

THE TALON TIMES

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We're Officially Back in Session!

September jump starts the new year for TALON 540! Not just any year, though. This year is our *sixteenth* year! Yessiree, it's our **sweet sixteen!** And we are so excited to return to our beloved room 31 in order to crank out this robotics season.

The month of September focuses on a variety of aspects. The most important aspects, however, are our transition into the school year, recruitment of new members, training, and preparations for Rumble in the Roads.

This year, TALON 540 had a great turnout during our informational as well as orientation meeting, with returning members and new, interested students exceeding over **ninety** kids! Training also went very well, as potential members and veteran members begin intense training. This year seems to be starting off exceptionally. We are excited to what this group of students have in store for TALON 540!

TALON Testimonials

What do the returning members have to say about this new robotics season? And what did they do this month?



It's Good to be Back!

I've been looking forward to one thing, and yes, that thing is TALON 540! I haven't been able to get my mind off of the idea of starting another season and seeing the bright faces of the prospective members. I've been more than happy to return to the 540 family

atmosphere as well. I'm ready to help new members get a feel for the team.

These feelings, along with the joy of knowing that I'll soon discover this season's game challenge in several months has given me that extra push of energy I need to put out my best work. I'm extremely excited to see what comes over the course of this season and to be able to enjoy it with my best friends.

— Jacob S., Mechanical Member

Sixty-Three Rookie Members?!

I am overjoyed that the new year has started, because this means a new season is about to begin. I am very pleased with the massive turnout this year. The year has kicked off with the interest group of more than ninety students wanting



to join our big TALON 540 family, including 63 rookies! And from what I have seen, this group of rookies may be the best ever in my years as a member. It also looks like we have many prospective leads within this group of potential members, which is necessary because many of our current leads will graduate this year. All in all, this year looks fantastic!

— Jacob H., Mechanical Member



Sponsor Dodecahedron

CAD worked on an interesting side project during the first half of this month, before recruitment began. We like to call it the "Sponsor Dodecahedron," a 3D printed dodecahedron, for, well, the sponsors! The first few tries worked and printed well, but the model had

several small issues. Once we worked out the problems on the CAD, though, the 3D printer unexpectedly crashed. It was most likely the model's construction, because I effectively jury-rigged it. It took three versions before the problematic laurel design was simply removed. The font was also changed so the printing could be done right. Currently, we are printing a fourth version that didn't crash the printer and had all problems resolved. We has also consulted Cole, the mechanical lead, on a frame piece that would allow for easier access to the bolts.

— Michael, CAD Lead

Training, Training, Training

The month of September has been a busy one for programming because of all the events that the new school year has brought. Due to a successful club day and word of mouth, there have been many new members wanting to join



robotics, many of whom have picked programming as their subgroup of choice. As a result, all prospective members will need to be trained to program Java (and some LabVIEW in order to program the older robots). This will have to be accomplished by initially teaching the basics of Java with concepts such as methods and variables. After they have learned how to use variables, they will begin to learn the fundamental logic of "if statements" as well as "for loops." These are essential elements of Java programming and the members will need to know them in order to be successful programmers. Their programming ability will be assessed the week before cuts with a small programming test that will incorporate concepts such as multiple variables, if statements, and for loops. If all goes according to plan, this season could become one of programming's best and many goals will be accomplished.

— Uday, Programming Lead



The Strategy Behind Rumble in the Roads

Rumble in the Roads is a pre-season FRC competition, in which the game will be a modified version of Recycle Rush, last year's FRC game. Some modifications and regulation changes are significant so it is important that they are

taken into consideration from a strategy perspective.

Futhermore, last season's data was used as a reference to analyze and rank the thirty teams that have currently signed up for this year's Rumble in the Roads. This number of teams has allowed for additional matches to be played in the quarterfinals (three matches instead of two).

Strategy has been typically a single-person subgroup. Because of so, much of September was spent preparing for the addition of new members and the

delegation of tasks. A curriculum of sorts was designed in an attempt to familiarize prospective strategy members with the game manual and the district model for competition. Since this is the first year the *FIRST* Chesapeake District will be in existence, this manifests a new challenge for strategy as we seek to maximize team performance so that we can earn the most points possible at our two district events in March as well as at the district championship in April. For the next month, we plan to finalize dates for driver tryouts after the roster has been finalized and improve the scouting system.

— Goutham, Strategy Lead



Stay Tuned!

Upcoming Events

- November 7th - Rumble in the Roads at Menchville High School

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TALON 540



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