What are the competition themes?

**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. Specifications are listed below:

- **Background:** The Coach-to-Player system is a direct point-to-point transmission from the sideline to the field of play. The current system consists of a radio receiver, battery pack, and small speakers embedded in the pads of the helmet. The transmission is fully encrypted to ensure privacy. The receiver cannot impede the player’s ability of hearing their surroundings while monitoring the transmission.

- **Objectives:** The goal for the next generation system is to explore alternative solutions for delivering communications from the coach to the player while the player is on the field. Any system should be mindful to reduce any potential risk of injury, and minimize the weight and size while increasing efficiency and fidelity. The system must be wireless and operate in the least amount of RF space in the complex frequency environment of an NFL stadium on game day. Any system must have, or be able to incorporate, a “cut-off” mechanism to terminate the communications at specified times during the game when such communications are prohibited. The system must be capable of being used in games and team practices.

- **Specifications for consideration:**
  - Encrypted, point-to-point simplex transmission
  - Frequency agile (i.e., avoid heavily used frequencies such as Wi-Fi)
  - Minimum of 6 hours operating window
  - Modular, easy to switch between the designated players eligible to use it
  - Speaker, in-ear, bone conduction or other audio transmission methods

**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 will advance player health and safety while allowing for the highest-level of performance. Innovations may include 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.

How do I apply?

Visit www.tmc.edu/1st-and-future to find more information on the program and a link to the application. The application deadline will close on January 20, 2017. Applications are subject to the 1st and Future Official Rules and completion of a Participation Agreement, which can also be found at www.tmc.edu/1st-and-future/.

Am I eligible to apply?

Apart from clear relevance to one of the three themes, qualifying startups should:

- Be early-stage companies, having raised an A-round or less;
- Have a fully working product/beta, reasonably close to or in production;
- No known intellectual property issues.

How many startups will be invited to pitch?

The NFL and Texas Medical Center (TMC) will select up to a total of nine teams or three startups in each category.

What is the pitch competition format?

Each of the finalists will have a total of ten minutes on stage: five minutes to pitch their technology and up to five minutes of questions asked by a panel of judges.
If your sport-tech startup has what it takes to be the next best thing, prove it and apply for 1st & Future.

Who will judge the startups at the competition?
The judging panel is expected to include individuals from among the following groups: former NFL players, noted entrepreneurs, investors and qualified medical professionals with relevant experience who are familiar with the theme.

What do the winners receive?
In addition to the opportunity to pitch in front of NFL team owners and executives and other invitees from the NFL, the Houston Super Bowl Host Committee and TMC, the winning team from each theme will receive a $50,000 check from the NFL, two tickets to Super Bowl LI and acceptance into the Texas Medical Center Accelerator (TMCx).

Where is the event?
The event will take place at TMCx, located at 2450 Holcombe Blvd., Suite X, Houston, TX 77021. The event will be livestreamed on the TMC’s website (www.tmc.edu).

When is the 1st and Future event?
Saturday, February 4. Finalists are expected to check-in by 7:45 a.m., the event starts at 8 a.m. (CST). The pitch-off is from 9 a.m. until 12 p.m. (CST). There will be a reception following the pitch competition, where each startup will have room to exhibit and talk 1:1 with pitch-off attendees.

When will the finalists be notified?
The NFL and TMC will notify the finalists on or before January 24, 2017.

Are applicants required to sign a participation agreement?
Yes, all applicants are required to sign a participation agreement to be considered for acceptance. Once an application is received, the applicant will receive a confirmation email and participation agreement for execution.

When will the finalists arrive in Houston?
The finalists will be expected to arrive in Houston on Wednesday, February 1 to begin pitch competition preparation and rehearsals at TMC. Finalists will be provided with a schedule of events upon acceptance into the competition.

Are costs to attend 1st and Future covered?
Yes, airfare for two personnel per startup (unless ground transportation is reasonable) and up to two hotel rooms are covered by the NFL.

If you would like to apply, please visit www.tmc.edu/1st-and-future/.

Questions?
Get in touch at 1standFuture@tmc.edu