



2008 Bayou Regional WFFA – John V-Neun

In two short years, John V-Neun has made a lasting impression on Team 148 with his commitment to excellence, professionalism, and dedication to the FIRST program.

John pledged his experience and enthusiasm when he accepted our Team Leader position. After working with several teams over the past eight years, John has a specialized, unique perspective on how to lead an FRC team. His former teammate, Eric O'Brien, commented, "John has always enjoyed inspiring young minds with creative drive train and mechanism concepts." He has taught our team to think and act with skill and precision.

John takes time to sit down with each student and explain mechanical aspects of our robot. He makes sure we understand not only the assembly, but how and why the robot works. Junior Adam Risley feels that John's knack is his ability to involve each person in useful and relevant educational opportunities that cater to their strengths. John never fails to remember that his work is for the students' benefit. For reasons such as these, John was selected as the first recipient of the Unsung FIRST Heroes Award.

Team 148 is proud of their Team Leader, but it says much more about John when mentors of other teams praise his hard work and mentorship. Rich Kressly of 1712 said, "Not only does John display a passion for engineering and design to his students, he shows them first hand that the reward is worth the hard work. John's legacy will ultimately be the countless number of student and adult lives he has changed, both on his own team and throughout FIRST. John makes engineering design accessible and enjoyable for students. He is the type of FIRST mentor many others aspire to be."

John is well-known throughout the FIRST community for his mentoring style, but his efforts are not limited to involvement on Team 148. Over the years, he has worked with several teams and mentors around the country to lend a hand with everything from robot design to team structure. The Mechanical Design Calculators John created for ChiefDelphi users have been downloaded thousands of times. John has spent many hours communicating with students, college mentors, and fellow engineers helping them to completely understand the concepts he has incorporated into his spreadsheet. In addition, John was the driving force behind the design and implementation of the chassis and gearboxes that are now standard in the FRC Kit of Parts.

Mentors like Karthik Kanagasabapathy find that John has had a profound impact on their teams as well. "Our students look to John as a source of guidance and information. At the Waterloo Regional in 2007, John helped the 1114 Chairman's team rehearse their presentation. The students still look back at that practice and comment on how John's teaching in a few hours impacted them more than all their practice throughout the season." Even students from other teams, like Aaron Lussier, have appreciated John's guidance. "John showed me that with a lot of dedication and a lot of hard work, I will be able to succeed at FIRST and at college. Everything I have learned from John will be with me for the rest of my life."

There is no better way to sum up how much John V-Neun deserves this award than with his own quote. "Remember, no matter what, you don't know everything. Listen to what everyone has to say... I'm still amazed what I learn from even my youngest high school kids. We all have a lot to learn and we also all have a lot to teach others. FIRST is an amazing opportunity for learning."