THE VARMINT WEEKLY

Competition and the End of the Season

With our last match in South Florida and summer break on the horizon, our 2018 Season is sadly coming to a close. Many of our students are going on to exciting new lives in STEM fields while their younger colleagues sit in anticipation for next year's season. We've done exceptionally well this season, we've made great strides in community outreach, training, and sustainability. We've seen continued growth in our team's size as well as continuous improvements in competition over the last few years. Our members are consistently going on to fulfilling lives in STEM careers while FIRST Robotics scholarships are allowing our members to shoot ever higher in their educational pursuits.

South Florida Regional:

We started the competition strong on with four consecutive wins but lost to our in-state rivals with the day's conclusion. Saturday was a much more difficult day, we ended qualifications with 7 wins 3 losses and an eleventh rank placement. Moving into alliance selection for the elimination rounds we were selected by the fourth ranked team, Team 744 Shark Attack from Fort Lauderdale and Team 3932 The Dirty Mechanics from Boca Raton; Both exceptional teams with plenty of experience and talent. The three of us competed in quarterfinals against Team 5854, Royal Robotics 5472 Stallion Robotics, and Team 108 Sigma C@ts all from the South Florida area. We put up a good fight but were sadly eliminated. We are proud of all our members who worked hard all year to get us to where we are. We are proud of the Drive team who practiced around the clock, of the Mechanical team who worked tirelessly with the robot from inception to the final bag up day, to electrical for all their hard work wiring the robot and to software for making an award-winning code.

On the Field With Tyler Foster

Team Driver

"Lights, noises, and many other robots. Walking out seeing the field was an adrenaline rush visualizing how to play the game and defeat the other team, conquering the boss at the end. Strategy filled our drive team of 4 as we debated and discussed how to play each match. Our robot played well with very few mechanical failures, immediately getting fixed as we returned back to our home base for the weekend; a 10 by 10 area filled with tools and a mighty crew. Our robot sped around the field placing cubes quickly and efficiently, dominating most of our opponents. Team Voltage ended up making it into quarterfinals with Shark Attack and Dirty Mechanics. Overall, we were very proud of the robot games and how our team competed as a whole."

Behind the Code With Ryan Feldbush

In between competitions, our practice time was primarily spent modifying the autonomous code to allow for double cube autos. Through some basic dead reckoning and some tweaks of our vision-processing based cube following, we were able to implement basic code to grab two cubes from the scale and switch. Unfortunately, through the course of competition it was determined that our primary method to save time for the second cubes (driving in high gear) introduced far too much error to be usable in competition, so we reverted back to a one cube scale, but we were able to keep our two cube switch (albeit at a slower pace). Through the presentation of our successful vision processing code, we were able to earn the Innovations in Controls award at this regional, the most directly software-based award offered by First regionals.

A Word From Our Seniors...

I never knew my body could be filled with so much excitement. I am around the people who I most love and care for and they make me feel as if I am right at home. I dress up in the craziest outfits and I don't feel embarrassed of myself because I am surrounded by the same exact people who do very much the same. These annual competitions never fail to surprise me and make me the happiest person I can be, it makes me feel as if I matter. If I were to make one wish, that is to relive the four years that seemed to have gone by so fast.

-Hunter

Class of 2018

I've always known I wanted to go into a career in a STEM field, but I wasn't sure what engineering was all about. Thanks to the team mentors from multiple engineering companies in the area like Harris, I know I want to pursue a career in engineering. Now I just need to choose which discipline of engineering I will go into.

Kade

Class of 2018

When I first joined the team, I was pretty shy and I wasn't open to letting anyone new into my life. After four years of being on this team, I can appreciate meeting new people and enjoying who I truly am. The people I met and became friends with through the years have taught me to appreciate life and the experiences you have. Although these years really flew by, I know for certain the memories will last a lifetime.

-Anastasia

Class of 2018

My first year on the team I knew absolutely nothing about engineering. In fact, I had to google what an Allen Key was the first time I was asked to grab one. Although I may have started off with virtually no knowledge of how to build a robot, I have learned much more than Java and welding. I learned that being apart of a team means more than contributing to code. It consists of early mornings and energy drinks, of kickball games and chili cook-offs. It means admitting your failures and learning from your mistakes. I learned that it does not matter how smart you are, but how willing you are to work. Though I have gained many life skills from this team, the most important lesson I have learned is that one does not need to share your blood to be your family.

-Shannon

Class of 2018

So when I first joined the team I had just moved to Florida from Ohio and a school I had attended for 10 years. Through joining the team I was able to meet new people and learn new skills which helped me get used to the move. I am grateful to the team and plan to use the skills I learned to serve my country in the military.

Bryan

Class of 2018

I started Robotics my Freshman year right out of middle school. Throughout all the trials and tribulations of my high school experience, Robotics remained an important part of my life. I made some of my closest friends on this team as well as some of my best memories. The people I meet here supported me through some of the worst moments. As head of the Business Sub-team I learned how to work with and coordinate others. I learned how to give presentations, build teams, and make efficient schedules. I made swim lanes, business plans and canvas models. I know that the skills I learned here will help me through the rest of my life in any field I enter. Looking back to my awkward freshman self, joining the team was the best decision he's ever made.

Ben

Class of 2018