

# Girl Power Robotics Team

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Team: 5081F

Location: Pembroke Pines, Florida

The term “girl power” is often defined as women empowerment and celebrating feminism. I personally define it as breaking the female stereotype. When it comes to activities like robotics, women are automatically stereotyped as slow and less skilled than males when the reality is, women are just as capable or even better.

The first day coming into robotics, our teacher gave us the assignment to find the teams we wanted to spend the rest of the school year with. Being the only three females in the class, we were instinctively avoided. Given no other choice, all the females were forced into one team with two other males. Within the first couple of weeks in our teams, one of the males had already requested to switch to an all male team. Becoming discouraged, I requested to change electives in fear of failure. Fortunately, my teacher didn't allow this to happen. He wanted his student to be challenged and succeed. So instead of giving up, we pushed to be better. I wasn't going to make the mistake of letting the male call the shots and my input go unheard. After the first male left our team, us girls were determined to show him that we weren't just girls, that we were a power driven team. Being the only females in the class, it also made us easy targets for persecution. One of our team captains, Alisha, experienced first hand oppression due to her religious beliefs. Some students on the opposing teams mocked her accent and called her cruel names. Not letting it faze her, she ignored the rude antics and put her attention towards improving the team. Within a few classes, our robot had drastically improved. We already had it on the field driving and picking up balls. Seeing our success, a team of two requested to join us. After much debate with my teammates, we realized it'd be helpful to have an experienced driver and an extra set of hands to help. Now having a group of six, we were in need of a captain to keep our team in order. I took it amongst myself to be appointed one of the captains. Us being an abnormally large team, two captains were chosen, Alisha and Olivia. This allowed two females to be in charge and make the important choices for the team.

After viewing our progress, our teacher was impressed by how far our team had come within a few weeks. So impressed that he signed us up for our first VEX IQ competition. Lighting a small fire underneath us, the team now had to move quickly to complete and program our robot. The day of the competition arrived and needless to say we impressed the other teams. Being a mostly female team, it was a shock when we came in 5th out of the other 30, mostly male teams. Coming back to the class after the competition, it was already determined by the captains what needed to be done to rise to the top in our next competition. We immediately started building the new, highly improved robot. With our fantastic driver, incredible team of builders and relentless captains, this robot assured us a place in the top five come our next competition.

In short, the term “girl power” isn't just a term used to celebrate feminism. I refuse to be stereotyped as a girl who is only good for the notebook because of their “neat writing” and “organization”. I refuse to be uncredited for my devotion to the team and to our success. To be a

girl powered team means we are a hard driven, unstoppable team, full of undying determination to prove that we are more than just the female stereotype.