Onsite Presentation Pointers
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When a robotics team hears the word "documentation", they generally think "Ugh! Documentation is so hard and boring!" They do have one thing right; documentation is one of the challenging aspects of this competition, but does it really have to be a boring one? The onsite presentation is a chance for you to get creative. Think of it more as a theatre performance than a boring oral report. By following the steps in this paper, my team earned a perfect score on the onsite presentation portion of documentation in the recent Oklahoma regional competition.

1.Our Experience

We all know documentation is an extremely important aspect of the competition. It is one third of your overall score, so not doing the online documentation and/or the onsite presentation can severely impact your final rank. At our regional competition, we placed third in double elimination and fifth in the seeding rounds. Overall, we ended up in second place. Given our previous statistics, this seems impossible, right? Wrong! Our documentation scores, both onsite and online, were perfect, giving us the boost we needed to put us in second place for the final awards. That proves just how important documentation is.

2.The Rubric

Now it is time to unveil the secret of how to get a perfect score on the onsite presentation. The first step is to print off the rubric and read through it carefully. Content is the most important part of this portion of the competition, but there are other things that you can do in addition to boost your score. After reading the rubric, it is best to divide and conquer the different requirements that are listed. You might need to take pictures, make graphs, create charts, and of course, write the script. Pictures of your robots help the judges visualize the robot as you are describing it out loud. You might be thinking that these jobs may not take very long to accomplish, but do not be deceived. Make sure to allow yourself plenty of time to plan, write, put together, and practice.

Another piece of advice is to follow the rubric extremely closely. The rubric is your friend. It has everything that you need on it, so there really isn't any excuse for not having all the information you need. We took our rubric and used it as a checklist, and every time we completed something, we checked it off. This made us more organized and we were sure that we had all components together. Just following the rubric won't cut it, however. You have to give in depth answers and descriptions to all parts of it. During this presentation, you are trying to prove to the judges that you have done your own work and know everything there is to know about your team and robots.

3.Creativity

Okay, so now you have the content completed. The next part of the presentation is the creative side. You should try to find a scenario that works well with the game and the content of your presentation. For our skit, we performed as the famous Dora and Boots. Our team was

brainstorming different scenarios we could do when we came upon this idea. The concept was just thrown out there as a joking answer to a question about our favorite television shows. When we analyzed it deeper, we found that it fit the game perfectly. In our skit, Dora and Boots are on an adventure to Karel Island to save Botguy and the frogs. Along the way they have to go through the pond, around the oil slicks, and that's how they get to Karel Island. We made fake maps to show our strategy as Dora repeated the famous line, "How do we get to Karel Island? Pond, oil slicks, Karel Island! Pond, oil slicks, Karel Island! Come on, vamanos! Everybody, let's go!" So, our whole skit was based on this concept. There are many other funny characters that would fit the game as well. You just have to find the one that's right for your team.

Dora and Boots costumes used for the presentation

Since we were doing the Dora and Boots concept, we needed to fill the parts perfectly. That is one thing that many people would have missed; you really have to get into character. Dora and Boots are very enthusiastic and have a certain way of talking that we had to replicate. We actually went online to nickjr.com to look at clips of the shows and research our roles. We spent hours making costumes that looked like our characters, including a full body costume for boots (tail included), as shown above. Costumes that reflect your roles enhance your presentation by a large amount. Don't be afraid of making the judges laugh; that's a good thing, but make sure your whole presentation isn't just focused on the comedy. Always keep in mind that the most important part is the content.

4.Presentation

So now you are all ready for the presentation; you have everything you need from the rubric, you are in character, and have awesome costumes. However, none of your work matters if you don't show the judges all you know. Your main goal is to show the judges all that you know, keeping it under the time limit. The best way to prepare for this portion is to practice your presentation in front of an audience of parents. Give them the rubric, so they can double check that you talk about everything. Practice makes perfect, so you might want to repeat this step several times.

Next comes the moment of truth. You are walking into the room and are nervous, but if you remember a few things, you should do fine. This is the part where things that your theatre teacher has told you come into play. It is okay if you take scripts to the presentation, but you cannot read straight from them. Doing so distracts from the presentation and is not recommended. When doing this, you are no longer focused on the judges, but on the paper. Taking glances at the script is perfectly fine, and I would actually suggest that you do so, to ensure that you do not forget any information. During the presentation, speaking clearly and slowly is also important. The judges need to be able to understand what you're saying in order to score it.

Now you know our secret, but it's up to you to come through. Just because you have read this paper, does not guarantee that you will get a perfect score on your presentation. I know it's not easy, but if you put in some hard work and effort and try to follow these guidelines to the best of your ability, you should do fine. Remember that the onsite presentation is extremely important, but it doesn't have to be boring. Keep up the hard work and you'll do great.