

## **General FAQ for Potential First Time Judges for a LEGO Robotics Tournament**

Hopefully this will help you decide if judging is for you! (And we hope it is, so don't be intimidated. It really is fun! AND you get a free t-shirt and lunch.) For more info. or to sign up, contact [Marylou](mailto:Marylou@teamnash.org) at [robotics@teamnash.org](mailto:robotics@teamnash.org) or 970-217-7666, or go directly to [Judge Signup \(age 19+\)](#).

### **What is a LEGO Robot?**

LEGO Robots are very cool! They are based on the **LEGO Mindstorm Technology**. The robots are built around a small, onboard computer. The robot's computer runs programs that are written on a personal computer (ex. laptop) and downloaded to the robot. Kids learn to program, and they learn mechanical principles as they build their robots. Some designs are better than others! LEGO parts, such as regular bricks and Technic parts, are added to the robot to give it capabilities to perform tasks, such as picking up and moving objects. **The robot is autonomous** – that is, it operates based on sensors and its prewritten (by kids) programs and is not remote controlled. Kids learn sophisticated technological concepts while designing, building, and programming their robot to move around its environment, performing tasks.

### **What is a LEGO Robotics Tournament?**

Every fall, the national organization, **FIRST LEGO League (FLL)**, releases this year's new challenge related to a theme, complete with a new 8'x4' playing mat and pieces built from LEGO parts that must be manipulated according to very specific rules. The theme changes yearly. For example, this year's **theme is Climate Connections**, an exploration of local and global climate. **Teams of up to 10 kids ages 9-14** form at schools, churches, scouting groups. They have only a couple months to build robots that can solve as many of the challenges on the playing mat as possible in 2.5 minutes. Each team has an 8'x4' practice table on which to place the mat and pieces. The team also works on a research project issued as part of the year's challenge. Then, on Tournament Day (sometime in Nov. or Dec., depending on geographical area), teams compete on competition tables to see which team's robot design can win the most points. Families and friends cheer them on! They also present a skit based on their research project solution to spectators and judges. This year there are several qualifying tournaments in CO, leading up to the Championship tournament in December. In Fort Collins, we have the **Poudre Qualifier Tournament** which will be held on **Sat., Nov. 15 at Poudre High School**. Our tournament is not sponsored by the school district, although many of the teams are based at local schools. Nearby is the **Thompson Tournament** which will be held at **Thompson High School on Sat., Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup>**.

### **What is a Judge?**

Maybe you! Judges are adults who work in teams of twos to judge the qualitative aspects of the competition. (Usually teen volunteers act as referees at the competition tables and determine quantitative scores.) There are three main types of judging "jobs" that volunteers can choose from:

- 1) Technical Judging:** Judging the robots themselves (creativity, design, programming, etc.)
- 2) Presentation Judging:** Judging skits that teams create to showcase research into real world aspects related to the theme of this year's tournament, "Climate Connections".
- 3) Teamwork Judging:** A team is presented with a new problem and must work together to come up with a solution in a few minutes. Judges get to see the team at work in a spontaneous setting.

### **What time commitment and training does judging take?**

A judge reads relevant training material online prior to the tournament. There may also be a one-time phone conference before the tournament, led by the head judge. Possibly, there may be an evening training during the week leading up to the tournament. Then, on tournament day, **judges arrive at 7:45 a.m. to be trained** and placed in teams of two, usually with a veteran on each team. The tournament lasts until mid-afternoon.

### **How is it to judge?**

FUN! Seeing how excited the kids are as they compete and watching the pride they take in their ingenious robots and presentations is fun! Knowing that there could not be the much anticipated "Tournament Day" without YOU is rewarding. Please consider joining us for a fun filled, rewarding day.