FAMILIES · 2026-2027 SEASON

IRON Cal INSPIRATION ROBOTICS OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

TOURNAMENT DAY FAMILY GUIDE

New to robotics competitions? At an IRON Cal event, student teams bring robots they designed, built, and programmed themselves. Here's what happens, how to cheer your student on, and how families can help.

START HERE

1. Check the event page at https://www.ironcal.org/event for times, venue, and parking.
2. Pack water, snacks, and something to do between matches. It's a long day.
3. Want to help? Most volunteer roles need no experience. Sign up on the event page.

Events and volunteer sign-up

https://www.ironcal.org/event

WHAT HAPPENS AT A TOURNAMENT

- **Matches:** teams are paired into alliances and play short timed matches on a field, scoring points with game pieces.
- **Skills:** teams also run their robot alone, driving and on autopilot, for a skills score.
- **Judging:** judges talk with teams about their design process and engineering notebook.
- **Awards:** at the end, teams are recognized for match play, skills, and judged awards.

WHICH PROGRAM IS YOUR STUDENT IN?

PROGRAM	WHO	WHEN
RECF Engage League	Elementary and middle school	Thursday league sessions, 4:30 to 8:00 PM, at schools in Chico. League Championship on Saturday, December 12, in Oroville.
VEX IQ tournaments	Elementary and middle school	Saturday tournaments, usually all day. Check each event page for times.
VEX V5 tournaments	Middle and high school	Saturday tournaments, usually all day. The IRON Cal Classic runs 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Saturday, December 5.

A TYPICAL TOURNAMENT DAY

Every event is a little different, so check the event page for times.

1. Morning: teams check in, set up in the pits, and get robots inspected.
2. Mid-morning to early afternoon: qualification matches, skills runs, and judging interviews.
3. Afternoon: alliance selection, elimination matches, and the awards ceremony.

CHEERING AND WATCHING

- Cheer for every team. Students remember a supportive crowd.
- Let students do the work. Coaching from the stands or fixing the robot for them goes against the student-centered spirit of the event.
- Respect the referees' calls. Students can ask the Head Referee questions after a match.
- Keep walkways and pit aisles clear.

PHOTOS AND VIDEOS

You're welcome to take photos and videos of your own student. Please be thoughtful about other people's children, especially when posting online. Some events are livestreamed, and the event will post a notice if so.

HOW FAMILIES CAN HELP

Our events run on volunteers, and many of our best volunteers are parents who started in the stands. Most roles need no experience, and we train you on site. Sign up at https://www.ironcal.org/event and take our free online training at https://www.ironcal.org/slides. Volunteers under 18 must have an adult (18 or older) on site who is responsible for them in case of emergency. This can be a parent, guardian, or coach, or an IRON Cal event lead we assign when they check in.

Questions about which program fits your student? Visit https://www.ironcal.org/get-involved/family.

KEEPING STUDENTS SAFE

If anyone is in immediate danger, call 911 first. Then tell the Event Partner or an event lead right away. IRON Cal's Incident Report and Youth Safety Concern Report forms are at the check-in table.

EVENT CONTACTS

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