

Learning from Vex

This year was the first time Killer Bees Robotics team participated in Vex. We decided to do this because we figured it would be a great learning experience for the new members on our team. We wanted to encourage the love of engineering through our new members. The mentors and upperclassman helped them learn the basis of engineering and learning to be creative. To help inspire them, we hosted the Vex competition at our school and invited other teams to compete. The members on our team learned to build the robots for the. It helped them think differently like engineers.

First, we learned to think like engineers. For example, our team captain told us what to do, but didn't do it for us. This came in handy later in the season then he had other obligations and couldn't attend all of the meetings. We relied on our own skills, creativity, and ideas instead of others'. We became leaders rather than followers.

Also, we learned to act like engineers. We did a lot of trial and error and rebuilding. We rebuilt the drive train about six times, maybe more. We also had trouble with our shooter mechanism. This both collected and shot the balls and cylinders. We had this device mostly finished, but because we changed the base so often, we had to keep detaching and reattaching it. In fact, we were finishing up our robot as we went into the first competition.

We, in addition, were inspired to be engineers. The point of participating in Vex was to inspire the new Bees. This tactic worked! The rookie members learned a ton of their current knowledge from this experience. The Vex robots were like miniature FIRST robots. It was a great way to learn at a smaller scale. Also, we hosted one of the Vex competitions at our school. This also brought attention to our classmates that aren't on the teams and motivated us to tell them about robotics. All of the rookies became more excited throughout the season and helped out more and more. It also energized the new members for the FIRST seasons to come. Before, most of them were probably not going to build and focus on other things. Now, they want to build like the upperclassmen.

Overall, the Vex season was very inspiring for the new members and helped even the upperclassmen learn some helpful skills. Vex was great for learning how to think outside the box and put our ideas to the test. Even if we didn't win, I believe that all of the members would love it and participate just as much anyway.