

## The Retrovirus

At the close of December, the thought crept into everyone's mind that B team was not going to the World Championships. They were good, but not good enough. With no competitions in Southern California, they were not going to enter the world championship competition through qualifying matches and an excellent display at a competition. The world's stage is where the VEX team beats out the FRC team. But only if the entire team is competing at the event. At the close of December, we had a fragmented team registered for the event.

Two avenues remained for B team to qualify. The entire team rallied together to produce a Promote Award video in the short time that was left before it was due. A script, a few scenes, and a couple of days produced a top-notch video. Submitted right on time, it gained an enormous amount of votes and a good ranking. When the list of finalists for the award was announced, the entire team was stunned. Our presumed "winner" had not been selected as a finalist. It was good, but not good enough.

One avenue remained. February the 23rd was the marked deadline for B team. On that day, thirty teams from across the valley signed up to get a shot at the Skills Challenges. Following the extremely long hours of the FRC build season, more than twenty members of the team would volunteer to run the event so B team could get their shot. The team reached out to a STEM English teacher that supports Robotics for her help as a chaperone. During the FRC build season, the members of A and D teams, who had qualified previously, aided B team in designing, building, and programming a winning robot. In the week preceding our marked date, B team had a working robot that was scoring high in programming skills. High enough. In the hours preceding, the internal motor encoder started to fail. Around midnight on the 22nd, A team's programmer reported that B team was ready to go. On the 23rd, the same notion from late December began to flow through the heads of the team, jumping from volunteer to teammate like a bad cough. Not a second was wasted as the volunteers worked to squeeze in extra runs for B team. No teams qualified for the World Championship Event that day. They were good, but not good enough.

While A and D team worked to help B team, the competition at the World Championships has gotten stronger. Teams iterate through new designs daily as they prepare their robots to win. B team has become a retrovirus, integrating itself into the other teams to speed up the process of fine-tuning and perfecting. At the World Championships, we hope for a Robodex on Robodex showdown on the finals field. Only through a tremendous team effort can this hope be actualized this year. Nevermore shall a 599 team be described as good, but not good enough.