



A *FIRST* force of nature giving back through mentorship

From robotics champion to community inspiration

Joel Tomy has long been known in the community as “one to watch.” He started his *FIRST* Tech Challenge UK journey when the programme launched in 2018 and has seen through every season with us to become who he is today.

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Initially getting involved without really understanding what *FIRST* is all about, Joel is now one of our biggest advocates, often happily jumping on stage without a script. His team, Hotwire Rewired, formed with no common interests but robotics gelled them together. Today, Joel and his peers mentor other teams to give back to the community.

Mentoring from experience

In Joel's eyes, it was only natural that his *FIRST* Tech Challenge UK journey wouldn't end when he stopped competing. Once he'd got a feel for what the challenge was about, he knew he was in it for the long haul.

"I like doing things for charity or helping people because it brings me another kind of joy. So when I heard more about *FIRST* Tech Challenge UK, I thought 'I've got to be part of this.' It's something I knew would build me as a person."

Alongside studying for his A-Levels, Joel mentored younger teams at his school. Bringing his wealth of experiences to the table, Joel guided Circuit Breakers vol. 3 to adjust their leadership style so that everyone's ideas were heard and they could learn from different members of the team. He also supported Octacore, his school's junior team, with the technical aspects of the challenge.



"It's a case of 'I've never done this before, so let me try to find a way to do this,' which is very key to life."

Joel Tomy, former member of Hotwire Rewired, Engineering Student at University

While Joel was competing, he learned to overcome many challenges, such as creating a cable management solution without a 3D printer. He improvised and built something himself, glueing together scrap materials and discovering his passion for engineering in the process.

"It was great the 3D printer wasn't working because I learned so many skills as a result," he explains.

These challenges were vital for Joel's personal development and enhanced his mentoring skills. **"For the teams I mentor to go on and win something at regionals, it felt like I was an older brother watching them. Hearing their team name announced and seeing how happy it made them took me back to my team,"** he shares.



Our inspiring community

Joel came into the programme not knowing he'd entered one of the most empowering robotics communities.

Industry volunteers played a key role in inspiring Joel to explore his potential and give back to the community.

“*FIRST Tech Challenge UK is not just for one kind of person. It's for anybody and there is something for everyone – it's just a case of finding it.*”

Joel Tomy, former member of Hotwire Rewired, Engineering Student at University

One of the biggest influences on Joel was one of our superstar volunteers, the one and only Andy Batey.

“Andy had a big influence on me. I really look up to him because he pushed me and made me realise there was someone who believed in me.

I still remember when he came up to me and said ‘You’re brilliant.’ I was just doing my own thing but he said ‘You’re going to go onto great things.’ I’d never had someone come up to me and say that before.”



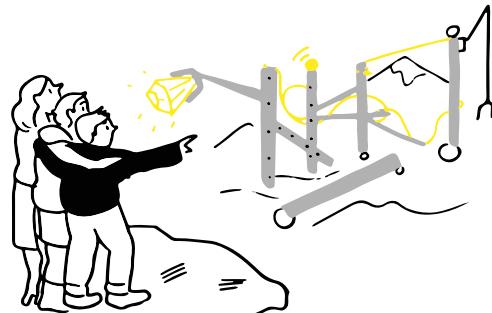


The journey starts with **FIRST**

The challenge changed Joel's life and career.

Originally, Joel had plans to study medicine at university, but he then realised that robotics could be more than a hobby – it could be the foundation for an exciting career.

Driven to pursue his passion, he reworked his applications around *FIRST* Tech Challenge UK and has since accepted a place to study engineering at a top UK university.



“My plan is to become a project manager, taking what I learned in the challenge and applying it to the real world,” he shares.

Joel's journey with *FIRST* Tech Challenge UK is only the beginning. Emerging from the programme as a confident public speaker with strong leadership skills, there is no doubt he will continue to be an inspiration to our global community.

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