The complete Judging Toolkit can be found on the volunteer resources page [here](#).

Match Scores

● **Requirement!** Official events must follow the scheduling requirements for matches (see the Scheduling section) and adhere to the official *FIRST* LEGO League Future Edition game materials, including:

- Rulebook
- Updates
- Scoresheet

The complete Referee Toolkit can be found on the volunteer resources page [here](#).

Event Management and Scoring Tools

Online Tools

- [FIRST Event Portal](#): An online tool for setting up and managing events. Access is given to PDPs to create events and assign the role of Event Admin so others can manage all other aspects of the event. The event portal allows Event Admin to create and manage the event schedule, assign teams and volunteers to event spaces, complete and edit online rubrics and scoresheet data, see team rankings, and assign awards and advancement.
- [Event Portal Game Score Calculator](#): An official online score calculator that makes a team's final match score easy to calculate.

Offline Tools

- Official Judging Spreadsheet: A Microsoft Excel based tool that allows you to track team scores, see team rankings, and assign awards and advancement. If you are not using the *FIRST* Event Portal for your event, it is the best practice to use this tool.
- Excel Game Score Calculator: An official offline score calculator that makes a team's final match score easy to calculate.

Team Recognition & Awards

● **Requirement!** Review and adhere to the recognition and award requirements below:

- A form of recognition (medals, certificates) for all participants must be provided at Championship events and may be provided at other official events as desired.
- 30-50% of teams at your event should receive an award. The judging toolkit includes a list of Core and Additional Awards, along with instructions on how to allocate each type.
- Official LEGO trophies must be provided with awards at all Championship events. Other official events may use official LEGO trophies if desired.

Participation certificates with season branding that can be edited and used at events can be found [here](#). Your PDP will provide information on ordering official trophies or other recognition items, if used.

Advancement

Advancement guidance is included in the judging toolkit resources for Judge Advisors. Contact your PDP concerning team advancement in your region and to learn how many teams will advance from your event to a Championship or International Open event, if applicable.

Published Results

Teams should have either digital or paper access to their Judging Rubrics and Game Scoresheets after the event. If using paper copies, plan to have teams leave with them at the end of the event. Digital copies should be shared with teams as soon as possible following the event.

● **Requirement!** Published results may include award winners/finalists, advancing teams list (if applicable), and game scores/rankings only. Published results shall NOT contain judging scores for any individual team or information regarding the overall ranking of teams in consideration for awards. Published results should not contain any Personally Identifiable Information on coach or student participants – only team numbers and team names.

Event Communications

Team Communications

FIRST provides a Team Information Packet for customization, available from your regional PDP. The following information should be shared with teams ahead of the event:

- Event Date and Location
- Event Feeds and Payment Instructions
- Directions and Parking Information
- Overall Tournament Schedule
- Pits, Judging, and Game area information
- Awards and Advancements Information
- Concessions Information and/or Outside Food Policies

Upon arrival at the event, teams should receive any remaining details about the event, including a detailed schedule for their judging and game match times.

Marketing & Branding Resources

-  **Requirement!** All official *FIRST* LEGO League events must use official *FIRST* LEGO League branding. You can access *FIRST* LEGO League and BIOGLOW™ season logos, along with design guidelines, on the [FIRST Brand & Assets | FIRST](#) page.

Work with the PDP in your region for information on how events are branded in your area. Your region's PDP will also have access to marketing fliers, ceremony slides, and other resources that will be helpful as you plan your event.

Event Safety and Accessibility

As you plan your event, it is important to consider event safety and accessibility in all planning areas. PPs and Tournament Directors should work together to reference the following resources before you begin and make sure to adhere to local laws and regulations for youth and attendee safety as you are planning.

- [FIRST LEGO League Volunteer Resources](#), under the Tournament Directors section:
 - Event Safety and Emergency Response planning

- [Youth Protection Program & Code of Conduct | FIRST:](#)
 - *FIRST* Code of Conduct
 - Youth Protection Policies
 - Youth Protection Concerns and Medical Incident Reporting
- [STEM for Everyone | Optional Trainings and Resources | FIRST](#)
- External Resource: [A Planning Guide for Making Temporary Events Accessible to People with Disabilities | ADATA.org](#)