

What is the F.I.R.S.T. robotics competition?

“**FIRST**” stands for : “**F**”or “**I**”nspiration and “**R**”ecognition of “**S**”cience and “**T**”echnology. It was founded by inventor Dean Kamen and sponsored by NASA, and is designed to interest young students in science, engineering and technology.

The competition is an annual event, where high school students build a remote control robot to compete in that year’s “Game”. The game usually consists of an “Alliance” of two or three teams competing against another “Alliance” in a scored event, trying to accomplish complicated tasks, performing offensive and defensive maneuvers. The contest promotes having “Mentors” (professional engineering and business people) on the teams to guide and teach the students, and to provide contact with good roll models.

The contest starts in January with a Kickoff at the Science center and an intense, 6 week period, where the students find out the requirements of this years contest and build a radio controlled robot to compete. The robot must be shipped off to the contest at the end of the 6 weeks. The regional competition will be in March, and is free and open to the public at the St. Charles Family Arena.

The entry fee is \$6,000, which includes an initial kit of basic parts. Each team can solicit corporate sponsors to supply materials and/or funding to complete the robot and other related school activities. These sponsors will be recognized on banners, contest publications and intended documentaries or local news coverage.

This will be the sixteenth year for the FIRST competition, and the eighth year that this contest has been held in St. Louis. In 2007, there were 48 local and nationwide teams competing here in the regional competition, including over 10 St. Louis area school teams competing at the St. Louis regional contest at the St. Charles Family Arena. In 2005 and 2007, the “Lightning Lancers”, team 1444, took first place in this regional competition, and traveled to Atlanta for the National Competition.

The St. Louis Alumni of the National Lutheran Fraternity (at the University of Mo.-Rolla), **Beta Sigma Psi**, organized the team and provide many of the sponsors and the engineering “Mentors” for FIRST robotics team 1444.

If you would like to know more about the FIRST competition, visit the Lightning Lancers’ team website at www.FIRST1444.com, or the FIRST website at www.usfirst.org., or email team@first1444.com