



A drive team; a group of four people that come together around eight times during a regional and drive the robot. If they win a match it is great, but if they lose it is okay. Is this your team's definition of a drive team? If it is I would beg you to reconsider. In this article I will share with you what I think a drive team is first. Then later, I will give you some tips about how you can assemble a drive team for rookies and veteran teams. After that I will give you some examples of some great drive teams.

WHAT IS A DRIVE TEAM?

As you would imagine, there are a lot of different definitions of a drive team in FIRST robotics. Some teams don't really care who is on the drive team and others make it their priority to get the best drives and the best team so they can win as much as possible. As for your team, It is up to you, but I would like to explain what a drive team should really be. I have spent four years in FIRST and of those four years, three of them I have been on the drive team. I think a drive team is so much more than four people coming together every match just to play and see what happens. A drive team is really a closely knit group of friends that communicate well. Not only that, but a great drive team is also patient, passionate, and persistent. To give you a better understanding let me talk about these three P's.

Let's talk about a drive team being **patient** first. Each of the four members of the drive team (which are the lead driver, second, coach, and human player) should have some patients in them. They all should understand that good things will come their way if they just wait. When the stage lights are on and your standing there on the field getting ready to drive, there sometimes is this overwhelming anxiety you feel. It comes from the rush of the game, the energy in the room, and the readiness to win. If the drive or drive team does not control this anxiety, they are bound to fail. Having patients for a drive teams means waiting on the right moment to call the play, to push the fire button, to block that other robot, or to tell your alliance members robot to score the "end game" points; It can really be a whole lot of things. Waiting can take a team very far in FIRST robotics. To many drive teams get overwhelmed and get anxious and they make bad plays. Patients is something your drive team should have.

Second, lets talk about **passion**. A great drive team desperately needs to have passion. If the drive team doesn't have the drive and energy to keep working hard and improving, it won't get anywhere. When a drive team has passion, they take risks, they improve, they never give up, they work hard, and they love what they are doing.

Lastly, a drive team should be **persistent**. A drive team with persistence should keep going, keep working, keep trying, and be routine. When a drive team comes up with a strategy for the matches or the game, they should really keep it simple and routine. Simplicity is to much overlooked, and really it is what wins games. Robots and drive teams that exhibit a simple and routine strategy will more than likely end up doing exceptionally well and better than most teams.

PICKING A DRIVE TEAM: ROOKIES AND VETS

Picking a drive team can be very hard and difficult, but I think there are some things each team can base their decisions off of. Let's first talk about rookie teams.

ROOKIES

Rookie teams have more of a disadvantage because they have really never played the game before but that doesn't mean they can't pick a good first year drive team. I believe any rookie team can have a great drive team if they follow these three steps:

1. Find the team members that actually want to be there.

Sometimes team members on a rookie team don't actually want to be apart of FIRST robotics.

They don't have the drive and really could care less if they are there. Find the team members that actually want to be there. Those students should be on the drive team.

2. Make sure they are competitive.

You want a drive team that is competitive, outgoing, and persistent. They need to know that it doesn't matter whether or not they are rookies, they have just as much of a chance at winning as a veteran team does.

3. Know that they understand responsibility.

The rookie drive team should understand how much responsibility is on their shoulders. They are driving and handling an expensive object and they should understand the importance of it.

VETS

Sometimes veteran teams have the same disadvantages as rookie teams because they get new members each year. Here is a list of three things veteran teams might follow to gain a better drive team.

1. Find new freshman members.

You should not give senior team members a free pass to the drive team or any other position on the team. The goal is to find the best people to drive so the team can succeed. Once you find a new freshman or sophomore drive member, stick with them and they will improve each year and

get better. It is better to have a team that works together throughout the years then picking a new drive team each year.

2. Create driver tryouts.

This could be anywhere from using last years robot to create an obstacle course and seeing who has the best hand-eye coordination, or to using a console game to prove who is the best. Hands down, you want the best driver.

3. Find people who work well together.

You want a drive team that works well together and communicates efficiently. When a drive team does not communicate well, its like North Korea, nobody wins. Drive team members should also trust each other so they can go into a match feeling confident in their robot and their team members.

FAQ

Q: How many drive team members should you have?

A: You should only have four drive team members. You need one drive team to work with the robot and each other as much as possible so they can preform the best. It is okay to have backup drivers incase the leads are unable to compete.

Q: How well should the drive team know the rules of the game?

A: The drive team should really be the kings of the knowledge of all the rules. They should understand what each penalty means, and how it affects their team.

Q: Can we change drivers in the middle of the competition?

A: Yes

Q: Are the drive team members the leaders of the team?

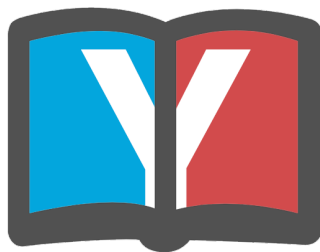
A: No, I would not suggest it. They drive team members position is to drive the robot only.

Q: What are the different positions on the drive team

A: There are only four positions: Lead Driver, Secondary Driver, Human Player, and Coach.
These positions should not be switched at anytime.

Q: Can drive team members be associated with Chairmans and other projects?

A: No



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