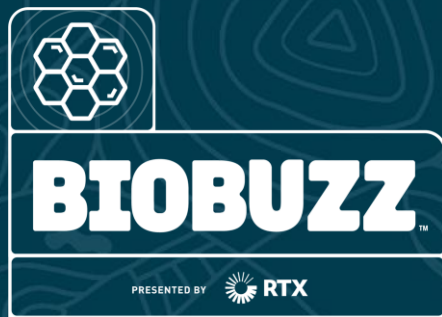


Pennsylvania 2026-2027 Season Kickoff

FIRST[®]

CANOPY[™]

BIOBUZZ[™] presented by RTX



FIRST
TECH
CHALLENGE

Pennsylvania 2026-2027 Season Kickoff

Tom Zawislak
FTC Program Delivery Partner - Pennsylvania FIRST Robotics

Welcome!

Agenda

- Congrats to 2025-2026 Championship and Premier Event Teams
- Pennsylvania 2026-2027 FTC Season Overview
- FTC PA Grants
- *FIRST* Core Values
- **Important *FIRST* Tech Challenge Team Guidance – Key Dates; Resources; Competition Manual; Advancement and Judging**
- Game Reveal – 12:00 Noon
- Game Q&A with Pennsylvania Head Referee – 12:45 pm

FTC Championship, Houston - Apr 29th – May 2nd

56 Teams per division – 6 Divisions, 336 FTC Teams from around the world
Our six PA teams were distributed in 2 of the divisions. Details follow.

Awards: Special recognition and congratulations to **Team 7244 OUT of the BOX Robotics - Sustain Award** and **Team 14423 RoboCorns Inspire Award Winners**, both in Lovelace Division.

Playoffs: 5 of the 6 competed in their respective Division Playoffs
Special recognition and congratulations to **Team 8393 - The Giant Diencephalic BrainSTEM Robotics Team** for their **1st place overall ranking in Franklin Division**

FTC Championship Franklin Division – 2 PA Teams

Team 8393 - The Giant Diencephalic BrainSTEM Robotics Team

Sustain Award 3rd Place; Ranked 1st overall in Franklin Division

Captain of Alliance 1 – Advanced to Lower Bracket Round 3 Match 9 before being Eliminated

Team 25650 - One Small Step for an Axolotl

Connect Award 3rd Place; Ranked 14th overall in Franklin Division

First Team Selected (by 8393) Alliance 1 - Advanced to Lower Bracket Round 3 Match 9 before being Eliminated

FTC Championship Lovelace Division – 4 PA Teams

Team 7244 OUT of the BOX Robotics

***Sustain Award*; Ranked 9th Overall** in Lovelace Division

Captain of Alliance 7 – Advanced to Lower Bracket Round 2 Match 6 before being eliminated

Team 9791 - Divide by Zero

Ranked 13th Overall in Lovelace Division

1st Team Selected Alliance 1 – Advanced to Lower Bracket Round 2 Match 5 before being eliminated

FTC Championship Lovelace Division – Continued

Team 14423 RoboCorns

Inspire Award

Ranked 35th overall in Lovelace Division

20153 Silver Wolves

Ranked 12th Overall in Lovelace Division

1st team Selected (by 7244) Alliance 7 - Advanced to Lower Bracket Round 2
Match 6 before being eliminated

Premier Events - PA Team Performance overview

We are very proud and pleased to provide the following summary of the performance of our Pennsylvania FTC Teams at this past season's Premier Events. AMAZING! **Virtually every team was either named in a Judged Award category, advanced to the playoffs or both!**

With the 6 teams that advanced to the FTC Championship in Houston we had a total of **20 PA teams that went to post-season competitions.**

Premier Events - PA Team Performance overview

Western Edge Premier Event – May 28 – 31, 2026

18603 – TeraBridges – Overall Event Winning Alliance, Connect Award
Winner, Sea Division

21364 – First Try – Finalist Alliance and Control Award Winner, Sand Division

Run for the Robots Premier Event – May 28 – 30, 2026

8645 – Robotic Doges – Semi-Finalist Alliance and Connect Award
Winner, Secretariat Division

11792 – BotsBurgh – Inspire Award 3rd Place, Man o' War Division

.

Premier Events - PA Team Performance overview

Canada Cup – Niagara Premier Event – June 13 – 16, 2026

10098 – 2 Eyed Illuminati – Winning Alliance and Connect Award Winner, Technology Division

16468 – Green Lemons – Finalist Alliance and Sustain Award 2nd Place, Technology Division

12792 – Sharon High Robotics Team – Connect Award 2nd place, Technology Division

9242 – GearHounds – Reach Award 2nd Place, Technology Division

21324 – Hackin Hounds – Innovate Award 2nd Place, Science Division

Premier Events - PA Team Performance overview

Michiana Premier Event Presented by GEARS – June 18 – 21, 2026

22312 – The Brobdingnagian Tritocephalic BrainSTEM Robotics Team –
Semifinalist Alliance, Jones Division

13474 – MARS: Curiosity? – Design Award Winner, Croft Division

Multinational Tech Invitational – June 26 – 28, 2026

25650 – One Small Step for an Axolotl – Semifinalist Alliance and Hardware
Mastery Award

Premier Events - PA Team Performance overview

Chicago Robotics Invitational Premier Event – July 24 – 26, 2026

25650 – One Small Step for an Axolotl – Finalist Alliance and The CTA
Creative Teleop Award

Carolinas Premier Event – July 25 – 26, 2026

17895 – The Prodigiously Hemicephalic BrainSTEM Robotics Team – Finalist
Alliance

PA Season Overview

Event Scheduling

- We have scheduled twelve (12) Qualifiers.
- Qualifiers will be held over 6 weekends, 1 each on Saturday and Sunday
- Qualifier season will start on Dec. 5th/6th and be completed by Feb 20th/21st, 2027. **Be prepared for 2 weekends, 4 events in December!**
- Qualifiers will be 24, 28, 32, or 36 team events depending on venue space and registration interest. **More slots, more opportunities to compete!**
- **Qualifier Registration will open Sat October 10th, 2026**

PA Season Overview

Event Scheduling

- FTC Event page: 2026-2027 Season – <https://www.ftcpenn.org/ftc-events/2026-2027-season>
- Pennsylvania Championship preliminarily scheduled for March 6th and 7th, Bellefonte HS just outside of State College
- Registration for Qualifiers will open Saturday, October 10th 2026 at 8:00 am
- Event Registration link: <https://www.ftcpenn.org/event-registration>
- FTC Team Q&A Opens Sep 28th

PA Season Overview

Scheduled Qualifiers

Dec 5th/6th - York Country Day School, York, PA – 24 Teams

Dec 12th/13th – McCaskey East HS, Lancaster, PA – 24 Teams

Jan 9th/10th – Mountainview MS, Mechanicsburg, PA – 32 Teams

Jan 23rd/24th – Bensalem HS, Bensalem, PA – 36 Teams

Feb 6th/7th - Coatesville Area HS, Coatesville, PA – 36 Teams

Feb 20th/21st - Boyce Middle School, Upper St. Clair, PA – 32 Teams

Special thanks to our Host teams and their schools for making this season happen!

PA Season Overview

Workshops and Scrimmages – Scrimmage Registration is open

Any team may hold a Team Powered Workshop or Scrimmage. Let us know!

- **Sat Oct 24th - Ramp Riot Scrimmage**, Wissahickon – 14 Teams
- **Sat Nov 7th - Longhorn Roundup Scrimmage**, Kennett Square – 24 Teams
- **Philadelphia Workshops (2)** Tuesday - Oct 6th and December 1st from 2-6pm in the Robotics Lab at Central High
- **Coaches Calls (2)** Thu Sep 17th and Thu Sep 24th, 2026
- Teams advance from PA State Championship to **FIRST Championship in Houston, TX** - April 28 - May 1, 2027

PA Grant Opportunities

Google.org – In its 4th year, the priority of the program for schools and organizations is to reduce barriers and increase *FIRST* Tech Challenge participation of middle school-aged students who are under-resourced or have been traditionally underrepresented in STEM.

The Google.org grants has stipulations and requirements as dictated by the sponsor organization. PA *FIRST* Robotics is obligated to meet the requirements

On-line applications are open. Grants will be processed starting this coming week.

PA Grant Opportunities

Arconic Foundation – To be opened soon.

In its 5th year as administered by PFR, it is for *FIRST* Registered FTC Rookie and Veteran teams located in 10 PA counties contiguous with Arconic offices or manufacturing facilities in the following counties: Allegheny, Berks, Butler, Columbia, Dauphin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Montour, York, and Westmoreland.

For FRC and FLL teams in PA please apply through *FIRST* grant portal

PA Department of Education (PDE) Grant -Southwest PA

New this season – Applications are not open yet:

The Southwestern PA Regional Robotics Access Initiative addresses a critical gap in access to high-quality STEM education opportunities for students in rural, under-resourced, and economically disadvantaged communities across Southwestern Pennsylvania.

While robotics programs have proven to be powerful vehicles for developing technical knowledge, problem-solving skills, teamwork, leadership, and career readiness, many schools and communities lack financial resources, trained mentors, and institutional support needed to establish and sustain these programs.

PA Department of Education (PDE) Grant -Southwest PA

This grant is only possible thanks to the incredible support of State Rep Natalie Mihalek (D-40) and for the dogged advocacy of Upper St. Clair Robotics FTC Team # 18603 Terabridges especially their students, coaches and mentors.

An Application will open soon so look for an announcement in a future email blast. The grant will be for \$90,000!

Now let's hear from Rep, Natalie Mihalek



PA Department of Education (PDE) Grant - Philadelphia

Philadelphia school-based FTC and FRC teams are eligible. It is intended for

- Team Support
- Coach Stipend
- Coach Training

In 25-26, awarded \$146k to 18 teams and 15 coaches

Program will continue this year!

~\$40k in hand

\$100k coming “soon” from Harrisburg

PA Department of Education (PDE) Grant - Philadelphia

This grant is only possible thanks to the stalwart support of State Senator Nikil Saval and also, thanks to the students and coaches of the Central High School RoboLancers whose advocacy in Harrisburg paved the way for this grant.

Application open now, **closes September 30th**, at

<https://www.ftcpenn.org/team-grants>

Funded with Senate discretionary funds by Sen. Nikil Saval (D-1)

Grant Administrator is Michael Johnson grants.pde@pennfirst.org

Legislative Update

Our goal to expand this grant program to support K-12 robotics teams across the Commonwealth, and to fund the program from a general appropriation.

- SB 1419 introduced July 2026 by Sen. Devlin Robinson (R-37), bipartisan cosponsors include Sen. Saval (D-1) and others
- Wasn't reported out of committee before budget was passed, will need to be reintroduced in January
- Would create a statewide fund and grant program with proposed \$1.5M initial funding. Grants would flow through IUs.

Team Advocacy Goal – Visibility and Personal Connection

This fall, every PA FTC team will have met their state senator and state rep by

- hosting the legislator at an FTC event or at a team meeting, or
- visiting the legislator's office with students and a robot.

During the visit

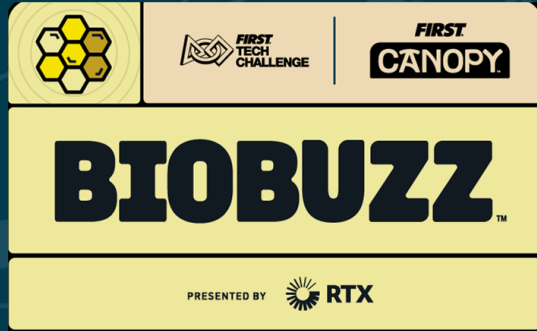
- Show and tell about your team, your robot, and how FIRST helps you grow
- Share the importance of state funding for K-12 robotics programs

After the visit

- Send a paper thank you card
- Post pics of the visit to team social media and **tag the legislator**

FIRST Core Values

If your team hasn't already talked about your goals for the BIOBUZZ™ Season, take some time this week to think about how your season goals will help build towards your life goals!



- **Discovery:** *We explore new skills and ideas.*
- **Innovation:** *We use creativity and persistence to solve problems.*
- **Impact:** *We apply what we learn to improve our world.*
- **Inclusion:** *We respect each other and embrace our differences.*
- **Teamwork:** *We are stronger when we work together.*
- **Fun:** *We enjoy and celebrate what we do!*