

### **Introductions & Housekeeping**

- NorCal FTC Program Delivery Partners
  - Mark Edelman
  - Ashley Harbert taking some deserved time away with family

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- Jill Wilker helping to manage the questions
- The session is being recorded and the slides & recording will be posted on the NorCal FTC website









## Why are we here?

Into The Deep season review/summary

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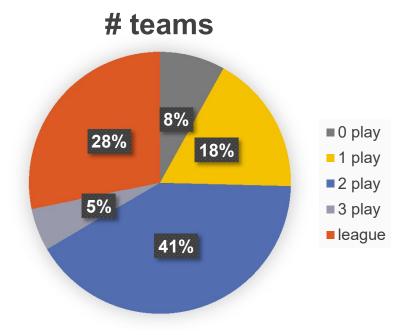
- Looking at upcoming challenges
- Call to action for help Mayday!!!





### **Into The Deep Highlights**

- 248 registered teams
  - 4<sup>th</sup> largest region in the world!
- 5 leagues 70 teams
- 13 qualifying tournaments
  - 8 single, 5 double
  - 1.5 plays/team
- 48 team regional championship
  - 14 teams invited to post-season events

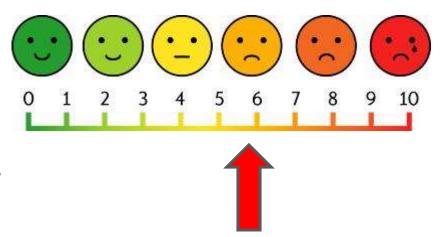






### **Into The Deep Lowlights**

- 2 canceled QTs
- Low registration for Nov/Dec QTs
- Only 1.5 plays/team
- Volunteer staffing challenges
  - More than 1 QT was close to being canceled for lack of volunteers!

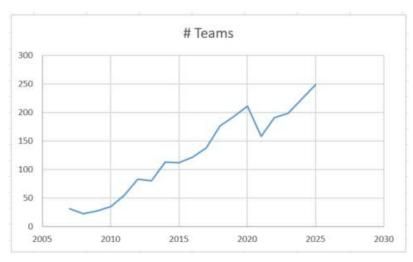






### The Challenges Ahead

- Our historical growth
  - 10-15% per year
- FIRST's plans accelerated growth
  - 15-18% per year double every 4 years!!
  - Plan is for 8 years of 15-18%
  - Makes our pains/lowlights worse!







#### **Next Season**

- Best Estimates ...
  - 290+ teams
  - 6 leagues (one new)
  - 21 QT (for 2.5 plays/team) 8 more than last year
  - ~18% advance to regional championship





### **Calendar Challenges**

- Only 20-22 viable QT dates Nov-Feb
  - Dean's List Interviews 2/14 weekend
  - FIRST Robotics Competition impacts dates after 2/22
  - Regional Championship no later than 3/15 (FTC mandate)
  - Holidays
    - Thanksgiving, Christmas, Super Bowl, MLK, Presidents' Day
- Means we need to use EVERY viable date







## QT Plays/Team

- Historical goal of 2.5/team
  - Would have needed 7 additional QTs this season
- Possible Fixes
  - More events, larger events
  - Utilize more of the calendar
  - Multiple QTs per day
  - Shift to more leagues
- More QTs puts pressure on Regional Championship Advancement





### The Impact of Leagues

- Reduces competition for QT spots
- Increases competition for key volunteers
  - 5 leagues = 20 events spread over Nov-Feb timeframe
- Full League Model
  - 18 leagues
  - 72 events (54 meets and 18 league tournaments)
  - Averages more than 3 events a day across all viable weekends





### Regional Championship Advancement

- Advancement percentage currently has a "fixed" numerator
  - Doesn't scale with team growth
  - Makes advancing feel "hard" and getting harder
- Larger CT size = larger venue
  - Few and generally more expensive
  - Need help finding venues (more later)





## Regional Championship Advancement Fixes

- Grow the RCT
  - Potentially expensive likely non-school venues
  - Multi-day event??
  - Short-term fix
- Add an intermediate layer
  - "Super" Qualifiers would likely mean at least 2-3
  - Shortens QT season need a couple of weeks to host SQT events





### FIRST Championship Advancement

- Regions assessed for size on 11/17
- Advancement allocations
  - FIRST Championship (5 this past season)
  - FTC Premier Events (9 this past season)
- Advancement suffers same issues we face locally!
  - 256 teams in 4 divisions in 2025!
  - Ongoing discussions on continuing growth!!





### **Enabling Continued Growth**

- Current model MUST evolve
- Changes will come with costs
  - More volunteers
  - More QT sites & hosts
  - More calendar pressures
  - Additional \$\$\$ for additional equipment





### **Current QT Limitations = 1 QT per day**

- One trailer (can carry two fields)
- 2-ish sets of electronics
- Enough fields for 2 two-field events
- Key volunteer shortage
  - Head Refs
  - Judge Advisors
  - FTAs
- One Mark





### One Event Per Day

- Without help, NorCal FTC can support only 1 event per day
- Makes calendar tight
  - More than 25% of days are in Nov
  - Need to use all opportunities!

Month	# event days
Nov	6
Dec	6-8
Jan	8
Feb	2





#### **QT Event Hosts**

- Need teams/organizations to host QTs
  - Find & book venues
  - Recruit & organize volunteers
  - Manage the event
- With 16-team QTs, if 1 of every 8 teams hosts, all teams can play twice!
  - If you aren't hosting, what are you doing to support those that are??





#### **Venue Search**

- We need help to explore
  - Middle & high schools
  - Community colleges, universities
  - Event spaces
  - Conference centers
- Handy Google form for collecting your inputs more info coming soon





## **QT/Event Support Needs**

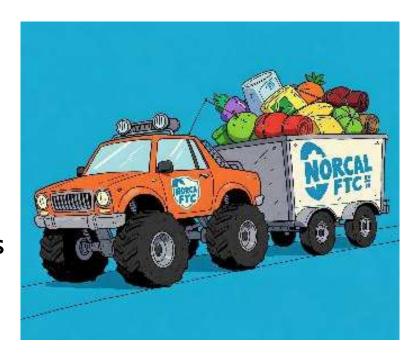
- Equipment movement
- Event setup & teardown
- Day-of event support





### **Equipment Movement**

- NorCal FTC has multiple fields
  - Most setup for trailer movement!
  - Can setup alternatives
- Available budget for mileage expenses (and hotels too if overnight required)







### **Event Setup/Teardown Help**

- Familiarity with the game & field assembly/setup
- Knowledge of scoring system setup and basic networking
- Attention to detail for pack out
  - Equipment potentially needed for next day!





## **Day of Event Support**

- Knowledge of scoring system & basic networking
- Understanding of field setup & maintenance
- Ability to help manage event flow & timing
- Patient problem solver





## **Volunteer Recruiting**

- Unaffiliated
  - Head Referees
  - Judges & Judge Advisors
- Technical
  - FTA, Lead Robot Inspector, etc
- Many roles at events can be team parents!!!
- Every team should be helping!
  - If your team isn't helping, your team is a part of the problem!







### Why Not Pay Staff?

- Typical QT workload
  - 2-3 hours setup day before
  - 10-12 hours day of tournament
- · Twice in a weekend
  - 30 hours (not including overtime 34 hrs w/ OT)
  - More than an entire work week in our current half-time staffing model!





### We Need More Sponsors

- Additional equipment requires funding!
  - Fields, electronics, trailer(s) ...
- Likely will need additional staffing
- Program-level sponsors needed
  - Will allow us to reduce team registration fees
- Contact us if you are willing to help broker connections to your company





### What's Already Happening??

- Regional Key Volunteers
  - Judge Advisor work with QTs to identify, train & support JAs
  - Head Refs committee to identify, train & support HRs
  - Lead Scorekeeper work with QT/league scorekeepers
- The NorCal FTC "pitch deck" is being updated
  - For working with potential sponsorship opportunities





### Happening This Fall – Post Kickoff

- In person trainings
  - For field setup & management
  - For scoring system equipment and software
  - For referees & head referees
- Field assembly work days

All will be at our building – The Play Space (San Jose)





#### The Worst Case

- 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- If no additional help comes ...
  - 2.5 plays/team needs 21 QTs
  - I cannot personally sustain doing more than this past season
  - Some desire will go unserved





### Questions??

- As time allows ...
- Please type questions into the GoToWebinar app
- If there are unanswered questions, we will add them to an FAQ on the website
- You can also email questions later to ftc@playingatlearning.org





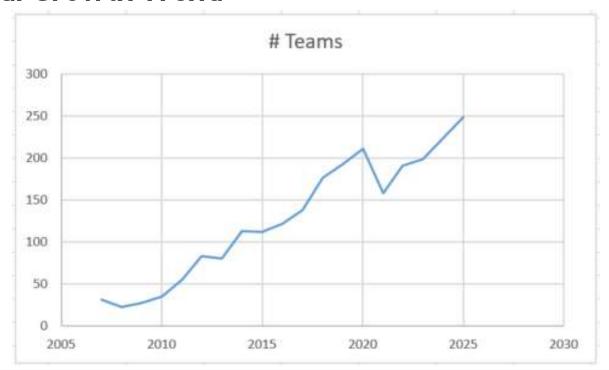








## **Historical Growth Trend**







# **Important Dates**

When	What
9/6/25	Kickoff
Early to Mid Oct	QT registration opens
11/17/25	Region Size Snapshot
12/15/25	Dean's List Nominations Due
2/7/26	Last weekend for QT
2/14/26	Tentative Dean's List Interviews
2/21/26 weekend	Tentative NorCal FTC Regional Championship
4/28/26-5/2/26	FIRST Championship



