

Tournament Tips for New Teams

For team members, from team members :)

Before the season or early on:

1. Try to go on a few tours related to the theme for the year. Our team goes on several tours every year, and we have got many great solution ideas from them! Plus tours are fun and interesting!
2. Meet a few times to:
 - Build a basic robot to practice with and potentially use for the season
 - Get new members used to programming the robot to do simple things like turn and use sensors.
 - Come up with the team name and do team building games to break the ice.
3. Review the rules you will be judged on (aka rubrics). This will help you know what the judges are looking for and make sure you can answer their questions well. Review them as the season goes on to make sure you are still on track.
4. For robot and programming lessons, and other tips, check out classes from High Tech Kids or go to www.Ev3Lessons.com. Make sure you learn, don't just copy! You will need to explain it later.

JUDGING

There are three kinds of judging sessions you will go to Project, Core Values, and Robot Design/Programming. Here's what you need to bring for each of them and a little of what to expect.

● **Project:**

- **BRING:** Any props or items needed for your presentation, handouts or boards you have to help the judges remember your team or project. Anything you need to help you remember key points.
- **WHAT:** You have 5 minutes to set-up any props and present information about your project problem and solution. This must be done only by the team members with no other help. After the 5 minutes, the judges will ask you more questions about your project based on the rubrics.
- **WHO:** Anyone who wants to watch including friends, family members, and even other teams.

● **Core Values:**

- **BRING:** Any handouts or boards you have to help the judges remember your team or help you remember or talk about your team's Core Values.
- **WHAT:** The judges will give the team a few minutes in the beginning to do a secret Core Values game. All teams will do this same thing, so you are not allowed to talk about the CV game with or around other teams. It's more important to work well as a team than to complete the CV game well. After the CV game, the judges will ask your team questions about how you work together as a team and other questions related to the Core Values.
- **WHO:** Because of the secret Core Values game, only the team and one adult.

● **Robot Design/Programming:**

- **BRING:** Robot with all attachments, **your computer or tablet with all the programs**, handouts or boards you have to help the judges remember your team or help your team talk about your robot stuff, and an engineering notebook if you have one.
- **WHAT:** Your team will be asked to describe the missions you have programmed, your robot design process, and how many points you get. Highlight what is interesting, special, or unique about your robot or attachments. The judges will ask you questions about how you chose your missions, how you designed your robot, how many points you can score and other related questions. About halfway through, the Programming judge will take 1 or 2 team members to a different table to go through your programming information. The person with the Programming judge needs to understand the programming and how it works. No coach help! So make sure the team has done the work and understand it. Code comments are helpful.
- **WHO:** Anyone who wants to watch including friends, family members, and even other teams.

At the tournament, find some time and go with your team to a quiet place where you can practice judging sessions or your skit before you have to go to that judging session. If the gym is quiet, you could use that, a hallway, or somewhere near the pits.

Don't get nervous before judging sessions. The judges are nice (usually) and want to hear all about your team and what you have done this season. Even if they are not, just be polite and do your best. If you or a team member messes up during your skit, don't stop, just keep going. The judges don't know how it is supposed to go, so they won't know something is missing or different if you don't show it. :) If you know a missing line, whisper it to your teammate (that's good teamwork), or say it for them, or just keep going.

During the question and answer session, if you don't understand a question, ask the judges if they could rephrase it or redirect the conversation to an answer you know. After the judges ask a question, try not to have more than a few seconds of silence, or they will think you don't know the answer. It can be helpful to have someone on the team distribute the questions among the team members. Also, try not to have only one or two people do all the talking, everyone should talk, or the judges may ask the people who don't talk specific questions. If you have shy members or people who don't like to be put 'on the spot,' have them say something specific about your problem or solution right after the skit or during questions. It will be easier if they have an answer memorized and ready. Make eye contact with the judges and try to smile. Also, don't talk over each other. Very important: don't fight or argue in Core Values judging! It doesn't show good Core Values. :)

The other teams are friendly, so are most judges and refs. If you are having a problem you can ask another team, usually they will try their best to help. Don't be afraid to talk to other teams. You can make great friends!

ROBOT GAME

Something that you should know: it's almost guaranteed that your robot will not perform as well at the tournament as it did on your practice table. It just happens. So do whatever you can in your design and programming ahead of time to make sure your robot will consistently perform its missions on any table and lighting condition. Things like shielding your color or light sensors, squaring up on walls, finding or following lines with sensors, and other sensor use can help.

As you are running on the practice tables at the tournament, be careful not to change too much based on that table. They might be crooked or warped, or the mission models might be built wrong. Examine the tables and models carefully and see your results on the actual competition tables before making big changes. Programming to make your robot work on practice tables might make it not work on the competition tables. We know this from experience! So, be careful and work around this the best you can.

Try to always program your robot on a battery that is at least halfway or more full. The robot will perform differently if the battery is low versus fully charged. If the robot had been working and then starts behaving strangely, check your battery level before you change your programming. The battery may be the problem. It's also helpful to charge your robot when you are not using it at the tournament so it will run well the whole day.

Cheer for your team! Having a cart to carry your robot stuff is good. During Head-to-Heads, stay in the gym if you advance instead of going back and forth to the pits. The awards are right after the last round of head-to-heads, so stay close. Have fun!!!!!! That's what you're there for. And never give up!