I have been building robots for over half my life. I started in FIRST Lego League when I was eight and competed for four years, learning teamwork, simple programming, and simple building. I competed in FIRST Tech Challenge for one season and then switched over to Vex Robotics Competition(VRC) which I have continued to do, making this my fourth season. While in VRC I have simultaneously been doing FIRST Robotics Competition(FRC) for the past three years. Sometimes I get asked why I am still in VRC if I'm building "big robots" in FRC, and I explain that FRC is a different learning experience than VRC is and I can really learn a lot from VRC even if our robots are not as big.

 I enjoy doing both FRC and VRC but for very different reasons. My VRC team is small and I find myself designing, building, programming, working with my teammates very closely, writing, and documenting the build process. My FRC team is large and I find I must get the mentors' attention and gain their respect before I am able to fabricate my own ideas or make decisions about the robot. VRC also has the benefit of being able to incorporate the engineering process by allowing time to redesign the robot between competitions, whereas in FRC the six-week build ending with a competition does not allow for many reiterations.

 Sixteen birthdays + 11 years of schooling +13 challenges in 10 years of competing = one great experience.