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NFL AND TEXAS MEDICAL CENTER TEAM UP FOR SUPER BOWL START-UP COMPETITION

Companies to Present Innovations to Advance Sports Technology and Athlete Safety

The National Football League and the Texas Medical Center (TMC) today announced the launch of 1st and Future, the league’s annual Super Bowl start-up competition, to be held at the TMC Innovation Institute in Houston on Saturday, February 4, the day before Super Bowl LI.

The 1st and Future competition will focus on innovations that advance sports technology and athlete safety. Beginning today, start-ups may submit entries in three categories—Communicating with the Athlete, Training the Athlete and Materials to Protect the Athlete—for the chance to pitch their innovation to competition judges and an exclusive audience, including NFL team owners and executives and representatives from the Houston Super Bowl Host Committee and Texas Medical Center.

“We’re pleased to partner with the Texas Medical Center on this initiative to fuel innovation and advance athlete safety,” said Jeff Miller, NFL Executive Vice President of Health and Safety Policy. “The NFL will use its biggest stage—the Super Bowl—to continue to catalyze the development of technologies and other products that will help improve the game and promote the safety of athletes across all sports.”

The NFL and TMC will select up to nine companies from the three categories to compete in Houston. One winner from each category will be selected by a panel of judges comprising former NFL players, entrepreneurs and medical professionals. The winners will receive a $50,000 prize from the NFL to further develop their innovation; acceptance into TMCx, TMC’s world-renowned program for start-ups; and two tickets to Super Bowl LI.

For information on the submission process, selection criteria and official rules, visit www.tmc.edu/1st-and-future/. The deadline to submit applications is January 20, 2017.

“TMC provides a one-of-a-kind environment where the best and brightest minds in health and technology and private companies can collaborate to drive breakthrough ideas to market and transform the health of humanity,” said Dr. Robert C. Robbins, president and CEO of TMC. “The NFL and TMC both value healthy competition, prioritize the safety of the athletes and know that we can achieve more through teamwork and collaboration. We are partnering to give sports technology and safety companies this career-changing opportunity to help advance sports and shape the future of athlete health and safety.”

TMC will livestream the 1st and Future event on the TMC website as contestants compete in the following three categories:
• **Communicating with the Athlete:** New technologies that will improve the secure and safe means of communication between a coach on the sideline or in the coaches’ booth and a designated player on the field.

• **Training the Athlete:** Educational and training innovations designed to reduce injury during practice or competition. Innovations may include training techniques or equipment.

• **Materials to Protect the Athlete:** Novel or innovative solutions and materials that advance player health and safety while allowing for the highest-level of performance. Innovations may include, but are not limited to, materials that: improve breathability, heat dissipation or provide better protection for players by absorbing or mitigating force. These materials may be incorporated into protective equipment, padding, uniforms or footwear among other potential uses.

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**About TMC**
What was sparked with the founding of a single hospital in Houston in 1925 has come to be the Texas Medical Center (TMC) today. Home to 57 member institutions, including 21 hospitals, 13 support organizations, nine academic and research institutions, six nursing programs, three public health organizations, three medical schools, two universities, two pharmacy schools and a dental school, TMC operates the world’s largest medical city with eight million patients and family encounters with doctors, nurses and staff at TMC every year. TMC is dedicated to reinventing life sciences to improve the health and wellness of Houston, and the world. Learn more at [tmc.edu](http://tmc.edu).

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