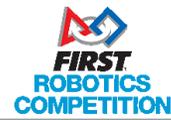




Oregon Robotics Tournament  
& Outreach Program



## Message to the *FIRST* Tech Challenge Oregon Community from the Oregon Robotics Tournament & Outreach Program (ORTOP)

April 15, 2019

At the *FIRST* Tech Challenge Oregon Championship Tournament on Sunday, March 10, 2019, tournament staff were approached by multiple parties expressing concerns regarding the alliance selection process and the resulting elimination rounds. The allegations were credible and serious enough that Tournament staff immediately paused the competition to gather additional information and conduct an investigation. *FIRST* HQ staff in Manchester, NH were contacted to determine what actions could be taken during the event regarding the judging process and the robot competition. No actions were taken regarding the elimination rounds of the competition, per *FIRST* policy. After the event, ORTOP staff gathered statements from teams directly involved in the alliance selection process to learn more about the incident and decide upon an appropriate response.

The allegations are related to inconsistencies in the way a team communicated the status of their robot to other higher-ranked teams. The first and third ranked teams were given a more favorable report regarding the functionality of the robot while other potential alliance captains were told the robot was not functional, was not able to be repaired by competition time, and that the team should not be selected as an alliance partner. However, this team was picked as the second selected by the number one alliance, and went on to compete with no apparent mechanical issues. The alliance went on to win the competition.

ORTOP is not an investigative or punitive entity. As the *FIRST* Affiliate Partner in Oregon, we are tasked with implementing the rules as enacted by *FIRST*. In this case, there are currently no specific rules regarding the way teams communicate about their robot's status during scouting activities. Teams are allowed to seek out alliance combinations that are advantageous during competition. However, Gracious Professionalism is expected in all activities associated with teams and tournaments.

ORTOP is committed to the core values of *FIRST*, especially the ideals of Gracious Professionalism. Using deceitful tactics to gain an advantage does not align with Gracious Professionalism. We recognize that there are many possible explanations concerning what happened, ranging from misunderstanding to malicious intent. Regardless of intent, the perception of fairness during the alliance selection process was damaged, as well as the perception of Gracious Professionalism, and our program.

As an organization, we are committed to transparency and making improvements that advance our mission and values. ORTOP, as the *FIRST* Tech Challenge Affiliate Partner, has no jurisdiction to change the Championship results or advancements. A comprehensive non-medical incident report was filed with *FIRST* Headquarters for further review. We have requested that *FIRST* Headquarters implement policies to minimize or prevent similar issues in the future. *FIRST* has communicated with ORTOP that they are taking this incident very seriously and are considering policy and rule changes to be adopted for the 2019 - 2020 season.

We have also met privately with the team in question to discuss the impacts of the situation on the community, regardless of whether the miscommunication was intentional or accidental. Below you will find a message from the team about the incident to the *FIRST* Tech Challenge community.

Thank you, to everyone who shared their thoughts with us. Please know that I will always make myself available to hear your concerns. I encourage all Coaches and Mentors to use this opportunity to discuss Gracious Professionalism with their teams and emphasize it above all else during the season. Thank you for modeling the respect, kindness, integrity and sensitivity that makes up this ethos.

Sincerely,  
David Perry  
ORTOP Executive Director

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**Message to the *FIRST* Tech Challenge Oregon Community  
from the Gifted Gears #8949 received April 15, 2019**

*Dear FTC Oregon,*

*Over the past month, our team has spent significant time reflecting on the incident - its impacts, what we learned from it, steps we take to ensure this never happens again, how we heal - and had some thoughts we wanted to share.*

*We feel deeply remorseful that miscommunication on our part during the Oregon FTC State Tournament hurt members of the FTC Oregon community, and we are actively taking steps to heal our relationships with those affected. Furthermore, new protocols and guidelines were established in our own team following the event to ensure better communication processes during and outside tournaments, and to guarantee that information being passed is accurate. Additionally, our team fully endorses any rule and/or game manual clarifications regarding the alliance selection process, in order to help guide teams more specifically in the future to decrease the chance of similar incidents in the future across *FIRST* nationwide.*

*Lastly, throughout this process, one of the most important things we have learned is that reaching out to folks in power and sharing concerns can be a good way to push for change. We are extremely grateful to ORTOP for the opportunities they've given us to share, and hope this event encourages others to openly share any concerns they might have in the future. Thank you for taking the time to read this.*