

Introduction

The Emcee plays a key role in a VEX IQ Challenge event by adding enthusiasm and energy, as well as a high level of engagement and understanding, for all event participants. During VEX IQ Challenge events, the Emcee provides the play-by-play of the match describing the robot game action for the audience. The Emcee also introduces the participating teams in the matches and provides informative program knowledge between matches, helping develop interest in the event and maintaining an upbeat atmosphere. At events where both an Emcee and an Announcer are present, it is crucial that these two individuals coordinate their actions. In most cases, the Announcer and Emcee will be the same person. The following guidelines will help you prepare for your role as a VEX IQ Challenge event Emcee.

Responsibilities

- **Be a great team player.** Your team includes the Queuers, Referee / Scorekeepers, VEX TM (Tournament Manager) Operator, and the Event Partner. When everyone works well together, matches run on time and everyone enjoys their experience.
- **Play an important role in controlling the pace of the matches.** Work closely with the Head Referee to help keep the matches on schedule. If the matches are behind schedule, shorten team introductions and commentary to get back on schedule. If the matches are on or ahead of schedule, you may add more information to team introductions and make general announcements to engage the audience.
- **Be flexible.** Situations may arise that require you to adjust your delivery of commentary and information.
- **Support queuing**, as needed, by announcing names and the numbers of teams that have not arrived for matches.
- **Support the Event Partner** by sharing announcements with the participants, as time allows.
- **Support the teams and Referees** by reminding Robot Drivers to switch the controller and by counting down to the end of the match. Engaging the audience in the match countdown adds to the excitement of the event.
- **Be enthusiastic!** Smile and share your excitement, which adds to everyone's enjoyment of the event!

Guidelines

Since the Emcee is a highly visible event role, it is important that you take a professional, positive approach to preparing for and performing your duties. The Emcee has the power to set the tone and cadence of the matches, and the Event Partner relies on you to help keep the event running on schedule. Please carefully review the following details to support your valuable efforts and ensure success.

Sportsmanship

Emcees are responsible for adhering to the highest standards of sportsmanship and serving as a positive role model for the participants. Modeling good sportsmanship includes announcing the game in a non-partisan manner, not suggesting game strategies to the teams, and fostering a positive, collaborative event environment.

Prior to the Event

- **Prepare for the event by reading the game materials, including the *Game Manual*** to understand basic game play strategy. Familiarize yourself with the current game and all the different ways to score. Be aware of game specific terms and get comfortable using this terminology for announcing. Your understanding of the game will help the audience become more engaged in the robot matches. Find materials for this year's challenge on the [Current Game Information page](#) and select *Crossover*.

- **Prepare for your role by reviewing all Emcee resources online**, which may include instructions, examples, and training videos. [On the Volunteer Resources page](#) select the *VEX IQ Challenge* tab and click on **Emcee** to reveal training resources available for this role.
- **Get the Audience Perspective (Optional)**. If possible, visit a VEX IQ Challenge event, prior to the one you will support, and listen to the Emcee. This will help develop a better understanding of how an Emcee can add additional value to the event by sharing helpful information in a positive and enthusiastic way.

Day of Event – Prior to Your Emcee Shift

- **Meet with event volunteers**. Establish where everyone will be positioned during the matches. Emcees must be in a position to see the match timer on the field display without obstructing the view of spectators and participants (or camera operator if video is being used).
- **Coordinate hand signals** with both the VEX TM Operator and the Head Referee so that you will always be aware of when a new Teamwork or Skills Challenge match will begin.
- **Check with the Head Referee** for additional updates or details related to the game or the matches. Confirm the Event Partner and Referee’s rules regarding starting matches on time and waiting for teams.
- **Test the microphone** to make sure it is working properly. Emcees should feel comfortable using it during the event. Make sure extra batteries are available when replacements are needed for wireless microphones.
- **Obtain a copy of the event schedule and the announcer sheet** from the VEX TM Operator or Event Partner.
- **Obtain general announcements** that Event Partner would like to be delivered during event and between matches. These announcements might include recognition of sponsors, REC Foundation and VEX program announcements, safety reminders, and scheduled event breaks or times for lunch, etc.

During the Event – Begin Matches

- **Make sure that everyone is ready to start the robot matches**. A great way to do this is to turn to the participating teams and say, “Teams, thumbs up if you are ready to start. Referee, thumbs up, if you are ready to start. Scoring table (VEX TM Operator), thumbs up, if you are ready to start.” Once everyone has given the thumbs up, use a countdown of “3-2-1” to start a match.
- **Share team numbers and names of the teams in each match**. As you become familiar with team names, it is great to work those into your commentary, along with any details that you have learned about the teams or their robots.
- **Refrain from giving directions to the Drivers** about what action they should take next. For example, do not tell a team to move an object into a scoring position.
- **Describe the action as it occurs**. Try not to predict what a team is going to do.
- **Divide your attention and announcements as fairly as possible** when you are serving as the Emcee for more than one robot match at a time. If a portable or wireless microphone is available, plan to move between fields, so that you can better see and share the action of multiple matches. Teams and the audience will appreciate your efforts to recognize the accomplishments of all team participants.
- **Coordinate your activities if you are sharing duties with another Emcee**. The audience will appreciate it if the delivery of match play-by-play and announcements flows smoothly between the Emcees.
- **Fill in the down time between matches** with information that is of interest to the audience and will support the event, such as reminders about the event schedule, venue policies, and announcements provided by the Event Partner or event staff. Emphasize crowd control issues if opportunities exist. Please also share helpful information about REC Foundation and VEX programs, as families have students of all ages with them.

Refer to the **Emcee Announcements** document for information to share with the audience so they can become aware of and learn more about our programs like Certification, Scholarships, Alumni and Online Challenges. Announcing where they can go to find out more about these programs will help increase team awareness of opportunities they may not know existed. The **Emcee Announcements** document is located on the [Volunteer Resources page](#); select the *VEX IQ Challenge* tab and click on **Emcee**.

- **Share something positive** at the closing of each match. Congratulate the teams on a great effort, no matter the result.
- **Develop and share the background story** of the event. Refer to the overall rankings when you can, and follow the trends of individual teams. For example, “Take a look at Team 217. They have really upped their game this afternoon. If they win this match, they will have locked up the number one ranking!”
- **Avoid being repetitive.** Try to find ways to use a variety of phrases, as opposed to relying on the same ones over and over again.
- **Get the full attention of the audience for awards presentations.** If possible, provide proper introductions of the judges that will be making presentations (where applicable). Understand the role you play in the production value that the Event Partner is striving to reach at the event.
- **You are the voice of the event!** The event participants will consider anything that you say as “official” information. Never make any comments, including references to the match score, Referee’s rulings, or technical issues, unless you are absolutely certain that the information is accurate.
- **Share your enthusiasm and excitement!** If you are having fun, everyone involved will too.
- **Drink plenty of fluids throughout the event!** Rest your voice and save your energy when time permits. Arrange for another volunteer to serve as Emcee when you need to take a break from your duties. Pro tip: have a few throat lozenges in your pocket.

Most Important: Have fun and the event participants will too!

Listen To A Few Emcees In Action

In order to get a better idea of what it is like to be a VEX IQ Emcee, follow the links below to four matches from VEX Worlds 2016 and 2015.

- [VEX Worlds 2016 – VEX IQ Middle School Finals Match 18](#)
- [VEX Worlds 2016 – VEX IQ Middle School Finals Match 16](#)
- [VEX Worlds 2015 – VEX IQ Elementary School Finals Match 14](#)
- [VEX Worlds 2015 – VEX IQ Middle School Finals Match 10](#)

Period of Game	Sample Play-by-Play Announcing
Prior to the Match	“Ladies and gentlemen, we have Match 21 coming up next on Field #2. All teams should be in place because we are going to start on time.”
Prior to the Match	“Remember that both teams are working together to score as many points as possible in this 60-second match. The combined score of this match will be added to each team’s cumulative score.”
10 seconds before the Match	“For Match 21, we have Team ____ and Team ____ (insert team numbers and names). Teams, thumbs up if you are ready to start. Referee, thumbs up, if you are ready to start. Scoring table, thumbs up, if you are ready to start. I have the thumbs up from everyone. 3-2-1 Go!”
Start of the Match	“The Match has started and the Robots are on the move. Team ____, (insert team name), is already working to Deliver Hexballs to the Goals. In the Crossover game, every Elevated Goal is worth 5 points. Meanwhile, their partner, Team ____, (insert team name) has scooped up a Hexball. A Hexball scored in the Scoring Zone is worth 1 point and a Hexball scored in the Low Goal is worth 3 points.”
40 seconds left in the Match	“We have 40 seconds left in the Match. Teams, remember you must switch Drivers soon.”
35 seconds left	“It is time to switch Drivers. Drivers, pass the controller to your partner.”
10 seconds left	“We are nearing the end of the Match and the Robots are still running strong. Team ____ is moving toward the Bridge. One Robot parked on the Bridge is worth 5 points. The clock is running out. Count down with me, audience: 3-2-1 and Match 21 has come to an end. Let’s hear it for these incredible teams and their Robots. They put on a great show!”
After the Match has Ended	“Teams, please do not touch your Robots until the Referee tells you to do so. Help the Referee count your score. Teams for Match 22 should be getting ready on Field #1.
Announcement of Match Scores	“We now have the scores from our previous Match, # 20. The Alliance of Team # ____ and Team # ____ scored 19 total points together. It’s time to move back to Field #1.”
General Announcements	<p>“The Skills Challenge fields are open on a first-come, first-served basis until (insert time). Each team will have (insert the number of matches allowed by the Event Partner, i.e., “3”) opportunities to participate in a Robot Skills match and (insert number, i.e., “3”) opportunities to participate in a Programming Skills match.”</p> <p>“Check your Teamwork Challenge match schedule and choose a time to participate in Skills Challenge matches that does not conflict with your scheduled Teamwork Matches. It is important to always report to queuing (insert time, i.e., 15 minutes) before your scheduled Teamwork Challenge match.”</p>
To fill in extra time	“It looks like the teams for the next Match 22 are almost ready. As they make final preparations, teams are reminded that they are only allowed to have 2 team Drivers next to the field. All other team members should support their team from the audience.”
Additional Tips	<p>Repeat this loop of communications, remembering to mix it up a little. Engage the audience and work with the other volunteers to make the event an enjoyable experience for all participants.</p> <p>Here are some random facts to announce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Size limitations of robots or number of game pieces on the field • The names of the various scoring zones of the field • Event details about finals match procedures and the awards ceremony • Refer to the Emcee Announcements document for program information to share

Thank you for sharing your time, talents, and enthusiasm to make an exciting event possible for all VEX IQ Challenge participants!