

ROOKIE CONFERENCE CALL #11

PICKING DIVERS:

Every team handles this differently. Remember to do whatever works best for your team! Following are some things to consider:

Driver availability:

- Can they attend every day of every competition, including States and the Championship?
- Are they able to come to meetings often in order to practice?

Driver personality:

- Do they listen to the drive coach and do what he/she says?
- Are they responsible?
- Can you count on them to be where they need to be, when they need to be there?
- Can they handle pressure and intense situations?
- Are they able to handle criticism from the drive coach?
- Can they implement others' suggestions for improvement?
- Are they able to have the weight of the team's success on their shoulders?
- Are they able to think and act on their toes?

One drive team versus multiple drivers:

One drive team allows:

- Driver to build on previous experiences
- More practice time
- Drivers to learn each other's style
- Drive coach to set and maintain expectations
- More consistency in execution

Rotating teams of drivers allows:

- Everyone to have a turn
- Opportunity to discover more strategies
- New drive team every year versus returning drivers

Future thoughts ...

New Drive team Every Year:

- Example: only letting seniors be on the drive team
- Everyone eventually gets a chance to be on the drive team
- Allows students to watch other drive teams before them and learn by example
- Students learn what is expected of the drive team before they try to be

on it

Same drive team year after year:

- Example: picking students as freshman and have them drive for 4 years
- Get to build off of many years of experience – lending more experienced drivers and possibly further advancement in competitions
- Develop skills for many years

ADVICE FOR THE WEEKEND:

- Arrive early
- Find an official to un-bag your robot right away so you can get working
- Bring strong people in originally to do the unloading
- Take advantage of your pit time
- Get inspected as soon as you can
- Remember to have a mentor check in at registration as soon as you arrive – with the proper paperwork

COMPETITION CHECK-LIST:

- Bagged robot
- Paperwork for bagged robot
- Team Listing (from TIMS) and any other waiver forms
- BOM (Bill of Materials) – needs to be on a thumb-drive in the proper form. Look at past emails for this format (or in the game manual)
- Do you have any “information” on your team? The judges will come around and ask you about your team. Have the kids ready to answer these questions. If you have any documentation (newsletters, press releases, etc), have a copy to show to the judges. They will give back anything you give to them, if you ask.

PIT SUGGESTIONS:

- Get organized – have a place for everything; put tools away
- Have a sign for your sponsors to hang up
- Make it a “safe” environment
- Keep it clean – safety judges will talk to you, otherwise

SAFETY CAPTAIN

- Delegate a student on your team to be the safety captain
- In the manual, there are rules for the safety captain – they must know them

- Judges will ask questions like:
 - Where are the eye-wash stations?
 - How do you properly handle the batteries? Etc.

COMPETITION EXPECTATIONS

- Get there early – work until they kick you out
- Do all you can get the robot inspected and on the practice field
- Friday – open ceremonies
- Compete all day Friday
- Finish qualification matches Saturday morning
- Elimination matches Saturday afternoon
- First to win 2 matches moves on
- Alliance selection – top 8 ranked teams pick 2 other teams to play with them in the elimination matches (this is why scouting is important!)
- Award Ceremony – ALL teams should stay – more than just “winner of competition awards” that you qualify for!
- FIRST can use help cleaning up afterward (team building!)

FIELD MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR ROOKIES – MATCH SETUP PROCEDURE:

- Send two students to place the robot on the field and turn on the power as soon as possible.
- Have another student take the controls and Classmate to the driver station that you are assigned (Red or Blue, 1, 2 or 3)
- Ensure that your Classmate is booted into the driver account prior to arriving at the field.
- Connect the Ethernet cable to the Classmate
- Connect or Check that all USB are connected properly
- Go to the Diagnostics tab and ensure that when you press a button on your joysticks, the USB device changes from GREEN to BLUE (joystick can be rearranged and could affect your controls)
- Check that your team number is in the upper right hand corner
- Communications light will turn green once it has connected with the field
- Robot code light will turn green once it has connection with the robot
- Once all 3 lights are green, your robot is ready for the match.
- IF you have ANY QUESTIONS, ask for help. It is easy to get going, once you know what you are doing. Ask the FTA for help if you are having controls issues.

AFTER THE MATCH – ON THE FIELD:

- Send one student to get cart while others go to robot
- Put robot in SAFE transfer mode (bring arm down, etc)
- Be sure robot is turned off
- Wait for your turn to get off the field, put robot on cart and take to pit
- IF you LOST parts on the field, PICK UP ALL YOUR PARTS. If you didn't know, the referees will put the "extra parts" in the "ROBOT BARF BOX". Look there for missing pieces.
- Go back to pits and perform a ROBOT CHECK-LIST, for the next match.

GENERAL TIPS AND HINTS:

- Remind the mentors that this is the kid's weekend. They should be doing the talking to the judges! They should be the ones to brag about all the great stuff you have done!
- Cheer and have fun! Everyone loves to cheer!
- Don't forget to ask for help. Veterans love to help Rookies ... everyone loves a rookie team!
- Don't forget about gracious professionalism ... it is about working together!
- Remember to ALWAYS put a fresh battery in the robot (for each round).
- Name/number your batteries, so you know which one you just used, and which one has been charging the longest!
- Create a pit-crew checklist, so you know what batteries you are using, you can have a list on what you need prior to each round.
- Document the weekend!
- When you get home – make sure your local news media know you went and how you did ... get the word out!

FINAL THOUGHTS:

- Continuously improve your robot. Don't think when you are done, you are done
- Gracious professionalism reminder:
 - All teams work very hard to get a robot on the field. Some make it, some don't ... don't criticize if they are not the best, remember, they suffered like you.
 - Remember, everyone is watching – only say something you would say in front of your grandmother, as if she is watching!

- What to do if your team doesn't get picked ...
 - You go to practice field, work on auton or robot,
 - Fix your robot,
 - Pick an alliance and cheer for them
- Don't leave early – in case you win an award (or someone else wins an award, you can cheer them on)
- Choose your attitude – to have fun!