## Project Overview: The TBA + YouTube/Instagram-Style Community for FIRST & Other Robotics Programs

We’re building a community-driven platform that brings the energy of TBA + YouTube + Instagram to all FIRST programs, VEX, RoboCup, and more.

**Simple Idea:**  
Right now, FRC has platforms like The Blue Alliance where match stats, videos, and team profiles are super organized. But there's no central hub where teams across multiple robotics programs can consistently share robot reveals, practice runs, project progress, or connect with each other.

## Idea/Product

A platform where:

* Every team has their own page/channel (like a mini YouTube or Instagram for robotics teams)
* You can follow other teams and get notified when they post updates or videos
* There's a general feed of uploads, match footage, and team highlights
* Teams can post robot reveals, practice matches, behind-the-scenes, project vlogs, or even STEM outreach work
* Teams across programs (FLL/FTC/FRC/RCJ/VEX) can network, mentor, and collaborate
* You can view team stats, event summaries, or program-wide rankings
* There is some sort of leaderboard system for posts/stats/outreach on the platform that can later be endorsed by the specific robotics programs that are taken into account for specific awards, etc

Differentiation

* Multi-Program by Design: Unlike TBA (FRC-only), we support FLL, FTC, FRC, VEX, and RCJ - all on one platform.
* Creator-Focused: Teams aren’t just data points; they’re creators. We spotlight robot reveals, build vlogs, and outreach stories - potentially even have a YouTube channel for this community.
* Mentorship Built-In: Features that actively connect older teams (FTC/FRC/RCJ) with younger teams (FLL/VEX IQ) for real mentorship.
* A Living Feed, Not Just Stats: Dynamic feed of team content, not just match videos - robot reveals, STEM outreach, and progress updates; Social + Technical
* Gamified Engagement: Leaderboards and community shoutouts for top posts, outreach, or helpful content - like “Most Inspiring Build Log.”
* Cross-Platform Sync: Seamlessly integrates with Discord, YouTube, and (eventually) FIRST/VEX APIs for real-time updates and notifications.
* Student-Built, Student-Led: This isn’t a corporate initiative - it’s a project by robotics students, for robotics students.

## Similar Platforms / Competitors

* **The Blue Alliance (TBA)**FRC-focused match database and stats tracker with limited community interaction.
* **FIRST Alliances**A directory and alliance-building tool for FTC teams, mainly used for event coordination and team scouting.
* **FUN (FIRST Updates Now)**A YouTube channel focused mostly on FRC, with robot reveals and behind-the-scenes content, but no direct community platform.
* **Chief Delphi**Forum-based, mostly FRC-centric. Great for technical Q&A, but not visually engaging and lacks content sharing beyond text posts.
* **Open Alliance**Transparency initiative where some teams share documentation and updates—primarily for competitive edge, not true mentorship or cross-program reach.
* **Robogals, RoboCup Board, STEMBoard, VEX Forum**Valuable orgs and forums, but often fragmented, program-specific, and not built for ongoing media/content sharing.

## Impact

* Cross-Program Mentorship: FTC/FRC teams can help FLL teams level up, kind of like a built-in mentorship/tutoring system.
* More Exposure for FLL: FLL Students can be spotlighted and also connect with upperlcassmen and experienced mentors who can help them with their engineering and innovation journies
* Bridges the Gap: FLL students can see what FTC and FRC are like and reach out to local teams to tour their labs or get inspired.
* VEX and RoboCup Friendly: This platform can grow beyond FIRST and welcome other competitive robotics programs like RCJ and VEX
  + RoboCup isn’t very well known across the US, this will create a much larger RoboCup community as well

## Discord Server: The First Step Toward Community

We’ll launch a community Discord server alongside the platform. It’ll act as our central hub for now.

Here’s the plan for now:

* People select their programs when joining (e.g. RCJ, FTC, FRC).
* Channels are organized by program and subteam (elec, prog, mech, etc).
* You can talk about projects, share code, get feedback, or just hang out.
* We'll promote it in group chats, on the FRC/FTC/FLL Discords, RCJ channels (e.g., via Armin or RoboCup Board), and more.
* Once there’s a strong base of users, we’ll announce the platform to the community already on the server (we might end up doing both at the same time instead of platform after server)

## YouTube Channel: A Central Highlight Reel

We’ll also launch a YouTube channel where:

* Teams from around the world send us their best videos for us to feature (Similar to FUN Robotics Network except more robotics programs).
* We curate compilations, showcase cool robot designs, practice matches, outreach clips, etc.
* Eventually, we could even do team interviews, robot showcases, or “Day in the Life” segments.

## Timeline (High-Level)

Phase 1 – Build the Foundation

* Ideation + Planning
* Start building the platform
* Decide on tech stack and layout

Phase 2 – Grow the Community

* Launch our Discord server
* Spread the word across FRC, RCJ, and FLL servers/groups

Phase 3 – Launch MVP

* Continue updating based on feedback
* Integrate Discord and YouTube into the ecosystem
* Keep updating the Server and website with feedback making it more usable
* Reach out to RoboCup, FIRST, Vex and other growing robotics programs for sponsorships/endorsements and networking opportunities
  + Potentially reach out to robotics/cs education companies/non-profits

Phase 4 – Expand

* Host virtual events, workshops, and possibly hackathons
* Include stats tracking, match results, and rankings
* Start collecting more team videos for the YouTube channel

## Long-Term Vision

We imagine a world where a 10-year-old in FLL can DM a VEX robotics alum working at Boston Dynamics and ask how they got there. That’s the kind of accessibility and inspiration we’re going for.

## **🚀 Phase 1: Clone + Foundation Setup**

### **✅ 1. Project Initialization**

* Make an instagram clone with all the features , but no instagram branding

## **🧱 Phase 2: MVP Customization**

### **👥 1. Team Pages Instead of Users**

* Add a new field in Firebase: userType: "team" | "viewer"
* Update profile pages to support:  
  + Team bio
  + Team number/program (FLL/FTC/FRC/RCJ/VEX)
  + Season/year
  + Team logo
  + Links to YouTube, Discord, TBA, etc.

### **🖼 2. Posts Become Robot/Match Updates**

* Rename "Posts" to "Updates"
* Allow uploads of:  
  + Images
  + Videos (via Firebase Storage)
  + Optional text captions
* Add new tags: #robot-reveal, #practice-match, #team-vlog, #outreach, etc.

### **🧭 3. Program Selection + Filtering**

* On sign-up, select program(s): FLL, FTC, FRC, VEX, RoboCup
* Add filtering system to main feed to view only FRC teams, or only outreach posts, etc.

## **🌐 Phase 3: Community Features**

### **🤝 1. Team Networking + Mentorship**

* Add “Mentorship” button to team profiles  
  + Sends request → triggers chat link or email
* Add badges to users who mentor (e.g., @Mentor, @FRC-Alum)

### **🔔 2. Notifications System**

* Firebase Cloud Functions for:  
  + New follower
  + New comment
  + New update from team you follow

### **💬 3. Commenting & Discussion**

* Add threaded comments under posts
* Reactions system (⭐️, ❤️, 🔥)
* Markdown support or rich text editor

## **🧠 Phase 4: Advanced Features**

### **📊 1. Stats + Match Tracker (Phase 1 version)**

* Each team can add match logs (manual entry for now)  
  + Opponent, score, result, video link
* Auto-generate basic charts: win rate, matches per event

### **🕹 2. Live Workshop / Collab Support**

* Embed YouTube livestreams
* Add Discord call link field on team profile
* #live-events page for upcoming events/workshops

## **📱 Phase 5: Connect to a Mobile App**

### **📲 1. Create Mobile App (React Native or Flutter)**

* Option 1: Use [Expo + React Native](https://expo.dev/)
* Option 2: Flutter (if looking to support Android/iOS with same UI)
* App will:  
  + Use Firebase backend (same as web)
  + Allow scrolling feed, uploading media, and viewing team profiles
  + Notifications via Firebase Cloud Messaging

## **🎯 Phase 6: Polishing + Scaling**

### **⚙ 1. Admin & Moderation Tools**

* Admin panel to remove flagged content
* Ability to feature a team/post
* Ban/remove users

### **🔍 2. Search & Discovery**

* Global search for team names, post captions, program tags
* Recommended teams based on follow/interact history

### **🌍 3. Landing Page**

* Public-facing home with:  
  + How it works
  + Featured teams
  + Signup/login CTA
* Built in Next.js or separate frontend like Framer or Astro