

Duel Master Volunteer 2017 Nomination

Name of person being nominated: Dom Perna

Nominee Team #: 4342

Name of person submitting nomination: Sarah Ploener

I could tell that Dom Perna was different the first time I met him. The meeting had ended and my mom was running late. Contrary to most coaches, he refused to do so much as get in his car, despite the 30 degree weather. Over the past four years that I have worked with Dom, his unconditional dedication to inspire, communicate, model FIRST to the members of the team is always clear.

Having worked his entire life in engineering, Dom's energy and enthusiasm about engineering never fails to inspire the team. Dom encourages students to build their own ideas and learn from their own mistakes. Because he forces us to think on our own, we are much more willing to try new things and explore our interests. However, Dom is anything but silent. His phrases are common rhetoric around the shop. "Handle it," accompanied by a flick of his hands shows us how much he trusts every member of the team to accomplish what they set out to do. The faith he puts in our abilities inspires us to prove him right.

Dom is the mediator between all aspects of the FIRST progress. Recently, Dom has taken the role of Lead Engineering Mentor for Demon Robotics. In this position, he coordinates between the different sub-teams to ensure that everything comes together on time. Dom is known for speaking to parents as well, even though it is not in his job description. He goes above and beyond at competitions to make sure every parent knows their child's potential. Additionally, Dom finds the team corporate sponsors through his connections in the engineering world. A few months ago, Dom arranged for the team to attend a DuPont picnic to promote the team and search for possible mentors. Dom Perna's ability to communicate within and outside of the team prove him to be an essential member of team 4342.

No one better represents the spirit of Demon Robotics than Dom Perna. At competitions, he looks up to other teams that have done well and frequently ask how they run their program for insight on how to better our own. And whenever a member shows an interest in a subject that he doesn't know, you can bet he has a book on it or is signed up for a class within the week. He taught himself Java to help the programmers, he bought a book on CAD to learn how to use the CNC machine that he built himself for the team, and researched manual machining techniques when a milling machine was donated to the team. Furthermore, safety is his number one priority. He works with the safety captain every year to provide a comprehensive set of rules and procedures. He is always reminding us to wear safety glasses and gloves. Just yesterday, I ran into Dom installing an eye wash station at the shop on an off day. Dom has more energy and enthusiasm about FIRST than the entire rest of the team combined. At competitions, you cannot miss him with light up demon horns, face paint, and pompoms. Dom Perna is exactly what members should look up to and emulate.

From teaching members how to drive stick shift to telling members, “you’ll go deaf by thirty if you don’t put on earmuffs,” Dom Perna is everything that Demon Robotics and FIRST stands for. He effectively inspires, communicates, and models every aspect of FRC. It is abundantly clear that he strives For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology.