

The Complete Guide to the FIRST Robotics Competition Chairman's Award

Written by *FIRST Robotics Competition* team



The Complete Guide to the FIRST Robotics Competition Chairman's Award

Introduction

1.0 Why Every Team Should Apply for the Chairman's Award

2.0 Common Misconceptions About the Chairman's Award

3.0 Leading up to the Chairman's Award Submission

- 3.1 How to begin changing the culture in your community
- 3.2 Documentation

4.0 An Introduction to the Chairman's Submission Process

- 4.1 What to expect
- 4.2 Creating a theme
- 4.3 Chairman's Award Submission Timeline
- 4.4 Chairman's Award Submission Checklist
- 4.5 Overall tips & tricks

5.0 The Essay

- 5.1 What is the Chairman's Award Essay?
- 5.2 The outline
- 5.3 The process
- 5.4 Tips & tricks

6.0 The Executive Summaries

- 6.1 What are the Executive Summaries?
- 6.2 The process
- 6.3 Tips & tricks

7.0 The Video

- 7.1 What is the Chairman's Award Video?
- 7.2 Why is the Chairman's Award Video important?
- 7.3 The process
- 7.4 Tips & tricks

8.0 The Chairman's Award Interview

- 8.1 What is the Chairman's Award Interview?
- 8.2 Why is the Chairman's Award Interview important?
- 8.3 The process
- 8.4 Props
- 8.5 Attire
- 8.6 Tips & tricks

9.0 The Chairman's Award at the Event

- 9.1 Practicing
- 9.2 Presentation times
- 9.3 Competition Checklist

10.0 Win or lose; you are a Chairman's Team

11.0 How You Can Help All Teams Become Chairman's Teams

12.0 Additional Resources

- 12.1 Chairman's Award Submission Timelines
- 12.2 Resources from FIRST
- 12.3 Submission Example
- 12.4 Contact Information



Introduction

This guide was developed by members of FRC team 2486, the CocoNuts, to address a need we saw in the FRC community: there aren't enough teams applying for the Chairman's Award, and many teams who do apply for the award lack confidence in the process. Teams everywhere are being encouraged to apply, but at many regionals less than 1/3 of eligible teams apply for the award. The Chairman's Award is FIRST's most prestigious award and is given to a single team at each event that best exemplifies the FIRST message and values. The Award Submission behind Chairman's can be tedious and scary for many teams. We wanted to create something that could guide these anxious teams through the process, and that could encourage teams who don't apply for the award to do so. This guide aims to help all teams- whether 2 years or 20 years old- accomplish the goal of completing a Chairman's Award submission so they can truly see the impact they have had on their community and aim for even higher goals.

1.0 Why Every Team Should Apply for the Chairman's Award

1. It is documentation of everything you have done that year. If nothing else, your Chairman's Award submission is an excellent way to document your team's growth and accomplishments each year. The Chairman's video is also a great way to get your team and FIRST out there for potential sponsors and community members.
2. It will allow your team to analyze the program you have in place. The numbers might disappoint you, but you may also be very surprised. The Chairman's Award submission is also a good tool when it comes to setting team goals.
3. It will change your team and your community for the better. If your team has traditionally only been a "robot" or "build season" team, submitting your first Chairman's Award is a huge step in advancing your team towards becoming a "Chairman's Team" and leaving an impact on your community. The award submission introduces videography, writing skills, public speaking, and more, thus pulling in more students who may not have been interested in robotics before.
4. It refocuses your team on the values and messages of FIRST. It can be easy for teams to forget that the real reason FIRST exists is not to build a robot, but to inspire others to pursue and appreciate STEM. Applying for the Chairman's Award steers teams back to the core values of FIRST because in the process you must explain why your team embodies FIRST's core values. The more you look at and embrace these values, the easier it will be for your team to embody them.
5. It allows your team to teach itself your mission and history. When you create a Chairman's submission, you are forced to look at almost everything you have done as a team. This usually means going back far in the history as well as figuring out what your current mission is. Team history and a team mission are two things every team member should know.



The Complete Guide to the FIRST Robotics Competition Chairman's Award

6. In general, Chairman's teams seem to perform better on the field and at competitions. The reason Chairman's teams do so well is two main reasons: 1. When you have a strong, sustainable program with lots of partnerships (like many Chairman's teams have) you gain more mentors, funding, build space, machines, team members and many things that contribute to a better robot on the field. 2. Chairman's teams understand and embody FIRST. They are quality teams and understand that FIRST isn't just a competition, but also a celebration. There are many examples of Regional and Championship Chairman's Award winning teams doing well in both aspects of competition. Annually, in division finals, 1/3 of teams are Engineering Inspiration or Chairman's Award winning teams. In 2005 "The Hot Team" won Championship Chairman's and on Einstein. 7 out of the past 10 Championship Chairman's Award winning teams have made appearances on Einstein; many of these teams have even won on Einstein. It is no coincidence that these teams are successful in so many areas; it's because they have incredibly strong partnerships in their community that gives them access to the tools they need to succeed.

2.0 Common Misconceptions About the Chairman's Award

1. My team won't win. This is not attitude to have as a Chairman's Award team! If you are doing your Chairman's Award submission for the right reasons, this shouldn't matter anyways. Evaluate why your team is applying for the award, and if the only reason is to win, maybe you should wait a year or two before applying or take a year off of applying for the award so your team can truly understand why the award and submission is so important. Plus, with the new changes to the Chairman's Award ([Chairman's Resources](#)) you have multiple chances to win and improve.

2. There is some kind of "secret" to winning the Chairman's Award. This is something teams always ask about, and the truth is, there is no secret. There is not a single thing across the board that works for every team that allows them to win the award. The judges aren't looking for one single thing that your team does that automatically qualifies you for the award. There is no list of things a team should do before they win Chairman's at any level. Stop looking for some "secret" and just do what works for your team, that's the real way to win.

3. We don't have enough of a track record to be competitive for the award because we are a two-year team or just started focusing on Chairman's this year. That is no reason not to apply! There are dozens of teams who have won the Chairman's Award as a two-year team. For example in 2014, 18 teams won the Chairman's Award for the first time. That means that 18 teams have been working hard, whether for a long time or a short period and won the award this year! You can do it too! Even if you don't win the award, which shouldn't be your only goal in applying, you just took the first step towards becoming one of those teams with a track record!

4. We don't have as much money as those other teams that apply for the award do. Those teams have all that money because they go out and get it! There is money everywhere, and usually you just must ask. Why should money be a factor in your Chairman's Award submission, anyways? How much money you have isn't proportional to how much you spread FIRST. Falcon Robotics, Hall of Fame team 842, comes from an extremely low-income area in Phoenix, Arizona. They didn't let limited funds stop them from winning Championship Chairman's. It shouldn't stop you either.



3.0 Leading up to the Chairman's Award Submission

3.1 How to begin changing the culture in your community

The most important part of the Chairman's Award Submission is its content. This means you should work year around, spreading the ideals of FIRST and changing your culture. What does this mean exactly? Well, there is outreach, FLL, FTC, and VEX, mentoring, starting rookie teams, putting on workshops and so much more. However, this will not change the culture. Thinking outside the box is generally what sets Chairman's Team apart from the other teams. Whether it is creating an app, influencing a rights movement, or creating one of the first effective guides for rookie teams, spreading FIRST and inspiring STEM in a way that has never been done before is what's going to make a difference. This sounds like an enormous task, and it truly is, but the first step is identifying something in your community (whether on a local, state, national, or international level) that your team can embody, then do your outreach, start your teams, and always keep that innovative thing in your mind, because innovation is truly what makes a difference in FIRST and in the world.

3.2 Documentation

One of the most important things you can do when preparing to apply for the Chairman's Award is document everything. Documentation is vital for all aspects of the award. From recording hours, to taking pictures, to saving programs and news articles, the things you document are part of what validate your Chairman's Submission. Pictures and film are needed for the video. Dates and activities are necessary for the essay, and statistics are very beneficial in the Executive Summaries. Anything from your events can be useful for the presentation. Here are some ways you can make sure your team has good documentation:

- ✓ Assign at least one person to take pictures and video at all your events, meetings, and competitions
- ✓ Keep track of where your alumni attend school and what scholarships they were offered
- ✓ Keep all your pictures and videos in one organized place
- ✓ Record how many hours you dedicate to outreach, community service, mentoring, etc.
- ✓ Keep any newspaper clippings that feature your team in one place
- ✓ Record dates for all outreach events, volunteering, etc.
- ✓ Keep an excel sheet with links to any place your team is mentioned including videos, news features, and other websites
- ✓ Keep a document with any nice things people have said about your team from emails, letters, social media, etc.



4.0 An Introduction to the Chairman's Submission Process

4.1 What to expect

The Chairman's Award submission is a process that requires dedication, passion, and enthusiasm. The submission entails:

- ✓ 10,000 Character Essay
- ✓ (13) 500 Character Executive Summaries
- ✓ 3-minute Video
- ✓ 10-minute Chairman's Interview

All award submissions have a very strict due date and this varies from year to year. Typically the submission deadline is two weeks before stop build day. The awards were due before the last day of build season. However, the Team Information Management System (STIMS) allows teams to submit all awards starting in late fall, usually sometime in October. This means that you can have your awards done before build season even starts! Although, it would be advised that you hold off on submitting the awards until later in the year just in case new things come up or statistics change.

Ideally, a core group of students will be dedicated to creating a Chairman's Award submission. Creating the submission can be done in many ways. If you only have a small group of students (1-5) working on the submission, it will be easiest if you have all the students work together on all aspects of the submission. If you have a larger group of students (6+) then you should be able to split up the kids into groups to work on each aspect of the submission. This will save time and allow students to work on what they are best at or most interested in.

In your first year applying for the award or if you have a very small team, you may have to set aside specific times for the team to work on awards. This may require a few hours each week where much of members are working on awards instead of working on the robot. This could be a hard transition, and the first year of applying for the award may be a little rocky, but in the end the impact you have on your community and your team because of the Chairman's Award will be worth it.

If you have never applied for the Chairman's Award, and don't know where to start on the actual submission, don't worry. This guide should provide enough knowledge that you are comfortable with the entire process.



The Complete Guide to the FIRST Robotics Competition Chairman's Award

4.2 Creating a theme

For many teams, it is a good idea to pick a general theme or continuity throughout their submission. This could mean several things, but no matter what, do not force a theme. When you come to it, you will know whether a theme feels “forced”, and if it does, don’t be afraid to trash it.

One way to do a theme is to keep a consistent idea throughout all parts of your submission. Whether it is a phrase, an idea, or something like a puzzle or recipe, it can be a good idea to keep consistency throughout your submission.

Themes can also vary based on which aspect of the Chairman’s submission you are working on. For example, you may do a newscast for your video, a Wizard of Oz themed presentation, and a formal essay. Don’t be afraid to switch it up if a certain theme or idea feels right for one aspect, but not another. There will always be one coherent aspect of any award submission: your team.

4.3 Chairman’s Award Submission Timeline*

Applying for the Chairman’s Award before build season begins is a very good strategy if you would like to focus on other awards and the robot during the build season. Although, applying before build season requires a lot of team effort. To effectively do this, you should plan 5 or so hours each week to work specifically on the Chairman’s Award. Completing a Chairman’s Award submission before build season is also considerably easier and more effective if you have more than 5 people dedicated to working on it. If you do, use the strategy outlined above of splitting into smaller groups to work on various components. Make sure that you wait to submit your essay and executive summaries until a few days before the award is due! This will allow you to update your submission with any important information that happens during build season!

If you want to start during build season, as many teams do, you will need to make a major time commitment to the Chairman’s Award submission. You have 5 weeks to complete the awards and will need to work on the submission for about 12 hours each week.

**Timelines for both applying before & during build season can be found in “Additional Resources”*

4.4 Chairman’s Award Submission Checklist

Make sure follow this checklist as you create your Chairman’s Award submission to ensure you have all the necessary components and are staying on track.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ✓ Essay outline | ✓ Have essay rough draft edited by mentors/students/English teachers |
| ✓ Theme or storyline for the essay | ✓ Gather necessary video and pictures into one place |
| ✓ Executive Summaries written | ✓ Chairman’s presentation Outline |
| ✓ Essay rough draft | ✓ Record any audio/music you need for the video |
| ✓ Chairman’s video storyboard | ✓ Practice presentation |
| ✓ Choose Chairman’s presenters | |
| ✓ Impact Statements from Chairman’s presenters | |



The Complete Guide to the FIRST Robotics Competition Chairman's Award

- ✓ Add finishing touches to essay & Executive Summaries
- ✓ Submit essay and Executive Summaries via STIMS
- ✓ Double check that none of the characters have changed when you copy and paste the essay and Executive Summaries into STIMS
- ✓ Finalize the video
- ✓ Burn at least 3 copies of your video
- ✓ Sign the release waiver from the FIRST website for your video
- ✓ Ensure you have any additional release forms for any minors in your video
- ✓ Present Chairman's presentation to groups outside of your team
- ✓ Print and/or construct any supporting materials for the presentation.

4.5 Overall tips & tricks

- ✓ -Start early, if you can.
- ✓ -Show the aspects of your submission to groups outside of your team for feedback (other teams, teachers, school district, parents, etc.).
- ✓ -*Always* write your Executive Summaries and essay in a separate document and not in STIMS. Sometimes STIMS crashes.
- ✓ -Submit a day or two before the awards deadline.
- ✓ -Print multiple copies of your essay & bring them to competitions. You can have one in your pit & have extras to give to other teams or judges.
- ✓ -Don't stress about a consistent "theme".
- ✓ -Don't be afraid to ask for help from other teams

5.0 The Essay

5.1 What is the Chairman's Award essay?

The Chairman's Award Essay is a 10,000-character document that is essentially the judges' first impression of your team. The essay and Executive Summaries are the first-time judges see why your team is a Chairman's Award team. The essay is a time to show facts, tell stories, and explain what they mean to your team and community. The essay is the way for you to show what your team is all about and why you deserve the award. It is great to include quotes, statistics, and facts. Along with the essay, you can submit up to four pictures to accompany your submission. Make sure you utilize this media and don't just throw in some random pictures. Use pictures that mean something to your team and that relate to your essay. The essay is one of the longest parts of the Chairman's process, but it is also one of the most important.



5.2 The Outline

You should always begin your Chairman's Essay with an outline. For most teams there is far too much information to skip an outline. If you do, the essay may become cluttered or you may miss important information.

To create an outline, start by listing all the things that are important to your team that you think should be in the essay (i.e. mentoring, specific outreach/service events, sponsors, FLL, FTC, VEX, etc.). Once you have all of these important details written out, group them into larger chunks like "Tournaments", "Sustainability", "Outreach", etc. Then, organize these chunks in a way that makes sense and flows with your essay. You now have a coherent outline that you can use to write your essay! The outlining step is best done with as many people as possible so that nothing important accidentally gets skipped over or forgotten.

5.3 The Process

Once you have your outline, begin filling in each topic. An introduction to your essay is a good idea. Depending on what you picked for a theme (whether a formal essay, short story, or an essay that is broken up by headings) the introduction will vary. You should, however, introduce your team and set up the rest of the essay with a solid introduction. Remember, just like any other essay, you have to pull the reader in and make them remember your writing.

After you write your introduction, begin filling in your outline with facts, numbers, quotes, and stories. Try to use as many abbreviations and actual numbers ("1" instead of "one") as to conserve those valuable characters. While doing this, it is important that you don't make the essay too clutter with these, as too many abbreviations can make the essay choppy and confusing.

When you are writing the content of your essay, try to be conscientious of characters, but don't worry too much about them. Aim to finish the rough draft of your essay under 10,000 characters.

End your essay with a strong conclusion paragraph that will be memorable to the judges. Don't be afraid to reiterate some important facts, but add in why what you do as a Chairman's Team is so important to your team and community. Make sure to echo your theme, if you have one, in your closing paragraph.

While writing the essay, you may hit patches of writer's block or where your writing feels forced. If your team does, it's okay to take a quick break and stop staring at a computer screen for a little bit. If it is late, call it a night and resume the next morning or in a day. It is better to take a little time off and refresh than it is to push through, especially with high school students.

Once you have your finished essay have many different people read it. English and history teachers are great essay editors. Try to give teachers a week or so in advance before you need to essay back so that they have time to read and return it to you. Be careful when adding these revisions to your essay, because sometimes teachers don't understand all the FIRST lingo and references that the judges will. Be cautious about what you change in the essay as to not spend characters explaining things, like acronyms, that the judges will already understand.



The Complete Guide to the FIRST Robotics Competition Chairman's Award

Once you have completed all the necessary corrections, you can begin cutting down characters. Start from the beginning and work your way through the essay. Many times, sentences can be shorted and the content in paragraphs can be rearranged and condensed. Try to use symbols like "&" and "%". You can also consider changing most spots with your team name to your team number. For example, changing a sentence from "The CocoNuts" to "2486" saves 8 characters every time it is changed. However, make sure you leave your team name in both the introduction and conclusion of your essay.

The next step, once the essay is at 10,000 characters or less, is submitting the essay in STIMS. Each student should have a STIMS account, and if a coach hasn't already designated the student as an award submitter they must do so before the awards can be submitted. You will be asked to fill in a few boxes and to select which regional you would like your submission to be judged at. Then, copy and paste the essay from the document and into the text box. Then, upload the four pictures you have selected. Before sending in the submission, check your essay to make sure that no letters or symbols have been changed on your essay. Sometimes transferring the text will do this. Once you are positive everything is polished, you will finalize the submission. Verify that the submission has been finalized for judging and is not just saved in STIMS. You're done with the essay!

5.4 Tips & tricks

- ✓ Use your 4 pictures wisely; don't just pick random ones, choose pictures that mean something.
- ✓ Let your enthusiasm show through in your essay. Don't be afraid to throw in an exclamation point when you write about something that is exciting for your team.
- ✓ Try not to list what your team has done; try to explain what you have accomplished.
- ✓ Start with an outline.
- ✓ Work on the outline for a couple of days so that you don't forget something in one session.
- ✓ Don't force a theme. If it doesn't fit, trash it.
- ✓ Write a strong introduction that is an overview of your team and is memorable.
- ✓ In most spots, use your team number instead of your team name.
- ✓ Before you allow the submission to be judged, go back and make
- ✓ Use abbreviations, numbers ("1" vs "one") and symbols.
- ✓ Do not overuse abbreviations and symbols.
- ✓ Don't stress too much about characters in your rough draft.
- ✓ Try to keep your rough draft under 10,500 characters.
- ✓ Don't be afraid to take breaks.
- ✓ Give your rough draft to people outside of your team to edit.
- ✓ English and history teachers are great editors.
- ✓ Cut down characters after you add any corrections
- ✓ Have fun

sure that none of the characters have been changed in the transfer.



6.0 The Executive Summaries

6.1 What are the Executive Summaries?

The Executive Summaries are thirteen 500-character summaries on a specific topic that is provided by the judges. The thirteen 2016 summaries are:

- ✓ Briefly describe the impact of the FIRST program on team participants with special emphasis on the current season and the preceding two to five years
- ✓ Describe the impact of the FIRST program on your community with special emphasis on the current season and the preceding two to five years
- ✓ Describe the team's innovative or creative method to spread the FIRST message
- ✓ Describe examples of how your team members act as role models and inspire other FIRST team members to emulate.
- ✓ Team's initiatives to help start or form other FIRST Robotics Competition teams.
- ✓ Describe the team's initiatives to help start or form other FIRST teams (including FIRST LEGO League Jr., FIRST LEGO League, & FIRST Tech Challenge)
- ✓ Describe the team's initiatives on assisting other FIRST teams (including FIRST LEGO League Jr., FIRST LEGO League, & FIRST Tech Challenge)
- ✓ Describe how your team works with other FIRST teams to serve as mentors to younger or less experienced FIRST teams (including FIRST LEGO League Jr., FIRST LEGO League, & FIRST Tech Challenge)
- ✓ Describe your Corporate /University Sponsors
- ✓ Describe the strength of your partnership with your sponsors with special emphasis on the current season and the preceding two to five years.
- ✓ For FIRST Robotics Competition teams, older than 5 years, briefly describe your team's broader impact from its inception
- ✓ Describe how your team would explain what FIRST is to someone who has never heard of it
- ✓ Briefly describe other matters of interest to the FIRST Judges, if any

The Executive Summaries are a key place for you to use numbers and statistics. Because the Executive Summaries are so short, there isn't much room to add a lot of content beyond numbers and statistics. Be sure to visit the FIRST awards website if Executive Summaries have been changed/added.



6.2 The Process

To write the Executive Summaries, start by listing the most important ideas for each specific topic. Try to focus on numbers and statistics for your team. Remember to not stress too much about the characters initially- those can be fixed after you have your content, although you don't want to go too far over initially.

6.3 Tips & tricks

- ✓ Focus on numbers and statistics for your team.
- ✓ Keep characters in mind.
- ✓ Try using a bullet-point format.
- ✓ Save stories and long explanations for the essay.

7.0 The Video

7.1 What is the Chairman's Award Video?

The Chairman's Award Video is a 1-3 minute video created by your team to demonstrate what your team has done to earn the Chairman's Award. The video will be given to the judges on a DVD at competition with the necessary releases and paperwork.

7.2 Why is the Chairman's Award Video important?

The importance of the Chairman's Award Video is often debated between teams. Some say that the video is used as a tiebreaker between top Chairman's teams. Some also say that the judges to ensure the content is appropriate and no music, pictures, or video has been used without proper consent only view the video. It has also been argued that judges don't watch the video at all. Although we can't really be sure which one of these is true, it is safe to say that each regional and each judging panel will go about judging the Chairman's Award in different ways. Regardless of whether or not the video makes a difference in the judging process, it is important because, if you win the award, your video demonstrates to all the other teams, volunteers, judges, and spectators what you have contributed to earn the award. But, with the video, it is required, when you walk into the judge's room, that you have your video to hand in.

7.3 The Process

The first thing you should do when you plan your video is decide on what kind of "theme" or storyline you would like to portray and what effect you would like your video to have on its viewers. Do you want it to make people laugh, or inspire people? Do you want to use a series of interviews and pictures, or do you want to do something like a newscast?

The next step is to storyboard your idea. The video is only 3 minutes long, so it is important to have a concise plan before you start creating your video. The storyboarding should be done with a larger group of students to ensure that there are many ideas in circulation. If you don't have a fancy storyboarding program, writing your storyboard out on a white board works as well.

Once you know what you want your video to look like, you can begin gathering pictures,



The Complete Guide to the FIRST Robotics Competition Chairman's Award

video, and audio. Make sure all of these items are within the proper constraints of FIRST. If you plan on interviewing people outside of the team make sure you give them a good amount of notice and provide a few talking points.

After you have gathered all of your content, use video editing software to create a final video. Once you have a completed video, you will need to burn at least one DVD, and to a flash drive are recommended. Make sure you also fill out the proper forms* and bring them with you to competition.

7.4 Tips & tricks

- ✓ Always aim to make your video 3 minutes long; you should be able to find enough content to do this.
- ✓ Give your interviewees at least 2 weeks' notice that you would like to film them.
- ✓ The feelings you want to convey to your viewers are very important will reflect your team. Choose carefully.
- ✓ Give interviewees a list of possible speaking points.
- ✓ Have as many people as possible giving input during the storyboarding
- ✓ Copy your video to a flash drive or copy your video on a DVD.
- ✓ Process.
- ✓ Don't forget your forms at home!

8.0 The Chairman's Award Interview

8.1 What is the Chairman's Award Interview?

The Chairman's Award interview is a 10-minute-long session in which your team is allowed up to 7 minutes to present, and the last 3 minutes of Q & A from the judges. Each team is strictly allowed to send in 3 students and any props required for the presentation. You are allowed a mentor to be present in the judge's room. But the mentor cannot speak, or interact.

8.2 Why is the Chairman's Award Interview important?

The Chairman's Award Interview is your team's opportunity to make your Chairman's Award Submission personal and to remind the judges of anything you want to emphasis in your submission. The Chairman's Award presentation is a point where teams who are prepared stand out against those who aren't.

8.3 Picking a Chairman's Presentation team

The Chairman's Award Presentation requires a large amount of work from the 3 students (and any back-ups) on the Chairman's Presentation Team. These students are going to need to be willing to practice individually on their own time as well as in a group. It is important to consider teamwork, speaking abilities, and team knowledge when selecting your 3 students.

For the actual selection process, you may simply ask for volunteers, hold "try outs", or, in some cases, appoint members to the team. Ideally, every member of the Chairman's Award



The Complete Guide to the FIRST Robotics Competition Chairman's Award

Presentation Team would be excited and dedicated to presenting, although, in the first year especially, this is not always realistic. Especially in your first year applying, just try to do your best when coming up with a team. Eventually, you're going to have so many people interested in presenting you won't know what to do with yourself.

Once you have your Chairman's Team, you will want to write a presentation. There are many, many ways to present at competitions. Some teams do a very formal business-like presentation; some do skits like cooking shows or newscasts, and some teams do an in-between method, using formal presentation structure with fun props. The important thing is to do what reflects your team as a whole. You also need to consider what your presenters are comfortable with. Not all teenagers are going to be comfortable doing a skit in front of others and some aren't going to be comfortable doing a formal presentation. It's really up to your team as to what will work for you.

Once you have an idea of what you want your presentation to look like, you should begin writing it out. An outline is a good start. You can use the same method as you do in the Chairman's Essay. Once you have your outline, you will want to divide it up amongst your presenters. After this, have each presenter create bullets for their own speaking piece. Then, they can talk through each point as if they were presenting. This is what your presenters should use for the full content because it allows the information to be communicated in the same language each presenter normally uses. You don't want a presenter using words that don't sound comfortable coming out of his or her mouth. It is also advised that each team member prepares an "impact statement" that should be included in your presentation. The impact statement sums up the effect FIRST have had on a person and are often very personal. If you don't want to include it in your actual presentation time, something relating to your impact statements will probably come up in the Q & A, so it is good to have one anyways.

Now that you have a presentation, you'll need to practice, practice, and practice! Allow students to have a week or so to work individually at home. This will give them time to become comfortable with the content and make any tweaks to the content.

Once the students think it is time to start practicing together, meet as often as possible, and once they are comfortable and consistent in their presenting, they should start presenting to groups outside of the team. This will boost their confidence and give them more experience. It will also give them lots of experience with Q & A!

8.4 Props

During all this, you will want to spend time creating any "props" you need for competition. This includes PowerPoint's, videos, posters, or anything else your team needs to present. Teams who put on skits will probably require more extensive "props" than teams who put on a formal presentation. Other things to consider bringing into the presentation room include pictures, documents, judge's packets, and business plans. It is also a good idea to bring "swag" for the judges like buttons, hats, or anything else you normally hand out at competitions. But a reminder to you is, do not create props that take too much time to set up. Once you walk



The Complete Guide to the FIRST Robotics Competition Chairman's Award

into the judge's room, the timer will start.

8.5 Attire

Like your presentation itself, your attire should reflect your team and your presenters. Teams wear a large range of clothing into the judging room. Some wear polo's and slacks, some wear complete business attire including ties and jackets, and some simply wear their team T-shirts. If your team is putting on a skit, attire is especially important and should be carefully considered. Teams who choose to wear business attire need to consider whether all members should be matching, or if females and males should dress differently. You also need to figure out where you will be getting these items.

8.6 Tips & tricks

- ✓ Only 3 people are allowed into the Chairman's judging room, but it is a good idea to have at least one person as backup in case anything goes wrong at the competition.
- ✓ Make your presentation center around something that is comfortable for your presenters and reflects your team.
- ✓ Let your presenters write their own parts so they are familiar with the diction used in the presentation.
- ✓ Practice, practice, practice!
- ✓ Before practicing as a group, allow students to have a week or two to practice on their own.
- ✓ Present to the team.
- ✓ Present to people outside of the team. School boards, city councils, parents, and teachers are all good examples.
- ✓ Practice with your props as often as possible.
- ✓ Bring handouts for the judges (buttons, judges packets, pictures, etc.).
- ✓ Presenters should wear something comfortable that reflects the team and the presentation.
- ✓ Having your entire team waiting outside of the presentation room is extremely encouraging for your presenters.
- ✓ Any set up time taken in the room counts towards your presentation, so be ready in advance and factor that time into your presentation.

9.0 The Chairman's Award at the Event

9.1 Practicing



The Complete Guide to the FIRST Robotics Competition Chairman's Award

Prior to your presentation to the judges, it is a good idea to practice. Grab your presenters and find a quiet spot about 2 hours before your presentation time. Run through the presentation (with your props) once or twice, and then give your presenters some time to go change if needed. Continue to practice until about an hour before your presentation time. At this time, it can be fun to take some pictures of your presentation team and do something relaxing like watching a few matches. At about a half hour before the presentation, you will want to get the team back together. Make sure you have your DVD, props, and forms. Run through the presentation one or two more times, then go to the area near the presentation room. Try to stay as relaxed as possible, and line up in the way you will enter the room, with all props ready.

9.2 Presentation times

How you get your presentation time varies by event. Some regionals will assign a time for you while others will require you to sign up for a time. It is advised that you visit pit admin and ask which method is used when you arrive at your event. If you have the option to sign up, consult with your presenters and coaches as to which time you would be most comfortable with. It is a good idea to pick a time that doesn't conflict with one of your matches.

9.3 Competition checklist

Make sure you have these things prior to leaving for your competition!

- ✓ Presenter attire
- ✓ Props (Computer, thumb drive, posters, etc.)
- ✓ Video on a DVD
- ✓ Additional documents (pictures, business plan, judges packet, etc.)
- ✓ Video Release form
- ✓ Any other forms required for your video
- ✓ Extra copies of your Chairman's Submission
- ✓ "Swag" for judges
- ✓ Printed out copies of your presentation script for practicing

10.0 Win or lose; you are a Chairman's team

This may be one of the hardest pieces of a Chairman's Award Submission for teams to grasp: win or lose, if you are applying for the Chairman's Award for the right reasons, you are a Chairman's Team. This means that your team embodies what the Chairman's Award is about. Remember, the Chairman's Award was created as a way to honor ONE team at each event that best embodies FIRST, this doesn't mean that there aren't other teams that deserve the award as well. Now, with the new changes to the Chairman's Award, you can apply to every event you attend, giving teams that deserve the award, but are at the very competitive regionals, the chance to win elsewhere.

Being a Chairman's Team is an attitude and a mini-culture within a team. If your team acts like a Chairman's Team and embodies what the award and FIRST is about,



The Complete Guide to the FIRST Robotics Competition Chairman's Award

eventually you will be honored for it. The hard part is believing that, despite any award, what you are doing is worthy of recognition.

So, act like a Chairman's team. Be a role model for other teams. Keep up the outreach and keep on changing the culture. Most importantly, be proud of what you are doing and know that it is worthy of recognition and that even if you didn't win this year, there is much more to the Chairman's Award than simply "winning".

11.0 How You Can Help All Teams Become Chairman's Teams

It is extremely important that teams encourage other teams to apply for the award and become Chairman's teams. First, it provides for more healthy competition at events and it pushes teams to do more to spread FIRST. Secondly, by encouraging a team to apply, they will be able to begin spreading FIRST. In turn, that team will encourage other teams to apply and all those teams will spread FIRST, too. Because you help a single team become a Chairman's Team, there is no telling how many people will be impacted.

1. **Mentor.** Helping a team through the submission process is immensely beneficial. Just being available to answer questions and review a submission can work wonders for a team. There are many ways you can mentor teams who are close by as well as teams across the country and world. Skype and social media are great tools when mentoring.
2. **Collaborate.** Sharing your struggles and your submissions is a great way to encourage a team to apply for the Chairman's Award. Many teams simply need an idea of what they should be doing and providing an example can give teams a lot of confidence.
3. **Host Workshops.** If your area doesn't already have a Chairman's Award Workshop at Kick-Off, sign up! Having a team explain the process and answer questions is a great way to get other teams started on the Chairman's Process.
4. **Host a Chairman's Exchange at your event.** The idea of The Chairman's Exchange (ChEx) was created by FRC Team 2486, the CocoNuts, in 2012 and was first implemented at the Phoenix Regional in 2013 and then at the 2013 FIRST World Championship. ChEx is an opportunity for Chairman's Teams, at a set time on Thursday before presentations, to get together to practice their presentations and Q & A. It can also be a great source of ideas for teams who would like to apply for the Chairman's Award. ChEx has been very successful so far, with 3/4 of the Chairman's Teams at World Championships in attendance. If you are interested in hosting a Chairman's Exchange at your event, please email us at the.chairmans.exchange@gmail.com.

12.0 Additional Resources

12.1 Chairman's Submission Timelines

The first timeline is for team who wish to complete their submission before January and



The Complete Guide to the FIRST Robotics Competition Chairman's Award

build season.

Week 1:

- ✓ Brainstorm “themes” or “storylines” for the presentation, video, and essay
- ✓ Make a list of pictures and videos you need for the video
- ✓ Create a rough essay outline

Week 2:

- ✓ Review and finalize your essay outline
- ✓ Decide on your “theme” or “storyline” for the presentation, video, and essay
- ✓ Contact anyone you need to interview for your video (if necessary)
- ✓ Storyboard your Chairman's video

Week 3:

- ✓ Choose your team's Chairman's Award presenters
- ✓ Be 1/3 done with the first draft of your Chairman's Essay
- ✓ Gather all the pictures you need for your Chairman's Video

Week 4:

- ✓ Be 2/3 done with the first draft of your Chairman's Essay
- ✓ Begin conducting any interviews you need for your Chairman's Video
- ✓ Begin writing your Chairman's Presentation

Week 5:

- ✓ Finish the first draft of your Chairman's Essay
- ✓ Give your essay to people outside of the team to edit
- ✓ Begin assembling your Chairman's video
- ✓ Find music for your Chairman's video (optional)
- ✓ Continue collecting pictures, videos, and interviews for the video

Week 6:

- ✓ Write the first draft of your Executive Summaries
- ✓ Give your Executive Summaries to people outside of the team for editing
- ✓ Make any corrections to your essay from the edits
- ✓ Complete the writing for at least half of the Chairman's Presentation

Week 7:

- ✓ Correct your Executive Summaries from the edits
- ✓ Finish writing your Chairman's Presentation
- ✓ Have Chairman's Presenters practice on their own time individually
- ✓ Have half of the Chairman's Video completed



The Complete Guide to the FIRST Robotics Competition Chairman's Award

Week 9:

- ✓ Have your Chairman's Presentation team practice together
- ✓ Cut down your essay to under or at 10,000 characters
- ✓ Ensure your Executive summaries are under or at 500 characters

Week 10:

- ✓ Continue to practice the Chairman's presentation as a group
- ✓ Begin making any props you need for your presentation
- ✓ Finish the Chairman's video
- ✓ Make any tweaks to the Chairman's video

Week 11:

- ✓ Finish any props needed for the presentation
- ✓ Practice the Chairman's Presentation for groups outside of the team

During Build Season:

- ✓ Make any updates to your submission if/when the occur
- ✓ Continue practicing the Chairman's Presentation for groups outside of the team

A couple days before awards are due:

- ✓ Finalize all your documents, and then submit them. Chairman's is due February 9th, 3pm ET
- ✓ Continue to practice the Chairman's presentation until competition

The timeline below is for teams who would like to prepare their submission during build season.

Week 1:

- ✓ Brainstorm "themes" or "storylines" for the presentation, video, and essay
- ✓ Create a rough essay outline
- ✓ Decide on your "theme" or "storyline" for the presentation, video, and essay
- ✓ Storyboard your Chairman's video

Week 2:

- ✓ Review and finalize your essay outline
- ✓ Choose your team's Chairman's Award presenters
- ✓ Be 1/3 done with the first draft of your Chairman's Essay
- ✓ Contact anyone you need to interview for your video (if necessary)
- ✓ Write the first draft of your Executive Summaries
- ✓ Give your Executive Summaries to people outside of the team for editing.

Week 3:

- ✓ Begin conducting any interviews you need for your Chairman's Video
- ✓ Be 2/3 done with the first draft of your Chairman's Essay



The Complete Guide to the FIRST Robotics Competition Chairman's Award

- ✓ Make a list of pictures and videos you need for the video
- ✓ Find music for your Chairman's video (optional)
- ✓ Continue collecting pictures, videos, and interviews for the video

Week 4:

- ✓ Gather all the pictures you need for your Chairman's Video
- ✓ Finish the first draft of your Chairman's Essay
- ✓ Give your essay to people outside of the team to edit
- ✓ Correct your Executive Summaries from the edits
- ✓ Ensure your Executive summaries are under or at 500 characters
- ✓ Begin assembling your Chairman's video

Week 5:

- ✓ Make any corrections to your essay from the edits
- ✓ Begin writing your Chairman's Presentation
- ✓ Cut down your essay to under or at 10,000 characters
- ✓ Begin making any props you need for your presentation

Submit your Executive Summaries and Essay – February 9th @ 3pm ET

Week 6:

- ✓ Complete the writing for at least half of the Chairman's Presentation
- ✓ Have half of the Chairman's Video completed
- ✓ Finish any props needed for the presentation

Week 7:

- ✓ Finish writing your Chairman's Presentation
- ✓ Have Chairman's Presenters practice on their own time individually
- ✓ Have your Chairman's Presentation team practice together

Week 8:

- ✓ Finish the Chairman's video
- ✓ Make any tweaks to the Chairman's video
- ✓ Continue to practice the Chairman's presentation as a group

Until Competition:

- ✓ Practice the Chairman's Presentation for groups outside of the team
- ✓ Continue to practice the Chairman's presentation until competition

12.2 Resources from FIRST

There are many resources from FIRST on a wide variety of topics. However, one of the most important is the Administrative Manual, which is released in September. This will contain information on all the awards and due dates.



The Complete Guide to the FIRST Robotics Competition Chairman's Award

Chairman's Award Video Suggested Shot List

This document contains several ideas for basic shots that could be very effective in your Chairman's Video. [Shot List](#)

Chairman's Award Video Suggested Timeline

This document is a more in-detail timeline for creating your Chairman's Video that centers on a yearlong creation process. [Suggested Timeline](#)

Chairman's Award Video Tape Log

This is a way for teams to keep track of their filming.

[Example Tape Log](#)

[Blank Tape Log](#)

Chairman's Award Video Consent & Release Form

This is the form that is required for your video to be shown at competitions. If you do not have it, you may be disqualified!

[Consent Form](#)

12.3 Submission Examples

**A professional film crew prior to the Chairman's Video submission requirement created these videos*

Hall of Fame Submissions

2016: The High Rollers (987)

[Essay and Executive Summaries](#)

[Video](#)

2015: The Wolverines (597)

[Essay & Executive Summaries](#)

[Video](#)

2013: The Holy Cows (1538)

[Essay & Summaries](#)

[Video](#)

2012: Simbotics (1114)

[Essay, Video, & Presentation Display](#)

2011: Hawaiian Kids (359)

[Video](#)

2010: Miss Daisy (341)



The Complete Guide to the FIRST Robotics Competition Chairman's Award

[Video and Presentation](#)

2009: Techno Ticks (236)

[Video](#)

2008: Falcon Robotics (842)*

[Video](#)

2007: MOE (365)*

[Essay & Executive Summaries](#)

[Presentation Documents](#)

[Video](#)

2006: Wild Stang (111)*

[Essay & Executive Summaries](#)

[Video](#)

2005: The Hot Team (67)*

[Video](#)

2004: The Cheesy Poofs (254)*

[Video](#)

2003: Cybersonics (103)*

[Video](#)

Other Video Submissions:

http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Chairman%27s+Award+Video&eq=Chairman%27s+Award+Video&gs_l=youtube.3...119419.123547.0.123866.22.20.0.2.2.0.164.2053.5j14.19.0...0.0...1ac.1.11.youtube.RkqO2dqj5s4

CocoNuts Chairman's Submissions:

2016:

[Essay & Executive Summaries](#)

[Video](#)

2015:

[Essay & Executive Summaries](#)

[Video](#)

2014

[Essay](#)

[Summaries](#)



The Complete Guide to the FIRST Robotics Competition Chairman's Award

[Video](#)

2013

[Essay & Summaries](#)

[Video](#)

2012

[Essay & Executive Summaries](#)

[Video](#)

2011

[Essay & Executive Summaries](#)

[Video](#)

2010

[Essay & Executive Summaries](#)

[Video](#)

2009

[Video](#)

12.4 Contact Information

If your team needs help with anything, especially the Chairman's Award and anything associated with it, feel free to contact us with any question, comments, or concerns. If you need to know something not covered in this guide, please let us know so we can answer your questions and add the missing information.

Email: fusd1robotics@gmail.com

Chairman's Exchange: the.chairmans.exchange@gmail.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/cocorobo>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/cocorobo>

Our Website: www.team2486.org

