



M-A Robotics 2012-2013

M-A Robotics is a team of high school students who participate in the annual FIRST robotics competitions held in late February and March. The team is based at Menlo-Atherton High School and usually consists of 20-30 students. Each year, with the help of professional engineering mentors, the team designs and builds a 5-foot robot that can competitively play the "game" specified by the FIRST organization. The team also participates in outreach events, giving younger students opportunities to see and sometimes even drive a robot.

The six-week build season provides the classic garage start-up environment. You must bring to life your ideas without enough time, very limited resources, and few people. While we build robots, *"FIRST isn't about building robots, it's about developing life skills. The kids learn skills in relationships, teamwork, finance, fundraising, budgeting, and project management. The partnership between academia, the community, and industry...will build our future employees and future citizens."*

The team provides a great opportunity to learn about technology and engineering, but it also provides an opportunity simply to be involved in something hands-on and team-oriented. There is a wide variety of ways to be involved: from using power tools to creating animations, from programming to working on publicity. NO EXPERIENCE IS REQUIRED, all you need is interest and a willingness to learn. Participation in FIRST competitions can also open doors to scholarship and internship opportunities.

Typical Robotics Team Schedule:

- **Fall:** The fall months are focused on recruiting and training new members; also, there is a local Bay Area competition, Cal Games, in October. This year, Cal Games will be on **Saturday, October 13** at nearby Woodside High School, 199 Churchill Avenue, Woodside. *Going to CalGames is an excellent way to see what robotics is all about, even if you can only stay for a few hours.*
- **Early January kickoff:** FIRST releases the new "game"; our team receives a basic Kit of Parts and starts brainstorming designs. This year's kickoff will be on **Saturday, January 5, 2013.**
- **January-February "build season":** This is the peak activity time; students have six weeks to design and build a sophisticated, ~120 lb. robot that can compete successfully in the game. The team meets 2-4 times a week. The final, most busy time is the **Presidents' Day weekend: Feb 15-18, 2013.**
- **Regional competitions:** The M-A team participates in two regional competitions, one at UC Davis **March 21-23**, and Silicon Valley Regional at SJ State **April 4-6**
- **April Championship:** M-A was on the winning alliance at the Silicon Valley Regional last year, and went to the Championships in St. Louis. 2013 date is April 24-27
- **Late spring outreach:** The team typically does outreach activities in the community and local schools, spreading interest in robotics.

For more information on FIRST FRC Robotics and M-A Robotics please check out the websites at USFIRST.org and marobotics.org

What is FIRST?

It's **competition.**

It's **possibility.**

It's a **life experience.**

It's **community.**

It's **incredible**

*It's the **hardest fun**
a student will ever
have.*

Nowhere else can you find bleachers filled with hundreds of kids cheering wildly for a game played by robots and even more kids furiously rewiring, reprogramming, and repairing bots to get them back on the field.



Parent Info:

Parents play an important role in running the team. While the minimum requirement for parents is only contributing some snacks/meals, the team definitely needs additional support from parents who are willing and able to help further.

Parent roles include supervising build sessions, helping mentor (in technical areas but also in non-technical areas like publicity), fundraising, robot transport, doing photos/videos, etc. It's very rewarding to get to know the students better and to contribute to the team's success.

To join the team:

At a minimum, all team members need to fill out two forms: a Team Contact and Medical form and a Team Expectations form. More forms are needed as time goes on, for the various competitions.

Forms are available at:

marobotics.org/forms

2013 Key Dates

- October 12-13 CalGames at Woodside High School
- January 5, 2013 Kickoff
- Build season January 5 – February 18, robot must be bagged & tagged on February 19th
- Sacramento Regional at UC Davis March 21-23
- Silicon Valley Regional at San Jose State University April 4-6

Have more questions?

Contact the team student presidents and vice presidents:

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Executive Vice President

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Or the faculty advisor: Jeff DeCurtins (jdecurti@seq.org)