

## Comments on no-FTC training

**Money** The price of 1500 USD is not the cost of registering. If we do FTC ourselves we are still liable for all costs other than the 275 USD registration fee, but unable to apply for grants. We are a *rookie* FTC team which makes it easier to acquire grants, especially if we are expeditious and decide on doing FTC quickly. **It is likely that not officially competing will cost us more than an actual FTC team.** Registering as a team would give us access to many grants, and as we know from past experience rookie (quotes optional) teams have an easier time getting sponsor money.

**Practice** The second week start seems very artificial. I don't see any reason that we can not get started earlier, especially considering that we have meetings all summer long. The first week is when other clubs are beating us to freshman, for example cross country always makes large gains during the first week of the school year. I disagree with the statement

- *there's no way we will get freshman to that event, and have them understand what robotics is.*

For example, at Capitol Hill, my sister's team formed rather spontaneously. Maybe we won't get *every* freshman to the event, but I could certainly imagine a group of at least four, which would be more than enough to replace members of the core group we are losing this year. I don't know what the "understanding" piece is, so I may be passing judgement too quickly, but it seemed like the kickoff was a very comprehensive experience. I attended the Kickoff at the U last year, and they had several talks afterwards specifically targeted at rookies.

- *Freshmen would have no training:*

Once again, pulling from the capitol hill team. No one there knew any programming or building, and Putnam took a very hands-off approach. FTC has many materials meant to get people up to speed quickly and we are used to getting people up to speed. We also don't need to make a super complicated robot, but I think with the unlimited build season and the rest of the team helping skill will not be an impassable barrier. We could even view it as a 6 week season after a 4 week training session if it had to be. In the past we've had people join the FRC team during the build season and they managed to contribute to the team (example: Joel. Simon and myself also joined the team at kickoff).

**Competition** Competitions are an awesome experience. I think that being *competitive* is not particularly important, attending competitions would be an amazing way for new team members to see how other teams function and what our competition process is like. I think it will also allow us to ingrain a key team value in the rookies early, that a simple complimentary robot → succeeding at competition. Having a competition does not preclude continued work after the season, or even whenever there is spare time.

## Potential Disadvantages

**"Junior-Varsity" Disappointment** I think the best part of doing FTC as a training program is that it provides the competition feel and the kickoff experience. Alternatively, we are likely to have the slow development that we usually see during the pre-season, with rookies and veterans both less motivated. For FTC we need a lot of effort at the start of the season to recruit people, but after that it should be almost self-motivating. Comparatively, not doing FTC would require constant motivation to continue working on the robot and it lacks a binding force. The lack of bind → less retention and productivity, and in turn that would harm the mentor and leadership skills vets would develop.