Team History

1999 thru 2005

The Miller Place Robotics saga begins in 1999, when team leader Pat Hughes assembled a team of about 20 Middle and High School students to participate in the FIRST Game Double Trouble as Team 273. At the regional event, Team 273 went into high gear, competing with an unnaturally sturdy robot. (As former team member Rob Forquette quipped "Sturdy? This thing's practically bulletproof!") The rookie team seeded 7th and seemed poised to take the trophy, but alas, that could not be. During a quarterfinals match, the robot's arm broke off and could not be repaired in time. The alliance ultimately lost, but not without putting up a phenomenal fight.

The 1999 season seemed a forecast of things to come, but due to other circumstances, Team 273 was forced to go dormant for the year 2000. Miller Place Robotics was reborn "T-2" in September 2001 as team number 514. T-2 seized Diabolical Dynamics by the horns, pushing their way into the final round with relative ease before falling to the winning alliance in 3 exciting matches.

2002 started off with a bang. The program’s success brought several new members from the North Country Road Middle School. 514 entered "The Crush" into the SBPLI Long Island Regional. Although the team only seeded 12th overall, they were quickly scooped up by a top seed and entered into the elimination round. Though they lost in the quarterfinals, 514's spirits were not dampened.

A third mentor, Donard Pranzo, joined the team in 2003 and headed the largest scouting and game strategy operation in team history. With approximately 20 middle school students under his wing, he ensured that Stack Attack was known "Better than the back of your hand. Better than the front, too. I want you to know this game better than you know yourself." His efforts paid off. In addition to a phenomenal robot, expert driver and quick as lightning pit crew, strategy and scouting played a pivotal role in seeding the team 7th overall. With the memory of what could have been in 1999, the team paid exceptionally close attention when selecting their alliance.

Teams 496 and 871 were enrolled onto the RPM alliance. With near unstoppable precision and force, this dark horse alliance seized the coveted winner's trophy and near instantly began making plans for a trip to Houston for the Championship. 514's hopes were quickly dashed, however, when the Board of Education announced the troubles the school was having financially. In spite of the team's victory, the School Board felt they could not support the hefty cost of the robotics program.

The team rallied together, attending numerous board meetings, pep rallies, and pamphleteering missions. Because so much support was shown for the team, the school board decided to keep the program in the budget.

2004 was best described by team leader Pat Hughes. "It was a growing year." he told team members during a 2005 meeting "We had an unfortunate set of circumstances, made a few mistakes, but I like to think we're stronger from it." A team that seemed to be at the pinnacle of its existence the year before hit some turbulence and its step faltered. In addition to losing several key students to graduation, the team lost mentor, Mr. Pranzo, who went off to pursue other interests. With a team that had swelled from some 40 members to over 80, the group was far too large for 2 mentors to handle alone.

As the 2004 season came to a close, somewhat of a filtering process occurred. The large team of 80 reduced itself to a manageable number of 35 people who were willing and ready to get their hands dirty for the team. Though the team was ready to start and run as efficiently as they did in 2003, more setbacks rushed in to challenge the members. The loss of the high school technology rooms as well as mentor Paul Siller. However, the Middle School labs were well equipped, and support came in the form of mentor Ben Flaiz and local engineer Gordon Scott who donated materials and tools for build season.

And what a season it was. 2005 was the team's most efficient season, by far. Students who joined 4+ years before were now coming of age and taking on phenomenal tasks. Game strategy returned to the playing field, lead entirely by students this time. Mr. Scott lent tools, materials and time as well as insight, ideas and a little motivation to construct a fully functional, ready to ship robot 4 weeks into build season.

In a conversation he had with fellow team members, Jonathan Lewis stated, "You know, if teams are going to remember us, I don't want to be remembered for 2003, when we won (the regional), I don't want to be remembered for this year (2006) when we won Woodie Flowers and Chairman's. I want teams to know that our best year was the year we didn't win anything big, because it's more satisfying to do something well just because we can than it is to be rewarded for it."

Triple Play didn't know what hit it. In addition to a well working, unique robot, team communication was at an all-time high level. "If Zach (our driver) needs any intel, we'll have it for him." was the philosophy the strategy team lived by. Using a strong, adjustable strategy to their advantage, Team 514 spent most of the time during the Long Island Regional somewhere in the Top 8. Although 514 fell short of the regional championship, Mr. Hughes, Mr. Flaiz and the Miller Place community felt the team's performance merited a trip to the Championship Event in Georgia. During 7 matches in the Galileo division, the team maintained an impressive 4-3 record, netting 30th place overall. Although they weren't picked for an alliance, the team left Atlanta satisfied with their performance.

Shortly after returning from Atlanta, 514 embarked upon a number of community support projects in thanks for their undying support and contributions. Projects such as road and beach cleanups, walk-a-thons for disease research, visits to a children's psychiatric ward as well as mentoring 3 FLL teams and a rookie FRC team dominated the team's time until the kickoff for 2006 occurred.

2006 thru 2011

<I joined in 2008. I need some help from Mr. Flaiz/Matt/John on this part. Just bullet point highlights will work. I can wordsmith it after that./>

2012 thru 2014

<Same here. I would like some bullet point highlights and I can wordsmith it after that./>