

Our Girl Powered Story

5150H
Danbury, CT, USA

Being a feminist is easier said than done. We all can agree to this, especially as an all girls team. We went on a journey these past few months, and this is our story of becoming true feminists in our girl powered robotics team.

September 26th, 2017

We had thought that the base would not need any fixing. However, the positioning of the wheels would not be fit for the "In the Zone" Challenge. Because of this, we deconstructed the base and this took up the time agenda. Our first few days have just consisted of us deconstructing the robot rather than planning. We haven't been using all our time wisely when it came to deconstructing & planning.

Objective: Fix the wheel position on the base so it is more conducive to the "In the Zone" challenge.

Goals:

- Fix wheel position on the base
- Plan what we would like to build for a lift
- Plan claw for picking up yellow cones.

Extra Information:

We weren't able to complete all our goals for today, as fixing the wheel position on the base took longer than we thought. We need to manage our time better so that we can get our lift built and working for the first competition.

In late September of 2017, we all had been attending the robotics meetings after school.

Our interest in robotics was genuine, but we all felt out of place. Most teams were approaching full capacity, so we contacted Mr. Savoyski, our coach. We felt like creating a new team would open up new opportunities for us.

When Erin, Betsy, and I approached Mr. Savoyski, we didn't really have an idea as to who would be on our team. Savoyski was on board with our idea of creating a new team, and planted the idea of creating an all girls team. From there, we recruited both Sophia and Aalia, forming team 5150H. We were inquisitive and excited, ready to explore the world of robotics.

Despite our enthusiasm to have an all girls team, we were wrapped up in a false sense of security. Betsy, Erin, and Sophia were carrying the legacies of their siblings, but we lacked the proper experience to build a robot from scratch. Our inexperience lowered our motivation to work effectively, and we began to question the legitimacy of our team--*Would we be able to create a functional robot by the first competition? Was an all girls team a good idea? Were we an example of the stereotypical girl in the engineering field?*

We barely mentioned our doubts out loud, but these questions stirred in the air and created tension between us and the other teams. Essentially, our lack of proper focus, motivation, and management of time plagued our progress.



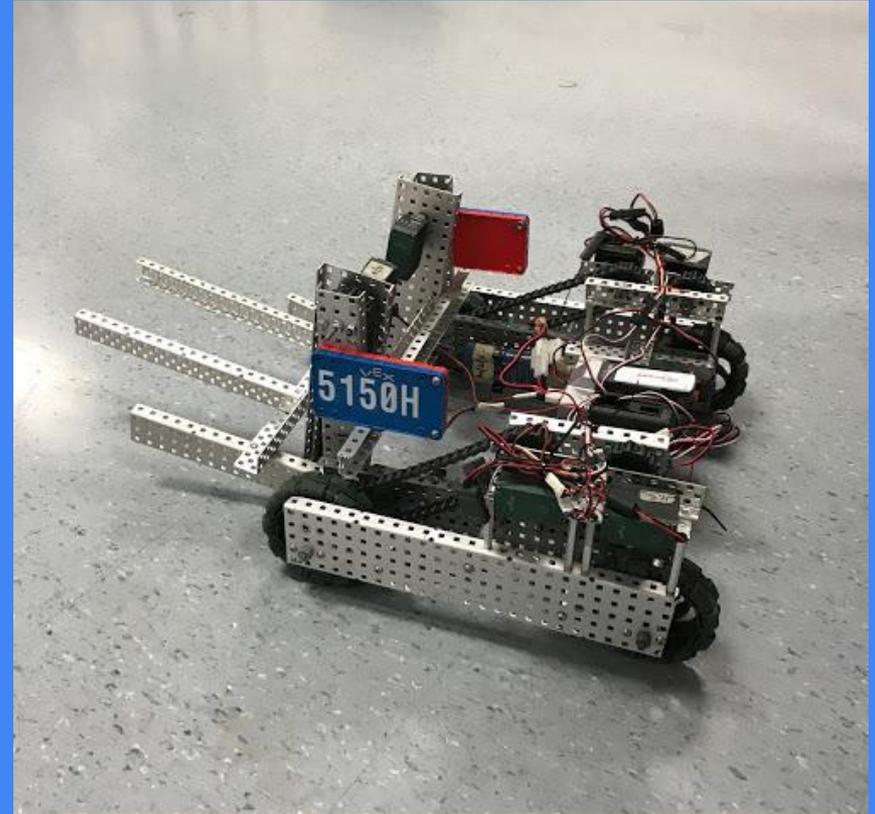


Reality hit us the week before our first competition. We were cramming to have a working robot with a mobile goal lift. Sadly, our lift did not work, but we programmed the base and attempted to write an autonomous. Our inexperience plagued us yet again during the qualifiers, as we came in 54th place (last). We became skeptical of our success in this competition--no one was going to pick the team in last place as their alliance, would they?



As a matter of fact, one team decided to pick us as their alliance. We were absolutely dumbfounded, but a spark of hope had ignited for us. We had a chance to win the tournament-- *and that is EXACTLY what we did.* With our alliances, **WE WON THE TOURNAMENT.** From 54th place to tournament champions--that is 5150H.

While this was quite the accomplishment for us, we knew it wasn't well earned. This success was merely due to the luck of a strong team choosing us as an alliance. However, we let this win motivate us to build a properly functional robot. We now had a competition experience under our belt, and scouting (thanks to Sophia and Aalia) provided us with new ideas. A new understanding of robotics renewed our efforts and determination.





In the following weeks, we worked to build a new mobile goal lift that would work effectively. By working diligently and sharing ideas, we achieved this goal and performed exceedingly better during qualifiers. This was true as well for the competition that followed this one. Our experience with driving was increasing, along with our building experience. Success in these competitions rose our morale. We became proud to be an all girls team.

Overall, our team has recognized the difficulty in being an all girls team. We all didn't have prior experience in robotics, which served as a setback, but we didn't let that inhibit our success. We also did not let it stop us from giving up. We have been persistent, and in the process, we have found ourselves. By experimenting with different roles, each of us has discovered our own forte. We all tried building, but eventually, Erin moved on to programming and Aalia to notebooking. Betsy became the driver for our team, and she programs and builds. Both Sophia and I are builders.

Ultimately, we all learned to adapt as females in this field of engineering. We continue to do so, proving that a girl powered team is one that prevails. We are 5150H and we are proud feminists, advocating for equal rights and a world where gender stereotypes don't discourage people to follow their dreams.

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# Credits

TEAM 5150H:

Aalia - Notebooker

Betsy - Builder

Erin - Programmer

Sophia - Builder

Kiara - Builder, writer