

Kelly Ortberg FTC League

10/01/15 League Meeting Minutes

League Dates / Venues

- We are targeting four league meets: one in November, two in December, and one in January.
- We are proposing to our counterpart league that both leagues could agree to enter the League Championship with four meets each. This avoids the challenge of racing the other league to rack up as many matches as possible to enter with better records than the other league.
- Our first meet is tentatively scheduled for November 19th at the Cedar Rapids Library. This date is not locked in, but Andy Marshall is in contact with them and yesterday they had this date open. We are working to get confirmed on their schedule.
- League meets for week nights should start at 5:00 to 5:30 PM. We expect that they take about an hour to setup prior to the start time.
- Some possible locations for the December and January league meets: Linn-Mar Excelsior or Oak Ridge, Kennedy High School, Wilson Middle School, Cedar Rapids Library (possibility for the January meet). The representatives for these potential locations need to look into this and let us know what seems possible. Action needed from Dan Niemitalo, Lorymar Vargas,

Volunteer Needs / Volunteer Coordination

- Each league meet will need around 15 volunteers: 1 Field Technical Advisor (FTA), 3 Referees, 3 Hardware Inspectors, 1 Scorekeeper, 2 Queuers, and 2 Field Resetters. Optionally, it is also great to have a few people to help with Check-In, Pit Admin, DJ, and Emcee.
- All teams are asked to tap their networks for potential event volunteers.
- Linn-Mar Robotics as league administrators will provide some of the volunteers and volunteer coordination support for all of the league events.
- Dan Niemitalo will lead the volunteer coordination for the November meet at the CR Library, and Steve Brooks and Delta Robotics have offered to help out with that one.
- Dan Niemitalo will lead the volunteer coordination for a potential December Linn-Mar event (if we can secure a space to hold such an event)
- Lorymar Vargas has a young team and would need help coordinating a potential event at Kennedy. Mark Matson and the Franklin team would be willing to help out with that event.
- Chris Martin and the Marion High School program are hosting the League Championship on Jan. 23. Dan Niemitalo and Linn-Mar will help with volunteer coordination, and the other league will also be asked for some help with that event.
 - **Judges Needed:** The League Championship will be a larger event that will also feature a full judging experience, and that will significantly increase the need for outstanding volunteer recruits. Please try to

identify people that would make good potential judges. We want the most diverse set of judges possible. We would like a mix of technical and non-technical backgrounds in our judge crew, as well as a mix of experienced and new judges. What sorts of people can be judges? Answer: a judge should be a good role model for our students, and they should be interested in experiencing and supporting FIRST.

- Some volunteer positions require some training, which is a combination of reading and “on the job” training:
 - Judges have a bit of reading material to look at prior to the event. No test required. The judge advisor at the event helps the new judge learn the role, and new judges are paired with experienced judges as they work throughout the day.
 - Referees need to learn the game rules and take an online quiz. Any potentially interested referees are strongly encouraged to attend an early league meet and “apprentice” with an experienced referee. Referees have a difficult job, but it is also very fun to be next to the action, according to some of the people who have done it.
 - Hardware Inspectors need to read the robot construction rules and pass an online quiz. Hardware inspectors can learn on the job from an experienced inspector.
 - Field Technical Advisors (FTA) need to read online training material and pass a quiz, and they should apprentice with an experienced FTA their first time.
- Some roles can be done with no training by any eager volunteer who just wants to help, including queuer, field reset, and check-in, and possibly pit admin and DJ.
- It would be great to get a bunch of new volunteer recruits to the November league meet to learn new roles from experienced volunteers in a low pressure environment. We have experienced volunteers in this geographical area for all of these roles, but those people get stretched thin sometimes. We would love to train lots of new people in these key roles.
- Volunteers should sign up in VIMS (Volunteer Information and Matching System), which includes 2 day lead time to do a background check as a part of the Youth Protection Program (YPP) that FIRST put in place last year.
 - This process is a bit cumbersome, so helping volunteers through it in person would be a good way to avoid scaring off potential valuable volunteers.
 - Feel free to call FIRST directly with your concerns about VIMS or Youth Team Member Registration (formerly STIMS). This contact might influence FIRST to make more support available or upgrade their systems to something that is more user friendly.
- Volunteer Sharing: I’d like to facilitate the exchange of referees in particular with other leagues. This is a way for us to get referees from outside the league, which helps us get impartial referees and also help another league do the same. Does anybody have a volunteer who would be willing to referee for another league? We have several leagues that will have league meets in the Cedar Rapids metro area.

League Communication

- Please email me and tell me your team’s **name** and **web address** (if applicable). I will update the team list with that information. If there’s any other information you’d like me to include about your team, let me know.
- The league website (Imrobotics.com/ortberg) will include the following:
 - Logistical info on events (date, time, location)
 - League meet results – official meet results will be posted on the site
 - League meeting minutes
 - Match scores during meets – we will update match scores during the league meet, since this is a significant gap at many FTC events that is easily addressed. This will be low-tech (i.e. link to a Google

spreadsheet or a simple WordPress page that we update after each match) but we'll make something available.

- We will set up a Google Group to make it easier to look at past league emails with important info. This just means that I will copy the email address of this Google Group when I sent out emails, and you can subscribe to that if you want to use it to view the email history at any time.
- If you have some valuable resources that teams might be able to use, please email it to Dan Niemitalo so they can be put on the league page.

Discussion of Software Platforms

- MIT App Inventor was intended as an easy way to start programming using graphical Scratch style programming. Word from a couple of the teams is that it is limiting and “not ready for prime time,” which is to say that it probably needs some additional development before it will be easy to use. It might not be any easier to start in App Inventor than it is in Android Studio.
- Android Studio offers more flexibility and the provided templates are good.
- The new control system supports the new hardware better than the legacy hardware. Two teams said it was quite difficult to make the control system work with the Legacy (HiTechnic) controls whereas it was easier with the new equipment.
- The FTC Technology Forum has a lot of useful discussion lately. One of the developers is one these forums answering questions daily. <http://ftcforum.usfirst.org/forumdisplay.php?156-FTC-Technology>

FIRST Senior Mentor: Andy Marshall

Andy Marshall is a FIRST Senior Mentor who can support teams in a variety of ways. This includes team development, helping to connect teams with opportunities in their communities, and generally connecting teams with resources.

Andy Marshall, 319-929-1588, amarshall@usfirst.org

League Mentor

You should have received an email from our league mentor, Nick Dallege, who is an alumni of the Kennedy FTC program. He is available to answer questions about events, and he seems to be knowledgeable about robot related stuff as well. He can be reached at ftc.iowa.leagues@gmail.com.

Next Meeting: Early November

We will plan to meet again in about a month in late October or early November. We will discuss our needs for upcoming league meets (volunteers, logistics) and any other business that teams would like to bring up.