

# High School Robotics Competition Returns to the Maverik Center with 'Crescendo'

## The Action-packed FIRST Robotics Games will start Feb. 29

Feb 22, 2024 — Hundreds of high school students from Utah and surrounding states will converge on February 29 – March 2 for the Utah Regional FIRST Robotics Competition. The annual tournament involves teams designing and building robots that play a physical, action-packed game against one another.

The event, co-organized by the University of Utah's John and Marcia Price College of Engineering and held at the Maverik Center in West Valley, is free and open to the public.

The FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics Competition aims to promote science and technology education for high school students around the world, fostering a new generation of engineers, programmers, and scientists.

“FIRST gets kids involved in STEM in a fun way, solving real-world science, engineering, and business problems. Those aspects are critical for developing our economy and future leaders,” says Mark Minor, associate professor in the Price College's Department of Mechanical Engineering and Organizing Chair of the Utah Regional FIRST Robotics Competition.

“It also prepares them to come to the U with skills that go beyond engineering. Just learning how to be part of a team is so important for emotional support, building confidence, and making friends.”

Minor and his colleagues at the University of Utah Robotics Center first organized the state's chapter of the national robotics competition as an outreach program through a National Science Foundation grant in 2010 and have been helping run the annual event since.

To participate, students form teams, then are tasked with designing and building an industrial-size, semi-autonomous robot to compete in this year's FIRST game.

Called “Crescendo,” this year's game requires robots that can pick up foam rings — called “notes” — then fling, flip, shoot, and drop into various scoring chambers situated around a field of play about the size of half a tennis court. Coordination between robots, along with well-timed actions from their humans, can earn teams bonus points.

Teams must program their robots to operate autonomously for the first 15 seconds of the two-and-a-half-minute matches, then may manually pilot them to execute more complicated maneuvers. Teams must therefore engineer their robots with high degrees of mechanical

precision and reliability, but also develop strategy, teamwork, and other interpersonal skills, in order to come out on top.

The latter are particularly important in FIRST, as each match is between two alliances of three teams and their robots; while individual teams have had months to fine-tune their designs and strategies amongst themselves, they must also be ready to quickly coordinate with the other members of their alliance in each match.

In the spirit of FIRST's principle of combining competition with cooperation, opposing alliances can also score "Coopertition Points" by coordinating with each other at certain times in the match. Beyond boosting the alliance's score, Coopertition Points also improve teams' overall standing in the tournament rankings.

"Coopertition' fosters innovation by promoting unqualified kindness and respect in the face of intense competition," says Kris Nelson, Regional Director of the Utah FIRST Robotics Competition. "At FIRST, in every interaction, Coopertition means that teams help and cooperate with each other, even as they compete. It's about learning from teammates, teaching others, collaborating with mentors, managing, and being managed. Coopertition embodies the spirit of competing while assisting and enabling others whenever possible."

Teams that win the Utah Regional Competition, as well as winners of select technical and performance-based awards will move on to the FIRST Championship, held April 17–20 in Houston.

## MEDIA ADVISORY

### **High School Robotics Competition Returns to the Maverik Center with 'Crescendo'**

- WHAT: Utah Regional FIRST Robotics Competition
- WHO: Hundreds of high school students from around the region and their custom-built robots.
- WHY: An action-packed, sports-like tournament featuring head-to-head robotic competition.
- WHEN: February 29 – March 2, 2024
- WHERE: The Maverick Center  
3200 S. Decker Lake Drive  
West Valley City

HOW: The event is free and open to the public. News media can check in for a press pass at the “VIP/Will Call” entrance on the south side of the Maverick Center. Parking is free.

**Video and photo opportunities for news media include:**

- Opening ceremonies: Friday and Saturday, 8:30 to 9 a.m.
- Qualification matches: Friday, 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 5:45 p.m., and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.
- Final rounds: Saturday, 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.
- Awards ceremonies: Saturday, 4:30 p.m.
- Pits: Opens Friday and Saturday at 8 a.m.

For more information about this year’s game, Crescendo, and to view a demo, please visit [www.firstinspires.org/robotics/frc/game-and-season](http://www.firstinspires.org/robotics/frc/game-and-season).

For more information, and to pre-arrange interviews with FIRST officials and participants, contact: [evan.lerner@utah.edu](mailto:evan.lerner@utah.edu)

MEDIA ADVISORY

FEB 24 — SATURDAY SCRIMMAGE

[Waterford](#) (Sandy) maker space full-sized practice squad

Herriman

Hillcrest / West (good coaches)

Bright

Alta (mentoring rookie team)

Ames — wellspoken young woman team leader (also suing the state)

Separate media visit

Morning News 3 stations  
Channel 4 (nisha)  
Channel 13