



COUGARTECH 2228

2023-2024 HANDBOOK

HONEOYE FALLS-LIMA & RUSH-HENRIETTA HIGH SCHOOL ROBOTICS TEAM

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1. Overview

This team handbook of FIRST Team 2228, CougarTech, outlines team policies, practices, and guidelines which each student is expected to comply.

Updates to this handbook may occur annually as needed, unless otherwise noted in specific sections within this document. The Leadership Team as described in this handbook, along with Senior Mentors, will contribute to final decisions regarding the content, each fall before the first official FIRST activity.

1.1 Purpose

This handbook is an information source and communication tool for the use by CougarTech FIRST Robotics Team 2228. It contains information regarding team roles and responsibilities, events, travel information, safety instructions and other important information, for team members to reference. Policies and procedures are outlined and explained, with the expectation that team members follow them. See the 'Student Contract' at the end of this handbook.

CougarTech 2228 is comprised of Honeoye Falls-Lima and Rush-Henrietta High School students, faculty advisor(s), senior mentors, adult mentors, parents and alumni mentors. The information contained within this handbook applies to all team members, unless otherwise specified.

1.2 History

CougarTech began operations in 2006 after several years of preparation by community members. A core group spread the word about regional competitions, FIRST LEGO Leagues, and engineering design. To raise interest, technology teachers filled a bus with students and administrators and attended the Finger Lakes Regional Competition at Rochester Institute of Technology. Experiencing the spirit and energy of this competition energized the group, and a steering committee, led by Paul Fleming was established and subsequently, Team 2228 was formed with a rookie team of 40 students and numerous mentors.

Their first challenge was to solicit support from anyone for anything a robot or a team needed. Contributors stepped up to provide food, access to a lift truck, machined parts and registration fees. Our start-up contributor, Alstom Corporation, supported the cost of building the robot, competition registration, travel expenses, teacher stipends, and team shirts. After Alstom succeeded in establishing Team 2228, we gained sponsorship from Xerox Corporation, Mendon Foundation, Lee Garelick Family, Honeoye Falls-Lima Central School, Sage Ruddy Financial Services, and Guida's Pizzeria. Sponsors remain a critical part of funding and operating the team.

CougarTech represents suburban communities interested in education. Advanced mathematics, science, and introductory engineering are available in our high performing school districts. Community-based mentors teach software and website programming as well as offer application and integration of engineering and math learned at school. Team 2228 meets the needs of both academically capable and hands-on learners. Past team members comment on what they learn from involvement with FIRST:

- working with other people in a team
- how projects are organized
- how things are done in the real world
- problem solving
- accounting, fund-raising & marketing
- engineering & technology
- computer programming
- gracious professionalism

1.3 What is FIRST?

“For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology”

1.3.1 Vision

"To transform our culture by creating a world where science and technology are celebrated and where young people dream of becoming science and technology heroes." Dean Kamen, Founder

1.3.2 Mission

Our mission is to inspire young people to be science and technology leaders, by engaging them in exciting programs that build science, engineering and technology skills that inspire innovation, and that foster well-rounded life capabilities including self-confidence, communication and leadership.

1.3.3 Gracious Professionalism

Gracious Professionalism is part of the ethos of FIRST. It's a way of doing things that encourages high-quality work, emphasizes the value of others, and respects individuals and the community. With Gracious Professionalism, fierce competition and mutual gain are not separate notions. Gracious professionals learn and compete like crazy, but treat one another with respect and kindness in the process. They avoid treating anyone like losers. No chest-thumping tough talk, but no sticky-sweet platitudes either. Knowledge, competition, and empathy are comfortably blended.

"In the long run, Gracious Professionalism is part of pursuing a meaningful life. One can add to society and enjoy the satisfaction of knowing one has acted with integrity and sensitivity."
Woody Flowers

1.4 College and Career Opportunities

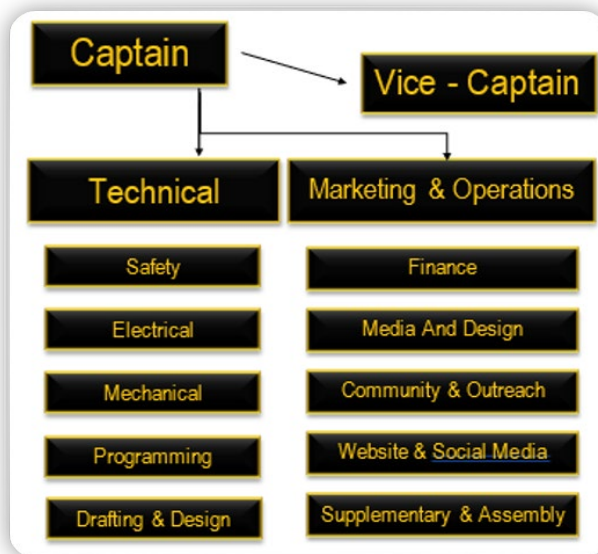
The goal of CougarTech is to have every student graduate from high school and pursue either advanced education or a career in STEM, Business, or the Arts. Many scholarships are available from FIRST, Universities, and Companies to this goal, and we encourage every senior to apply for FIRST scholarships, along with eligible juniors.

2 Roles, Responsibilities, and Team Organization

2.1 Team Organization and Leadership

CougarTech 2228 is organized as defined in this team organizational chart. The subsequent subsections outline the roles and responsibilities of team members

Organization Chart for Team 2228 CougarTech



2.1.1 Team Captain/Team Lead

FIRST requires one team member to be identified as the Team Captain. CougarTech Team 2228 identifies the Team Captain as the Team Lead. These titles may be used interchangeably throughout this handbook.

The Team Captain and the Team Vice Captain run for election as a pair. Both positions are usually held by upper classmen with at least one year of experience on the team.

The team captain must demonstrate technical, marketing, and strong communication skills. The student captain is responsible for the project management of the entire team. He/she will be required to manage the team schedule, activities and facilitate team meetings. The team captain will also be responsible to ensure the branch directors are fulfilling their responsibilities effectively. At times, the team captain will delegate activities as necessary. The team captain is also responsible for escalating issues to the leadership team for resolution. The position of team captain requires time spent outside of scheduled meetings. The team captain is expected to attend 90% of team meetings.

2.1.2 Vice Team Captain/Team Lead

The Vice Team Captain is an elected position selected by the team as a running mate of the Captain. The Captain and Vice-Captain share the responsibilities of running the team as described in the “Team Captain” section 2.1.1. The Vice Team Captain is expected to attend 90% of team meetings.

2.1.3 Branch Directors & Project Manager

There are two Branch Directors and one Project manager appointed by the team captains. The Technical Director will oversee the equipment, robot build, and performance. The Project Manager will guide the team through the design process for the robot and other project with a primary focus on scheduling. The Marketing and Operations Director will oversee team branding, financial stability, community outreach, and award submissions. The Branch Directors and Project Manager are expected to attend 90% of team meetings.

The Branch Directors coordinate efforts between their respective subteams. Each subteam will have a lead and a back-up. Each branch of the team is shown below:

Technical Branch Subteams:

Mechanical
Electrical
Programming
Design and Drafting (CAD)
Safety

Operations Branch Subteams:

Community Outreach and Service
Finance
Media and Design
Website and Social Media
Supplementary and Assembly

2.1.4 Subteam Leads

Subteam Leads are elected by the full team membership. The subteam leads will report to their respective branch director and will work closely with the subteam mentors. They are responsible for ensuring that the subteams plan and execute all duties and activities allocated to them. Subteam leads are also responsible for escalating any issues that cannot be resolved within the respective subteam. It is important to recognize that subteams cannot function in a vacuum and must work together with other subteams to accomplish cross-team activities. The level of commitment varies depending on subteam, however, subteam leads are expected to attend 90% of their respective subteam meetings.

For more information on the election process see Attachment #1.

2.1.5 Team Members

Team members are the foundation of CougarTech 2228 and the team cannot function if its members are not committed. All current members are representatives of the team and shall act in a manner in accordance with the vision and mission of FIRST and will act with gracious professionalism at all times. Team members will be committed to the team as a whole, as well as individual subteams, and will actively participate in any work that the team is currently engaged in. The leadership team may ask any team member to leave if they are not a productive member.

2.1.6 Senior Mentors

Senior Mentor(s) are recognized by the team and by the Honeoye Falls-Lima Central School District and Rush-Henrietta Central Scholl District as the main contacts for the team. Senior Mentors work closely with the Faculty Advisor(s) to accomplish administrative aspects of the team. Duties include, but are not limited to parent communication, liaison to both school districts, trip and travel arrangements, official background checked FIRST representatives, oversee day-to-day operations of the team. The Senior Mentors will directly mentor the student team leads in communication, scheduling, budgeting, and other team operational activities. Senior Mentors must be registered with FIRST and sign a consent and release form.

2.1.7 Mentors

The role of CougarTech mentors is to listen to students and provide training, guidance, and insight to team members. Mentors act as professional role models and support and care for students in small group settings and as a whole team. Just as in any organization, mentors have a wide range of skills and talents and represent many professions and organizations outside of Robotics. The goal of mentors is to share those varied perspectives with students while demonstrating practices for successfully working in professional organization.

Mentor time commitment to the team ranges from those who participate in all team activities all year, to those who attend meetings once a week, to those who work behind the scenes to manage specific projects or ongoing work. All mentors are encouraged to attend all competition events so that we have sufficient adult supervision at those events. For mentors who participate in team competition events, community service events, and outreach events, this commitment may include paying for travel and food and use of personal vacation time.

2.1.8 Alumni Mentors

College age, former team members may become Alumni Mentors. They are expected to act and work as an adult and not a student. They will take on mentor responsibilities. At any time, this commitment may require an alumni mentor to pay for travel, food, and use personal vacation time. Alumni mentors become full time Adult Mentors after graduation from college, and at that time must follow all responsibilities of an Adult Mentor.

2.1.9 Faculty Advisor(s)

Faculty advisor(s) are necessary to maintain consistent communication between CougarTech 2228 and the school administration. It is necessary that they understand, reference, and provide copies of school policies that affect the team. Faculty Advisors are responsible for assuring active members remain academically eligible to participate in extra curricula activities. Faculty advisors will be responsible for scheduling and supervising all team meetings that are conducted within the boundaries of school property. They are also responsible for the conduct of the team members and administering disciplinary actions consistent with school policies. A complete "job description" for the Faculty Advisor position is available upon request.

2.1.10 Parents

Parents are asked to support the team by helping in a variety of ways. Team 2228 needs assistance in identifying scholarships, coordinating food, making competition arrangements, coordinating fundraisers as well as helping to organize the team banquet. Each family is expected to participate in Saturday lunches during build season. This effort is important because taking time to travel to eat disrupts work. Parents are responsible for payment of student travel expenses. See the attendance policy for more details.

2.1.11 Leadership Team known as 4-Square

The leadership team is comprised of the Team Captain, Vice Team Captain, Branch Directors, Faculty Advisors, and Senior Mentors. The leadership team is empowered to make decisions on behalf of the entire team. This leadership team exists to facilitate internal communication and provide opportunities to foster development of better leaders. The leadership team is responsible for setting the proposed budget for the team and subteams as necessary.

2.2 Responsibilities of Branches and their Subteams

2.2.1 Technical Team

- **2.2.1.1 Technical Director**

The technical side of Team 2228 has an appointed Technical Director as the head of that branch. The Technical Director is responsible for setting the goals of the technical groups. The director is responsible for communication down the branch, organization of work for the branch, assisting any subteam in the completion of work, reporting problems and success up to the leadership team, and maintaining gracious professionalism throughout the branch. The Technical Director collaborates with the technical branch mentors in determining the goals, and the order of work. The Technical Director is responsible for communicating problems related to achieving the goals to the lead mechanical mentors for resolution.

- **2.2.1.2 Project Manager**

The Project Manager is responsible for developing and tracking the technical schedule and tasks that need to be completed during Build Season to get the robot successfully completed on time. The Project Manager works closely with the Technical Director and the technical mentors to help the team develop and execute a plan for building a robot.

- **2.2.1.3 Design and Drafting (“CAD”) Subteam**

This subteam is headed by an elected leader. The CAD Lead is responsible for training team members in useful skills, building and maintaining files for the computer aided design (CAD) activity of robot build including award submission files. This team lead works in collaboration with a CAD mentor.

- **2.2.1.4 Electrical Subteam**

This subteam is headed by an elected leader. With the collaboration of the electrical mentor, the Electrical Lead is responsible for training team members in useful skills, building and repairing any electrical component on any robot, and developing wiring diagrams.

- **2.2.1.5 Mechanical Subteam**

This subteam is headed by an elected leader. With the collaboration of a mechanical mentor, the Mechanical Lead is responsible for training team members in useful skills, building and repairing any mechanical component on any robot, monitoring the Kit of Parts, coordinating efforts with D&D, providing insight into the functioning of the robot to the drive team.

- **2.2.1.6 Programming Subteam**

This subteam is headed by an elected leader. With the collaboration of a programming mentor, the Programming Lead is responsible for training team members in useful skills, writing code for any robot, and providing insight into the functioning of the robot to the mechanical and drive teams.

- **2.2.1.7 Safety Subteam**

This subteam is headed by an elected leader. With the collaboration of a safety mentor, the Safety Lead is responsible for training Team 2228 members on safety rules, regulations and procedures. The Safety team monitors safe practices in the shop, dismissing from the shop and the pit area any person not practicing safety. Often referred to as the Safety Captain during competitions, this team maintains a safety handbook, works with pit design to incorporate safe practices, and may develop any number of imaginative methods to improve safety.

2.2.2 Marketing and Operations Team

The operations side of Team 2228 has an appointed Marketing and Operations Director as the head of the branch. The M&O Director is responsible for setting overall goals, communication down the branch, organization of work for the branch, assisting any subteam in the completion of work, reporting problems and successes up to the leadership team, and maintaining gracious professionalism throughout the branch. The M&O Director collaborates with M&O branch mentor in determining the goals, and the order of work. The M&O Director is responsible for communicating problems related to achieving goals to mentors for resolution. The M&O Lead maintains an inventory of materials, makes sure work is performed on schedule and within allocated budget. At competitions, this person has added responsibilities, including but not limited to: awards submissions and team promotion.

- **2.2.2.1 Community Outreach and Service Subteam**

This subteam is headed by an elected leader. The CO Lead is responsible for recruitment of new members, coordinating community service events and fundraisers, and developing opportunities for recognition of FIRST. The CO Lead works closely with sponsorship mentor to prepare and present materials to potential sponsors. Working closely with the M&O Branch Director, the CO team will prepare Chairman's Award materials.

- **2.2.2.2 Media and Design Subteam**

This subteam is headed by an elected leader. The MD Lead is responsible for the product packaging and the branding of the team. These activities include pit design, mascots, button production, T-shirt graphics and production, costumes, video production for Chairman's Award, submissions for Animation Award, newspaper articles, and content development for the team website.

- **2.2.2.3 Social Media & Website Subteam**

This subteam is headed by an elected leader. The SM&W Lead promotes Team 2228 in a positive manner through social media and the team website. The team lead and the website mentor train members in useful skills to build and maintain a website.

- **2.2.2.4 Supplementary & Assembly Subteam**

This subteam is headed by an elected leader. S&A Lead maintains the storage closet and has a firm grasp of inventory. Working within budget and time constraints, S&A designs procures, fabricates robot bumpers and game field elements. S&A designs and builds team-to-team awards. This group may assist in pit improvement projects.

- **2.2.2.5 Finance Subteam**

This subteam is headed by an elected leader. Since mentors are responsible for ordering materials, performing banking, and payment services, the Finance team works closely with several mentors to

maintain the budget, and the bill of robot materials. The Finance Lead will collaborate with sponsorship mentor, execute the business plan, and prepare materials for the Entrepreneurship Award submission.

2.3 Special Leadership Assignments

There are times when our existing leadership structure does not provide enough support to all aspects of our team and does not provide enough leadership opportunities to qualified students. Special assignments may be added by the leadership team know as 4-square. Special assignments may include, but are not limited to: 3-D Printing Specialist, Recruiting Specialist, and Strategist. Depending on the complexity of the assignment and the contribution the student on special assignment makes to the team, the student may qualify for Leadership Awards.

2.4 Competition Teams

During competitions, Team 2228 requires a set of temporary teams under the direction of Team Captain and Vice Captain. All active team members attending competitions are required to contribute to the success of CougarTech by being a member of one of the following Competition Teams. These team members, as well as the associated mentors, must commit to attending the competition and being available to perform their assigned duties. These teams do not conflict with a members' choice of subteam during build and off season.

Descriptions and job duties for these competition teams will be presented to all team members as the build season progresses. Some of these competition teams (ie Drive Team) may require an application, test, and or tryouts. Others may be appointed positions (ie Pit Crew).



3 Team Participation

Participation on Team 2228 requires students to be interested in activities of this group and to have time to commit to team activities. Team members must be willing to develop their skills, demonstrate effort, and be willing collaborators with other team members.

3.1 Team Member Expectations

3.1.1 Attendance Requirement and Active Membership

To be recognized as a member of CougarTech 2228 all students must be registered with FIRST. Parents must complete the online registration process found at (<https://my.firstinspires.org/Dashboard//> - click on “Parent/Guardian – Youth”). In addition, parents and students must sign and return the Student Contract form found at the end of this Handbook.

While we are recognized by HF-L as an “extracurricular club”, CougarTech is really a Team, and just like other teams, we have a defined schedule of meetings, work sessions, and events, just like an athletic team might have scheduled practices and games. Like any team, members have to attend practices to be able to play – if you didn’t come to basketball practice, for example, the coach would probably not let you play in the game.

Members are expected to attend all scheduled full-team meetings, to arrive at the proper start time and to leave at the proper end time. During the school year, meetings are held every Wednesday evening for 3-4 hours. During build season, an all-day Saturday session is added to the regularly scheduled meeting. Every effort should be made to attend meetings. Additional weekly subteam meetings may be required. If a team member cannot attend a meeting he/she must contact his/her subteam lead or the team captain via e-mail or phone PRIOR TO THE MISSED MEETING. They must outline the work that needs to be done and who will now complete the team task.

Being a member of CougarTech Robotics can be a rewarding experience. To ensure that each member and the team benefit from a student’s participation on the team, it is important to remain active. The intention of this Active Membership Guidelines is to track each student’s contribution to the team.

To be an active member of the team and qualify to travel with us to competitions, the following attendance guideline must be met:

Parents are also an important asset to CougarTech. In addition to full time mentors, parents are needed to supervise, participate, and contribute to the overall experience of our many students. Parent participation also is required to ensure student and team success.

Only registered, active members with academic eligibility will be able to participate in competitions with the team. Here is how it works:

An active member is defined as:

1. A student who meets the following requirements:
 - a. Joins CougarTech by the first Wednesday in November each year.
 - b. Is registered with FIRST by a date defined by team leadership, usually in mid-November.
 - c. Reads and agrees, yearly, to all team policies as outlined in the team handbook.
 - d. Completes all required team trainings by a defined deadline.
 - e. Earns a minimum of 100 participation points, as described below, by the 1st Saturday in March.
2. A student who participates at meetings and is engaged in all activities.
3. A student leader who fulfills the duties of their elected role.

Participation Points:

A student is required to earn points in each of the following categories, for a minimum of 100 points. Points will be accumulated beginning in April, after the world championships, and will continue through the first Saturday in March the following year:

1. Attendance, registration, and training. Minimum 70 points.
 - a. 1 point earned for each 3-4 hr meeting attended
 - b. 2 points earned for each 5-8 hr meeting attended
 - c. 5 points earned for completing each administrative items (FIRST Registration, CougarTech Handbook) by the designated deadline.
 - d. 5 points earned for completing the required safety training by December Holiday Recess
 - e. Attendance points maybe pro-rated for rookies, and will be evaluated on an individual basis.

2. Team Sanctioned Events. Minimum 20 points.
 - a. 2 points each for attending Open House (Fall, typically in September; Spring, typically in June)
 - b. 3 points each for participating in a team organized community service event (example: Black Diamond Express Water Stop; Village/Hamlet/Town Clean up events; Any other community service event approved by the team.
 - c. 3 points each for participating in a team organized STEM outreach event (Example: Parades – Christmas, Mendon Fireman’s, Rush Fireman’s, etc; Presentations and Demonstrations – Day Cares, Sponsors, BOE, Cougar Creations; Mendon Fireman’s Carnival and other area events; Any other event organized and approved by the team
 - d. 3 points for each \$50 earned during a fundraiser (e.g. candy sales, bottles and cans)
 - e. 4 points each for attending an off-season FIRST event (Ruckus, Rally, or others event identified by the team)

3. Parent Participation. Minimum 10 points per family
 - a. 1 point for attending each required parent meeting
 - b. 1 point for each day food is provided during build season
 - c. 3 points for supervising a team event as approved by the team
 - d. 3 points for being an active member of a parent committee
 - e. 5 points for being a committee chairperson (Fundraising, Scholarship, Feeding CougarTech, etc)
 - f. 6 points for being a part time Mentor, duties and time commitment to be approved by Senior Mentors
 - g. 10+ points for being a full time, active Mentor
 - h. Parents unable to earn the above points, may discuss other options with the Senior Mentors.

Optional: Special Projects. A student unable to earn 100 points in categories 1-3 may request team leadership to consider a special project assignment for them to complete. Point value will be determined by the Senior Mentors based on the depth of the project and how it benefits the team.

Please note that CougarTech understands and expects that students and families have many activities and commitments and may occasionally not be able to attend a meeting or event. The intent of this attendance policy is not to exclude active members who occasionally have conflicts. We will be as flexible as possible and no student/family who shows enthusiastic good faith participation will be penalized.

3.1.2 Required Team Information

Team members are expected to keep current with team activities deadlines and requirements. Team members can do this by attending all meetings.

3.1.3 Participation

Team members are expected to actively participate in meeting activities. Team members are expected to take initiative to determine what tasks need to be completed in support of the team. Some downtime (lack of having a team task to work on) is expected. Excessive downtime will not be tolerated.

3.1.4 Academic Eligibility

The HFL Code of Conduct is the primary source for direction on maintaining academic eligibility. If the student is unable to maintain a passing average, he/she will be considered inactive member until the required grade is met. The HFL [Code of Conduct](#) will be followed at all times.

3.1.5 Socialization

FIRST robotics is a unique opportunity to learn from professionals and to accomplish formidable tasks. It is not a social club. We do expect social interactions to occur as we build a true team, however our team meetings and events are not the place for excessive socializing or displays of affection.

3.1.6 Promoting STEM

Team members are expected to promote FIRST and technology education in their communities and schools; this entails participation in presentations about FIRST Robotics.

3.1.7 HAVE FUN!!!

Being an active member of this team takes much work, but the rewards far outweigh the efforts. Take advantage of this unique opportunity.

3.2 Team Rules

To maintain membership in good standing with CougarTech 2228, each student team member must obey the team rules. Failure to do so may result in consequences up to dismissal from the team. Team members and mentors are to practice gracious professionalism at all times, which means that we act in a manner that makes our grandmothers proud.

3.3 Professionalism and Respect

- We treat each other, as well as other teams, with courtesy and respect.
- Team members must be an active member of the team.
- Mentors represent the community and their professions. They are volunteers, sharing with the team their time and expertise. They should be treated as professional partners.
- Team members must dress appropriately at all times. Appropriate dress is defined in the HF-L handbook. When working in the shop, open toed shoes, loose clothing, and jewelry cannot be worn. Long hair should be tied back so as to avoid safety hazard. The safety captain has the final say in what is acceptable – we take individual safety in the shop environment very seriously..
- Team members are to abide by all safety rules at all times.

3.4 HF-L Code of Conduct

All students will abide by the Honeoye Falls-Lima [Code of Conduct](#) at all times. The Code of Conduct is the primary source for direction for any disciplinary matters. The Rush-Henrietta Code of Conduct is similar.

3.5 Awards and Recognition

3.5.1 Deans List Nomination

This prestigious FIRST award is for an individual team member in their Junior year, regardless of the number of years on the team. In the event that there are no qualified Juniors, a Sophomore may be nominated. The requirement for the nominee can be found on the FIRST website. Each team may nominate up to two individuals. The CougarTech nomination(s) will be submitted at the Finger Lakes Regional. Visit the FIRST website for more information about the selection of winners at a regional.

3.5.2 Varsity Letters

Robotics is the sport of the mind. Both the Honeoye Falls-Lima and Rush-Henrietta School Districts award varsity letters to students who:

- Successfully complete a leadership position on the team. Team Leads, Subteam Leads, and student completing a Special Leadership Assignment may qualify for a varsity letter.
- Is a Senior that makes a significant contribution to the team.

The actual felt letter will be awarded the first time a student qualifies. The second time, and every subsequent time, a robotics themed pin will be awarded.

3.5.3 Team Awards

Senior Mentors, Adult Mentors, Alumni Mentors, and the team Advisor will nominate, discuss, and/or vote for students for each of the following team awards:

- **3.5.3.1 Most Valuable Player (MVP)**

All students are eligible for this award. This award is for an outstanding team member that made a significant contribution to the team during the year.

- **3.5.3.2 Most Improved Player (MIP)**

All students are eligible for this award. A student that has made significant improvement in their personal participation and contribution to the team qualifies. Improvements must be seen from either the previous year, or from the beginning of the current year. Title change or substitution may be made at any time.

- **3.5.3.3 Rookie of the Year**

Any student who is participating as an active member of CougarTech for the first time, qualifies for this award.

- **3.5.3.4 Leadership by Class**

(Senior, Junior, Sophomore, Freshman) A student from every grade level that holds a leadership position will qualify for the appropriate Leadership Award. The student must successfully complete their leadership assignment and make a significant contribution to the team.

- **3.5.3.5 Special Awards**

If a grade level is not represented on the leadership team, another student may be considered for the grade level award if they made a significant contribution to the team. In addition, a student with a Special Leadership assignment may qualify for a grade level award, or an additional award may be created to honor them or any worthy student.

3.6 Student Relationships

CougarTech strongly believes a work environment where students maintain clear boundaries between personal and team interactions is necessary to build a winning team! Students who are dating risk becoming a distraction not only for themselves, but other on the team. In addition, dating within the team can create awkward situations both during the relationship and when it ends.

Although this policy does not prohibit the development of friendships or romantic relationships between students, it does establish boundaries as to how relationships are conducted during working hours and within the working environment.

- Students who choose to date should notify Senior mentors early on. It's better to be open and upfront about things than to try to sneak around and hide it.
- Students who choose to date are expected to 'leave the relationship at the door'. This means that while at robotics the dating students should conduct themselves professionally (ex: no PDA, no holding hands, no sitting on each other's laps, showing preference, sneaking off to be alone).
- At no time will Adult Mentors be allowed to date high school students.

Students continually violating this policy may be moved to different sub-teams and or prevented from team travel. Major violations will be referred to the school district.

3.7 Student Contract

All students and parents will sign the Student Contract at the end of this document. After reading this handbook, please sign and return the contract.

4 Calendar

Team 2228 operates year-round. The following outlines the team activities throughout the year. Listed are typical events the team attends each year the calendar may change due to scheduling of events by FIRST, HF-L School District, Team 2228 and our Community Partners.

September - Full team meetings every Wednesday night.

Team Open House	Parent Meeting	Safety Training
Community Service	Lego Team assistance	Recruitment
Activities Fair		

October - Full Team meetings every Wednesday night, Saturdays as needed.

Ruckus Off-Season	Event Fundraising	Lego Team assistance
Safety Training		

November - Full Team meetings every Wednesday night.

Lego Team assistance	Shop Training	Fundraising
Safety Training	Sponsor Visits	

December - Full Team meetings every Wednesday night.

Lego Team assistance	Training	Lego Competition at U of R (Volunteer)
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January - Full Team meetings every Wednesday night and Saturdays, plus additional Subteam meetings

Build Season FIRST Kick Off Scholarship Applications Due

February - Full Team meetings every Wednesday night and Saturdays, plus additional Subteam meetings

Build Season Awards Submissions Meet over Winter Recess
Rochester Rally

March - Full Team meetings every Wednesday night and Saturdays.

Build season schedule continues FIRST Competition at RIT
Out of town Regional Competition Award Submissions due
Parent meeting about travel

April - Full Team meetings every Wednesday night.

Build Parade Robot Banquet Planning Team Elections

May - Full Team meetings every Wednesday night.

Year End Banquet Fundraising Mendon Fireman's Carnival and Parade
Juniors apply for FIRST internship opportunities Cougar Creations/District Budget Vote

June - Full Team meetings every Wednesday night.

Community Service RH STEM Fair Middle School Recruitment

July - Full Team meetings every Wednesday night.

Maker Camp Rush Fireman's Parade Skills Trainings
RH Day Care Visit

August - Full Team meetings every Wednesday night.

Lima Cross Roads Festival Black Diamond Trail Races (Comm. Service)

5 Partnerships

Team 2228 cannot exist without support of the community. FIRST teams are designed to build a coalition of corporate and educational support in mentorship, and monetary sponsorship. CougarTech reaches out every year in many ways to our partners in creating a positive STEM experience.

5.1 Budget and Sponsors

Team 2228 is organized an extracurricular club of Honeoye Falls-Lima High School. HFL provides space for meetings, robot build, materials storage, trailer storage, bus to regional, kickoff and Ruckus. HFL frequently provides funding for an advisor.

Team 2228 retains not-for-profit status through Rochester Community Robotics which is a 501(c)3 charitable foundation. This foundation allows corporate and individual sponsorship and donations to be made to the team tax free in most cases.

The major portion of funds to run the team comes from corporate sponsors. Each year, the sponsorship mentor contacts all current sponsors to secure their continued support. The students may be involved in making presentations to potential and existing sponsors. This corporate sponsorship method is approved by the school district and is a hallmark of the FIRST method of team funding. Corporate sponsors are a combination of national firms such as GM and Xerox, and local firms such as Southco, HanTek, Day Automation, and Pittsford Federal Credit Union among many others.

Another source of funding is the parents of team members. The parents may be asked to help pay for food, hotel, and transportation when the team is traveling. The parents provide food on Saturdays during build season.

Finally, several local businesses may provide services or food. One year, Dynak milled parts for us, another year Southco made parts. Local pizzerias provide Wednesday evening build season pizza. Kirkwood Oil provided robot transportation in our first years. The involvement of local businesses is a team goal.

The team creates and works to a budget each year including both planned expenditures and expected income. A copy of the current budget is available upon request. The CougarTech budget for 2023-2024 is approximately \$44,000.

5.2 Community Involvement

Team 2228 is more than a robotics team. We believe that the message of FIRST extends beyond the robotics competition and the team. We owe the community for all of its support for this program, and here at Team 2228 it has become our obligation to give back whatever and wherever we can.

Community involvement includes participation in any event that is team designed or developed by other community groups. Examples of activities include manning water stations at the Tour de Cure, walking in Relay for Life, sponsoring Breakfast with Santa demonstrations at middle school science classes, or working with Team Sparx to offer robot driving to visually impaired young adults. There is no rule for the type of activity.

Community involvement means spreading the word of FIRST and STEMs Education providing Community Service, supporting our sponsors and partners, as well as promoting Team 2228. The goal is to make the team easily recognizable as a force for innovation and increased awareness of science, technology, engineering and math in our culture.

6 Travel

The following section explains the expected travel of Team 2228 each year and the expectations of team members during these travels. Student eligibility, financial responsibility, and expected conduct are outlined below.

6.1 Regional Competitions

- **6.1.1 Finger Lakes Regional**

We will attend Finger Lakes Regional every year, and a second regional if financially feasible. Team members attending competition are expected to either participate on one of the competition teams or actively participate in presenting CougarTech as an exemplary team. Spirit, interaction with other teams, and promotion of FIRST should be obvious to any bystander.

The primary cost of attending a local regional is the cost of food. These costs are the responsibility of the student. The team may order prepared food from the venue's food services.

- **6.1.2 Second Regional**

The second regional is selected based on school calendar and travel time. The second regional is a "road trip" – past locations have included Cleveland, OH, Troy, NY, and Toronto, Ontario.

The cost of the regional is the responsibility of the parents and the students with some support from the team when the budget allows. Travel methods, hotels, and meal plans will be selected based on cost and availability. To secure a spot on any trip, payments must be made by the announced deadlines. There are no refunds after any payment has been made because we have to pay for things like bus service and hotel rooms in advance.

Team members attending competition are expected to either participate on one of the competition teams or actively participate in presenting CougarTech as an exemplary team. Spirit, interaction with other teams, and promotion of FIRST should be obvious to any bystander.

6.2 FIRST Championship Competition

Each year there is the possibility that the team will qualify for an invitational or the FIRST World Championships. When the team qualifies, fundraisers to reduce the cost of travel and lodging will be held. All students traveling to international competition will be required to actively participate in raising money for the team. Fundraisers are held throughout the year as a contribution to team sustainability. Additional fundraisers will be needed for international competition attendance.

The travel costs for the Championship Competition is the responsibility of the parents and the students. We currently have a sponsor (GM) who may pay the registration fee, and the team tries to save some money in a reserve account to support some of the costs. Travel methods, hotels, and meal plans will be selected based on cost and availability. To secure a spot on any trip, payments must be made by the announced deadlines. There are no refunds after any payment has been made.

6.3 Eligibility Policy

All active members of Team 2228 may participate in any competition event provided they meet the requirements listed under Section 3; Participation, including adhering to the Attendance and Active Membership guidelines. In order to participate in competition events, students must also meet the following requirements:

- **6.3.1 Academic Eligibility**

The HF-L Code of Conduct is the primary source for direction on maintaining academic eligibility. If the student is unable to maintain a passing average, s/he will be considered an inactive member until the required grade is met. No member of the team may attend a regional event if s/he does not meet the eligibility requirements. Money paid for events is forfeited if the team member becomes ineligible.

- **6.3.2 Behavior**

Behavior at a regional must be exceptional. There is no personal time away from the group. There is no personal time to engage in behaviors unacceptable to the group or inappropriate for the environment. CougarTech uses the buddy system at all times. No one travels alone, even within the competition site. Additionally, no trips outside the competition venue or hotel can be made without a mentor. Failure to meet these standards is cause for dismissal from the event or the team as outlined in the HF-L Student Handbook. There is no appeal process.

- **6.3.3 Team Uniform**

Dress at a regional includes the team shirt, safety glasses, and khaki (desert sand) pants (from dickies.com). This outfit will be worn any time a team member is in public. Any subteam requiring a special costume or identifying insignia must obtain approval from the Leadership Team and verify compliance with FIRST and event competition rules. The next review of this team uniform policy may not occur before June of 2020.

6.4 Travel Rules

Traveling with the team is a group process designed to reinforce teamwork. Traveling with the team means using the team provided transportation and, when applicable, staying with the team at the team hotel at the team rate. No one under 21 years of age that is not a team member can travel with the team unless accompanied by their parent or guardian.

- **6.4.1 Transportation of Students**

6.4.1.1 Transportation of Students to and from Local Events

- **Local events include, but are not limited to: competition at RIT, Kick-Off, Ruckus**
- **Busing is provided by the Honeoye Falls-Lima or Rush-Henrietta School District**
- **A school district permission slip is required**
- **Students are expected to ride to and from the event with the team**
- **Coming late, leaving early, or both is acceptable only when due to another sanctioned school event**
- **Special arrangements may be made for alternative transportation provided it is in writing, approved a head of time, and the alternative transportation checks the student out, in person with the faculty advisor or a senior mentor, before leaving the event.**

6.4.1.2 Transportation of students to and from an out-of-town event

- These events include, but are not limited to, a second regional, typically with-in a 5 hour drive. Example: Buckeye in Cleveland.
- Transportation arranged by the team/school with a charter company
- A school district permission slip is required
- Students are expected to ride to and from the event with the team
- Special arrangements may be made for alternative transportation provided it is in writing, approved a head of time, and the alternative transportation checks the student out, in person with the faculty advisor or a senior mentor, before leaving the event.

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6.4.1.3 Transportation of students to and from other events

- These events include, but are not limited to, Rochester Rally, community service, sponsor presentations.
- Generally, no permission slip is required
- Parents/Guardian are expected to provide transportation

- **6.4.2 Transportation of students by someone other than a parent/guardian or the school district**

6.4.2.1 Student transported by a Mentor

- This option is sometimes available for other team events like Rochester Rally, or robot load-ins for local events.
- The Faculty Advisor can never transport student, other than their own family.
- This option is strictly up to a mentors comfort level. Some mentors may choose NOT to transport students.
- Parent/guardian must give permission for their student to ride with an adult mentor.

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6.4.2.2 Student transported by themselves or other students

- This situation may occur for transportation to and from meetings and events.
- Parent/guardian must give explicit permission to the faculty advisor and/or senior mentors for their student to ride with another student, outside your immediate family.
- At no time will students be allowed to leave meetings or events for food (ie during Saturday meetings) by themselves or with other students, without pre-approval and written consent by a parent/guardian.

- **6.4.3 Hotel**

Hotel arrangements will be made by a mentor. Every effort will be made to accommodate special needs, however, a room to oneself is not possible. Team members will be expected to room with one to five people depending on accommodations available. Mentors will room together and will share supervisory responsibilities with the advisor. Trips outside the team itinerary are ill advised.

Students will abide by a rigid itinerary in a respectful manner. Each morning, each student will check in with a mentor. Each evening, each student will check in with a mentor. Hotel rooms are for sleeping and preparing for the next day. We will respect the hotel's quiet hours, pool hours, and each other's needs. Hotel room phones will not be used. If a student has a cell phone, s/he will share the phone number with the advisor.

- **6.4.4 Commitment Deadlines**

Students and parents need to commit to completion dates for field trip permission forms, and payment. All pricing of transportation and housing while traveling is based on the number of travelers. Individuals making a decision to travel or not travel after all prices have been established is very difficult for the team. Team advisors will provide a range of costs based on the estimated number of attendees, but the parents and students must then decide. Late decisions cannot be honored and may result in the loss of a down payment or inability to travel.

- **6.4.5 Participation and Travel Documents**

All students traveling with Team 2228 to any event must complete and submit, in a timely manner, the following documents where necessary: Parent Permission Slip, Overnight Permission Slip, any forms required by FIRST (i.e. Consent and Release Form), Run- Around Sheet, if required by either school.

Every participant, student and adult, must be registered online with FIRST to participate. The students will register during a meeting. Parents will receive a request for confirmation after student registers. Completion of this entire process makes record keeping much easier. Students must reregister every year.

Advisors and mentors will be responsible for all communication with both schools to make sure that all eligible students are granted excused release time for competitions.

7 Communications

Communication to parents and mentors come primarily from one of the mentors. It may be an advisor, or it may be a Senior Mentor another mentor. Communication from FIRST will come from the advisor registered with FIRST. Communication to the student team members comes from the team captain or vice-captain. The preferred method of communication is email. If a student does not have a personal email account, parents should arrange a method to relay messages to the student team members.

Team Captain will send out a weekly email including a brief agenda for the upcoming meeting. Team Advisor and Senior Mentors will maintain a list of parent email for use in scheduling parent meetings.

Mentor meetings will include one required training meeting with Honeoye Falls-Lima School District, and mentor scheduled meetings when needed. If a mentor would like to call a meeting, it may be informal (i.e. problem-solving meeting during build season,) or formal (i.e. strategic direction meeting during off-season.) The fastest way to get any of these meetings scheduled would be to ask advisor or Senior Mentors for assistance

Updates: November 7, 2022; October 13, 2021; November 4, 2020; October 23, 2019;
October 10, 2021, November 8, 2022; September 13, 2023

Attachment #1

Team 2228 Election Process

Existing Team Captain announces that elections will be held to determine leadership for the coming school year. This election will take place after competition season is over, and before school closes for the summer. The best timing would have the entire election process complete before the end-of-the-year team banquet. Team Captain will select the exact month and dates for elections, and will communicate this information to the team.

Team Captain and Vice-Captain will make a presentation to the team describing all the positions to be filled in the coming weeks. He/she will describe the duties and responsibilities of each position.

Team 2228 uses an application for all interested parties. The application must be completed and turned in several weeks before the elections. This information helps the existing team leadership identify areas that are not drawing interested parties. It also prevents walk-on candidates that through procrastination or coercion are completing applications while others are delivering election speeches.

The first elections are for Captain and Vice-Captain. These two students run for election as a pair. On the day of the election, all candidates will deliver a short speech describing why they are the best candidates for the position. Candidates will answer questions before election. Any team member, student or adult, may ask a question. Any team member, student or adult, in attendance at the meeting may vote by paper ballot, or show of hands. The existing Team Captain and Vice-Captain will count the votes.

During the next few weeks, the newly elected Captain and Vice-Captain will appoint the Technical Director, the Project Manager, and the Marketing & Operations Director. These decisions must be made in a timely manner in order that the election process may be completed as desired. Also, during this time, all persons desiring a subteam lead position will complete the application process. The applications may be turned in at a team meeting or to the team advisor during the school day. After all the applications are completed and turned in, the newly elected Captain and Vice-Captain will announce the date and time election of subteam leads will be held. On the day of the election, all candidates for subteam lead will make a speech describing why s/he wants this particular position and will also answer questions from the team members in attendance at the election meeting. Any team member, student or adult, may ask a question. Any team member, student or adult, in attendance at the meeting may vote by paper ballot, or show of hands.

The desired end result is to fill every subteam position. Every effort will be made to ensure that no one holds more than one leadership position at the same time. Since Team 2228 has a goal to develop leadership skills, as many team members as possible should have an opportunity for leadership. However, if no one has volunteered to run for a subteam lead position and the position is still open by the beginning of school in September, the Leadership Team will appoint someone to the open position. In this case, someone may have more than one area of responsibility.



Student Contract

I _____ (print team member name) as a member of CougarTech FIRST Robotics Team 2228 have read and agree to the contents of the team handbook. Specifically, I agree to:

- 1 - Follow the Team Rules as communicated by the team captain, the mentors, and as defined in the team handbook.
- 2 - Meet all of the team expectations as documented in the team handbook, including following the attendance guidelines.
- 3 - Conduct myself in a safe manner in all situations where I am acting as a member of this team.

By not adhering to this contract, I realize that my behavior may result in consequences up to and including termination of my team membership.

By: _____ Date: _____
(Student Signature)

_____ Date: _____
(Parent/Guardian Signature)