Q&A

VRC 2019-2020: Tower Takeover

Tagged: Tournament Structure

Welcome to the official VEX Robotics Competition Question & Answer system, where all registered teams have the opportunity to ask for official rules interpretations and clarifications. This Q&A system is the only source for official VRC Tower Takeover rules clarifications, and the clarifications made here from the Game Design Committee (GDC) are considered as official and binding as the written **Game Manual** itself.

Please review the **Q&A Usage Guidelines** before posting. This system is only intended for specific VRC Tower Takeover rules questions.

- For event, registration, or other competition support questions, please contact your **REC Foundation Regional Support Manager**.
- For VEX technical support, contact **support@vex.com** or **sales@vex.com**.
- For game questions, suggestions, or concerns outside of specific and official rules questions, contact **GDC@vex.com**.

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ONE STEM VIDEO Per event or Per season.

Hi All, anyone know if the STEM video is one per event or one for the entire season. In other words, out kids will learn more as the year goes on however they want to submit a STEM research project for the first tournament - can they improve on the video / PPT and submit a revised version to subsequent tournaments?

Thanks! Keep calm and robot on.

> **Answered by Game Design Committee**
>
> The purpose of the VEX IQ Challenge Q&A System is to clarify rules for the VEX IQ Challenge game, Next Level. For questions related to judging, please post in the official Judging Q&A, located on the VEX IQ Forum:
>
> http://www.vexiqforum.com/forum/vex-iq-challenge-discussion/general-vex-iq-challenge-discussion/judging-q-a

Is STEM Video the required method of Judging

Is the video submission for the STEM Presentation Awards a requirement? Can a local event skip the video judging process and do in person judging on the day of the event, instead?

If video judging is a requirement, would we be able to narrow down the top 5 STEM Presentations videos and perform in person judging with the top 5 video judging submissions?

Or must the determination of the STEM Presentation Award be made solely on the Video Submission prior to the start of the event?

> **Answered by Game Design Committee**
>
> The purpose of the VEX IQ Challenge Q&A System is to clarify rules for the VEX IQ Challenge game, Next Level. For questions related to judging, please post in the official Judging Q&A, located on the VEX IQ Forum:
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> www.vexiqforum.com/forum/vex-iq-challenge-discussion/general-vex-iq-challenge-discussion/judging-q-a

2nd Tiebreaker Disadvantage

It seems to me that if the 2nd tiebreaker that takes into account the match time is run one after the other, the second alliance would have an advantage knowing that once they reach the same score as the previous alliance they can set their controller down before the buzzer and win. Is that correct? Should/could both alliances be run at the same time?

> **Answered by Game Design Committee**
>
> The two tiebreaker matches should not be run simultaneously. The lower-seeded Alliance should play their match first, followed by the higher-seeded Alliance. This is a similar advantage that higher seeded Alliances have in a standard (no tiebreakers) Finals structure, as they will know what the "score to beat" is when going into their match.
>
> This was included in the August 17th Game Manual update.
>
>> If there is a tie for first place, the tied Alliances will each play one tiebreaker Match. **The lower seeded Alliance will play their Match first, followed by the higher seeded Alliance.** The Alliance with the

VRC Phone use during alliance selection

Tournament Structure

A question arose in the EP Q&A which impacts teams. Are you allowed to use a phone (or any communication device) as the team representative to get information from other team members or non-members during alliance selection?

Answered by Game Design Committee

There are no rules prohibiting this, thus it is legal.

Of course, this topic is also a good opportunity to remind participants that VRC is intended to be a student-centered program, as explained by this example in G2:

> During Match play, it is…
>
> …okay for an adult to provide cheerful, positive encouragement as a spectator.
>
> …not okay for an adult to explicitly shout step-by-step commands from the audience.

Do teams have to put their controllers down at the end of a match?

Tournament Structure   Hanging   G10

At the 2018 VIQC World Championships teams were asked to put their controllers down at the end of a match. In addition I believe it is common practice for refs to ask them to.

The definition of *match stop time* says that students put their controllers down to set their match stop time if they want to end early.

As far as I can see the manual never states that teams must put their controllers down at the end of a match. This would possibly allow a team to hold onto their controller and keep pressing a button to keep their robot high hanging.

Please could you clarify what teams can/must do with their controllers at the end of a match. I request a rule be added that requires teams to put the controllers down as they can use software to hold the robot up if they want to.

Answered by Game Design Committee

The end of the match procedure is currently defined by G10:

<G10> When it's over, it's over. Scores will be calculated for all Matches immediately after the Match is complete and once all objects on the Field come to rest. Any Scoring, Removing, Parking, or Hanging that takes place after the Match due to Robots continuing to drive will not count.

The key words in this rule are "Robots continuing to drive". The intent of this rule is for all Driver inputs and all Robot motion to cease at T=0. Holding a button down to continue moving after a Match would be outside the intent of this rule. However, a Robot holding its position steady (i.e. the default Driver Control behavior) would be permissible.

We highly recommend that Drivers place their controllers on the ground, or otherwise let go of them, to make it perfectly clear to referees that they have stopped driving. However, it is not an explicit requirement of the rule. We will look at clarifying this further in the August manual update.

Clarification on AP Points

Tournament Structure   Scoring

The definition for Autonomous Points states that "An Alliance who wins the Autonomous Bonus during a Qualification Match earns four (4) Autonomous Points." This appears to fit with last year's autonomous point values, and not the Tower Takeover values - causing points earned from the Autonomous Bonus and Autonomous Points to not have the same value. Is this interpretation correct?

> **Answered by Game Design Committee**
>
> Thank you for pointing this out. This was a typo and will be fixed in the June 14th Game Manual Update. You are correct, the Alliance who wins the Autonomous Bonus should receive six (6) AP's.

T01 and REC participation in local rulings

Tournament Structure

> <T01> Referees have ultimate authority during the competition. **Their rulings are final.**

> a. The referees will not review any photo or video Match recordings.

> b. Any questions for the referees must be brought forward by a Student Drive Team Member (not an adult) from the affected Team within a time period of two (2) Qualifying Matches, or immediately after the score is announced of an Elimination Match.

> c. Any concerns regarding the Match score must be raised by a Student Drive Team Member (not an adult) before the playing field has been reset for the next Match. Once the field has been cleared, scores may no longer be disputed.

In a semi-final match at the Southwest Texas Regional Qualifier, there was a disputed call which lead to a narrow loss. The affected (losing) team questioned the head referee immediately after the score was called, prior to any robots or scoring objects being moved. The head referee conferred with the teams and confirmed the ruling. Finalists were announced and queued to the field. The losing semi-finalist team left to the pits and then the stands, no longer contesting the ruling.

At that point there began a delay of over an hour while the REC regional coordinator conferred with the entire referee crew and persons unknown over the phone. The regional coordinator then announced that, in conjunction with the local referees, himself as a representative of the REC and other persons from the REC (by phone) , the previous ruling was overturned. The previous winners waiting at the finals field were disqualified from the finals, and (after even more delay) the finals were played.

Two questions:

1: At what point and in what circumstances may the REC overrule local decisions? T01 seems clear on the referees having the final decision, but was overruled in this case. In other words, on what basis may remote, non-observers rule on a game-play violation observed first-hand by the local referee staff?

2: At what point may persons other than students on the affected team advocate for a rule interpretation? In this case, despite the affected team accepting the ruling, it was overruled due to the advocacy of unnamed persons. Neither the affected team nor the alliance later disqualified was a part of the very lengthy discussion that lead to the disqualification.

(edited for formatting and grammar)

> **Answered by Game Design Committee**
>
> Both of your specific questions can be directly answered by <T01> as quoted in your question. While it is always impossible to issue a blanket ruling based on a snapshot description, the scenario laid out in this question would not be consistent with the guidelines and intended chain of communication set forth by this rule.
>
> The GDC cannot comment on a specific event staff's decision-making process, and the scenario described in the question is under investigation by the REC Foundation outside of the context of this Q&A forum.

V5 vs Cortex - not a level playing field

Not really a question but rather an observation from a middle school still waiting for their two V5 kits since September. Are there others waiting and/or having success getting their purchased kits more quickly? My teams are generally OK with where we're at in our rankings and likely not going to states, as we have in the past, but we all noticed a very clear difference in abilities and power between V5 & Cortex bots. There's nothing to do now but I wish that V5 bots would compete against V5 bots and Cortex bots against cortex bots. The V5 bots have a real advantage and I feel that it was truly unfortunate that many teams are still waiting for their kits to arrive 6 months after they've been ordered and promised. I am surprised I don't see more posts about VEX's practice of taking a team's money and not being able to provide the teams their products during the standard competition time... I saw posts from VEX U teams but not middle and high school teams and wonder if somehow we're the only ones still waiting? I'm not interested creating any drama or legal issues, but I am frustrated on behalf of my team & feel taken advantage of by VEX. I just want to advocate for my kids and am curious if others have had success getting kits more quickly and/or have gotten any "handicaps" at competitions because of having the cortex bots. Again, I am NOT interested in starting a struggle... I am just making sure I am advocating for my team or not missing out on any accommodations. Thanks from a newbie middle school mentor/coach!

> ### Answered by Game Design Committee
>
> Thank you for your post and for visiting the VRC Q&A. Please review the official Q&A Usage Guidelines before posting. The intent of the Q&A is to provide official clarifications on specific VRC Turning Point rules.
>
> If you have programmatic feedback, feel free to contact GDC@vex.com. If you are interested in starting a conversation with other VEX Robotics Competition teams, please visit www.vexforum.com.

Match Stop Time

I'm I understanding the rule correct? The match stop time only comes into play during a tie breaker match.

Or should the match stop times be recorded throughout all qualifying and finals matches?

Where's what I saw at a tournament. During the finals, three alliances all scored 17 points, which was the high score for most of the finals rounds. It ended up that the top seeded Alliance ended up beating that score so it wasn't ultimately an issue. But I can definitely see a scenario where at least a two way tie happens.

Ultimately, my question is, do refs and Tournament Managers need to worry about Match Stop Teams for most of the day? Or only in the case of a tie breaker?

Thanks.

> ### Answered by Game Design Committee
>
> Let's look at the definition of Match Stop Time from the Game Manual, with a portion bolded for emphasis:
>
>> Match Stop Time – The time remaining (i.e. displayed on the timer or audience display) **in a tiebreaker Finals Match** when an Alliance ends the Match early by placing their controllers on the ground. The Match Stop Time is rounded down to the nearest even number. For example, if controllers are set down when the displayed time is 13 seconds, the Match Stop Time is recorded as 12 seconds. If an Alliance does not finish the Match early, they receive a default Match Stop Time of 0 seconds.
>
> As well as the following portions of the "Teamwork Challenge Finals Matches" section:
>
>> • If there is a tie for first place, the tied Alliances will each play one tiebreaker Match. The lower seeded Alliance will play their Match first, followed by the higher seeded Alliance. The Alliance with the

highest score in their tiebreaker Match will be declared the winner.

o If there is a tie in the tiebreaker Matches, the Alliance with the higher Match Stop Time will be declared the winner.

[...]

• If there is a tie other than first place, the higher seeded Alliance will receive the higher rank. For example, if the #4 and #6 Alliances both post a score that ties them for 3rd place, the #4 Alliance will be considered the 3rd place Alliance, and the #6 Alliance would be considered the 4th place Alliance.

Thus, Match Stop Time only becomes relevant during a tiebreaker Finals Match, and tiebreaker Finals Matches only occur if there is a tie for first place.

Invitations to Worlds

Tournament Structure

I heard somewhere that Jan 15th was the date when it is decided officially how many Worlds invitations will be given at each state competition. Where can I find that information? Thanks!

Answered by Game Design Committee

Please review the Q&A Usage Guidelines before posting. The Q&A system is intended for specific rules clarifications regarding the current VEX IQ Challenge game, Next Level. For event, registration, or other competition support questions, please contact your REC Foundation Regional Support Manager.

Second set of tiebreakers in finals

Tournament Structure

Teamwork Challenge Finals Matches ...

? If there is a tie for first place, the tied Alliances will each play one tiebreaker Match. The Alliance with the highest score in their tiebreaker Match will be declared the winner.

o If there is a tie in the tiebreaker Matches, a second set of tiebreaker Matches (one (1) per Alliance) will take place. The Team with the highest score in the second tiebreaker Match will be declared the winner. ...

? If there is a tie other than first place, the higher seeded Alliance will receive the higher rank. For example, if the #4 and #6 Alliances both post a score that ties them for 3rd place, the #4 Alliance will be considered the 3rd place Alliance, and the #6 Alliance would be considered the 4th place Alliance.

Is the second set of tiebreakers only for the teams that tied for all of the teams that initially tied?

(I also think it should read "The Alliance with the highest score...," not "The Team ...")

Answered by Game Design Committee

The second set of tiebreaker Matches is only played by the Alliances who tied for first place in their Finals Match, and only played if they tied again in their tiebreaker Match. The scores of other Alliances are not considered in these tiebreaker Matches.

Please also note the Match Stop Time provision for a Finals tiebreaker match, added in the June 15th Game Manual update. In the first tiebreaker Finals Match, a Match Stop Time will be recorded, and could be used to break the tie, should the Alliances tie again in their tiebreaker Match.

Match Stop Time – The time remaining (i.e. displayed on the timer or audience display) in a tiebreaker

Finals Match when an Alliance ends the Match early by placing their controllers on the ground. The Match Stop Time is rounded down to the nearest even number. For example, if controllers are set down when the displayed time is 13 seconds, the Match Stop Time is recorded as 12 seconds. If an Alliance does not finish the Match early, they receive a default Match Stop Time of 0 seconds

If this does not answer your question, please feel free to rephrase and re-submit.

<T03> Can an elimination time out occur during a match?

Tournament Structure

[edit - This apparently was answered during Toss Up season, and the answer was that it was not the GDC's intention. Given the situation raised in VEX forum it appears that it is still not clear to some. I would recommend that that the words "prior to the start of the match" be added to T03 in future game manuals.]

An interesting discussion on VEXforum on time outs. A poster noted that a team asked for a time out during a match, and was given it by disabling all the robots on the field:

> This reminds me of Chinese teams were calling timeout during the match..... Yes, during the match, like when there is 1 min left and they call "timeout", field comp got cut and teams start discussing strategies. I scratched my head and searched for the rules, it does not explicitly say timeout cant be called during the match.....

Was this proper procedure to follow - shutting down the match because a team asked for it.

The game manual does not specify that a time out must be prior to the start of a match:

> <T03> There are no time outs in Qualifying Matches; in the elimination rounds, each Alliance will be allotted ONE time out of no more than three (3) minutes, as permitted by the head referee. The Matches must progress according to schedule.

Answered by Game Design Committee

The intent of T03 is for a time-out to be held between Matches, not during a Match. We will look at making this verbiage more clear in the future.

Finals tiebreakers if tournament qualifies more than first place

Tournament Structure

Teamwork Challenge Finals Matches

...

? If there is a tie for first place, the tied Alliances will each play one tiebreaker Match. The Alliance with the highest score in their tiebreaker Match will be declared the winner.

o If there is a tie in the tiebreaker Matches, a second set of tiebreaker Matches (one (1) per Alliance) will take place. The Team with the highest score in the second tiebreaker Match will be declared the winner.

...

? If there is a tie other than first place, the higher seeded Alliance will receive the higher rank. For example, if the #4 and #6 Alliances both post a score that ties them for 3rd place, the #4 Alliance will be considered the 3rd place Alliance, and the #6 Alliance would be considered the 4th place Alliance.

If a tournament will qualify the top three teamwork pairs to the next level, would it be appropriate to run a tiebreaker match for third place as well if the third and fourth places are tied?

> **Answered by Game Design Committee**
>
> No, this would not be appropriate. Tiebreaker matches should only be played for first place, as quoted in the rules.

Scoring Software

`Tournament Structure`

Hello,

Where can I find the scoring software for VexIQ Next Level?

> **Answered by Game Design Committee**
>
> Please review the [Q&A Usage Guidelines](#) before posting. This Q&A system is for specific rules clarifications only.
>
> For competition support questions, please contact your REC Foundation Regional Support Manager, who can be located by visiting this page: www.robotevents.com/support

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Movement before the beginning of the match

`Tournament Structure`

What should we do if a robot clearly starts before the beginning of the match? With the 3,2,1, GO! It's very easy for a team to get a half second head start. I've seen this happen a number of times and never been quite sure what to do about it. I would think that the only appropriate thing to do would be a DQ, but would it be possible to restart the match if necessary? This could be especially problematic during high stakes finals matches. Would it be a better practice to just not say 3,2,1 and just have the teams listen for the buzzer?

> **Answered by Game Design Committee**
>
> > Would it be a better practice to just not say 3,2,1 and just have the teams listen for the buzzer?
>
> This would be the preferred option, to ensure that any small delays (such as the announcer being out of sync with the TM operator) do not impact the match.
>
> If a Team starts driving too early due to this type of delay, it is within the Head Referee's discretion to call for a replay and reset the Match. This accidental infraction should not be grounds for a Disqualification.

NZ National V5 Ban

`Tournament Structure`

According to a post on VEXforum, EPs in the country voted to ban V5 from their World Qualifying National Event. Has this been sanctioned by the RECF? If so, why? This encourages regional partners to cherry pick what tournament rules to change for the sake of "level playing field".

I am perplexed by this action. We could make a similar ban of V5 at all fall events because not everyone got their shipments in time.

Or is this simply a single exception due to their national event being much earlier than all others?

> **Answered by Game Design Committee**
>
> The decision to disallow V5 at the New Zealand national event was made and approved in a collaboration between the Event Partners in New Zealand, the VEX office in Australia (who supports New Zealand), and the REC

Foundation. It is an explicit, individual, and specific exception to the rules due to circumstances outside of the scope of this Q&A, and is not an invitation for EP's to "cherry pick" rules elsewhere.

How to deal with robots that do not pass inspection?

Tournament Structure   R2

There is a good discussion on VexForum with differing opinions and weighins from RECF RSM on how EPs are to deal with teams whose robots do not pass inspection.

Two rules appear: Rule <T03> a. If a Robot cannot report for a Match, at least one Student member of the Team should report to the field for the Match. If no Student Team members report to the field, the Team will be considered a "no-show" and receive zero (0) WP, AP, and SP.

<R2> Every robot will be required to pass a full inspection before being cleared to compete. This inspection will ensure that all robot rules and regulations are met. Initial inspections will take place during team registration/practice time.

A) first question is does a team whose robot did not pass inspection and still on the schedule be allowed to send a representative to the field under <T03> and get credit for the outcome of the match, which is in essence the performance of the alliance partner?

B) second question - should a Head Referee disqualify the team for showing up to matches (with or without the robot) if it has not passed inspection for all matches the team shows up to? (a remedy suggested by an EP with the backing of the RSM)

C) third question - should a Head Referee allow a robot who has not passed inspection to compete while minor or trivial out of spec issues be fixed - i.e., over sized by a mere 1/16th of an inch?

D) does <R2d> specifically call for DQing the team every match until the problem has been fixed? Or does it mean the robot may not be placed on the field, but the team can show up and get credit? or does it mean the team MUST be marked as "No Show" and not allowed near the field?

> <R2d> d. Referees or inspectors may decide that a robot is in violation of the rules. In this event, the team in violation will be disqualified and **the robot will be barred from the playing field** until it passes re-inspection.

Thank you for considering this complex set of scenarios and subquestions relating to <T03> and <R2> - I believe teams, EPs and RSM are all trying their best to deal with a case that does occur all too frequently in a fair manner that supports the growth of teams coming to competitions.

Answered by Game Design Committee

Per <R2d> as quoted, if a Robot is found to be in violation of Robot rules, then it should be barred from the field. <R2d> should be considered the same whether the violation is found during inspection, or during Match play; that is, they should be barred from the field and receive a Disqualification for any Matches which occur while the Robot is in violation. Passing inspection includes minor violations such as being oversized by 1/16".

If a Robot has passed inspection, but the Team decides to not field the Robot (e.g. if it is being repaired), then the Team will not be considered a "no-show" as long as a Student representative is sent to the field per <T03a>. This allowance does not apply to a Robot which has not passed inspection or has been found to be in violation - in these cases, <R2d> still applies, as explained above.

So, Teams must pass inspection before bringing their Robot to any Matches, and must ensure that they remain within compliance of all Robot rules throughout the day. We encourage event staff to work with all Teams to pass inspection, and keep Teams in the Match schedule if they are making a diligent effort to pass inspection in a timely manner.