

Team Spotlight
December 18, 2017
Spotlight on:
FRC 3196 Team SPORK
Mooreville, NC
Formed 2010

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The following information about the team was submitted by Leslie Clegg.

Share some of your team's highlights from this past seasons. What is the team most excited about for this upcoming season?

Team SPORK has done very well in the past few seasons. During last year's events, we won the prestigious Chairman's Award. Also, we won the Greensboro District Event and were finalists in the district competition level and the state championship level. Our successes allowed us to even go to the *FIRST* Championship in Houston! It was our first time attending the world championships since 2012! Now, Team SPORK is looking ahead to the upcoming season. We have high hopes of once again attending the *FIRST* Championships in Houston. Team SPORK is also excited to see the new robots that each team will develop in an attempt to solve next season's challenge. We are also eager to welcome back our returning team members and to teach new members of the team.

Share some of your team's current or past challenges. How is the team working to overcome those challenges? Or what steps did the team take to overcome those challenges?

In the past, Team SPORK faced the problem of negativity within the team. Throughout a few build seasons, members found it difficult to work together due to the hostile and competitive atmosphere. In a way, this negativity had become a poison that almost killed our team. However, as of last year, Team SPORK found an antidote. We realized that the reason that the team was not performing at top proficiency was that we got too caught up in the drama of life. After this revelation, members became close friends and were thusly able to work together to build an amazing robot. With this newfound positivity and appreciation for cooperation, we were able to go to the *FIRST* Championship and win the Greensboro District's Chairman's Award.

Describe your team's culture. What are some of your team's values? How do you communicate your team's culture and values to new members of the team?

In Team SPORK, members aren't just a part of a robotics team, they are a part of a family. Each member cares for each other very much and values their friendships within the team very highly. Team SPORK creates a very open and accepting environment, with members feeling safe enough to voice their opinions on any subject in the team. During our team's new member recruitment, interested people are invited to become a part of our family and we allow them with open arms to attend all our meetings. We hope to show them that they'll earn more than knowing if they join the team.

What are some projects the team did this past summer? What exciting projects do you have lined up for the pre-season?

During the summer, Team SPORK expanded its outlook towards countries outside of the United States. In India, three team members created *FIRST* LEGO League teams and taught children about the wonders of engineering and the values of cooperation and gracious professionalism of *FIRST*. Team SPORK donated multiple *FIRST* LEGO League kits to students interested in the program and held classes to teach them programming and build design. Inspired by his participation in Team SPORK, another team member traveled to China in order to advance his knowledge of programming languages. He spent a month learning and met with multiple *FIRST* Robotics Competition teams in the area who went to the *FIRST* Championships as well. Team SPORK is excited and proud of all the wonderful things our team members were able to do.

Describe your team's build space. Does it have a name? What makes it special to the team? What are some unique features of your space?

For Team SPORK, the main workplace is the SPORKshop. Its name is based off a play off the word: workshop. Located in our school's STEM Building, the SPORKshop gives access to advanced machinery and tools to trained students, even if they are not on the team. Team SPORK believes that all students deserve the chance to make their ideas a reality and, after attending a training from a mentor, students are free to use our tools under the careful supervision of a mentor. In the SPORKshop, students also are given a chance to view a slice of team history. They'll find that the walls not lined with machinery are covered in team memorabilia. One of the favorite components of the SPORKshop is the garage door. The door provides the team with easy access to the outside, making the transportation of robots into cars easier and bringing in a nice breeze into the SPORKshop when open.

What advice/tips do you have for teams for this upcoming season?

- * No idea is a bad idea when brainstorming. Even the most ridiculous ideas could end up being an excellent solution for a problem.
- * During competitions, if things start to go astray before a match, send a drive team member to dance. It provides an excellent distraction to keep all of those in the stands from worrying.
- * Never spread gossip about other members of your team. This creates an atmosphere of distrust throughout the team which will only inhibit your ability to create robots.
- * Everybody is different. Try to emphasize a person's strengths instead of their weaknesses in order to create the best team possible.