Parent / Student Handbook

Updated: June 2024

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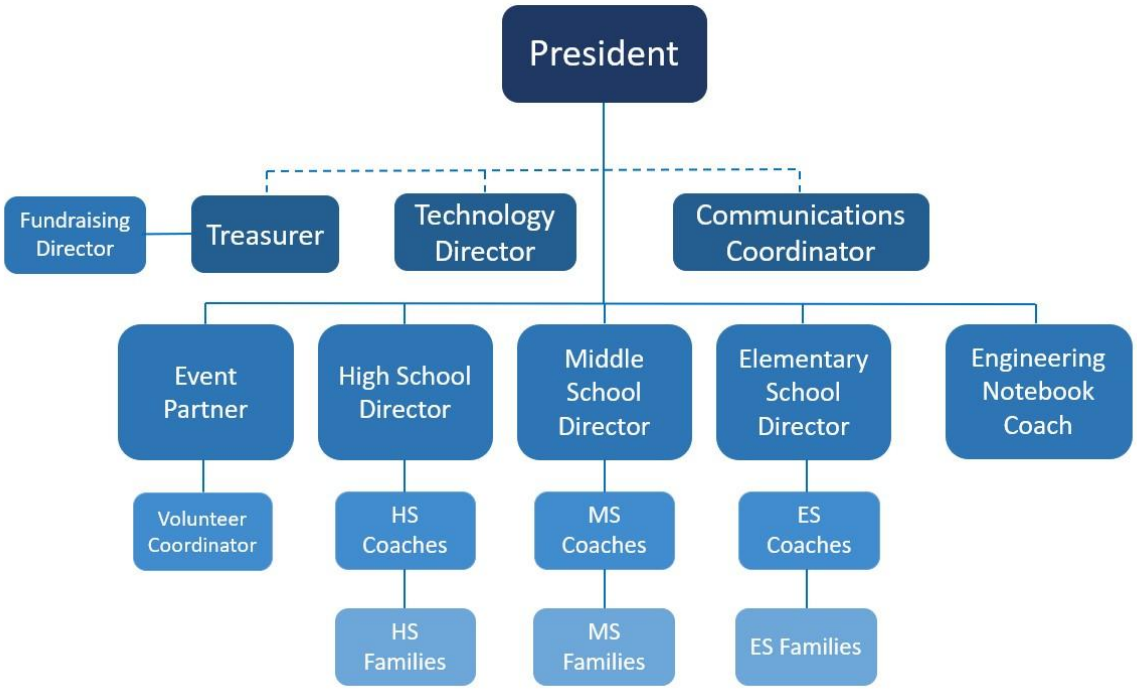
Introduction to the Plainwell Robotics Club (PRC)

This handbook is not designed to be all inclusive or to cover every question, but it is intended to answer some of the most common questions about the Plainwell Robotics Club and also to help parents understand what we do. For questions or concerns not covered in this handbook please contact team coaches or the president.

PRC Structure and Management Team

Figure 1 displays the current management structure for the PRC.



President – Marcus Anderson (m3ander3@gmail.com)
Treasurer - Joe Gentile (gr.j.f.gentile@gmail.com)
Communications Coordinator - Lisa Cook (lisa.cook@plainwellschools.org)
Technology Director - Jason Ferris (jferris75@gmail.com)
High School Director - Dan Klein (dangimp@ymail.com)
Middle School Director - Kate Bates (katelawtonbates@gmail.com
Elementary School Director - Shannon Ryan (shannon.ryan@qualityairinc.com)
Fundraising Director - Julia Wilkinson (blueostrich9@gmail.com)
Event Partner - Sarah Orr (cheerofficial85@gmail.com)
Volunteer Coordinator - Shannon Fritz (shafritz76@gmail.com)
Engineering Notebook Coach - Marie Tsuji (tsuji_marie@yahoo.com)

Purpose of the Plainwell Robotics Club

The Plainwell Robotics Club is a parent-driven, donor-funded organization created to provide students with a real-life, problem-solving experience which includes using skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Students work in teams to learn how to design, build, program, test, and operate robots to perform specified functions.

History of the Plainwell Robotics Club

2012 - 2016: Beginnings

The roots of the Plainwell Robotics Club go back to 2012 when the Plainwell Middle School fielded a FIRST Lego League team. PMS also fielded FLL teams in 2013 and 2014. In 2015, FIRST in Michigan required all middle school teams to compete in the FIRST FTC program. The PMS team also competed in the FTC program in 2016, including the FIRST State Championship Tournament in Battle Creek. Funding for these early programs came from grants, corporate donations, and individual contributions.

Middle School Team *Trial and Error*, State Championship Qualified, 2016.

Middle School Team *Trial and Error*, World Championship Qualified, 2019-2020.

2017 - 2019: VEX Robotics

Late in 2016, the College of Engineering at Michigan State University offered to support the PMS Robotics Program for three years if we agreed to participate in the VEX Robotics program with at least two teams. Consequently, in January 2017, PMS registered two VEX teams, each consisting of seven students. They participated in their first VEX tournament in October 2017.

The 2019-20 competition season was particularly notable. The PMS Robotics Program added a third team, and all three qualified for the 2020 State Championship Tournament. One team qualified for the U.S. National Tournament in Council Bluffs, Iowa and another team qualified for the VEX World Championship in Dallas, Texas. Unfortunately, both the National and World Championships were canceled because of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

High School Team *Robo Gamers*, Jenison Tournament Champions and Skills Champions, 2021-2022.

2020 - present: Plainwell Robotics Club

By 2020, VEX robotics teams had become eligible to apply for funding from the Michigan Robotics Grant Program. These funds were used in 2020 to create two new high school VEX teams, a fourth middle school VEX team, and two REC Foundation Aerial Drone teams each in the middle and high schools.

Gilkey Elementary School Team *Gilkey Girls*, Amaze Award Winners, 2021-22.

Concurrent with this growth, what had begun as the Plainwell Middle School Robotics Program was restructured and renamed the Plainwell Robotics Club. An Executive Committee was formed and an Operating Guidelines document was developed with members of the Plainwell Community Schools administration. As required by the Operating Guidelines, the Executive Committee prepared an Annual Work Plan in the first quarter of each calendar year.

In 2021, the newly-formed PRC created four VEX IQ teams at Gilkey Elementary School, and the Middle and High School Programs were expanded to seven and four teams, respectively.

Middle School Team *W.H.A.M.* at the 2022 CREATE U.S. Open Robotics Championship

The PRC had a very productive 2021-22 season. Fifteen teams with 58 students and 19 coaches competed in a total of 46 tournaments, in which they earned nine awards. Four teams competed in a State Championship, there was one Tournament Champion, and one team was a National Tournament participant.

In June 2022, the PRC introduced VEX IQ Robotics to Starr and Cooper Elementary School students; and announced its new eleven-member management team, which replaced the old three-person Executive Committee. The 2022-23 Work Plan was published in February and then revised in July and September. Appropriate revisions were made to the Club's previous Operating Guidelines to reflect the new Management Team and were then reissued as the Plainwell Robotics Club Bylaws.

Twenty teams competed during the 2022-23 season, involving 70 students and 25 volunteer coaches. Combined, they participated in 72 tournaments and received 13 awards. Eleven teams participated in a State Championship, two teams qualified for a National event, and two of three qualified teams participated in the VEX Robotics Middle School World Championship in Dallas.

High School Team *Blitz*, World Championship Qualified, 2023-24

The PRC's 2023-24 season also was very successful. We fielded 24 teams with 80 students and 33 volunteer coaches. These teams participated in 77 tournaments, received 22 awards, and claimed 2 tournament championships. Nine teams competed in a State Championship, five teams qualified for National events, and one team qualified for the VEX High School World Championship.

Our 2024-25 season is just getting started. We expect to field eight VEX IQ teams from our three elementary schools, eight middle school VEX VRC teams, and at least six high school VEX VRC teams.

Our Fourth Annual Middle School and High School Tournaments are already registered for November 23 and 24, and our Second Annual VEX IQ Tournament is on the schedule for January 18.

Cooper Team *KoalaBots*, Tournament 2nd Place Award and Excellence Award winner, State Championship Participant, 2023-24

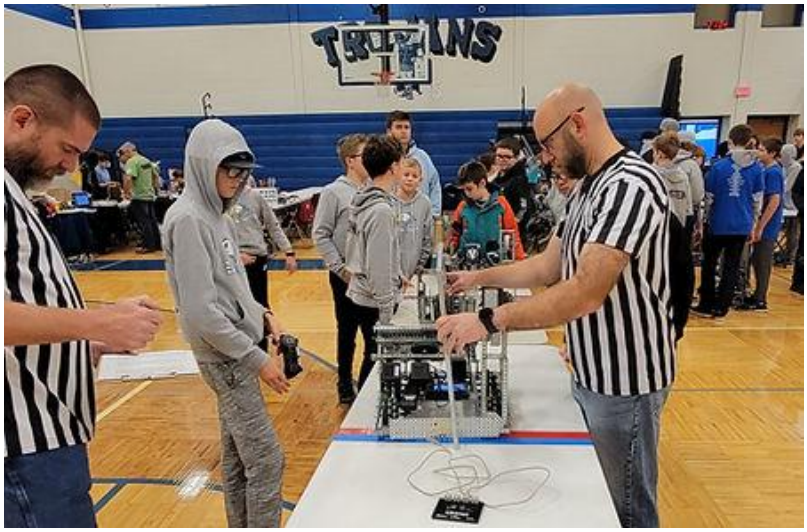
What is Competitive Robotics About?

In competitive robotics, teams design, build, program, and compete with a robot. Each year the game changes, and they are required to go through the entire process again. They compete against other teams in the state, region, country, and world to see whose robot can score the most points in that year's game.

Students do the work guided by coaches who are there to help them when they are stuck or frustrated.

Students will then take these robots to competitions. Competitions have three parts:

1. The Teamwork Challenge: teams are randomly assigned a partner to work together to score as many points as possible.
2. Programming Skills Challenge: teams write programs to have their robot score as many points on the field as possible while running an autonomous program. No controllers are allowed during this phase.
3. Drivers Skills Challenge: teams drive their robot on the competitions field using their controllers to score as many points as possible.

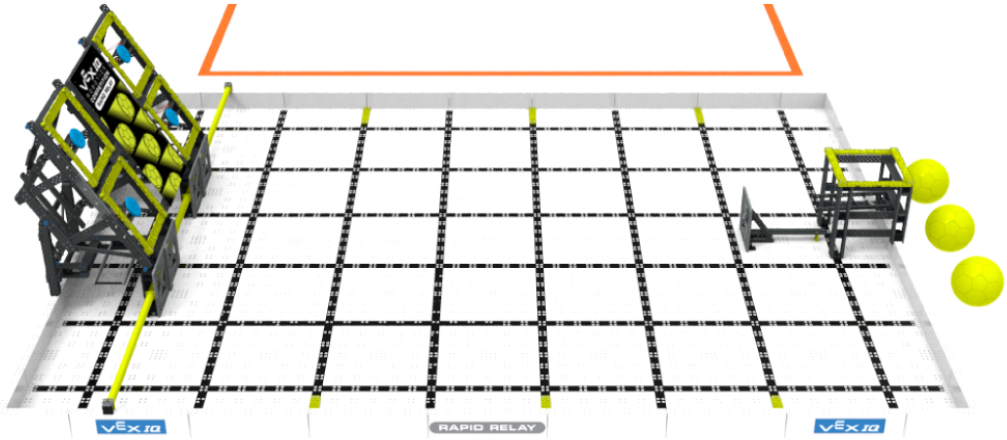


Robot Inspection Station.

This year's VEX IQ Game (Elementary School)

The 2024-2025 game is called RAPID RELAY. Information about this year's game, including introductory videos, rules, and other game manuals, can be found here:

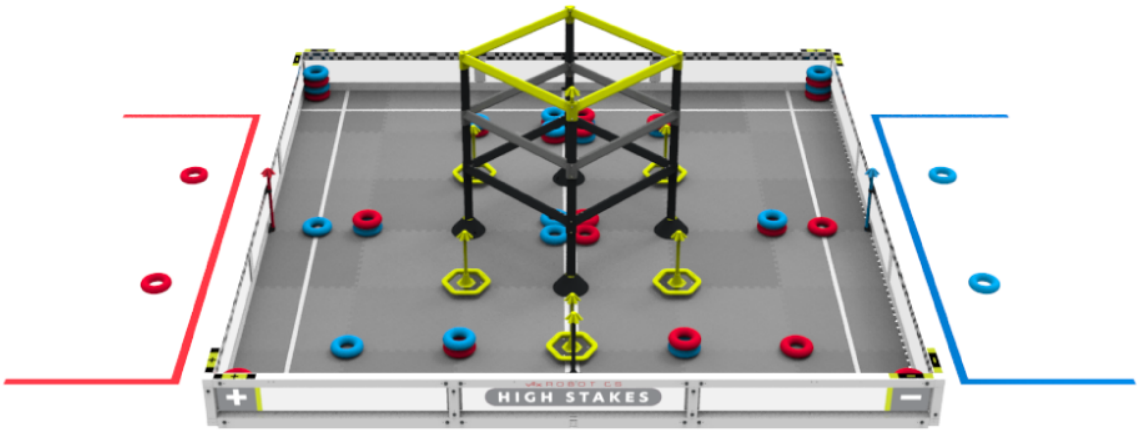
https://www.vexrobotics.com/iq/competition/viqc-current-game



This year's VRC Game (Middle and High School)

The 2024-2025 game is called HIGH STAKES. Information about this year's game, including introductory videos, rules, and other game manuals, can be found here:

https://www.vexrobotics.com/v5/competition/vrc-current-game



Codes of Conduct

As a Plainwell Robotics Club Team Member, I will:

- Remember robotics is an opportunity to learn and have fun.
- Not arrive more than 10 minutes prior to the start of practice.
- Do my best each day, remembering that all players have talents and weaknesses, including me.
- Treat my coaches, other players and coaches, judges, officials, other administrators, and fans with respect. This respect includes communication through the use of social media.
- Have a positive attitude and encourage others.
- Use good sportsmanship and set an example for others.
- Not wear ear buds/headphones during practice and only use my cell phone when it directly relates to robotics.
- Follow these safety guidelines:
    - Safety glasses are a when using tools and at all competitions.
    - Follow the REC Foundation's safety guidelines.
    - Closed toed shoes required.
    - Socks required on the competition mat.
    - Absolutely NO running or horseplay, in general.
    - No food or drinks except closed water bottles.
    - Make sure your coach knows when you are leaving.
- Talk with an adult if I have a concern about guidelines not being followed.
- Follow rules set by the REC Foundation and my school (PHS, PMS, Gilkey, Cooper, or Starr). Any violation of school policy will be dealt with accordingly.
- Remember that these rules apply not only at competitions and while traveling with my team, but at all events related to Plainwell Robotics Club practices, team parties, etc.

I understand that my participation in the Plainwell Robotics Club is contingent on my agreeing to, and abiding by, these Codes of Conduct.

As a Plainwell Robotics Club Parent/Guardian, I will:

- Not bring my student to practice more than 10 minutes early.
- Walk my student to the robotics room for practice (elementary and middle school students).
- Pick up my student within 10 minutes of the end of practice.
- Encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, judges, officials, and administrators.
- Place the emotional and physical well-being of all players ahead of any personal desire to win.
- Not bring non-team members to practice (practice is for team members ONLY).
- Support the coaches, officials, and administrators working with my child, to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
- Remember that the game and building of the robot is for the team members, not for adults.
- Treat players, coaches, judges, officials, administrators, and fans with respect. This includes communications through the use of social media.
- Teach and expect my student to treat other players, coaches, judges, officials, administrators, and fans with respect.
- be positive and constructive.
- Keep things positive with the opposing team's parents, players, and coaches.
- Remain in the stands during the matches. You cannot be in the pit or competition areas with your student.
- Understand that judges and officials are doing their best and have worked to understand the rules.
- Acknowledge that all Plainwell Robotics Club events (competitions, practices, and team gatherings) are tobacco, vape, drug, and alcohol free, and I will abide by that.
- Remember at all times that I am teaching my child through my behaviors. I will keep integrity in mind as I show my best face at competitions and events.
- Communicate things with coaches, including, but not limited to, behaviors, food allergies, and a change in pick-up person.
- Remember that these rules apply not only at competitions and while traveling with my team, but at all events related to the Plainwell Robotics Club practices, team parties, etc.

I understand that my participation in the Plainwell Robotics Club is contingent on my agreeing to, and abiding by, these Codes of Conduct.

As a Plainwell Robotics Club Team Coach, I will:

- Always place the safety and welfare of all team members above winning.
- Show respect for team members, other coaches, judges, officials, and parents. This includes communications through the use of social media.
- Remember that the game, building of the robot, and programming, is for the team members, not for the adults. (Please see REC Foundation and VEX Robotics Rules for clarifications.)
- Lead by example, always demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship. Use of profanity or profane gestures, arguing, inciting disruptive behavior, or any conduct not in the spirit of good sportsmanship, will not be tolerated.
- Conduct myself in a positive manner, keeping in mind that youth have a greater need for example, instruction, encouragement, and motivation than for criticism.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the rules of the game and teach these rules to my team members.
- Make sure appropriate behavior is maintained by team members and other volunteers.
- Acknowledge that all Plainwell Robotic events (competitions, practice, and team gatherings) are tobacco, vape, drug, and alcohol free, and I will abide by that.
- Follow rules set by the REC Foundation and my school (PHS, PMS, Gilkey, Cooper, or Starr). Any violation of school policy will be dealt with accordingly.
- Remember that these rules apply not only at competitions and while traveling with my team, but at all events related to Plainwell Robotics Club practices, team parties, etc.
- Report behavior that is not in line with these Codes of Conduct to the appropriate PRC Director. If violations are reported to me, I will report them promptly to the Plainwell Robotics Club Management Team.
- Serve without compensation, sign the Plainwell Robotics Club Contribution of Grant Funds Form, and agree to a PCS District Volunteer Background Check.
- Follow and enforce these safety guidelines:
  - Safety glasses are a when using tools and at all competitions.
  - Follow the REC Foundation's safety guidelines.
  - Closed toed shoes required.
  - Socks required on the competition mat.
  - Absolutely NO running or horseplay, in general.
  - No food or drinks except closed water bottles.
  - Ensure if someone other than a parent is picking up, they are approved by the parent.
  - Make sure your team members are safely picked up before leaving practice.
  - Two adults must be present for elementary and middle school practices. One adult must be present for high school practices.
  - Practices are for team members ONLY. Other children are not allowed to be at practice.

I understand that my participation in the Plainwell Robotics Club is contingent on my agreeing to, and abiding by, these Codes of Conduct.

Team Selection Process

Elementary School Teams

The PRC will create VEX IQ Robotics teams following the guidelines below. To be eligible, a student must be enrolled in a Plainwell Elementary School and be in the fourth or fifth grade.

1. Teams should be as balanced as possible in terms of grade (age) and experience.
2. Each team will consist of 3 - 4 students.
3. Practice time availability will be a priority over having friends on a team.
4. Students will have an opportunity to indicate one friend that they would like to have on their team. Every effort will be made make this happen, although this is not a guarantee. There is a better chance of having friends on a team if both students chose each other as their one friend.
5. Team membership will be announced in late May, but will be subject to change whenever necessary.
6. Each team will have at least one dedicated coach.
7. The Elementary School Director, together with the PRC Management Team, will create all teams.

Beginning in June after team membership is announced, PRC students and their team coach(es) will begin discussions of the fundamentals of building robots and using the Engineering Notebook. They will be expected to brainstorm ideas for how best to design a robot that will accomplish the year's game objectives. This will allow coaches to observe interactions among students and determine the skills of each student. Coaches will be expected to observe and guide teams, bringing any potential changes or conflicts among team members and teams to the attention of Elementary School Director as soon as possible.

Based on past experience, there will likely be some attrition during the first several months of the season which may warrant some team changes. It is also likely that some student schedules will change because of other commitments during the season. Change in a student's schedule does not warrant a change in team composition, but it may require a change in the practice night for that team. The coach(es) for that team will consult with these parents to determine which night of the week is best for practice.

All Elementary School robotics team practices will be held in Room A127 at the Plainwell Middle School.

Middle School Teams

The Plainwell Robotics Club (PRC) will create VEX VRC Robotics teams following the guidelines below. To be eligible, a student must be enrolled in the Plainwell Middle School and be a veteran of an elementary school VEX IQ team, or be in the seventh or eighth grade, or be a sibling of another middle school robotics team member.

1. Teams should be as balanced as possible in terms of grade (age) and experience.
2. Each team will consist of 3 - 4 students.
3. Practice time availability will be a priority over having friends on a team.
4. Students will have an opportunity to indicate one friend that they would like to have on their team. Every effort will be made make this happen, although this is not a guarantee. There is a better chance of having friends on a team if both students chose each other as their one friend.
5. Team membership will be announced in late May, but will be subject to change whenever necessary.
6. Each team will have at least one dedicated coach.
7. The Middle School Director, together with the PRC Management Team, will create all teams.

Beginning in June after team membership is announced, PRC students and their team coach(es) will begin discussions of the fundamentals of building robots and using the Engineering Notebook. They will be expected to brainstorm ideas for how best to design a robot that will accomplish the year's game objectives. This will allow coaches to observe interactions among students and determine the skills of each student. Coaches will be expected to observe and guide teams, bringing any potential changes or conflicts among team members and teams to the attention of Middle School Director as soon as possible.

Based on past experience, there will likely be some attrition during the first several months of the season which may warrant some team changes. It is also likely that some student schedules will change because of other commitments during the season. Change in a student's schedule does not warrant a change in team composition, but it may require a change in the practice night for that team. The coach(es) for that team will consult with these parents to determine which night of the week is best for practice.

All Middle School robotics team practices will be held in Room J839 at the Plainwell High School.

How the PRC is Funded

The PRC currently has three main funding sources.

1. The Plainwell School District is gracious enough to give us space in the Plainwell Middle and High School for practice and storage of robotics equipment.
2. Private and corporate donations, government grants, money received from charitable foundations, and individuals help with purchasing robots, parts, tools, software, and other equipment our teams need to stay competitive.
3. Plainwell Robotics Tournaments provide revenue that PRC uses to support the Club in various ways including, equipment, end-of-the-year celebrations and helping defray costs to the state competition.

Cost for Families

At present, there is no cost to students to participate on a PRC Robotics Team. However, families are responsible for transporting their student(s) to and from all practices and competitions. There may be additional expenses for food and lodging associated with some competitions.

PRC Parent Volunteer Requirement

All parents of PRC team members are *required* to volunteer their time to assist with at least one major PRC event each year. Parents who have agreed to coach a team at any level are fulfilling their volunteer requirement. Anyone not coaching can fulfill the requirement by volunteering at either of PRC's two tournaments or both. Most shifts during tournament days are two hours long, however if you are a notebook judge or a referee you will be working all day. Additionally, people to help set up for each tournament the evening before, and tearing down fields and such after each tournament are needed, which will also fulfill this requirement.

Who is Coaching?

For our elementary teams, we try to find two (2) parents per team who are willing to coach. Coaching does not require any prior experience. The main jobs of a parent coach are to learn right alongside the students, help them to problem solve when students get stuck, and make sure everyone is having fun. Since students have to do the work, coaches do not need engineering or programming skills. We try very hard to make sure to help our parent coaches out whenever needed to keep everyone engaged.

At the middle school level, we also try to find two (2) parents per team, who are willing to coach. Many of these students have prior robotics experience so there is not quite as much supervision for these students as may be needed at the elementary school level, but the main jobs are similar those of elementary team coaches.

At the high school level, we have at least one parent coach for each team. Typically, even less supervision is needed for these students, but they do continue to need guidance and assistance, which are the main jobs of these coaches.

Important Dates

Plainwell Middle School VEX VRC Tournament – November 23, 2024

Plainwell High School VEX VRC Tournament – November 24, 2024

Plainwell Elementary School VEX IQ Tournament – January 18, 2025

VEX IQ State Championship – early March 2025

VEX VRC Middle School State Championship – late February 2025

VEX VRC High School State Championship – late February 2025

VEX VRC Middle School World Championship – mid-April 2025

VEX VRC High School World Championship – late April 2025

Participant Release Forms

The REC Foundation requires that each student and each adult coach (or assistant coach) participating in a VEX Robotics event submit an online Participant Release Form, which is available at https://waiver.smartwaiver.com/w/5ab2c50d92047/web/. Parents will receive detailed instructions as to how to complete this form from their team coach early in September.

What Does an IQ Tournament Day Look Like?

Every tournament is different, but for the most part this is what a tournament will look like.

8:00 - 9:00 AM – Check-in and robot inspection. The coach will have the robot, toolkit, and notebook. They will let you know ahead of time what time they want team members there. The coach will check the team in and submit the team notebook. Parents should deliver team members to the pit area or to the coach in person. Tables at the pit are normally labeled with team numbers on signs.

9:00 - 9:15 AM – Drivers Meeting and Opening Ceremonies. The local Event Partner and Head Referee will go over event policies and rules.

9:15 - 11:15 AM – Skills Fields open. Teams have the opportunity to increase their rankings by doing the Skills challenge. Three autonomous Skills runs and three team driving Skills runs are allowed. These are normally done early in the morning or in between matches.

11:30 AM - 12:15 PM – Qualification Matches. Teams will have matches roughly every 10 minutes. They will be randomly matched with other teams to work together for the highest score possible. There are generally no paper copies of the schedule for parents, but the VEX VIA App will show the schedule of matches as well as team rankings.

Team Interview: Teams will be interviewed by two judges at least once. Team members will be asked questions relating to designing, building, and programming their robot; and their team's decision-making process. Near the end of the tournament, notebooks will be available for pick up if they were not submitted digitally.

12:15 - 1:15 PM – Lunch. There will be space to eat lunch, whether families bring their own lunch or purchase lunch at the event (if available*). Students are not permitted to leave the building for lunch*.

1:15 - 3:00 PM – Match Play and Skills challenges continue. The Skills challenge typically ends about 30 minutes prior to the last scheduled qualifying match, but teams need to listen to announcements about this.

3:00 - 3:30 PM – Practice for final matches.

3:30 - 4:30 PM – Final matches and Awards Ceremony.

What Does a VRC Tournament Day Look Like?

Every tournament is different, but this is what a generic tournament will look like.

7:30 - 8:30 AM – Check in and robot inspection. The coach will have the robot, toolkit, and notebook. They will let you know ahead of time what time they want team members there. The coach will check the team in and submit the team notebook. Parents should deliver team members to the pit area or to the coach in person. Tables at the pit are normally labeled with team numbers on signs

8:30 - 9:00 AM – Drivers Meeting and Opening Ceremonies. The local Event Partner and Head Referee will go over event policies and rules.

9:00 - 11:30 AM – Qualifying Rounds. Teams will have matches roughly every 30-45 minutes. They will be randomly matched with other teams to work together for the highest score possible. The VEX VIA App will show the schedule of matches as well as team rankings.

Skills: Teams also have the opportunity to increase their rankings by doing the Skills challenge. Three autonomous Skills runs and three team driving Skills runs are allowed. These are normally done early in the morning or in between matches.

Team Interview: Teams will be interviewed by two judges at least once. Team members will be asked questions relating to designing, building, and programming their robot; and their team's decision-making process.

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM – Lunch. Families may bring their own lunch or purchase lunch at the event (if available). *Students are not permitted to leave the building for lunch.*

12:30 - 2:00 PM – Match play and Skills challenges continue. The Skills challenge typically ends about 30 minutes prior to the last schedule qualifying match, but teams need to listen to announcements about this.

2:00 - 2:30 PM – Alliance Selection. All teams are ranked based on the results of the Qualifying Rounds. The highest ranked team begins by selecting an Alliance Partner. The selection process continues until the specified number of alliances have been identified.

2:30 - 4:00 PM – Elimination matches. Each alliance continues to participate in elimination matches until they lose a match or win the final elimination match.

4:00 - 4:30 PM – Awards Ceremony. Awardees are announced, and trophies typically are presented to the Tournament Champions, the team with the highest Skills score, and the teams winning the Excellence, Design, and Judges awards.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Who is eligible for Plainwell Robotics?

All fourth or fifth grade students attending an elementary school in the Plainwell School District are eligible to participate in the PRC's VEX IQ program.

All seventh and eighth grade students attending Plainwell Middle School are eligible to participate in the PRC's middle school VEX VRC program. Sixth grade students attending Plainwell Middle School are eligible to participate in the PRC's middle school VEX VRC program if they are a past member of a PRC IQ team, or if they are a sibling of another PRC team member.

High school students who are past members of any PRC IQ or VRC team are eligible to participate in the PRCs high school program.

[NOTE: When selecting teams, we do not discriminate based on age, gender, race, religion, or experience level.]

Q: Can we drop out at any time?

Yes, but you are expected to notify your student's coach(es), the PRC President, and the PRC Treasurer of your decision via e-mail as soon as possible.

Q: When and how often do teams practice?

IQ practices are typically once a week for 1.5 hours (Monday-Friday, generally beginning at 6 PM). However, as competition dates get closer, teams may want to practice more often. The team coach will discuss extra practices with families before any decision is made. All IQ practices are held in the Robotics Room (A127) at Plainwell Middle School.

Middle and high school teams typically meet one or two times a week for 2 hours (Monday-Friday, generally beginning at 6 PM). However, as competition dates get closer, teams may want to practice more often. The team coach will discuss extra practices with families before any decision is made. All middle and high school practices will be held in the Robotics Room (Applied Engineering Lab, room 816) at Plainwell High School.

Q: How long is the season?

Our season normally runs from July through the end of February, although the season may be extended for teams qualifying for their respective State and World Championship events. Most teams practice throughout the summer. Attendance at summer practices is not mandatory, but families must communicate with their coaches whenever their student will not be at practice. Beginning in September, attendance at all practices is mandatory unless the student is absent from school on the day of practice. When this occurs, the team coach must be notified in advance of the practice.

Q: How many tournaments do teams attend?

Teams are able to attend three competitions, which are paid for by PRC. One of these tournaments will be the Plainwell Tournament (see Important Dates above).

PRC typically sends teams that qualify to the State Robotics Championship. These teams are responsible for transportation to the competition (and lodging, if necessary). PRC pays for the registration fee.

PRC does not send IQ teams that qualify to the World Robotics Championship. For any middle or high school team that qualifies for the World Robotics Championship and has met the criteria set by PRC for attending the World Championship, PRC typically pays for all student and coach expenses (transportation, lodging, food, etc.), but not souvenirs. Family members who want to attend the World Championship are responsible for their own expenses. Competing in the World Robotics Championship would extend the competition season to the end of April.

Q: When and where do tournaments occur?

Tournaments normally occur on Saturdays or Sundays. Many events will be around the Grand Rapids area, but teams can choose to compete in tournaments around the state. The choice of tournaments for each team is determined by the team coaches together with their team members and their families.

Q: Are students bussed to tournaments?

PRC does not provide transportation for teams to tournaments. Families are responsible for getting their student to each tournament.

Q: What are the differences between VEX IQ and VEX VRC?

VEX IQ robots, and the majority of the components, are plastic and the parts snap together. IQ competitions are simpler. Matches take place on a 4 x 6-foot field, with two teams (*i.e.,* robots) working together for a high score. In the PRC, only elementary school students can participate in VEX IQ.

VEX VRC robots and kits are more advanced and use steel and aluminum structural pieces held together with nuts and bolts. Students also are permitted to cut robot construction pieces to fit their unique robot design. VRC competitions are more complex. Matches take place on a 12 x 12-foot field, with two *pairs* of teams competing against each other for the highest score. In the PRC, only middle school and high school students can participate in VRC.

Q: How do students move up from IQ to the VRC program?

Students who participated in the PRC IQ program will automatically move to the middle school VRC program in 6th grade.

Grievance Process (updated May 2024)

Should you disagree with a decision made by PRC Robotics or any of its coaches, a grievance process is in place.

Step 1: Contact the coach(es) of your team to make them aware of your concern. The coach(es) will work with you and the appropriate PRC Director to identify an amicable and mutually agreeable solution. *[NOTE: Please do not attempt to inform your team coach of a grievance on the day of a tournament. Please wait at least 24 hours before doing so.]*

Step 2: If talks with the primary coach(es) and Director, have failed, contact the PRC President.

Step 3: When necessary, the PRC President will consult with the PRC Management Team to determine how best to move forward. The Management Team's decision will be final. The PRC is not a school-recognized entity and, although we try to align with district rules and policies as much as possible, we do not fall under the school district's purview with regards to dispute resolution decisions.