Team 581 Blazing Bulldogs



2025 Scouting Whitepaper

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Team 581 Blazing Bulldogs is proud to release our 2025 Scouting Whitepaper and resource folder. The following document includes a breakdown of our custom scouting app, scouting subteam organization, and links to our scouting and strategy resources.

1 History

Our scouting and strategy subteam was formed in 2023, consisting of 6–8 scouts, 1 match strategist, and a basic web app. We knew that in order to play at a more competitive level, scouting was an essential part of our competition team. Robots win matches, but scouting wins events. We needed to make informed, data-driven alliance picks and optimize both ours and our partners' performance in matches, which is only possible through scouting and strategy. At the time, our custom app only tracked game pieces scored in Auto and Teleop for each match, and robot positioning at the end of each respective period. In 2024, we ran 10–12 Scouts and a much more complex app, allowing us to use our scouting data much more effectively. Ultimately, we were more successful at our competitions in part because of the more sophisticated app and subteam, earning our first Regional win and blue banner in 18 years. Our scouting subteam and app have further grown in 2025, both of which are detailed below.

2 Scouting and Strategy Subteam Roles

Scouting and Strategy is our largest competition subteam. Depending on the event, there are 12–22 students who fill the following roles, and 4-6 coaches providing support throughout. At offseason events, students may rotate into multiple roles given they have completed all required training.

- **Data Scout:** At each event, we have 10–18 Data Scouts whose main role is to fill out our match form, gathering objective data for a team each match. Additionally, Data Scouts take notes on robots' performance in their scouting notebooks. If we play with or against the team we scouted, Data Scouts will comment on their observations in our match threads.
- Expert Scout: 2-4 Expert Scouts document specific robot specializations by collecting subjective data in the stands. In each match, they scout Auto routines and rank teams by driver ability. Expert Scouts form watch lists and fine-tune the pick list prior to alliance selection.
- Pit Scout: Small groups of 3 trained Pit Scouts each observe teams in the pits before
 qualification matches start, filling out the Pit Scout form on the scouting app. We use the
 information to determine any additional resources we can provide our partners and form
 our pick list.
- **Pitbull:** The Pitbulls, while not a part of the Scouting subteam, are a competition subteam consisting of 2–5 students and 1-3 coaches who ensure our alliance partners are able to play their best in our matches. Assisting with software, hardware, and

electrical, Pitbulls communicate with Scouting and Strategy to pinpoint which robots may need support, then work to implement leave-line Auto routines, legal and robust bumpers, successful climbers, and other features to maximize performance in future matches.

- Strategy: 2–4 Strategy students develop match plans with alliance partners, optimizing our alliance's on-field performance in collaboration with Expert and Data Scouts. They communicate the match plan to our Drive Team and collaborate with Pitbulls to identify which teams may need support prior to matches.
- Pick List Attendees: Our pick list meeting consists of Scouts, Strategy, Pitbulls, and coaches. All Scouts and Strategy attending the pick list meeting are required to complete a 3-hour training before participating. Pitbulls attend the meeting to provide technical input and support.

3 Scouting App Usage

Our scouting app and data are used by all members of our scouting subteam, and the main uses are listed here:

- Data Scouts pre-scout for competitions and scout live matches using Match Form.
- Pit Scouts use the Pit Scout page to collect pit data from pit crews on Practice Day at competitions.
- Pitbulls use Pitbull Scout to collect robot data from pits on Practice Day at competitions, and Pitbull pages to identify which future alliance partners need help.
- Strategists use data from the Match Strategy page to create match plans.
- Pick List Attendees use Comparison and Data View pages to create and sort pick lists.

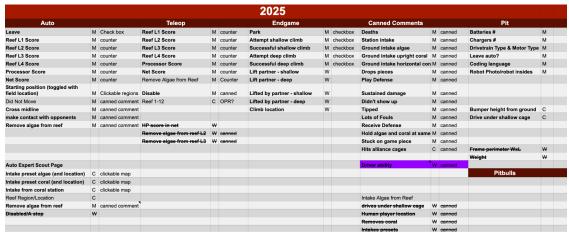
4 App Introduction

In order to compete in FRC, having data on other teams' robots that is up-to-date, digestible, and reliable is critical. We customize our app to fit our exact needs when scouting and evaluating data. Doing things digitally allows us to input more accurate and detailed information quickly, enabling instantaneous data analysis, which then allows our team to create smarter match strategies and make more informed alliance selections.

5 Match Form

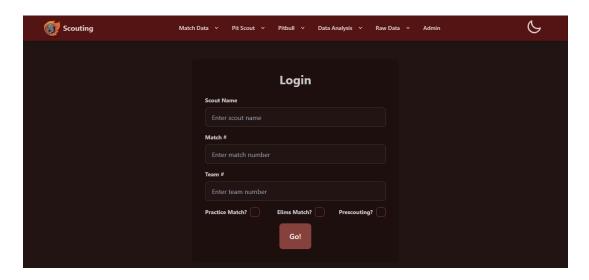
After kickoff, the scouting subteam discusses what specific data we need to collect for each page as well as any canned comments we may have in our scouting forms. Canned comments are short, pre-written comment options that list common robot actions; for instance, Scouts can track deaths, breakdowns, receiving defense, or playing defense. Multiple comments can be selected at once.

We begin by listing all possible data points for each section and decide what data collection method works best. Then as a group for each data point we discuss if it should be sorted into must have, could have, or won't have for our scouting pages.

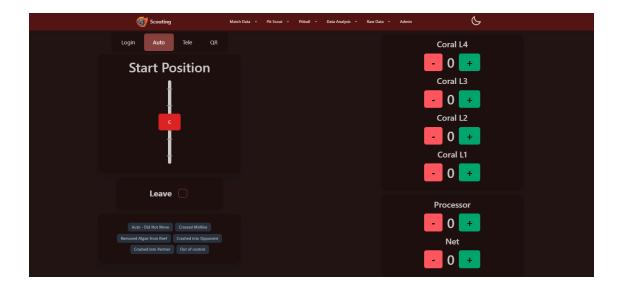


Our Match Form allows Scouts to record data for practice matches, qualification matches, elimination matches, and pre-scouting. It is broken into 4 sections: Login, Auto, Tele, and QR.

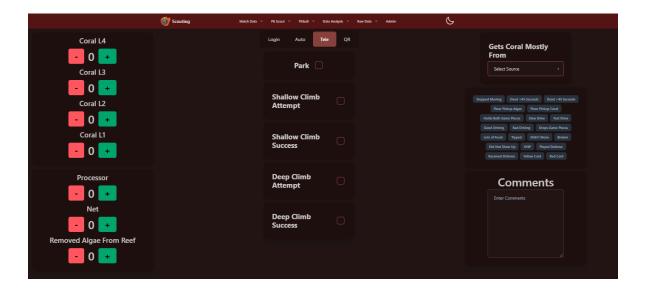
In our Login Page, Scouts are required to input their name, match number, team number, and select what type of match is being scouted. The scout's name and match being scouted is saved. Our app is also able to update the match number each time data is uploaded.



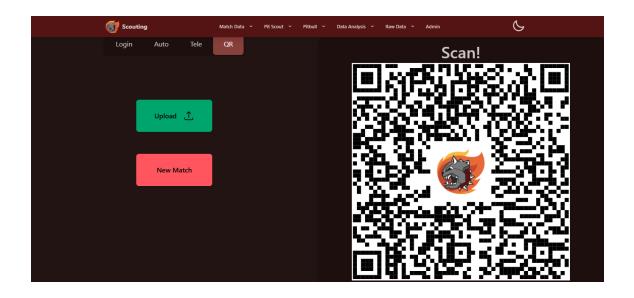
On our Autonomous Page, Scouts record their robot's starting position, determine if the robot left the start line, record how many game pieces were scored on each location, and select any canned comments.



On our Teleop Page, Scouts record how many game pieces were scored on each available location and how many algae were removed from the reef. There are checkboxes to record if teams attempted a climb, successfully climbed, or parked during Endgame. Scouts can select canned comments and write in additional details.

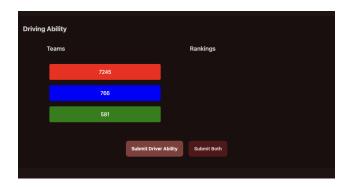


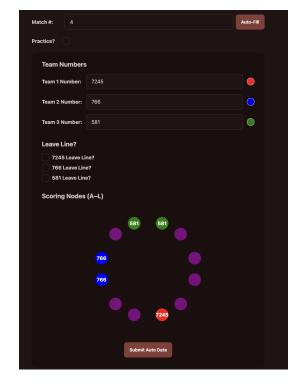
Our QR page provides a QR code to submit data during competitions, and an upload button if the device is connected to the Internet. QR codes are scanned through an Internet-connected phone at events because scouting Chromebooks do not have access to Wifi.



6 Expert Form

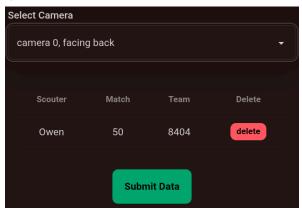
The Expert Form is used by a smaller group of Scouts called Expert Scouts. They focus on tracking Auto routines by marking scoring locations in the app and checking off robots that earned leave points. After Auto, the Scouts focus on ranking the overall driving ability of each team on an alliance, which is used later as the initial sort for defensive Picklists.





7 QR Scanner

The QR scanner page is how we input most of our data into the system. At competitions, we do not use wifi to upload data; rather, the QR code is scanned and uploaded on a phone through the QR scanner.



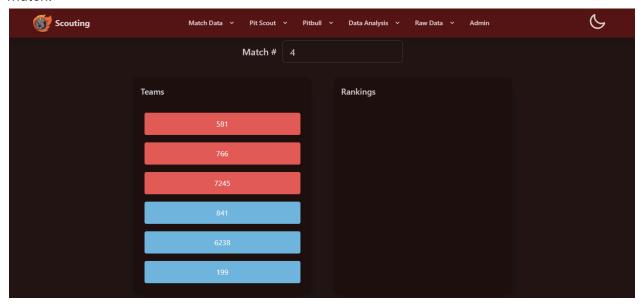
8 Form History

The form history page gives a QR code for matches that were accidentally cleared before being uploaded, so that there are fewer missed matches and data.



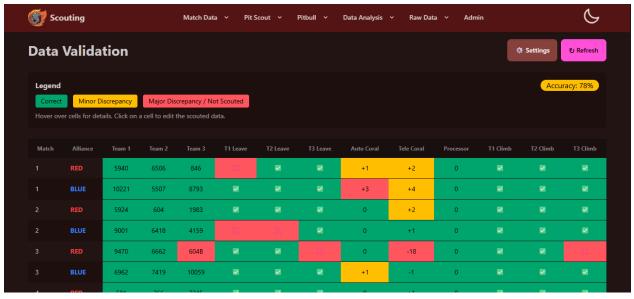
9 Rankings Input

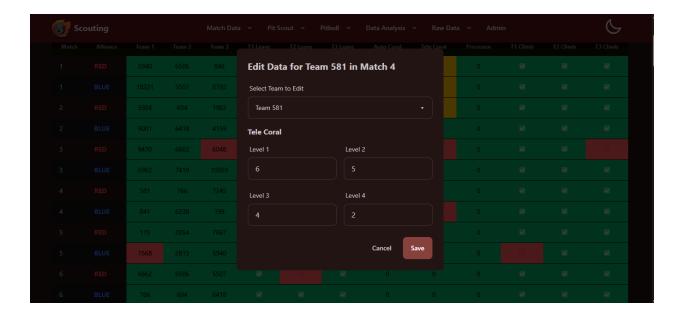
The Rankings Input page is part of the Expert Form. In this page, Expert Scouts enter the match number and rank teams for either alliance based on driving ability. This was last used in 2024, before we had an Expert Scout page. We only rank teams that moved for the majority of the match.



10 Data Validation

Our Data Validation page allows us to visualize discrepancies in our scouting data by comparing our numbers to match data from The Blue Alliance. This page also allows us to edit match data directly.



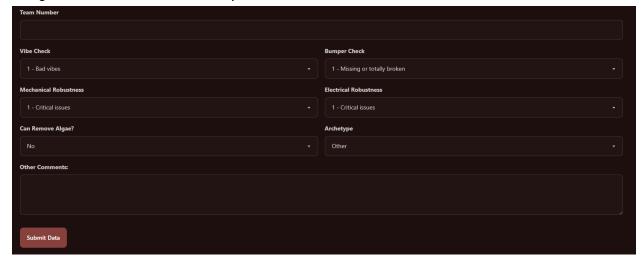


11 Pit Scout

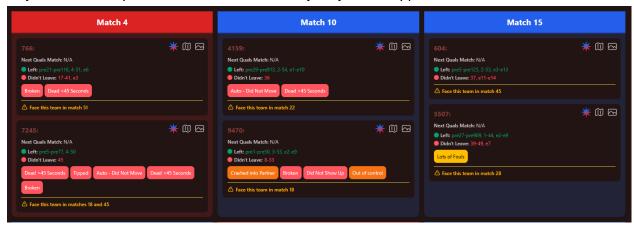
Trained Pit Scouts visit each pit at our events and complete our pit scouting form, which gathers information about teams, such as how many batteries they have, their drive train, and coding language, as well as a photo upload page. If students are unsure of what has been completed, they can refer to our pit check page.

12 Pitbulls

Pitbull Scout: The Pitbull Scout page is used to rate every robot at an event in reliability categories 1-4, as well as other important information about each robot.



- **Pitbull View**: This page is used to give Pitbulls a preview of the upcoming matches so they know who to prioritize and what areas they may need support in.



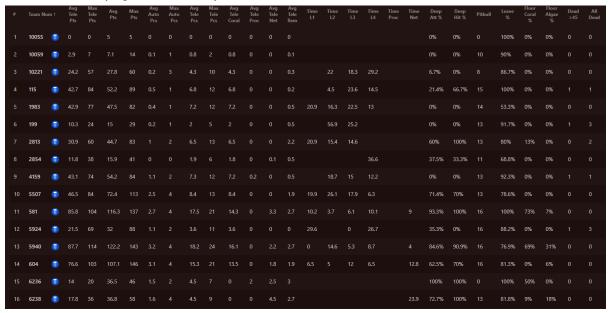
Pit Map and Pit Map Builder: These pages contain the pit map so Pitbulls have directions with them at all times, and they can reference the map without exiting the scouting app. The map also includes relevant information about each team, like which matches we play with them.



- **Technical Photo Upload**: This is where Pitbulls upload technical photos separate from the main photos, so they can remember what the technical parts of each robot look like.

13 Data Analysis

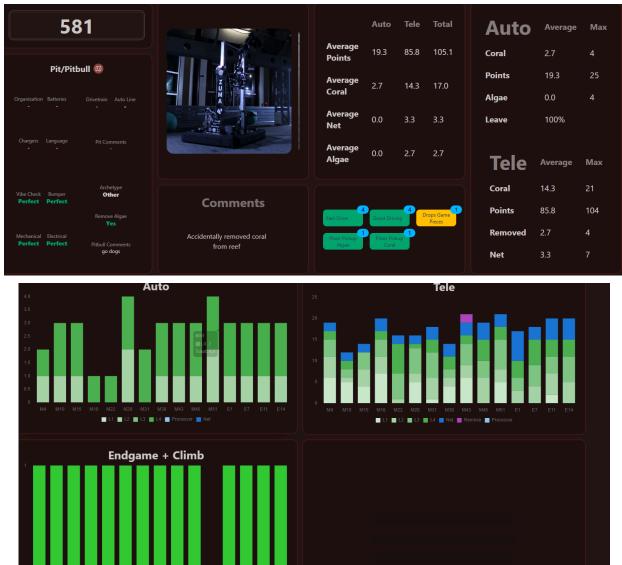
Aggregate: The Aggregate page organizes all of our raw data into a table so we can sort
by specific columns, and it can be copied and pasted directly into our pick list
spreadsheet. There are 26 data points listed on the page. This was mainly used before
the sort page was developed.



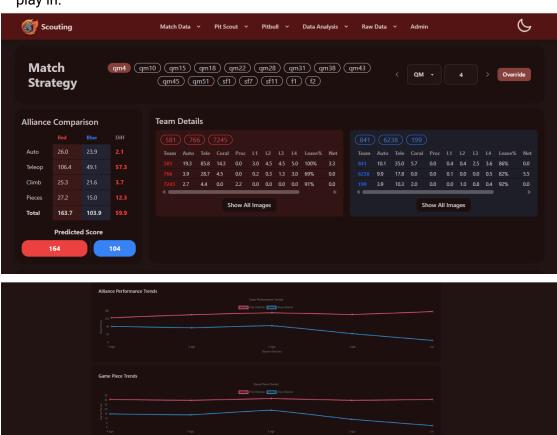
- **Sort**: The Sort page displays our data similarly to the aggregate page, but it is color-coded and more interactive; the columns can be reordered, and clicking on a team takes you directly to their page, while hovering over their name gives a snapshot of their data.



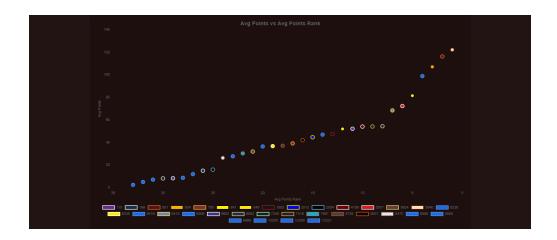
Team Data: The Team Data page is used to view data on a single team via graphs and digestible tables, as opposed to only the number-based data in Sort and Aggregate. It includes the Data Scouts' comments from specific matches for more detailed observations of teams. Most notably, the bar charts include full breakdowns of all game pieces scored in each match the team has played, divided into Auto and Teleop. This is a critical tool in pick list meetings, allowing us to identify game piece trends, averages and maximums in Auto and Teleop, & canned comments. Pick list attendees review the match data, then rewatch specific matches where a team scored maximums, minimums, or other notable behavior that should be reviewed. Watching match footage helps pick list attendees determine how teams differ, their style of play, and their strengths. Team Data also includes comments and ratings from our Pit Scouts and Pitbull Scouts, which help us during pick list meetings to identify which robots are the most mechanically and electrically sound.



 Match Strategy: Our Match Strategy page predicts the outcome of our matches by combining the average Auto, Teleop, and Endgame points scored by an alliance. It includes alliance performance trends, images of each robot, and a list of each match we play in.



- **Graph View:** In our Graph View page, we are able to compare all teams in a graph. The default graph ranks teams based on average points, but the axes can be customized to any of the data points we have collected. There are over 50 data points to choose from.



 Comparison: In the Comparison page, we can compare two or more teams in a side-by-side comparison using our match data. There are four graphs to visually compare both teams. This page is very useful when sorting similar teams on our pick list.



14 Pre Scouting

When data is available before an event, a group of 10-15 Data Scouts pre-scout all teams that will be in attendance. Every Scout who has completed the data scouting training is able to claim a group of 3 teams. They scout 6 qualification matches and 3 eliminations from each team's most recent event. As Scouts finish scouting a group, they claim the next until all teams have been completed. This is done not only for practice, but as a way to give students a better understanding of the robots that we will compete with at the event. To encourage Scouts, they win a pizza party for the whole team if pre-scouting is fully completed before the event!

- □ [PUBLIC] 2025 Chezy Champs Pre Scouting

15 Data Scouting Training

To prepare our Data Scouts for competition, we host a required three-hour training to explain the game and how the app works, as well as other aspects of how our team scouts, including scheduling and other critical information. This is required for both new and returning Scouts once per year. As part of the training, members practice scouting teams together and going step by step on each game piece a robot scored to make sure everyone understands, before moving to independent scouting practice.

- [PUBLIC] 2025 Data & Pit Scouting Training
- [PUBLIC] 2025 Training & Pre Scouting

16 Pick List Training

At our pick list training prior to each competition, we determine our desired alliance composition, keeping everyone on the same page about our must-have, could-have, and won't-have partner attributes. Our pick list training details how to sort teams via "buckets" and "bubble sorting." We also review what we do if we get picked, what changes in our overall strategy if we are on a lower seeded alliance, and when and how to decline if needed. We review match videos where alliances demonstrate the primary alliance strategies we would like to use in the elimination tournament. As part of the training, students use pre-scouting data to create a pre-event pick list. They are able to practice sorting teams by watching match videos, reviewing data, and discussing the results.

- □ [PUBLIC] 2025 Regionals Pick List Training
- [PUBLIC] Pre-Pinnacles EPAs

17 Strategy Training

To prepare our match strategists for competition, student strategists undergo a required strategy training that teaches match drafting, communication with alliance partners, and further explanation and review of the year's game. The training includes match drafting practice using prescouting data so that new strategists can learn the full process of planning a match. This offseason, new and returning students participated in strategy training for Chezy Champs, including both full-time strategists and students interested in rotational shifts.

- [PUBLIC] 20250920 Chezy Strategy Training

18 Additional Documentation

- Scouting Checklists:

Like our other competition subteams, we create a series of checklists to ensure our subteam completes all needed tasks at competitions. Creating checklists also allows our leaders and coaches to hand well-defined jobs to less experienced team members.

[PUBLIC] Scouting Checklist - Per Day

- Strategy Checklist:

Match Strategists may refer to a checklist prior to each match to review the drafting process. Following the checklist ensures that strategy communicates the plan to and receives input from all parts of the subteam.

- ■ [PUBLIC] 2025 Pre-Match Strategy Checklist

- Scouting Refreshers:

After all team members have completed our 3 hour data scouting training, we do less extensive training, called "Refreshers" prior to the Championship and every offseason competition. These cover a wide range of items like changes to the game due to level of play or rules, changes to the scouting system, and items we determine need "Extra Focus".

- [PUBLIC] 2025 Champs Scouting Refresher

- Year-Round Training & Activities:

On 581, Scouting & Strategy is a year-round subteam, and is very active outside of competitions. We provide structured projects and activities that promote learning & engagement, but are also meant to be fun. These include things like The Blue Alliance Scavenger Hunt, Bracket Challenges, Fantasy FIRST Drafts, Tell Me About A Team presentations, playbooks, and the Player Profile activity, which can all be referenced below:

- [PUBLIC] 581 Bracket Challenge
 - This is way quicker and much less leg work than a full fantasy draft is, so we tend to get more student engagement in these than the drafts.
- [PUBLIC] 581 Scouting Pathway Training 2024 IRI Fantasy FIRST
- [PUBLIC] 20230620 581 Scouting Pathway Training
- [PUBLIC] 20230708 581 Scouting Pathway Training
 - Additional Tell Me About A Team Examples:
 - [PUBLIC] Tell Me About A Team: 254
 - [PUBLIC] Tell Me About a Team: 5940
 - [PUBLIC] Tell Me About a Team: 114

In-Season Scouting Meetings

These are the slides from our first scouting & strategy meeting following the 2025 Kickoff. Scouting & Strategy do not meet until a week or two after Kickoff to discuss our scouting system to allow the "dust to settle" from Kickoff and to allow time to review public content that may contribute to our decision making and understanding of the game. After this first meeting, our scouting team meets weekly online for an hour or so. 581 is relatively small and very limited on in-person time, so we opt to have these meetings online to use in-shop time for physical practice field & robot work.

□ [PUBLIC] 20250116 Scouting & Strategy Meeting

19 Scouting & Strategy Team Health

This is a list of a few of the ways we promote a healthy and happy environment for Scouting & Strategy on our team. Most of these items can be implemented on most teams.

- Clear and consistent communication of expectations, outcomes, and schedules
- All behaviors & expectations also modeled by coaches
- Pizza Parties for the entire team for 100% completed Pre Scouting
- Custom 581 Notebooks for Scouting & Strategy Only
 - [PUBLIC] Notebook Cover
 - 5.5"x8.5" College Ruled Notebooks from Vistaprint
 - Vistaprint often has \$50 off or other large discounts every month or so!!



- Dog Stickers for customizing notebooks
- Quals-Day afternoon Candy Salad
- Small "Snack Tote" kept in the stands with variety of snacks
- Competition goals related to scouting accuracy
 - We also use actual metrics as often as possible to clearly demonstrate scouting & strategy impact on competition outcomes for the whole team
- Batteries in stands for charging devices



- Pick List Meeting is only for scouts, strategists, and limited Pitbulls representatives to answer and document specific questions only.
 - Dinner always provided at in-person Pick List Meetings
- Scouts are allowed to do whatever they want in the stands between matches (read, play phone games, etc), as long as they are always ready to scout prior to the match beginning
- Cushioned bleacher seats with back rests and cup holders for all on-shift scouts