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NORTHROP GRUMMAN

Foundation



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Things I Wish I'd Known Before Attending VEX Worlds

The VEX Robotics World Championship is a gathering of top robotics teams from around the world, celebrating their accomplishments and competing with and against the best of the best. Here are a few things to know before the event.

Building Robots

1. Have all your drawings, pictures, and plans handy in case they are needed for fast repairs.
2. Always confirm your robot size. After a long season things change with improvements.
3. Do a pre-inspection. Get the robot inspected as soon as possible.
4. Check the security of all fasteners. You don't want stuff falling off during matches.

Batteries

5. Visually check all batteries for wire damage and loose connectors.
6. Assign a team member to monitor charging and battery usage.
7. Use a battery clamp, Velcro strap, or otherwise firmly secure your battery. Batteries don't help you if they're lying on the field or dragging behind your robot.
8. Don't use your oldest, scruffiest battery in the finals.

At the Tournament

9. Don't panic, YES the event is large, get an idea of the scope and pace of the event by looking at the layout and the agenda on RobotEvents.com.
10. Safety first! Follow safe procedures and don't forget your safety glasses.
11. Know where the First Aid station is located.
12. Know where the VEX store is located for last second repair parts.
13. Get your team checked in as soon as you arrive.
14. Locate your pit area and get comfortable with the event layout.
15. Keep your pit area neat and well organized.
16. Keep track of your personal belongings.
17. Bring your own extension cords and power strips.

Tournament Matches

18. Something will happen beyond your control. Don't worry about it! That's robotics.
19. Make sure you turn the robot on before the match.
20. Have fully charged batteries. Test in the pits not on the field.
21. Check all systems before every match. Use checklists. If it's good enough for NASA, it's good enough for robotics.
22. Make sure you turn the robot on before the match. Important enough to state twice!

Strategy and Judging

23. Always coordinate strategy with your partners.
24. Have a scouting plan. Selecting a great alliance partner is very important.
25. Scouting is about finding great robots for your alliance.
26. Have all team members share in scouting activities.
27. When you go into alliance selection have a ranked list of at least your 25 favorite robots in the tournament. If you are picking, you will find that someone else gets your top five choices so you need a good depth chart.
28. Bring white boards and markers. Use them to go over strategy with other teams as there may be a language barrier.
29. Judges aren't scary people, and you'll be surprised at how much you can tell them about your robot. They'll love it.
30. Practice for Judging just like you practice with your robot. Have a mentor run a mock judging session for you. Each Judge should know the story of your team.
31. When talking to judges be enthusiastic and coherent.

Life at Events

32. Wear comfortable shoes. Open toe shoes may be a safety risk.
33. Wear jeans, but bring shorts.
34. These competitions are supposed to be a blast, not a chore. Don't be afraid to look like you are having fun. At least 20% of the people there are less cool than you.
35. Drink lots of water even if you aren't thirsty, and don't forget to eat.
36. Bring earplugs of some sort. Tournaments can get very loud.
37. Jedi robes or pirate costumes make any team instantly cool.
38. Get cell phone numbers of as many people on your team as possible. Put these on a list and distribute to your team BEFORE the event.
39. Network. Friends you make in robotics could influence your life later.
40. Meet other people from other teams. They have a lot to teach and a lot to learn.
41. Yes, kids really do cry when their robot loses. Adults sometimes do, too.

Marketing and enthusiasm

42. Promote your team to others. Demonstrate the strengths of your robot because you never know what teams may need a robot like yours as an alliance partner.
43. It's impossible to bring too many buttons.
44. Yell, cheer, chant, and dance. Most of all have fun! You worked hard to get here.
45. Your team's banner can never be too big.
46. Bring a small color printer. Being able to print flyers on the spot can be a big help.
47. Get out of your pits and meet other teams. Wear distinctive shirts.

Working Together

50. Don't be afraid to look around and learn from other teams.
51. Have a lot of fun, remembering that sometimes fun and pain go hand in hand.
52. Help others as much as you would like to receive help from them.
53. Have a meeting place in the event you separate from your team members.
54. Have a printed copy of each other's cell phone numbers.