

FIRST DEAN'S LIST

Matt DePorre

It's rare that a student exemplifies leadership skills their sophomore year of high school, especially on a team that has 11 senior members, yet Matt DePorre is that rare example of exceptional leadership. In 2009, as a sophomore, Matt was key to the development of our team's Chairman's Award submission. He worked diligently on the team's paper and presentation, always with a smile and positive attitude. With his help that year, our team won the Chairman's Award for the first time at the District and State levels. Matt wasn't content with just a simple win though; through his leadership, the whole team's attitude changed towards the way we work on our award submissions. Matt convinced his fellow students that the Chairman's Award is important, not just because it earns another blue banner, but because the spirit of the award is what FIRST is all about: gracious professionalism, coopertition, innovation, teamwork and relationships. Matt embodies every single one of those traits and his passion for FIRST and team 33, the Killer Bees, is conveyed through his constant positive attitude.

Now a senior, Matt is an active participant in every aspect of our team, from robot fabrication, driver for two years, awards and essay submissions to marketing and sales presentations for potential sponsors. This past summer, the Killer Bees faced the biggest obstacle in team history when we lost a major source of funding, putting our team in financial jeopardy. Matt was a key-component in rallying our students together to search for new sponsorship. Working closely with our lead sales mentor, Matt and two other students wrote a sales-pitch that they then presented to CEOs of several companies, including Takata Industries. The result of these presentations was outstanding! Our team received more than enough sponsorship to sustain us for this year and beyond. His efforts have gone a long way toward ensuring future team sustainability.

Matt understands that every aspect of the team is essential and should be appreciated. He always takes time to thank his teammates for their contributions to our team, from programmers to website designers. For example: every year we make a big deal out of seven students being awarded spots on our Competition Team and Pit Crew. This year, Matt approached the mentors to ask if we could announce our Chairman's presenters and Scouting team at the same time, because those roles are just as important. He took his idea a step further though, asking that we rename these groups to something "cooler", and so we now have the Presentation

Posse and Scouting Spies. It may seem like a small thing, but that is how Matt works: actively joking and making sure his teammates have fun, but quietly working hard to keep everything running smoothly on the team. He has been known to stand up at the end of meetings, without any prompt from mentors, and make announcements to ensure that his fellow students are on track and making choices that are in the best interest of the team.

Matt is also the leader of the 'other' robotics club at Notre Dame Prep. The OCCRA robotics team is used as an off-season introduction to robotics and often leads to new members for the Killer Bees. Matt has lead this club for the past two years, encouraging additional student involvement and spreading the knowledge he has gained through FIRST.

Matt is headed for the University of Michigan where he will major in Biomedical Engineering. Though we will be sad to see him go, we are sure that Matt will succeed in his new environment. The attitude, work ethic, and leadership skills that we have seen over the past four years will take him where ever he wants to go.

We, the mentors of team 33, have rarely seen a student who possesses the leadership qualities, communication skills, and technical knowledge that Matt has exhibited over the past four years. It is our pleasure to gladly and enthusiastically give Matt our highest recommendation for the 2011 Dean's List Award.