

Team 1527 2008 Woodie Flowers Award Submission

This year, The Bionic Battalion, has decided to nominate our software mentor, Cameron Dennis, for this prestigious award. As a team we agreed not to ramble on about the accomplishments that have occurred while he has been a part of this team, but rather explain his background. Before becoming a mentor for team 1527, Cameron was a dedicated student who helped his team excel in the school and community as well as FIRST. As a mentor, he has only galvanized the success of his team.

Cameron Dennis first started participating in FIRST four years ago (2005) as a senior in high school. He decided to join the program after meeting our main mentor, Gary Jibben, while in his web design class. Upon hearing about FIRST robotics, he thought what most think when they hear about the program: Battle Bots. Once his initial thoughts were adjusted, he got hooked and set out to better the team and himself as a student. Cameron decided to use his skills in web design to try and learn the programming language used for robot operation. The 2005 season proved to be both exhausting and victorious due mostly to Cameron's hard efforts. With the end of the school year, he had a big decision on his hands: leave to pursue his desire of becoming an engineer or stay with the team and aid them as a mentor.

I'm sure the choice is obvious; he decided to go with option three; accomplish both. During Cameron's first year as a mentor and second year as a member of FIRST, our team had a large group of students who wished to learn how to code and design websites. Cameron worked hard to teach them everything he knew and created a very productive and skilled computer crew. At the same time Cameron sought to ensure that the robot was designed and built by students. When they needed assistance, he would offer ideas to help them figure out what they needed to do to fix the problem at hand. If they still weren't sure about the solution, he would help them figure it out as a team. Through his help in leadership and perseverance, our team made it to the finals in Las Vegas.

However, Cameron wasn't satisfied with only our school being this successful in FIRST; He wanted all schools around Granite Hills High to experience this phenomenon. He started working on getting FIRST Lego League teams started at Madison Elementary and Montgomery Middle School so that FIRST could influence more students to join and stay with FIRST.

The 2007 season only strengthen Cameron's desire to spread the image of FIRST in his community. He attended meetings with El Cajon Governing Council about getting a mandate to make FIRST a program in all El Cajon schools. The new year brought new students and Cameron taught them everything from how to properly use pneumatics to programming a working autonomous mode. At the same time, Cameron became a vital member in the Team San Diego Robotics Coalition. He helps organize events and supports other teams in San Diego as well as those in other states.

All of Cameron's contributions to his team, his community and FIRST deserve to be recognized. He is the essence of Woodie Flowers award because of his leadership and dedication to this program. Because of Cameron's positive impact and the bonds created between him and students, many return to help mentor by his side. We hope that Cameron can stay around for many years to come, because he makes our team more of a family than anything else.