

Duel Master Volunteer 2017 – Nomination Submission Form

Name of person being nominated: Andrew Galbraith Ryer

Nominee Team #: 1089

Name of person submitting nomination: Phillip O'Reggio

Describe why the person being nominated should be recognized through this award (600 words or less):

Team Mercury is proud to elect Andrew Galbraith Ryer as a nominee for the Duel Master Award. According to our coach, Mr. Gregory, "In the last fifteen years, no mentor has come in and made such an immediate and immense impact as Mr. Ryer." Despite being new to the team, Mr. Ryer is no stranger to STEM, as he majored in Computer Science and works as a software architect. Mr. Ryer is a parent of two Team Mercury members, and before becoming a mentor he regularly supported the team by attending competitions and volunteering. When he realized his programming abilities could be of benefit to the team, he was eager to begin helping the students. After only two years on the team, he is already recognized as an optimistic and passionate teacher, and his ability to guide and connect with students not only helps students learn to program the robot, but teaches them how to work as a team.

Mr. Ryer distinguishes himself from other mentors by treating the team members not as subordinates, but as coworkers and as equals. Students appreciate how he respects their opinions, while maintaining control within the group. At a typical learning workshop with Mr. Ryer, he and the students can be found sitting in a circle and bouncing ideas off of each other. Mr. Ryer allows the students to joke and have fun, but he steers them back on task if need be, and guides them to the correct answers without giving it to them. He also makes sure to include freshman and newer members, so everyone contributes to the final product. He creates an effortless environment of fun, learning, and mutual respect.

The team believes that "Mr. Ryer's influence resonates with us even when he is not in the room." He spends his free time finding ways to improve on code, or researching different approaches to share with the students. His searching has allowed the programming team to implement functional programming concepts into the code. Last year Mr. Ryer's car broke down on the way to a competition, and he was unable to come. Determined to help however he could, Mr. Ryer streamed the entire competition from his home, watching all the team's matches and staying in contact with the team throughout the entire day. Mr. Ryer teaches by example that innovation and determination do not end outside the classroom.

In the couple years Mr. Ryer has been with the team, he has already proven his brilliance as a mentor. His attitude makes working with him informative, interesting and fun. Mr. Ryer pushes students to think outside the box, by encouraging students to collaborate on new ways to approach and solve a problem. He strives to ensure that every member can be involved in the engineering process, regardless of experience. Team coach Mr. Gregory attributes the team's nomination for the Innovation and Control Award to Mr. Ryer, because it was his guidance and leadership that allowed the programming team to succeed. Mr. Ryer's strong determination, wonderful leadership, and out-of-the-box role modelling will be a strong asset to Team Mercury for years to come.