

Mentoring a New Team

Ken and Ed, Ed and Ken

Key Milestones

- 1st Meeting – Initial Meeting
- 2nd Meeting – Prepare for Build Season
- 3rd Meeting – 1-2 weeks into Build Season
- Phone Call before Regional
- Assign contact(s) to guide through Regional

1st Meeting – “Sell the Teacher”

- Need your teacher with you
 - Answers administrative and financial questions
- Need robot & students with you
 - Choose at least one veteran, outgoing student
 - A couple new students will put the other team at ease
 - Robot demo by students is a must – it ‘hooks’ the other team
- Absolutely need a key mentor with you
 - Demonstrates confidence that this is do-able and they won’t fail
 - After they’re awe-struck by the robot, explain it one system at a time to show it’s not as complicated or as hard as it looks
- Explain ‘season’ to them
 - Sept-Dec – Prep; Jan-Feb – Build; Mar – Compete
 - Say what a regional is like
- FIRST Video helps

2nd Meeting – “Get Ready”

- Mentor-to-Mentor
 - Give list of needed items for build season:
 - Tools
 - Aluminum
 - Build Area
 - Local Machine Shop Help
 - Mechanical Mentor
 - Programming/Electronics Mentor
 - Explain importance of timeline, driver training
- We have done this ‘meeting’ via phone with e-mail follow-up

3rd Meeting – “You Can Do This”

- 1-2 weeks into season is a critical time
 - The team often feels overwhelmed and can't start
- Need robot
 - Other team now needs to see details
- Need mentor
 - Other team will have lots of design and rule questions
- Need students
 - One veteran to explain students role on your team, and how you develop and select strategy, divide work, build, pick drivers, etc.
- Leave them with this thought: ***Tell them to get something rolling to gain confidence, and add from there***

Before Regional – “Bring This...”

- Give list of items to bring
- Done by teacher and mentor
 - Teacher explains they do travel/hotel/meals, pit decorations, buttons, etc.
 - Mentor explains what to take/not take
 - Remember the cart!
- Done by phone call and/or e-mail

At Regional

- Assign contact(s) for the team
 - Drive team-to-Drive team is important mentoring
- Mentor meets with them early Thursday morning to explain process
 - Inspection
 - Practice Rounds
 - They can ask any team for help/tools/parts
- Meet Thursday night – ‘what to expect’
 - Relate alliance experiences – good and bad
- Be available Friday/Saturday for questions

Universal Tips

- Student-to-student contacts are wonderful!
 - But don't happen often because of the formal meeting settings; need to encourage this
- Teacher/Mentors - Give your cell number and e-mail address
- If you haven't heard from them in a while, call !
- The other team will always, always have 'panic' questions about building a crate and shipping the robot