

Introduction

The Emcee plays a key role in a VRC event by adding enthusiasm and energy, as well as a high level of engagement and understanding, for all event participants. During VRC tournaments, the Emcee provides the play-by-play of the match, engaging the audience with effective color commentary regarding the action on the field. The Emcee also introduces the participating teams 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 many cases, the Announcer and Emcee will be the same person. The following guidelines will help you prepare for your role as a VRC event Emcee.

Responsibilities

- **Be a 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 time. 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 commentary.
- **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 teams of basic guidelines and 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.

Dress Code – Wear comfortable **team-neutral** clothing that is appropriate for a school event, closed toe shoes, and a volunteer t-shirt, if provided.

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.

Training 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 [VEX Robotics Competition page](#) – scroll to the bottom of the page and select the *Official VRC Game Manual* button.
- **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 Robotics Competition* tab and click on **Emcee** to reveal training resources available for this role.
- **Get the Audience Perspective (Optional)**. If possible, visit a VEX Robotics Competition 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** and establish where everyone will be positioned during the matches. Emcees must be able to see the match timer on the field or audience 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 ready to take the queue from the Head Ref to start a match, potentially end Autonomous early, make the correct Autonomous winner call, or resume the Driver Control Period of a match. The Head Ref makes the call for these actions, and you need to be ready to act on the Head Referee's instructions. Mistakes in these transitions should be avoided.
- **Check with the Head Referee** for additional updates or details related to the game or the matches. Confirm 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 the Event Partner would like to be delivered during the 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, alliance selection, etc.

During the Event – Begin Matches

- **Check the field display monitors** before each match to see if the match is ahead of, on, or behind schedule. Make necessary adjustments to stay on or slightly ahead of schedule. Example: if the match is starting late, consider delaying the introduction of teams to after the start of the match. This does not increase the delay, and teams can still be introduced as the match progresses.
- **Make sure that everyone is ready to start the match.** Poll all teams before starting a match and ask each team to give you a “thumbs-up” signal when they are ready to compete. Also ask for a thumbs-up from both the Head Referee and the VEX TM Operator. Once everyone has given the thumbs up, use a countdown of “3-2-1-Go!” to start a match.
- **Refer to the robots by their numbers, alliance colors, or team names.** Look at the announcer sheets for team names, organization and location; and mix these facts into the day to add variety to your commentary.

- **Refrain from giving directions to the teams** about what action they should take next. For example, do not tell a team to come to the corner and move an object into a scoring position.
- **Report factual information.** Feel free to describe sounds that you may hear and are not audible to spectators seated more than a few feet from the field. Avoid comments that could imply a referee should make a judgement call they have chosen not to make (pinning or trapping are good examples).
- **Describe the action as it occurs.** Try not to predict what a team is going to do.
- **Coordinate your activities if you are sharing duties with another Emcee.** The audience will appreciate it if transitions and announcements flow 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, Girl Powered, Alumni Program, 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 Robotics Competition* tab and click on **Emcee**.
- **Share something positive** at the closing of each match. Congratulate the teams for a valiant effort. Avoid making negative comments about the teams or robots, even if something went very wrong during a match. Example: if two robots on the same alliance stop working and they are unable to score any points, put a positive spin on it by reminding them that they can still make up for lost time by scoring more points in future matches, and can still work their way up the rankings.
- **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 seed!”
- **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 VRC Emcee, follow the links below to four matches from VEX Worlds 2016.

- [VEX Worlds 2016 – VRC High School Finals Match 1](#)
- [VEX Worlds 2016 – VEX U Finals Match 1](#) (match begins at 1:00)
- [VEX Worlds 2016 – VRC Middle School – Spirit Field](#)
- [VEX Worlds 2016 – VRC High School – Science Field](#)

Period of the 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.”
10 seconds before the Match	“For match 21 on the Red Alliance, we have team 2424 the (insert team name) and team 2426 the (insert team name). For the Blue Alliance, we have Team 7100A the (insert team name) and Team 8080C the (insert team name). Red team, thumbs up if you are ready to start. Blue team, thumbs up if you are ready to start. Referee, thumbs up, if you are ready to start and scoring table, thumbs up, if you are ready to start. Ok, I have thumbs up from everyone and here we go. 3-2-1-Go!” <i>If you need to save some time, you can do the full team introductions during the autonomous period.</i>
Start of Autonomous	“The Autonomous Period has started. Team 2424’s robot started right away and went over and picked up scoring objects. Team 7100A’s robot is working its way towards the middle of the field with its preloads. Team 2424 has just stacked 2 cones on their stationary goal. What’s this? Team 2424 has just placed a mobile goal in the 20 point zone for the red alliance. 7100A is sitting in front of the starting bar but nothing is happening. The autonomous clock is ticking down and 3-2-1. Autonomous is over.” <i>Once the scorers have counted the autonomous period points, obtain the results from the Referees/Scorekeepers.</i>
Start of Driver Mode	<i>Announce the winner of the autonomous period. Then announce to the scoring table to go ahead and start the driver control period.</i> “Blue team wins Autonomous! Driver Control in 3-2-1-Go!” “Driver mode has started and the robots are flying all over the field. 7100A has already picked up four cones and deposited them on a mobile goal for Blue Alliance.”
Random	“Teams are reminded that the skills challenge fields will be open until 1:00 PM. If your team wants to complete a Skills Challenge, please make your way over to the fields as soon as possible.”
30 seconds left	“We have 30 seconds left.”
10 seconds	“We are coming down to the end and the robots are still running strong. Team 2424 is picking up more cones and moving mobile goals into scoring zones, but the clock is running out. 3-2-1 and match 21 has come to an end. Folks let’s hear it for these four incredible robots. They were able to put on a good show for us.”
After the Tournament Has Ended	“Competitors, please do not retrieve your robots until the Referees tell you to do so. While the referees are counting up the points, the teams for Match 22 should be getting ready on Field #1.”
Announcement of Match Scores	“Folks, we have the scores for our previous match, match 20. Red Alliance 195 and Blue Alliance 142. Time to move back to Field #1.”
Downtime	“It looks like the teams for the next match, Match 22, are almost ready. As they make final preparations, teams are reminded that they are only allowed to have 3 team members next to the field. All other team members should take a seat in the stands.”
Additional Tips	<i>Repeat loop, 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.</i> Random Facts to Announce: <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 Skills Challenge, alliance selection, and 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 VRC competition participants!**