



North Surrey Spartan Robotics SD 36 Rookie FRC Team 6390 *Hephaestus*

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Hello Rookie Teams!

Here is a quick document created by team Hephaestus 6390 to guide rookie teams on a certain timeline and give tips as build season quickly approaches.

Challenge KICK-OFF

The official date of the kick-off for this year's challenge is Saturday, January 5, at 10:00 am (10:00 HRS) Eastern Standard Time (UTC - 5:00). The kick-off will be streamed on the FIRST Inspires twitch channel. This is the moment that all the game details will be revealed and build season officially begins. It may be a Saturday; however, it is highly recommended that teams gather together to watch the livestream or head to an existing event where other teams are gathering to watch. BC's major kick-off event is at BCIT, where the majority of our BC teams' part kits will be delivered. A team can elect to meet elsewhere, even if they have chosen the BCIT location for their kit delivery. The location of the kick-off will vary depending on your team's location.

Pre KICK-OFF

Before kick-off, your focus is best spent creating clear-cut goals for the team, gathering funds from sponsors, and learning what you can from past competitions. Creating a personal and online presence, and building camaraderie will be crucial during this period, so ensure you reach out to your community about FIRST as it will help create awareness of your team.

As the leaders of the team, it is important to make it clear to your team what you hope to achieve during the season. It may seem impossible to win an award as a rookie team, however it is important to remain positive! Make the team understand that they are striving for the top position, while gaining invaluable experience and strategizing on challenges encountered for next year. Some awards that rookie teams may apply for include: Dean's List Award and Woodie Flowers Award

Robotics is not a cheap club to host! Costs may vary depending on the size of the team and how many people are going to each competition, but in general the team will not be able to survive on student, teacher, and PAC money alone. Create a sponsor package of information about the team, outlining what the team will use the sponsor money for, and how the sponsor will be recompensed, usually through having their name displayed on the robot, t-shirt, etc. This job is normally done by adult mentors, parents, and even older student members. Many places will say no, just remember, if your odds are one in a million, try a million times!

Use www.thebluealliance.com to view past competitions and look for the strategies employed by the winning team. Strategies will be varied each season, but every year, teams have to cooperate



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with three other teams and against the competition. In terms of design, look at successful robots' drivetrains, telescoping, claw mechanisms, etc. Other amazing resources are www.chiefdelphi.com and the Official FIRST YouTube Channel. Pregame strategizing is important so that when the game is revealed, the team can immediately have a meeting about the direction they want to go with the robot and playstyle. From the get go, immediacy is everything. The team will have until the very last minute of February 19 (23:59 HRS EST) to assemble their robot. This is known as the Stop Build Day.

Building camaraderie within the team is important, as there will be little time for socializing during build season. If you have an abundantly large team or a quiet group of people, or if there is not a healthy level of team bonding, they may not be as willing to communicate with each other. Communication is an intrinsic part of a team and can very easily be the instrument of success or failure. Team bonding exercises go a long way, because they subject the team to having a common experience they can talk about and bond over. The best team bonding exercises are the ones that nudge you outside of your comfort zone.

Speaking of communication, if you don't have one already, there will need to be a way for the team to contact each other outside of school or the regular meeting hours. Students will likely already have their own social media that they can connect with each other on, but the Remind app can be very useful as well. This is the app that our team uses, it links up to every team members' phones/devices. While most inter-student communication occurs on Facebook and Snapchat, adult mentors generally do not want to link up their social media to these text chains for reasons revolving around privacy. Remind is a perfect way for older mentors to send out text blasts to all members' phones through the platform or SMS.

It is also a good idea to start a team Instagram or Blog/Website. FIRST likes to see teams reaching out to audiences beyond their local communities. For an example of what this may look like, you can view our team instagram (@frc6390), twitter (@NSS_Hephæstus), and website (<http://www.hephaestus6390.com/>).

Post KICK-OFF

After viewing the game reveal, the team will need to be split into three major groups. Group one, are the builders, designers, drivers, coders, and other mechanically inclined people. These people will need to be strategizing and building right from the get go. Group two, is the awards team. These are historian type members who are eloquently spoken. The awards the team decides to go after should be decided pre kick-off. The awards are written documents with prescribed word limits, with the exception of the Chairman's Video. Some awards do not need to be submitted for, however the most esteemed award to submit for is the Chairman's award. This award is given to the team that best exemplifies the core values of FIRST, however Rookie Teams are not able to submit for it. Do not be disheartened, any philanthropic acts and achievements in your Rookie year can carry over to when you submit for next year. Chairman's video submissions are all on YouTube. Winners of previous Chairman's awards can be found on bluealliance.com, look for their video on YouTube. Group three, are the members who may not be old enough to be in



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FRC. These students should be welcomed to observe the build and awards team if they decide to stay for next year. If they are too much of a distraction for your team, the lead mentor should make an executive decision as to whether or not they will be furloughed until the end of the build season. In our team, only a few junior members elect to give their time and respectfully observe FRC pregame in action. These are the members that we bring to competitions as our scouts, who take valuable information about winning and losing strategies in real time. This information allows us to have a strong footing when alliances are chosen at the competition. Outside of these three groups will be specialists or one man show type roles like team photographer or drive coach. Sometimes these specialized roles do not require as much commitment, so they may be more attractive to members who have other things tying them down, which is perfectly fine. On the flipside, a member can double up and take on a specialized role alongside their regular group.

Final Remarks

Your team will need to be all registered on the firstinspires.org TIMS (team information management system) to be able to go to any competitions. This may take an extended amount of time due to the need for parents to sign off consent for their children.

Each team has their own shirt, so a logo will need to be designed. The logo can be made beforehand, but hold off on ordering the shirts until the sponsor list is finalized for that season, as they will likely want to have their name on the shirt.

Build season and Awards are a very stressful time. Treat your members as if they all have full-time jobs. Being a student is a full-time commitment, and should be prioritized above anything else. Robotics and the competition no longer becomes fun when the members are extortionately suffering. There are members on our team who will stay at school close to midnight, but these are the gifted and dedicated students who are willing to volunteer that time and are excelling in their studies.

Hopefully this has been helpful in kick starting your team as the competition starts heating up! Us as a team could not have had as successful a rookie season as we did without senior teams helping us along the way, so it is our self-appointed obligation to feed the cycle. Please reach out to us with questions through our website <http://www.hephaestus6390.com> or email robotics.hephaestus@gmail.com!

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