

Choosing Roles: Involving all Members

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Bayou Builders is a community-based team sponsored by the Louisiana Children's Discovery Center. We're committed to providing opportunities for all children who possess an interest in FLL. We are typically a large team with 10 students each season. Having a big team can make it a challenge to get everyone involved in every aspect of the experience.

Learn Each Team Member's Interests & Skills. We each have our own set of skills and interests we bring to every aspect of our lives. This holds true for each FLL team member. However, because of their age and limited experience, they may not be able to fully appreciate their potential talents and abilities yet. As coach, one of our roles is to encourage each team member to try out new experiences while also being observant of their likes and dislikes and growing skills. We often incorporate fun personality inventories into team building activities to help members learn more about each other, how best to work together and to give us (as coaches) a better understanding of how to engage everyone.



Develop Rotating Project & Build Groups. No matter what level of competition we have been involved in judges always stress the same. They want to see that each team member has been involved in every aspect of preparing for the competition. They want to see that there has been a balance of attention placed on Core Values, the Project and the Robot Game. They want to see that the team has worked out a way for everyone to feel comfortable expressing ideas even if it is in disagreement with others. The only way for kids to truly be able to express this is to be involved in every aspect.

It can be hard for large teams to manage a balance in roles. Typically students want to compartmentalize. Then you have those team members who may only want to work on the robot or the project. It is our job to help them experience more.

At the beginning of each meeting, we meet as one team for a community meeting. This time is used for fellowship and to provide each other with updates on specific progress or upcoming events. This is also a time where overall team decisions are made. Team members present ideas to the whole group and the team votes on what they want to accomplish.

We then have our team divided into two groups. At our Tuesday meeting group A works on the robot while group B works on the project. At our Friday meeting, they switch roles. During our Saturday drop-in meetings, students can choose what they want to work on and can easily alternate between the robot and project.

It is our role as coaches to observe when a team member may be avoiding a particular aspect or becoming too focused on another and to encourage engagement in another part of the planning where they might also be interested. It is also our role to regularly check in with each team member to get a gauge on if they feel included and respected and to give them suggestions on how to handle certain situations to improve the team's overall sense of community.

