
For immediate release

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Comox Valley Schools' FIRST Robotics Team 9641 takes home Rookie All Star Award

Comox Valley, B.C. – In an impressive debut, Comox Valley Schools' Robotics71 [FIRST](#) Robotics Competition Team 9641 finished fifth in B.C., and clinched the Rookie All-Star Award at the Canadian Pacific Regional FIRST Robotics Competition. The event, hosted at Victoria's Save-On-Foods Memorial Arena, saw teams participating from Alberta, B.C., Michigan, Hawaii, China, Brazil, California, and Idaho.

Robotics71 made its mark in their first qualifying match, allied with teams from Calgary and Hawaii. With a record of five wins and seven losses, the team was often the high scorer in its alliances, surprising many established teams with their performance.

Team 9641 was selected to be in the first round of playoffs — a rare achievement for rookie teams. They faced a double knockout, before losing their first match against the alliance that eventually won the tournament. They went on to win their next match, before being narrowly defeated due to penalty points in their final contest. Team 9641 ended up finishing a commendable fifth place in the playoffs.

The team's achievements were significant advancing the furthest among Vancouver Island teams, finishing fifth place overall for all of B.C., and winning the prestigious Rookie All-Star Award.

Despite facing challenges including supply chain issues, coding, and technical hurdles, the team demonstrated resilience and dedication. Students committed their after-school hours, weekends, and spent late nights designing and building. All within a two-month window to meet their deadline.

"Our students from Robotics71 should be incredibly proud of themselves moving from Vex Robotics to FIRST Robotics," praised team mentor and SD 71 district careers coordinator Steve Claassen. "This strong showing demonstrates the talent within the Robotics71 program, which is supported by the district's continued focus on our technology programs."

Eager to participate in next year's FIRST Robotics tournament, the team is already applying lessons learned to future competitions.

Team 9641 extends heartfelt thanks to all sponsors that made this journey possible for the Robotics71 students.

Local Sponsors of Robotics71: Resonant Light Technology, McElhanney, Central Builders, Urban Systems, Peninsula Co-op, Ecofish Research, Hakai Energy Solutions, North Island College – Trades & Technology, Forbidden Alloy Products, Remax – Ocean Pacific, Windsor Plywood, and Strathcona Industries.

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About FIRST Robotics Competition:

Under strict rules, limited time and resources, teams of students are challenged to raise funds, design a team "brand," hone teamwork skills, and build and program industrial-size robots to play a difficult field game against like-minded competitors. It's as close to real-world engineering as a student can get. Volunteer professional mentors lend their time and talents to guide each team. Each season ends with an exciting FIRST Championship.

About the Rookie All-Star Award:

The Rookie All-Star Award honors a rookie team that exemplifies a robust partnership effort while embodying the mission of FIRST to inspire students in science and technology. Team 9641, Robotics71, not only demonstrates FIRST values but also makes a significant impact in their school and community, supporting initiatives like a girls' coding camp and helping Indigenous youth.

Pictures attaches are courtesy of SD 71.

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