

Q&A

VRC 2018-2019: Turning Point

Tagged: Alliance Platform



Welcome to the official VEX Robotics Competition Question & Answer system, where all registered teams have the opportunity to ask for official rules interpretations and clarifications. This Q&A system is the only source for official VRC Turning Point rules clarifications, and the clarifications made here from the Game Design Committee (GDC) are considered as official and binding as the written [Game Manual](#) itself.

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61: Consequence for alliance on opposite alliance's platform, cont.

31-Aug-2018

Alliance Platform

This continues on the question Pascal asked about the following:

Alliance Platforms are denoted by their red or blue structural PVC pieces, and can only be used for Parking by Robots of the same color Alliance as the Platform.

This rule is ambiguous; it could be read in different ways.

1. Robots of the same color can only use these platforms for parking, for nothing else. Opposing robots cannot use these platforms at all.
2. Robots of the same color can only use these platforms for parking, for nothing else. But there is no restriction on use by opposing robots.
3. Any robot may use these platforms freely, but only robots of the same color count as parked when sitting on them.

I'm pretty sure #1 and #2 are incorrect, that #3 is what is intended, but apparently some referees are ruling that #1 is correct. Here are some of the problems with #1 and #2 that may need to be addressed if they are correct:

1. How would you determine if a robot of the same color is trying to park but goes too far, thus driving right over the platform, versus a robot of the same color intentionally driving right over the platform. They would look the same, only the intent determining the legality.
2. There would be restrictions on robots placing caps on the platforms since that would be using the platforms for something other than parking.
3. It would be hard for robots to pick up some of the balls on the platforms because they would likely touch the platforms and thus be using them for something other than parking.

All this reinforces my belief that interpretation #3 is what is intended, but it is not definitively what is written. Regardless of which interpretation is correct, this rule needs to be rewritten a little bit, and referees need to be using it the same way. Assuming interpretation #3 is correct, something like this is probably better:

"Alliance Platforms are denoted by their red or blue structural PVC pieces. Any robot may use them either Platform, but only Robots of the same color Alliance as the Platform can score points by Parking on it."

Answered by Game Design Committee

Any robot may use these platforms freely, but only robots of the same color count as parked when sitting on them.

This is the correct interpretation.

51: Consequence for alliance on opposite alliance's platform

17-Aug-2018

Alliance Platform

In the game manual definitions it states:

Alliance Platforms are denoted by their red or blue structural PVC pieces, and can only be used for Parking by Robots of the same color Alliance as the Platform.

So what is a referee to do if a robot from the opposing alliance gets on the parking platform, for example RED1 goes onto BLUE Alliance Platform with the intent of preventing either BLUE1 or BLUE2 from parking. Based on the definition this

appears to be prohibited - so what would be the consequence?

Answered by Game Design Committee

There are no rules prohibiting a Robot from getting on to the opposing Alliance Platform. The usage of the word "Parking" in the Alliance Platform definition refers to the defined term "Alliance Parked"; that is, a Robot which sits on the opponent's Alliance Platform is not Parked, and no points are awarded to either Alliance.

3: Alliance tile defense

14-May-2018

Alliance Platform G12

As per <G12> note 2 states, The Alliance Platform is not included in Note 1. Robots which are Alliance Parked are still protected by <G12> against destructive or defensive strategies.

I'm asking for clarification on if the alliance tile would have the same <G12> rule as any regular field tile, such as legal pinning/trapping and pushing.

In short, would it be legal to push an opposing robot off their alliance tile in a non-destructive manner?

Answered by Game Design Committee

Please note that G12 refers specifically to the Alliance Platform, not the Alliance Starting Tile. Figure 3 in the Game Manual depicts the Alliance Starting Tiles, while Figure 5 depicts the Alliance Platforms.

I'm asking for clarification on if the alliance tile would have the same G12 rule as any regular field tile, such as legal pinning/trapping and pushing.

The Alliance Starting Tile is not treated any differently than any other field tiles with regard to Trapping. The Alliance Platform is not treated any differently than any other field element with regard to Trapping.

In short, would it be legal to push an opposing robot off their alliance tile in a non-destructive manner?

There are no rules prohibiting this, for either the Alliance Platform or an Alliance Starting Tile. The note in G12 is included because pushing a Robot off of the Alliance Platform carries with it a significant amount of risk that the Robot will tip over or become otherwise damaged.

28: Parking Platforms Closer to Blue?

15-Jun-2018

Alliance Platform Center Platform

As documented in this thread: <https://www.vexforum.com/index.php/33972-parking-platforms-closer-to-blue/> the parking platforms are positioned closer to the blue alliance when the field is assembled according to the assembly instructions. I am not talking about usual minor variance from human error during field assembly, rather I am saying that the assembly instructions themselves place the parking platforms closer to blue. Is this intentional? If so, why does the field specifications document not reflect the off-center nature of the parking platforms?

Answered by Game Design Committee

- I am not talking about usual minor variance from human error during field assembly, rather I am saying that the assembly instructions themselves place the parking platforms closer to blue. Is this intentional?

The Field Assembly Instructions correctly depict the intended placement of the Platform assembly. Because of the interface between the Platform, the mounting plate, and the tabs on the foam field tiles, a consistently perfectly centered Platform could not be guaranteed without sacrificing other constraints, such as leaving field tiles undamaged.

- If so, why does the field specifications document not reflect the off-center nature of the parking platforms?

The Field Appendix will be updated shortly to reflect the off-center nature of the Platform assembly.

It's worth noting that all Field Elements, including the Platforms, have an expected tolerance of +/- 1.0 inches. This is noted in G17 and on page 13 of the Field Appendix.

249: Parking while partially supported by a game object or robot

24-Feb-2019

Alliance Platform Center Platform

Parking is defined in the game manual as

Parked – One of two Robot statuses.

- Alliance Parked – A Robot status. A Robot is Alliance Parked when it is:

- o Contacting its Alliance Platform.

- o Not contacting the foam field tiles or white tape.

- Center Parked – A Robot status. A Robot is Center Parked when it is:

- o Contacting the Center Platform.

- o Not contacting any Alliance Platform.

- o Not contacting the foam field tiles or white tape.

The platforms are defined as

Platform – One of three (3) raised surfaces made of PVC and polycarbonate, roughly 23.875" (606.4mm) by 21.70" (551.2mm), that can be used for Parking Robots. See Figures 5, 9, and 10.

- Alliance Platforms are denoted by their red or blue structural PVC pieces, and can only be used for Parking by Robots of the same color Alliance as the Platform.

- The Center Platform is denoted by its yellow structural PVC pieces, and can be used for Parking by Robots of either Alliance.

Note: The structures on the sides of the Center Platform are not considered part of the Platform, and cannot be used for Center Parking. See Figure 11 and <SG9>.

Assuming no violation of SG9 and SG10, and given these definitions, would it be legal to park such that the robot is not fully supported by the platform? For example, if one set of a robot's wheels were touching the top, clear plastic part of the platform, with the other wheels supported by another robot, either from the same or opposing alliance, assuming no part of the robot is touching the foam tiles? Would it then also be legal if those wheels were supported instead by a cap or ball?

Also, would it still count as parked if, instead of the wheels being supported by the clear plastic on top of the platform, if the wheels were supported by the colored PVC pipe around the perimeter of the platform?

Would the answers to these questions be the same regardless of it is the center platform or alliance platform that is in question?

Thank you for your time.

Answered by Game Design Committee

Thank you for the specific question and for quoting the relevant rules.

Assuming no violation of SG9 and SG10, and given these definitions, would it be legal to park such that the robot is not fully supported by the platform?

"Fully supported" is not a listed requirement in the definitions of Alliance Parked and Center Parked, so yes, there are scenarios that exist in which a Robot can receive points for being Parked without being "fully supported" by the Platforms.

For example, if one set of a robot's wheels were touching the top, clear plastic part of the platform, with the other wheels supported by another robot, either from the same or opposing alliance, assuming no part of the robot is touching the foam tiles?

Yes, this would be considered Parked.

Would it then also be legal if those wheels were supported instead by a cap or ball?

Game Objects are not mentioned in the definition for Center or Alliance Parked, therefore a Robot can be Parked even if they are contacted (or supported) by a Game Object.

If a Robot is hypothetically balanced on Robots/Game Objects and touching only the clear plastic skirt on the sides of the Center Platform, this does not count as Center Parked. If a Robot is hypothetically balanced on Robots/Game Objects and touching the clear plastic top or yellow PVC sides, this does count as Center Parked.

Also, would it still count as parked if, instead of the wheels being supported by the clear plastic on top of the platform, if the wheels were supported by the colored PVC pipe around the perimeter of the platform?

The definitions of Alliance Platform and Center Platform include both the clear polycarbonate on the top and the colored PVC pipe, so there is no ruling difference between the two.

Would the answers to these questions be the same regardless of it is the center platform or alliance platform that is in question?

Yes.

23: Clarification Regarding Pinning and Trapping

11-Jun-2018

Alliance Platform Center Platform G14

If a robot pushes the opposing robot against an Alliance or Center Platform, would it be considered pinning/trapping always in that scenario since the space is being restricted, would this be dependent on variables as to if the robot that is being pushed is able to drive up the platform such as according to the capabilities of the opposing robot, or it wouldn't be considered pinning/trapping because there was an avenue of escape but the opposing robot has a chance where it wasn't built to climb the Alliance or Center Platform?

Answered by Game Design Committee

Yes, holding an opponent against the Alliance or Center Platform such that they cannot escape would be considered Trapping.

21: Questions about <G12>

7-Jun-2018

Alliance Platform Center Platform G12

It seems that rule <G12> normally protects against other teams using deliberately defensive strategies, like a ground based bot using a <18" tall forklift/spatula to flip/tip bots off of the top platform. Under Note 1 of <G12>, Robots "Attempting" to utilize the Center Platform waive this right, unless they are "Alliance Parked" (Note 2).

1. Can teams design intentionally destructive/defensive/entangling subsystems for use against opponents or to aid teammates who are Center Parked?
2. If a robot is attempting to utilize the center platform but still has a single wheel, or even a single wire contacting the alliance platform, is it protected under "Note 2" of <G12> until they stop touching their own alliance platform?
3. Can Blue team tip a Red robot that is Center Parked onto the other Red robot that is "Alliance parked"?
4. Can a Blue Alliance Parked robot grapple and secure a Blue robot that is Center Parked, making it harder to push the Center Parked robot off of the center platform?
5. Can a Blue robot driving on the foam tiles use a cap to ram a Red robot that is Center Parked off of the center platform?
6. Can a robot grab and tug on the wires or VexNet Key of a Center Parked Opponent?

And now some possible rule clarification suggestions:

Could Note 1 be amended to only waive the protection offered by <g12> from robots that are either Alliance Parked or Center Parked? This way more destructive, momentum based interactions can be avoided, unless that is something that is encouraged.

Can Note 2 be extended to only cover Alliance Parked robots that have their motion subsystem touching the Alliance Platform. This way robots can't incorporate ideas to technically seek protection under Note 2, while being mostly or almost completely positioned on the center platform.

Answered by Game Design Committee

In the future, per the [Q&A Usage Guidelines](#), please quote the relevant portion of the manual in your question. In this case, you are referring to Notes 1 and 2 of G12:

- *Note 1: Teams who attempt to utilize the Center Platform should expect to encounter vigorous interactions from opponent Robots who are attempting to do the same. Engaging in this gameplay element of VRC Turning Point constitutes an acknowledgement of the risk of incidental tipping or damage, as covered by <G12b> and <G12c>, and waives the protection that is offered by <G12> against destructive interactions.*
- *Note 2: The Alliance Platform is not included in Note 1. Robots which are Alliance Parked are still protected by <G12> against destructive or defensive strategies.*

Also, splitting your question into multiple posts will help with readability and searching.

With all of these answers, remember that it is impossible to issue a blanket ruling on hypothetical scenarios. The highly interactive nature of the Center Platform means that many situations will result in judgment calls based on the context of the match and the specifics of the interaction.

1) Can teams design intentionally destructive/defensive/entangling subsystems for use against opponents or to aid teammates who are Center Parked?

- R3 still applies to all Robots, regardless of their Center Parked status or not. See [this similar Q&A post](#).

2) If a robot is attempting to utilize the center platform but still has a single wheel, or even a single wire contacting the alliance platform, is it protected under "Note 2" of <G12> until they stop touching their own alliance platform?

- No. "Utilizing the Center Platform" takes precedence over being technically Alliance Parked. The August manual update will include a revision to Note 2 that will clarify this.

3) Can Blue team tip a Red robot that is Center Parked onto the other Red robot that is "Alliance parked"?

- Since both Blue and Red Robots are attempting to utilize the Center Platform, these interactions may result in robots being pushed off the Center Platform onto the field or Alliance Platforms. Teams should be aware of the risks that may result from this interaction.

4) Can a Blue Alliance Parked robot grapple and secure a Blue robot that is Center Parked, making it harder to push the Center Parked robot off of the center platform?

- There are no rules against Entanglement with robots on the same alliance.

5) Can a Blue robot driving on the foam tiles use a cap to ram a Red robot that is Center Parked off of the center platform?

- Yes, this is legal. It is worth noting that the Cap in this question is irrelevant - this would be legal even if the blue Robot was not holding a Cap. Engaging in Center Parking waives the protection offered by G12 against destructive interactions, as explained by Note 1 of G12.

6) Can a robot grab and tug on the wires or VexNet Key of a Center Parked Opponent?

- No. Note 1 specifically refers to the risk of "incidental tipping or damage". Intentionally pulling out an opponent's wiring goes far beyond a simple pushing match and would result in a G12 violation. The Center Platform may result in some scuffles, but it is not a full-out combat robotics zone.

191: Contacting Platform

20-Dec-2018

Alliance Platform SG10

To prevent being pushed off the center platform, our team was looking at a mechanism that drops a small peg out of the back of the robot over the front of the platform. We would only contact two faces(#1 Our wheels on the top of the platform, #2 the peg only touching the outer edge of the platform) ,it would not clamp on anything and our robot could easily be removed. Would this be legal or would this considered be grappling.

Answered by Game Design Committee

With such a mechanism, <SG10> would be the primary rule in question:

<SG10> Don't clamp your Robot to the field. Robots may not intentionally grasp, grapple or attach to any Field Elements, including the Platforms. Strategies with mechanisms that react against multiple sides of a Field Element in an effort to latch or clamp onto said Field Element are prohibited. The intent of this rule is to prevent Teams from both unintentionally damaging the field and/or from anchoring themselves to the field.

Provided that the head referee determines that the Robot has not violated <SG10> (i.e. has not anchored or clamped to the Platform), this would be legal. As described, it sounds like it would not be clamping to the platform, but as always, it is impossible to provide a blanket ruling based on of a written description of a hypothetical design.

Updated on 1/14/19 for additional clarity: It should also be noted that any mechanism used to accomplish this would also be subject to <SG2>, as explained in [this similar Q&A post](#).

154: Cap Score when leaning on platform

20-Nov-2018

Alliance Platform Center Platform Caps

Is a cap scored if it is leaning on it's side where the Core is touching the side of a platform but outer rim rests on the foam tiles? Our debate regards the definition of the platform whether or not the PVC Sides/Bottoms are included in the Platform. In this Example, the cap's core is NOT touching both the foam tile and platform. This cap is also NOT resting on TOP of the platforms as ruled in a previous post.

EXAMPLE: The cap's Core is only touching the rounded (colored) edge of one of the 3 platforms and the outer rim is resting on the foam tiles. This cap is supported by the side of the platform. I think this cap would count as Scored because the entire Colored PVT Pipe is included in the definition of the Platform. The only thing excluded is the metal side structure in Fig. 11.

Low Scored – A Cap status. A Cap is Low Scored when a Cap's Core is touching the foam field tiles, white tape lines, or Platforms, without touching a Robot of the color Alliance for which the Cap would award points. ...

Answered by Game Design Committee

The definition of Platform is as follows, with a portion bolded for emphasis:

Platform – One of three (3) raised surfaces made of **PVC and polycarbonate**, roughly 23.875" (606.4mm) by 21.70" (551.2mm), that can be used for Parking Robots.

You are correct in your interpretation that the blue/red/yellow PVC edges are included in the Platform. Thus, a Cap whose Core is contacting the PVC would be considered contacting the Platform, and would be considered Low Scored.

148: Clarification of 18" height on platforms

18-Nov-2018

Alliance Platform Center Platform SG2

If a robot is parked on a platform and has a claw that hangs down slightly below the surface of the platform due to gravity, is it considered to be violating <SG2> which states that "Once fully outside of the expansion zone, the robot must return to a height of 18 inches"? In other words, is the rule referring to "height" or vertical displacement? For example, the height of a tree would not include the depth of its roots.

Answered by Game Design Committee

As explained in this [Q&A](#), the 18" height described by <SG2> is determined as the Robot height when placed on a flat floor. Therefore, the claw and any other protrusions are considered part of the Robot's height and should be included in the 18" height limit.

131: Robot on Opposing Alliance Platform and G12

31-Oct-2018

Alliance Platform G12 G13

It has been established through a couple of other Q&A's that robots of an opposing alliance may utilize the alliance platform but cannot score points for being alliance parked. What I would like further clarification on is if the waiver of

protection under G12 extends to a robot occupying on an opposing alliance platform for the purpose of preventing the opposing alliance from parking. Or is this circumstance covered by rule G13, and a robot occupying an opposing alliance platform would be taking a defensive stance and the offensive robot attempting to park is given the benefit of the doubt by attempting to shove the defensive robot off their platform? Or is this an in-between case; on the center platform, rough play is expected, but if you are attempting to park on your already occupied alliance platform, you will get the benefit of the doubt but you still have to be careful?

Answered by Game Design Committee

<G12> does not mention the opposing Alliance Platform; Robots on the opposing Alliance Platform should be treated as if they were on any other foam tile on the Field.

With that in mind, a Robot which is on the opposing Alliance Platform and actively preventing an opposing Robot from Parking would be considered participating in a solely defensive strategy, as described in <G12a> and <G13>.

<G12a> VEX Robotics Competition Turning Point is intended to be an offensive game. Teams that partake in solely defensive or destructive strategies will not have the protections implied by <G12> (see <G13>). However, defensive play which does not involve destructive or illegal strategies is still within the spirit of this rule.

<G13> Offensive Robots get the “benefit of the doubt”. In the case where referees are forced to make a judgment call regarding a destructive interaction between a defensive and offensive Robot, or an interaction which results in a questionable rules violation, the referees will err on the side of the offensive Robot.

12: Clarification of The 18" Height

18-May-2018

Alliance Platform Center Platform SG2

If my robot is not touching the expansion zone and my robot is 18" high vertically when all wheels of the robot is on the foam tiles, would my robot still be considered 18" high when it climbs the platforms? (Example: My robot has a 4 wheel drive; 2 wheels are on the platform and 2 wheels are on the tiles, causing the robot to lean backward which results in the robot exceeding 18" adjacent to the foam tiles)

Answered by Game Design Committee

The 18" height requirement described by <SG2> refers to the robot height when it is placed on a flat floor (such during inspection per <R4>, or at the start of the match).

An 18" tall robot which tips slightly while climbing a Platform, as you describe, would still be legal.