

Proposal for Wildcard Reform

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Purpose

The purpose of these modifications is to change the process by which Wildcard spots to qualify for the FIRST Championship are awarded to better recognize and advance teams who succeed at their Regional events.

Problems of the Current Regional Advancement System:

1. The current Wildcard system favors second picks and backups on the finalist alliance over semifinalist captains and first picks.
 - This often allows weaker second picks of top alliances to be chosen over strong semifinalist captains and first picks, who can *never* receive a Wildcard.
2. Unused Championship invitations, including Wildcards, are lost.
3. If there are more Wildcards generated than there are finalists who can use them, Wildcard(s) are lost.
4. District teams that claim Championship invitations at Regionals take a spot from both the Regional's Championship allocation and their district's.

In the scenarios described in 2, 3, and 4, a Championship spot is given to a waitlist team, selected at random, rather than a team qualifying on merit.

A proposed solution:

Part 1: Qualify Regional Winner, Chairman's Award, Engineering Inspiration, and Rookie All-Star teams for Championship (mostly unchanged from 2016 and prior)

This process remains unchanged from the current Regional system, with one minor exception: *each team that qualifies via these awards and declines their invitation to Championship generates an additional Wildcard.*

Part 2: Award all possible Wildcards using District Points rankings

Compute District Point rankings for all teams at each regional. The highest District Point ranked teams that have not otherwise qualified for Championship receive Wildcards, using tiebreakers

adapted from the District system. If a team declines a Wildcard spot or has qualified for Championship at a previous regional, the Wildcard is offered to the next highest ranked team until all Wildcards have been accepted.

For anyone not familiar with the District Points model:

- 0-24 points are awarded for qualification results
 - In years with strictly Win-Loss-Tie ranking: 2 for a win, 1 for a tie, 0 for a loss
 - Other years (i.e. 2015 and 2016), it is an approximate normal distribution based on rank
- 0-16 for alliance selection
- 10 points for each round of playoffs won
- 5 points per judged award, excluding RAS and EI (8 points) and Chairman's (10 points)

Additional details on the District Point system can be found in the [FRC Administrative Manual](#), Section 7.4.1.

The District Points system holistically captures a team's performance at an event. Compared to finalist alliance position, which indicates little beyond whether or not a team makes it to finals, the District Point system incorporates qualification rounds, alliance selection, *all* playoff round performance, and awards, painting a full picture of a team's success at the competition.

Part 3: Change District Team Qualification Rules

If a District team qualifies for Championship at a Regional, generate an additional Wildcard for the Regional. This way, Regional teams receive all the Championship spots allocated for Regionals, and District teams only draw from their Districts' allocations, rather than causing District teams to "double-dip," as they currently do.

Conclusion

The process of distributing Wildcards can be improved by awarding them based on a District Points ranking, which encompasses all parts of the competition (qualification rank, alliance selection, playoffs, and awards). This not only does a better job of recognizing successful teams but also eliminates the possibility for Wildcards to be wasted, which occurs with the current when there are more Wildcards than finalists who can receive them.