

Black Dragon Robotics Times

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The Story of a VEX Girl-Powered Team by: Team 70820X

Question: What is your story as a girl-powered team?

Answer: There have been several times in school when boys have said girls can't do the same things they can. Some boys say girls can't be successful in robotics. Our team has worked together these past years to prove them wrong! We have been a successful girl-powered team for three years straight. Our team 70820X made it to World's the last two years, and we even won the Innovate Award. We definitely had ups and downs and struggled a lot, but we were always there for each other and had an amazing time



Team 70820X Working During Pandemic

When we were a new team, we lost more matches than we won, but we never backed down and continued to grow as the year went on. Being a girl-powered team has meant more to us than just being a team made up of girls; we are girls who believe in teamwork, inclusion, and friendship, and it has continued to make us stronger over the years.

Question: What is your relationship as a team?

Answer: When we had our first meeting two years ago, we became good friends. Now that we have been together for multiple years, we love hanging out and we'll help each other even in the most stressful situations. For example, there was one time when one of our members, Gianna, was struggling with driving the robot and felt frustrated. To help her, we set aside time for her to practice with us and gave her our support and encouragement. We all have had times like that when we have needed a friend to be there for us. Each member of our team brings something valuable to the table: Sarina brings technical knowledge, Samantha brings effective problem-solving skills, and Gianna brings the spunk and creativity.



70820X Team Member Gianna

Question: What roles does each member of the team have?

Answer: At first, each member of the team took the lead in a certain role that best fit their strengths. Sarina was the programmer because she is really efficient at coding. Samantha is the builder because she has a knack for constructing sub-systems. Gianna is the driver and secondary builder because she is the most effective driver, and she enjoys helping Samantha with building. Even though at the beginning we assigned roles, by the end everyone ended up trying every job. We found that if we all worked together to learn everything, we could become more successful and well-rounded. This also caused us to never have disagreements about what "job" we want, since we end up trying all of the roles by the end.

Question: How does your team make decisions?

Answer: Whenever we are deciding on something of colossal importance, like a robot design, we decide through a certain voting process. First, we come up with the pros and cons of each possible solution. Then, we put them in a weighted decision matrix, which means we come up with criteria to judge our options. We rank the criteria in the order of most important to least, giving each criteria a rating of one to ten. Last, we multiply the weight by the rankings, add them up, and go with the one that gets the highest score. This makes sure our decisions are fair, weighing both sides and including the input of all team members.

Question: Who are your role models?

Answer: My Dad is my STEM role model. He is a software engineer and always pushes me to my best. He taught me how to problem solve and to push myself to my limits. My Dad never gives up on anything he works on and is always persistent to finish his work. He inspires me to have a more inclusive team by showing what happens when you work together. He is always understanding and works hard with his team to complete a task. - Samantha V.

My sister Sophia is my STEM role model. She is a 10th grade honors student, track runner, and level 6 All Star cheer summit champion. I have always looked up to her because she never gives up. She's always been there for me and is always willing to help. Whenever things get tough and she wants to stop, she keeps going because she knows her teammates are counting on her. She inspires me to be a more inclusive teammate because she has learned from her experience on a high level team that people sometimes make mistakes. Instead of getting upset, she is understanding and remains calm while she tries to help them out. She is a great role model! - Gianna S.



70820X Team Member Samantha



70280X Team member Sarina

My Dad's cousin Zea and her husband Chris are my stem role models. When I went down to Tennessee three years ago, they are the ones that first inspired me to try robotics. Zea has been a Referee at World's. She spreads optimism and enthusiasm wherever she goes, and she taught me how to see the positive in every moment. Her husband, Chris, is the coach of a really successful robotics club at Brentwood Academy in Tennessee. He is very knowledgeable with building and programming and has been very encouraging. I admire their work ethic and passion for robotics, which has inspired my own. - Sarina M.