

From the Crow's Nest

Free

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Team News



Breakaway

Last month, the iPirates gathered at Monroe High School to watch the FIRST kickoff event live on NASA TV. This year's game, Breakaway, is a type of robotic soccer. More information on this game is available on our website under Resources. Also, game information and info on our robot will be featured in the coming newsletters.



The iPirates get down to work. The build has begun!

Steve Ketron

The kickoff was a wonderful time for the team. We all gathered in the Steve Ketron's classroom and watched the event on his screen. We were joined Ketronix the other FIRST team at Monroe. Steve Ketron after working with us branched out and started Ketronix. He developed and instituted the program into a new class. The class is now an accredited part of the Monroe Public Schools program. Steve is also busy getting a class in alternative energy started to give students another start on future jobs.

Upcoming Events



Ann Arbor District
March 12, 13

Wayne State University District
March 19, 20

He joined the iPirates Senior mentor Dick McKinley in going to Novi MI. to pick up the robotic kit.



Mr. Steve Ketron accepts his plaque and the iPirates' thanks for his efforts.

While Mr. Ketron is busy with Ketronix he is still a valuable resource to the team doing things like volunteering his room as well as keeping a caring watchful eye out for us.

The iPirates decided to take a few minutes at kickoff to thank him and award him a plaque for all his efforts.

Volunteers

Those who have had the opportunity to be at an FRC event know that sometimes the events can be chaotic. What with students, mentors robots all moving around, banners hanging in the pit areas and tools everywhere. The events can be confusing and sometimes logistical nightmares. The iPirates this year are donating two shipmates to help at each of the district events.

The Districts at Ann Arbor will have Aaron Bolster and Saqib Peracha lending a hand. Wayne State has Ryan Huff and Michael McBride stepping to the plate.

These four will help out as needed directing traffic, score-keeping, monitoring safety rules or just helping out as needed.

Shipmate of the Month



Matt Bolster

Matt is another one of our second year shipmates. He is growing into an invaluable part of the team. His enthusiasm for both the team and this work is contagious and easily visible. The result of his enthusiasm as resulted in the team electing him to the position of build team captain.

Matt demonstrates leadership by both his enthusiasm and growing set of skills. Recently Matt was seen leading part of the team discussing robot design. Matt's contributions are helping the team to be a far more competitive team. The team is relying heavily on Matt's abilities and he is rising to the expectations.

Matt is also working with the team regarding upcoming fund raising events. He is instrumental in helping to develop ideas and organize events. These events will be announced as soon as plans are finalized.

Matt has his sights on being an engineer. Beyond that his pathway is yet to be decided. While he intends on furthering his education he is still exploring school possibilities. He has a strong interest in architecture and may pursue that as a career path.

Matt is a very great part of the iPirates. The enthusiasm he generates is contagious. The iPirates consider themselves fortunate to have him on board.

Free Spirit



There are many great robots that have inspired the iPirates. One such robot is the Spirit currently stuck in some loose soil. This is not a huge problem usually a push or pull will get a bot back in gear. However Spirit is unique in it is now stuck on the fourth planet of the solar system Mars. Being able to give Spirit a push or pull is not an available option. This limits the list of maneuvers to extricate Spirit dramatically. Indeed the remaining possible maneuvers are dwindling. On Sol 2143 (Jan. 12, 2010), NASA used slow wheel rotation of the wheels and are now analyzing the data. Earlier drives in the past two weeks using wheel wiggles and slow wheel rotation produced only negligible progress toward extricating Spirit. Two wheels appear to remain inoperable. The right-front wheel has not rotated usefully since Sol 2117 (Dec. 16, 2009). With the right-rear wheel also inoperable since Sol 2099 (Nov. 28, 2009), Spirit now drives with only four wheels.

One possibility is to use the robotic arm to sculpt the ground in front of the left-front wheel; the only wheel working the arm can reach. This activity could take several sols to implement. This is compounded by the oncoming Martian winter. The shorting of the days reduces the available power generation of Spirit's solar power capabilities. NASA engineers are concerned that attention will have to be turned toward Spirit's winter survival and attempt again to extract Spirit in the spring.

Follow Spirit at <http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/freespirit/>

Partner on Deck



The iPirates wish to promote our sponsors. It is they, who give us the ability to design, build and program competitive robots. Their continued support is important to us and we wish to direct our fans to them for their needs. This month we recognize **DTE Foundation** at a time when many philanthropic organizations are cutting back and facing challenging times the Foundation continues to remain active in the community. The foundation continues to support many core functions including initiatives in education, leadership, environment, human needs and others. One notable grant helped to establish a 35 week after school tutorial program in mathematics for seven underserved areas in Detroit. This grant along with other information can be viewed at their website: <http://www.dteenergy.com/dteEnergyCompany/community/foundation/aboutFoundation.html>

Marketplace



The iPirates would cease to exist without the support from their wonderful partners. The team offers their gratitude for all that these businesses do for them.

 <p>DTE Energy</p>	 <p>ITT Technical Institute</p>	<p><i>Iceberg's One Hour Heating and Cooling</i></p>
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