K-Botics, Team 2809

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Alliance Coordination – A qualifications survival guide

This guide gives a general insight to the organization needed before heading to the field in qualification rounds.

Pre-Match Coordination

The most important part of preparing for a match, beyond remembering to put a battery on your robot, is to coordinate with your alliance partners and to create a game plan. Without a plan (from starting positions, to in-game roles) you will have chaos on the field. It truly is a "*When you fail to plan, you plan to fail*" scenario.

1. Meet as an alliance and establish each robot's **abilities** and what **tools** you have at your disposal. Don't exaggerate your robots abilities! Developing a strategy around a robot you expect to score 20 game pieces that then scores 2 is useless.

2. Look at your **opponents** and identify where their **strengths** are and whether you can negate any advantage.
   - using one of your robots to run interference on the opposition's offensive powerhouse
   - using one of your robots to be a linebacker and clear a path for your best offensive robot.

   Weigh your options and determine whether dedicating a robot to these tasks is a better choice than trying to out score the opposition with all of your robots.

3. The more information you have at your disposal the better decisions you can make. Get **scouts** to make a condensed information list of robots you are playing with and against in later matches. By Saturday morning you should nearly be able to predict the final score of your matches.

4. When meeting with alliance partners send two to three representatives, this should always include the **coach**. The basic things to establish are the robot and human player starting positions. When doing this take into consideration what **autonomous** programs each team has. In discussing strategy nearly all teams have one of two approaches:
   - "We are trying to win this match"
   - "We are trying to show off our robots abilities so <awesome team> picks us"

   The former are generally very cooperative while the latter might be more reluctant to follow a plan that doesn't involve them doing what they built their robot to do. This type of team is usually more cooperative if it is pointed out that demonstrating an ability to play a role in an alliance is more likely to get them picked.

5. Coming out of the conversation each team should know their **role**, what to expect from the opposing alliance, and a **contingency** plan if the original plan fails. Do not underestimate the importance of a contingency plan. Intelligent alliances will try to stop your strategy and the ability to change strategy mid match can make an important difference.

In Match Execution

The most important in skill (other than driving ability) is knowing when to give up on a task. The coach should always be weighing the possible points earned against the time required to earn them. You need to know when to give up and move on to another task. Two minutes is a short time.

Assess whether your current plans is working and if one of your contingency plans would be more effective. The coach must know the remaining time and approximate score including anticipated penalties. The driver should focus entirely on driving the robot and nothing else. The coach is responsible for giving the driver all instructions and for any decisions made in the game, and watching the referee for warnings.

Representing Your Team

Remember that at the competition you are representing your team. Be friendly with other teams. Try to avoid being stubborn, uncooperative, or pushy.

Your drive team should have the manual memorized, especially what actions result in a **penalty**. Teams will remember and take note if your drive team hasn't put the time in to know the rules and if your human player decided that giving a robot a high five mid-match was a good idea. Unnecessary penalties that cost your alliance the match sting and will be remembered in scouting meetings.