



The Flying Toasters

Building Bridges and
Ahead into a Better Future



2015 Build Season Newsletter

"To inspire and intrigue, unite and achieve greatness"

2015 Challenge: Recycle Rush

Issue #2 Gull Lake Edition - March 2015

Gull Lake District Competition

Conquering Adversity to Finish in 3rd at Gull Lake

Competing at the Gull Lake FIRST District Robotics Competition event with 40 teams in Kalamazoo March 13-14th, the Flying Toasters Team 3641 experienced both the lows and the highs of competing.

They spent Friday morning's qualification rounds in 40th place out of 40 teams. However, with teamwork, they diagnosed the problem and got the robot working as designed (see article called "Think Quick and Fix") and moved into 26th by noon on Saturday. The team's average score per match was 34.08.

During playoff selections, they were picked by the 8th seed Team 1504 "Desperate Penguins" from Okemos to compete as their teammate in the playoffs, along with Team 1254 "Tech Force" from Lawrence. The alliance did well in the quarter finals and advanced to the semi-final round. Okemos, Lawrence, and South Lyon ended up 3rd out of the top 24 teams competing in the elimination playoffs. It was an impressive accomplishment since they were the underdogs.

Coach Ron Weber stated, "To go from last place to coming in third at Gull Lake showed that preservation, perspiration, and teamwork does pay off. Exhilarating!"

During the awards ceremony, the team watched other teams win various trophies such as team spirit award, safety award, and design award. Then for the final trophy, they held their collective breath waiting to see who would win the prestigious "Chairman's Award."

Turn to page 2 to see what happened...



Pg. 1

Upcoming events!

- March 26-28th -- Livonia Competition
- April 2-4th -- Bedford Competition
- April 8-11th -- Michigan State Champ.
- April 22-25th -- World Championships

Chairman's Award Success

Soaring to a Win and a Ticket to States

- "All day, Baylie was telling me "wait for the awards, Chairman's is last, waiting will be unbearable." Of course, I didn't think it could be that bad, but nothing could prepare me for the agonizing anticipation that was the awards ceremony. Finally, when the announcer reached the Chairman's Award, I squeezed Baylie's hand, heart racing. The minute I heard the announcer say "STEAMING AHEAD", I saw Mrs. Bizer turn around crying, look at Baylie, who was also crying and starting crying myself. I jumped and hugged Baylie, nothing felt better than seeing all of our hard work to formulate a win pay off into a victory." Julie F.

- "How can you explain winning Chairman's? It is a feeling that is full of happiness and gratitude. As well it's a feeling of pride, truly making this moment a highlight of my robotics career. It makes me proud to say that I am a member of "The Flying Toasters." - Baylie B.

- "Winning Chairman's was a surreal moment because it proved to me that with hard work we can achieve anything." - Carl G.

- "The announcer's description definitely spoke to our team, but not until I heard the words "Congratulations Team 3641 The Flying Toasters" did I believe it was true. All the hard work, planning, initiative, and outreach of the Chairman's Committee, over the past two years, had brought the team to this place. As excited as we were to be called down to the field, it was not about winning the prestigious Chairman's Award, as much as it has been about creating a team deserving of its honor!" – Mrs. Ann Bizer (Chairman's Award Mentor)

And the winner goes to, as read by the announcer:

"The Chairman's Award is the most prestigious award at FIRST. It honors the team that best represents a model for other teams to emulate and best embodies the purpose and goals of FIRST. The District Chairman's Award is presented to the team judged to have the most significant measurable impact of its partnerships among its participants and community over a sustained period, not just a single build season. The recipient team will be invited to the Michigan District Championship where they will compete for the Chairman's Award against the winners from all the other Michigan District Events.

Steaming ahead with all their gears synchronized, this team has built a bridge spanning STEM to STEAM. They wrote and illustrated childrens books that were provided to hospitals and schools across Michigan promoting the message of FIRST.

Reaching across the Mighty Mackinaw, this team extended their bridge to mentor and assist several FIRST rookie teams in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

They use a "Circle of Growth" to promote their team and create awareness of FIRST in their community and their school.

Here's a toast to the winners of the Chairman's Award: Congratulations Team 3641 The Flying Toasters."

For information on the new book "**The Flying Toasters Spread the Word: A F.I.R.S.T. Reader**", please contact Mrs. Bizer. Big thanks to Stephen Bizer for the illustrations and to the wonderful Mrs. Bizer for the book.



Seeing the Chairman's video being played for an auditorium of spectators at Gull Lake was incredible. Bryce B stated, "I was excited to put my creativity and filmmaking experience to work in making the Chairman's Video." Bryce and Lucas B compiled the video together using footage from various Flying Toaster events. By using numerous narrators, input from many different members of the team was included. Bryce and Lucas hope to inspire others to support the mission of FIRST and hope to express the far-reaching impact Team 3641 has made through the creating of an uplifting Chairman's video. To see the video, please visit our team's website at theflyingtoasters.org – Bryce B.

Scouts Focusing In

To stand in the crowds. To watch robots pit against each other in competitive game play. The sound of cheers and the rush you get from it all. These feelings are so amazing and thrilling that you gain the ability to notice much more than you ever have. Our scouters, our focused men and women in the stands, spend hours every day studying robots, noting their abilities, and trying to keep score of this hectic game. It may seem like hard work but many of our players beg to differ. They experience the game like never before. Realizing faults, counting points, and seeing teamwork in action. Kyle R., one of the scouters, told me that the scouting was “hands on and enjoyable” and explained how he’s spotted the unique robot accessories they individually had. Matthew K. stated that it was “fun and that he never really noticed the performances or teamwork in the competitions until now.” This team has acquired enough data through scouting to choose the best possible outcome for the competition with confidence. This just shows how exciting and important scouting is to the team. – Chris T.



Drive Team Heating Up

People often talk about working under pressure. There’s an essay due next hour, or, more realistically, a project with a deadline. While I can’t speak for the latter, I have had my fair share of writing a last word before I turn something in. Then I became a driver on the drive team, and my perspective changed. It’s a whole new kind of pressure to have to perform in front of stands full of people...to know that everything you do, you’re being evaluated. We are a young drive team that much is true. I do believe that with a little practice, we’ll be able to use our robot to its full potential. – Ethan N.

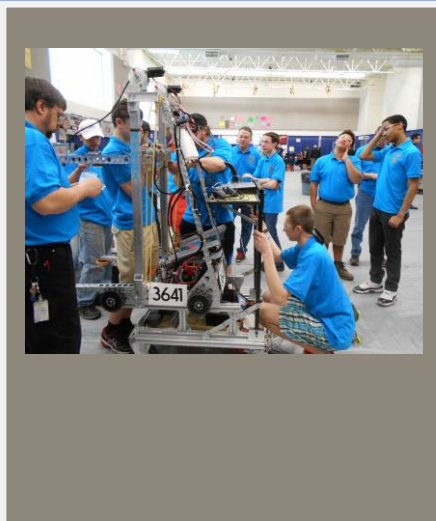


Gull Lake’s drive team includes Ethan N, Ben W, and Kyle J pictured at right.

Tips from the Toast

Kyle was the first brave soul to step up and put on the Toaster mascot mask. Here are his tips:

1. Move slowly, it’s hard to see.
2. Focus on being aware of your surroundings.
3. Don’t walk in front of the crowd during a match unless you have a reason to do so such as cheerleading, running across when the team is announced, or another reason that is worthy.
4. People like line dances. Know how to dance, know a lot of line dances.
6. Mascots are a role often mocked. You need to get courage. Other mascots are your friends.
7. Spend minimal time off duty to not miss a perfect opening.
8. Always have energy and energetic posture.
9. Eat small snacks like the occasional Snickers bar as you will burn more calories than you think.
10. Wave at small children so the toaster face doesn’t scare them. – Kyle R.



Think Quick and Fix

In robotics competitions, we often have a very short amount of time to fix what can be a very big problem. Just this past weekend at Gull Lake Competition, the right side of our robot was only driving half of the speed of what it should have been. We first began to look at all of the connections for the motors powering the right side of our robot drive while our programmer looked at the robot code to ensure no problems there. We traced all of the wires connecting the motors back to the source of power and the data cables that instruct the motor speed. Our problem was traced back to a loose data cable connection, which was only allowing one motor, instead of two, to spin. This explained and fixed our problem in less than two minutes, because that is sometimes all the time we have to work on the robot between matches.

-Ben W.

Thank You To All Our Sponsors

- “Our sponsors provide us with the resources and confidence to excel. I thank them for allowing me to travel to various competitions where the Flying Toasters can soar.” – Baylie B.
- “Robotics has helped me reach out to meet new people and learn how to use new machines. Without the help of our sponsors we would not be able to provide students like me and many others with these new skills and machinery.” – Tanner N.
- “Our sponsors have helped us greatly. We have been able to afford plenty of tools and parts to practice with. It definitely helped us reach where we are now.” – Martin S.
- “Thank you for the opportunity of having fun and learning a lot more electronics and CAD than my school could ever teach me.” – Isaac M.
- “Without the sponsors, we might not have enough materials to build the robot.” – Michael K.
- “Robotics has helped me learn about technology and put together a robot.” – Mark S.
- “I am highly grateful of the support of our sponsors as their contribution allowed me to increase my skills in engineering.” – Shashank R.

(Numerous thank you notes to the sponsors were written from the students. They will be included in the next newsletters.)

The Flying Toasters welcome some of our many sponsors for 2015:

FCA (Fiat Chrysler Automobiles) Foundation
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TEAM 3641 THE FLYING TOASTERS

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 Schupan Recycling
 Solidworks
 South Lyon Family Docs
 South Lyon Orthodontics
 Thomas W. Groom, Jr.
 Waltonen Engineering, Inc.
 Wrapped & Scent
 SLEHS Staff
 ZF Steering Systems

Sponsors on our 2015 team shirt

Thank you Sponsors for helping inspire our students in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Science (STEAM).

Donations needed for States:

Grandparents, relatives, and friends can give checks made payable to “South Lyon Robotics” to their Flying Toaster student or to Booster Treasurer & Mentor Mr. Novilla.

For information on sponsor donations to help send the team to Grand Rapids for States, please contact Coach Ron Weber at weberr@slcs.us

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(Thank you Mrs. Numberger for coordinating the T-shirts and sponsors' logos.)