

Team Building

Team building is an important step often ignored by many teams. Yet, when left out, it can result in an unbalanced and unstable team.

The reason team building is so important is because it lets the members of the team become more comfortable with one another, stimulating conversation and communication. For new teams, whose team members might not be as comfortable with one another, team building is vital for forming a functional and productive team.

Our team's favorite way of team building is to use Vex RoundUp game elements to play ultimate frisbee. This started last year at a qualifying tournament.

The rules of ultimate frisbee force the player to interact with one another. Once a player catches the "frisbee", he/she must stand still and pass it to another player, making interaction crucial, and ensuring that one person cannot win just by him/herself.

It is also important when playing ultimate frisbee to periodically switch players on each team. Keeping the same teams game after game can create rivalry within the team, a situation that is even worse for the welfare of the team.

Activities like ultimate frisbee can simulate the pressure and the need for cooperation seen at a tournament. Having a common goal is sometimes unattainable at practices because everybody is working on separate projects. Yet, because all of the separate projects come together to form one robot, it is important that the team be comfortable with coming together to form one team. Team building activities bring a team together to work towards a common goal.

Other activities that the teams can do together include:

- watching a movie
 - best for new teams whose members don't know each other very well because it can be as interactive as members want it to be (if someone's shy they won't be forced to talk)
- playing charades
 - good at helping teams feel more comfortable around one another and can be done easily at the end of a work session
- figuring out each others' strengths and weaknesses
 - best for teams later in the season (possibly after the first tournament) when people are more comfortable with each other
 - can be helpful for individuals looking for ways to improve, but don't be overly negative
- robot building competitions
 - Good exercise for over the summer to get new members used to building with VEX parts
 - Mix up the teams so there is a equal distribution of experienced people on both sides and try to split up people who are already extremely close
- knots
 - Fun exercise after a work session

These are all activities that will strengthen the bonds between the members of the team and contribute to the team's success.