



Mills E. Godwin High School Robotics Association



# THE TALON

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# 540

## Homecoming 2009!!



November 9, 2009



Homecoming season is the time of year where all clubs and students are united in pride for the Eagles. Each club is to make a float that represents what they do, and ours could be considered the epitome of robotics. The float donned a replica of the 1960's game of the acclaimed Rock 'em Sock 'em robots. Two of our members dressed in a white and red robot suits made out of cardboard battled it out in the parade as they would in the playing field of the competitions where the red of TALON 540 is always the victor.

After the parade, the game was on; Godwin vs. Thomas Jefferson. But the real game was within the bleachers and concession areas. Robotics found a financial opportunity to gain fundraising money for the trip to the World Championships in Atlanta, GA. The challenge was to sell as many glow sticks as possible to all the potential buyers—which turned out were more middle school student than actual Godwin students. We meet our goal and sold every tube of glow sticks. Some members even found it to be profitable to sell the connectors (these came free)! The night came to an end with some money in the robotics pockets and Eagles winning the game.

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# 4th Annual Robot Rumble



On October 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, Virginia *FIRST* held a small scale competition similar to the 2009 Regional Competition at VCU, on the site of the Virginia State Fair. Fifteen teams, including TALON 540 and representatives from various other neighboring schools competed for the Robot Rumble title. Throughout Saturday and early Sunday, preliminary matches were conducted to determine the teams which would progress to the next level. Many rookie members were able to get a feel for the dynamics of the team and experience their first Robotics competition. Robot Rumble also enabled returning members to refocus on team goals, and allowed them to identify areas in which to improve.

Following 6 wins, 5 losses and 3 ties in the qualifying matches, TALON 540 was able to proceed to the quarterfinals. Setting the numbers aside, Robot Rumble was an enriching experience for the team. TALON 540 tested several new drivers throughout the competition, giving new and even some returning members a chance to try their hand at commanding the moves of this past year's robot, TALON. As a result, four students were selected to serve as the primary drivers in future competitions. Members Owen, Rustin, Luke, and Ethan will be seen behind the controls within the coming months.

Additionally, this event provided an outlet for team members to become familiar with one another. As the team worked together to reach a common goal, students learned about one another and had a chance to build new friendships. Cheers and the intriguing game of ninja slap established and improved bonds between the students of TALON 540. Rapport among team members is an essential aspect of any Robotics team. It increases clearer more effective communication, thus yielding better results.

Robot Rumble was also an opportunity to foster team spirit among old and new members alike. Painted signs spelling out our team name and TALON 540 flags could be seen from all angles of the playing field. These boosted team morale, drew focus on the robot TALON, and helped pull the team together. Godwin cheers tailored to reflect the nature of the competition could be heard during every round in which TALON 540 participated. TALON 540 has come to be known as a team with a large number of extremely motivated and galvanized participants.

Students have described the experience as engaging and fun, as well as beneficial to understanding a *FIRST* Robotics Competition (FRC). Driver selection, ninja slap, and spirit team were rewarding outcomes of this event and will enhance the work which will be conducted in this coming year's build season. These factors will help in maximizing TALON 540's results at the 2010 Regional Competition as well.



# Mentoring TEAM #3168: Nansemond River H.S. Suffolk, VA.



TALON540 is now mentoring a new team in Suffolk. Suffolk has just decided to start a new *FIRST* team. In the 2009 Robot Rumble, most of TALON 540 met the Team 3168 from Suffolk. Robot Rumble is a miniature version of the regional competition from VCU that *FIRST* creates every year. About six months after the regional competition, the Virginia State Fair puts on Robot Rumble in one of their technology tents. Being a miniature version of the real competition, it was the perfect experience for the team from Suffolk. Team 3168 got to experience what *FIRST* is all about, gracious professionalism and the inspiration and recognition of science and technology. Each member of the Suffolk team that was at Robot Rumble was paired up to a veteran member of Team 540. This way, the members from Suffolk were able to ask any questions about *FIRST* to experienced, veteran members. Our members not only explained their roles to Team 3168, but they also let the Suffolk team shadow them throughout the whole day. After a long weekend, Team 3168 learned about driving, building, strategy, and many other key aspects that are necessary to be a good, solid FRC team.



## Upcoming Events:

**Operation Paintbrush: October 17th, 2009 Postponed to Spring due to weather**

**Student Workshops: Every Wednesday in November**

**Sponsor Team Dinner: Moved to Kick-Off weekend Saturday January 9th, 2010**

**Thanksgiving Break: November 25th-29th, 2009**

**Jake's Reindeer 5K Race: Sunday December 6th, 2009**

