



Site Host And Team Coach Do's And Don'ts

(Tips for having fantastic robotics competition)

Emma Alaba
Director/ Robofest Site Host - Florida



Abstract

Many valuable lessons are learned from being a robotics competition site host and team coach. The mistakes are many but the successes are more. The best way to maximize the robotics experience is by sharing what you have learned. The do's and don'ts will help with the management of the competition, volunteers, and teams. As a site host you will wear many hats such as manager, organizer, volunteer and coach; whatever it takes to ensure the event runs smoothly, orderly and on time. By sharing the pitfalls, challenges and the many successes of the students the STEM adventure will continue and reach more students.

Site Host - Planning The Robotics Competition

The planning phase will play a significant part of a successful competition.

- Be sure to pick the best venue, date, and time for the event.
- Do not have your event the same time as another event, or near a holiday.
- Do your homework, get the venue information in writing, and always have a backup plan.
- The type of competition (Robofest, FIRST, BEST, etc.), and the number of teams will affect the venue selection. Most robotics competitions are held in gyms.

Publicity

- Publicity – start early to reach your audience (teams, coaches, volunteers, school, etc.).
- Broadcast the event online, websites, free newspapers, magazines, social media, school, fliers, word-of-mouth (very powerful), etc.

Season Kickoff

- Season Kickoff – having a kickoff is a very good tool for getting people together who are interested in robotics and STEM. Be sure to have handouts, demos, and ‘FOOD’. The kickoff will determine if you have done your homework and you are ready to have a robotics competition.
- Be prepared to answer a lot of questions about what to expect or how to handle issues regarding the event (requirements, cost, equipment, mission, etc.). This is where you will get most of your teams, coaches, and volunteers.

Programming workshops and Mentors

- Programming workshops – if this is the first competition, you will need to have several workshops to help prepare for the event. You will have a lot of rookies who have never design, build, program or competed in a STEM competition; others will be advanced robotics players.
- The workshop is a good tool for helping the teams to understand the rules and mission.
- Mentors – teams will need experts in the STEM area and etc. reach out to societies like IEEE, organizations, teachers, schools, and etc.
- Use this platform to recruit volunteers, judges and mentors.

Show Time: Game Day

- Once all the pre-planning has been done, the teams, judges, volunteers, and programs are ready; so let the game begin.
- Relax and enjoy the event. You have done your homework. The event will not be 100% smooth, which they never are.
- The most important thing is to make sure the students have fun while competing and the game is fair.



Post-Event Wrap-up

- There is homework after the competition. Be sure to report the winners, upload the pictures and videos.
- The most important thing to do, is to send out personal thank you notes or emails to all the sponsors and volunteers who made the event happen. Let them know how much you appreciate their help and support.
- Now, get started planning for the next event!

DO's and DON'T's

Do's

- Thank you notes or emails to volunteers and sponsors.
- Thank you to the teams, coaches, mentors, and parents
- Ask for help! The project is bigger than it seems.
- Share pictures and videos
- Provide mentors for the teams
- Be an encourager, and motivator

Don'ts

- Send out global thank you messages to volunteers and sponsors.
- Allow parent and coaches in the pit area (Robofest).

DO's for Team Coaches

- Be pleasant, encouraging, and ready to motivate team members at all times
- Very Important! Make sure the teams know the goals and mission of the competition
- Allow the team members to develop their own goals and/or strategies.
- During practice and/or competitions be prepared to encourage any team that comes under stress.
- Resolve conflicts between team members early and make sure all members are participating.
- Get everyone involved
- Have Fun

DON'Ts for Team Coaches

- Do not build the robot or exhibit for the team.
- Do not instruct the team on how to proceed on the missions or what to have in their exhibits.
- **NEVER** allow your team to become discouraged or upset.

Remember: organize, organize, organize; and keep it simple!



Presentation next year:
Robotics and non-profit organization



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