



Appendix D: Leadership Selection Processes

Spartan Robotics Team Handbook 2025-2026
FRC- Teams 971 & 9584
Mountain View High School

Purpose and Scope

This appendix defines the processes for selecting student leadership for both Team 971 and Team 9584. The selection process ensures qualified, committed students are placed in leadership positions that enable the team to achieve its competitive and educational goals.

This appendix may be updated annually to reflect changes in process, timeline, or team structure without requiring changes to the main Spartan Robotics Team Handbook.



1. Team 971 Leadership Selection Process

1.1. Overview

Team 971 leadership positions are selected annually at the end of the competition season (May/June) through a formal application and interview process. Lead mentors make final selection decisions based on applications, interviews, feedback from current leadership, and mentor observations throughout the season.

1.2. Leadership Positions

The following positions are subject to this selection process:

- **Team Captain** - Oversees all team priorities, balance, and leadership development. Sets and upholds team cultural and operational standards.
- **Program Management Lead** - Transforms creative ideas into structured, executable plans delivered on time, within scope, and to specification. Maintains the master project schedule and leads all planning sessions.
- **Software Lead** - Owns software reliability and ensures all robot control and intelligence systems meet performance and robustness goals. Structures the software team and prioritizes development goals.
- **Engineering Lead** - Owns hardware & electrical reliability and ensures engineering delivers mechanisms that meet goals with maximum robustness. Recruits subsystem leads and builds training curriculum.
- **Business Lead** - Owns team finances including budgeting, fundraising, and sponsor engagement. Manages team budget and sponsor relationships.
- **Competition Lead** - Owns competition operations including event staffing, logistics, and on-site decision-making. Selects events and ensures drive team readiness.
- **Manufacturing Lead** - Owns the hardware timeline and all processes from design lock to assembly start. Manages supply chain and enforces manufacturing deadlines.
- **Training Lead** - Owns team development and education from post-season through kickoff. Sets training curriculum and helps new students establish their place on the team.
- **Outreach Lead** - Owns external relations including outreach programs, community engagement, and lab accessibility. Serves as primary contact to supervisors and manages community programs.
- **Special Project Lead(s)** - Focuses on special one-off projects that fall between major teams and can exist in any area. Assembles cross-functional teams with minimal guidance required.

Complete detailed role descriptions are provided at the end of this appendix. These roles can be adjusted during or between seasons based on learnings and available candidates.



1.3. Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for a Team 971 leadership position, students must:

- Be in good standing with the team and school
- Have completed at least one full season with Spartan Robotics
- Commit to the time requirements of the role (typically 12-16 hours per week in off-season, 24+ hours per week during build season)
- Commit to team goals including both short-term competitive success and long-term team sustainability

1.4. Selection Timeline

The leadership selection process follows this approximate timeline:

Stage	Timing
Initial interest form opens	Late April / Early May
Formal applications open	Early May
Applications due	1-2 weeks after opening
Interviews conducted	2-3 weeks for completion
Selections finalized	Before end of school year
Leadership announcement	Before summer break begins
New leadership assumes roles	June (off-season start)

The complete process takes approximately 4-5 weeks, depending on mentor and student availability and the number of applications received.

1.5. Selection Process Steps

Step 1: Expression of Interest

Students express interest in leadership roles through an initial interest form. This helps the selection panel understand which roles have interest and allows students to indicate preferences early.

Step 2: Formal Application

Eligible students complete a formal application via Google Form. The application includes:



- Motivation for the role(s)
- Qualifications and relevant experience
- Role preferences if applying for multiple positions

Students may apply for multiple roles but must indicate their preference order.

Step 3: Feedback Collection

The selection panel collects feedback from:

- Current student leadership team
- Mentors who have worked with candidates throughout the season
- Observations from team activities and competitions

Step 4: Interviews

Candidates participate in individual interviews conducted by:

- Two mentors (typically one lead mentor and one mentor from the relevant area)
- Optionally, a senior student from the current leadership team

Interview format:

- 20 minutes for primary role consideration
- Additional 10 minutes if a secondary role is being considered
- Focus on leadership philosophy, technical competency, time commitment, and alignment with team values

Step 5: Selection

Lead mentors review all applications, interview performance, and collected feedback to make final selections. Selection criteria are flexible and may be adjusted based on team needs and priorities for the upcoming season.

Step 6: Announcement

Selected leaders are notified individually, followed by a team-wide announcement before the school year ends. New leadership assumes their roles at the start of the off-season (June).

1.6. Mid-Season Evaluation

Leadership performance is formally evaluated after the first major off-season event (typically Chezy Champs). The evaluation process includes:

Self-Evaluation: Each leader completes a self-evaluation form reflecting on their performance, strengths, and areas for improvement.



Performance Review: Each leader participates in a sit-down meeting with two mentors to discuss:

- Self-evaluation insights
- Observed strengths
- Areas for improvement
- Support needed for continued success

Leadership Changes: In rare situations where a leader is clearly not performing and there is no confidence in their ability to improve, lead mentors may ask the leader to step down or transition to an alternative role. This intervention only occurs when the leader has not already indicated a desire to make such a change themselves.

1.7. Leadership Succession

Formal alternates or backups are not appointed through the selection process. Instead, current leaders are expected to identify and develop potential successors throughout the season. Lead mentors coach current leaders on how to effectively develop these successors.

To reduce bias and ensure a strong and diverse leadership pipeline, the selection process also includes students self-indicating their leadership ambitions. This ensures candidates are not limited to those identified by current leaders alone.

The team continues to evaluate and improve its approach to succession planning to build a strong and diverse leadership team each year.

If a leader is unable or unwilling to continue in their role, lead mentors may select an identified successor to step into the position. This is a rare occurrence and only invoked when a leader can no longer perform their responsibilities.



2. Team 9584 Leadership Selection Process

2.1. Overview

Team 9584 operates with a more fluid leadership structure that exists only when the team is active (October through April). Leadership roles are less formal and allow for rotation based on student interest, availability, and development needs.

2.2. Leadership Positions

Team 9584 leadership roles include:

- **Team captain:** Overall responsible for the team delivering the robot and being ready for their competition. Coordinates the work between the leads and maintains an updated planning for the build season.
- **Strategy lead:** Responsible for developing the robot strategy that is input for the design process (capabilities, minimal requirements, etc.). Creates the overall game strategy for the robot as input for the drive team training. Validates that the robot meets our overall strategic objectives.
- **Subsystem leads:** Responsible for the design, manufacturing and assembly of a subsystem on the robot. Together they coordinate with the team captain the overall robot design and integration. The number of subsystem leads will be determined based on the robot concept, expect around 3-4 lead positions.
- **Software lead:** Responsible for the delivery of a working software stack to operate the robot. This includes simulators, robot software, vision and test tools.
- **Manufacturing lead:** Responsible for planning the parts manufacturing, scheduling time on the machines, quality control of parts manufactured and coordination with 971 on workshop time.
- **Electrical lead:** Responsible for the design, implementation and quality control of the electrical system on the robot. This includes all wiring, sensors, vision system and control systems on the robot. Works closely with the sub system leads to ensure that the electrical components are properly designed into the robot.
- **Drive practice lead:** Responsible for organizing the drive practices for (software) testing and drive team training. Makes sure all equipment and people, including supervision, are available for practice sessions. Provides feedback to the team on any issues found during practices.
- **Competition Lead:** Responsible for the competition preparation, operations, and logistics. Leads the team during the competition, making sure the strategy, pit and drive teams are ready and performing their tasks. Coordinates all scouting activities, where needed in collaboration with 971. (can rotate by event)



2.3. Selection Process

Team 9584 leaders are selected by the 9584 mentors based on:

- Student expression of interest
- Observed capabilities and readiness
- Availability for the season

No formal application or interview process is required. Mentors can decide to rotate multiple students through roles during the season to gain experience and develop skills. For example, one student may serve as Competition Lead for Event 1, while another takes the role for Event 2.

2.4. Eligibility

Team 9584 leadership positions do not require previous season experience, as the team specifically serves first-year freshmen and sophomores.



3. Detailed Leadership Role Descriptions

3.1. Expectations for all Leadership

All student leaders are expected to:

- Identify and develop the best people for future leadership roles.
- Delegate responsibility inclusively, beyond personal friend groups, especially in key areas of ownership.
- Observe the performance of, and conduct regular check-ins with key contributors and leads within their areas to review strengths, areas for improvement, and progress.
- Actively collect feedback from others about team members, aggregate the feedback, then constructively share the feedback with those team members to support growth and prevent future conflicts.
- Set realistic plans, set expectations for team members, and manage the schedule. If someone cannot deliver, step in temporarily or reassign responsibilities appropriately.
- Set a high bar for excellence.
- Educate in the off-season, compete to win in the on-season.

3.2. Team Captain

Primary Role: Oversees all team priorities, balance, and leadership development.

Responsibilities:

- Develop a clear list of team priorities across all roles based on proposals from each lead (e.g., determining if the flywheel or third robot is a higher priority — and why, FLL vs. Spartan Series, etc.).
- Balance effort and resources across all areas (e.g., ensure mechanical, software, and business teams are proportionally supported).
- Understand each lead's role and be able to fill in temporarily when needed.
- Set and uphold the team's cultural and operational standards — including dedication, work ethic, inclusivity, and openness to feedback.
- Recognize and resolve conflict and disagreements between team members through mediation and decisive leadership.
- Set clear expectations for leads, monitor and check-in with leads to ensure consistency in leadership performance, identify communication gaps, and ensure the team's short-term and long-term goals are being served.
- Recognize situations where mentorship is needed and bring mentors in to support the student leaders.
- Lead the strategic planning process, ensuring all teams and perspectives are included, and hold the team accountable for translating strategy into clear priorities and direction.



- Oversee the robot strategy and design consensus process led by the Engineering, Software, Manufacturing, and Competition leads. Serve as the tiebreaker when the team cannot reach consensus on strategy or design tradeoffs.

3.3. Program Management Lead

Primary Role: Transform the team's creative ideas into a structured, executable plan — delivered on time, within scope, and to specification.

Responsibilities:

- Translate strategic team goals into actionable plans. Take the general consensus on approach and turn it into a detailed timeline with milestones, deliverables, and dependencies for all aspects of delivering the robot.
- Work with the Engineering, Software, and Manufacturing leads to establish performance metrics for all robot systems and ensure there are plans and timelines to validate that systems deliver against those metrics.
- Develop the planning content for the January Kickoff, including objectives and team activities. The Team Captain owns the kickoff event overall, and logistics can be delegated to a team member.
- Lead all standups and sprint reviews. Raise visibility into schedule concerns in advance of potential slips and hold the Team Captain and leads accountable for finding solutions. Maintain and enforce the master project schedule, ensuring consistent progress across subteams.

3.4. Software Lead

Primary Role: Owns software reliability and ensures all robot control and intelligence systems meet performance and robustness goals.

Responsibilities:

- Prioritize software development goals based on input from all other leads.
- Assign responsibilities to subgroups with clear leadership and ensure workloads are appropriately balanced.
- Ensure software training content and best practices are developed and maintained. Can coordinate with or delegate to the Training Lead.
- Lead meetings related to computer vision including hardware choices. Computer vision is a cross-discipline system requiring coordination between software, hardware, and electrical teams.
- Partner with the Competition Lead and drive team to continuously optimize software for consistency, reliability, and speed during match play.
- Develop and maintain comprehensive software system documentation for pre-competition inspection and delivery to the competition team.



- Identify mentors and advisors best suited for software subsystems, recruiting them for input and feedback.

3.5. Engineering Lead

Primary Role: Owns hardware reliability and ensures that engineering delivers mechanisms that meet goals with maximum robustness.

Responsibilities:

- Recruit a team of leads for every subsystem and have those teams present plans.
- Act as the tiebreaker and push subteams to accomplish more.
- Choose the balance of reliability with design choices. If the robot is built to spec, own every breakdown on the field.
- Lead rapid prototyping of selected ideas with clear measurements for picking the winner. The Manufacturing Lead is responsible for scheduling and prioritizing prototyping work on the machines.
- Lead research into options for robot mechanisms.
- Develop and maintain comprehensive hardware and mechanical documentation for pre-competition inspection and delivery to the competition team.
- Build the curriculum for mechanical and electrical training. The Training Lead drives delivery of the curriculum.
- Identify mentors and advisors best suited for engineering subsystems, recruiting them for input and feedback.

3.6. Competition Lead

Primary Role: Owns competition preparation, operations, including event staffing, logistics, and on-site decision-making.

Responsibilities:

- Ensure the analysis of each year's game to determine the most critical strategic elements (e.g., key cycle times, defensive vulnerabilities).
- Select competition events, manage logistics, and assign event roles.
- Authority to reassign or replace any team member during competition if necessary.
- Ultimate owner of the robot strategy and alliance selection execution at an event.
- Ensure the drive team has time to train and is exceptionally skilled by each competition.

3.7. Manufacturing Lead

Primary Role: Owns the hardware timeline and all processes from design lock to assembly start.



Responsibilities:

- Enforce deadlines for design completion as required by manufacturing needs.
- Manage supply chain logistics for both fabricated and purchased parts, including ensuring the shop is appropriately stocked with raw materials.
- Ensure the shop stays clean and safe. While shop safety is a team-wide responsibility, the Manufacturing Lead has specific ownership given the focus of activity in the manufacturing area.
- Define equipment usage, manufacturing methods, and buy-vs-build decisions.
- Set the priorities for the manufacturing parts schedule, including scheduling and prioritizing prototyping work on the machines in coordination with the Engineering Lead.

3.8. Training Lead

Primary Role: Owns team development and education from post-season through kickoff.

Responsibilities:

- Set and execute the training program, delivering curriculum based on content provided by the Engineering Lead, Software Lead, and other technical leads. Ensure training covers both technical and competitive skill development.
- Design engaging projects that inspire participation and learning.
- Recruit a teaching team.
- Track how quickly new students establish a place for themselves on the competition team and use this as a key measure of training effectiveness.
- Balance training across all disciplines.
- Use feedback and observations to continuously improve the training curriculum, noting where gaps emerged during the on-season that should be targeted in the next off-season training.
- Collect feedback on all new members and support building out Team 9584 each year by helping identify which students are a good fit for the JV team.
- Has first preference to take a leadership role as student mentor for 9584. If the Training Lead does not take this role, it is filled by experienced 971 juniors or seniors.

3.9. Business Lead

Primary Role: Owns team finances — budgeting, fundraising, and sponsor engagement.

Responsibilities:

- Develop and manage the full team budget and spending plans, collecting budget input from all leads to build the overall team budget.
- Lead fundraising strategy and sponsor relationship development.



- Maintain relationships with existing sponsors, including regular communication, delivering sponsor benefits such as recognition, updates, and lab visits, and tracking sponsor commitments.
- Own larger budget conversations with the team to get them funded by MV Robotics.
- Give updates on budget vs. actual as the season goes.
- Own event budgeting based on input from the Competition Lead and other leads.

3.10. Outreach Lead

Primary Role: Owns external relations — community outreach, parent engagement, and alumni relations.

Responsibilities:

External Community Outreach:

- Manage all community, educational, and outreach programs, setting priorities for all external outreach initiatives.
- Present a plan for the year and obtain commitments from other leads to assure success of the outreach program.
- Train presenters for outreach and competition activities including recruiting new students, pit/judge reps, impact award, etc. Ensure presentations are prepared well before they are needed.

Parent Engagement:

- Coordinate parent engagement to support team operations, including meeting supervision, meals, carpool, and lab hours. A dedicated student within the outreach team manages day-to-day parent coordination.

Alumni Engagement:

- Establish and maintain regular engagement with alumni, keeping them involved as advisors and preparing a path for them to return as mentors.

3.11. Special Project Leads

Primary Role: Owns cross-functional special projects that fall between major teams, delivering one-off initiatives across any area.

Responsibilities:

- Assemble a team of people who have broad skills, have strong perspectives, and are capable of driving projects with minimal guidance.
- Request special budgets through the Business Lead and size the team appropriately.
- Establish a detailed plan with aggressive deadlines and execute on schedule.



- Execute projects without impacting overall team leads or goals (unless agreed upon with those leads).

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For the most current version of this appendix and all team policies, visit the Spartan Robotics team website or contact team leadership.

Spartan Robotics

Mountain View High School

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<https://spartanrobotics.org>