

Q&A

VEXU 2019-2020: Tower Takeover

Tagged: G14



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 Tower Takeover 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.

Please review the [Q&A Usage Guidelines](#) before posting. This system is only intended for specific VRC Tower Takeover rules questions.

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 - For VEX technical support, contact support@vex.com or sales@vex.com.
- For game questions, suggestions, or concerns outside of specific and official rules questions, contact GDC@vex.com.

Index

[Forced into penalty with Disablement during Auton](#)

[SG3 Clarification](#)

[**Updated **SG\(3\) - further clarification of scoring objects blocking the platform](#)

[Can students use the plastic sheet to help with high hang?](#)

[Applicability of Rule G14](#)

[<SG3> indirectly contacting scored stack](#)

[Wallbot/Protected Zone Clarifications](#)

[<SG3> Defense Strategy in Protection Zone](#)

[Playing offense while a part of your robot is playing defense](#)

[When is Entanglement not "Normal Gameplay"?](#)

[Determining Holding When Defensive Robot Drives On Top of Offensive Robot](#)

[clarification on trapping.](#)

[Clarification Regarding Pinning and Trapping](#)

[<G14> Offensive Robot Clarification](#)

[Trapping G14 clarification](#)

[tipping blocking robots](#)

[Blocking Opponent Shots](#)

[Tipping in Match Load Zone & G13 / G14](#)

[How to consider G14 and G15 when determining a potential SG11 violations](#)

[Incidental vs Intentional Tipping](#)

969: Forced into penalty with Disablement during Auton

9-Dec-2021

G3 G11 G14

In the autonomous period, if two robots grab a goal and the Red robot pulls the Blue robot across the alliance line.

1. is this a violation for the Blue robot?

Rules say that a robot may not be forced into a penalty.

But what if the Blue robot still in auton then Disables the Red robot? Is there any penalty by either robot?

Answered by Game Design Committee

Please review the [Q&A Usage Guidelines](#) before posting, specifically point 3, "Quote the applicable rule from the latest version of the manual in your question".

In this case, the applicable rule is SG5, quoted below, with a portion bolded for emphasis.

<SG5> Enter the Neutral Zone during Autonomous at your own risk. Any Robot who engages with the Neutral Zone during the Autonomous Period should be aware that opponent Robots may also choose to do the same. Per <G11> and <G12>, Teams are responsible for the actions of their Robots at all times.

- a. For the purposes of this rule, "engages with" means any combination of:

- i. Contacting foam tiles within the Neutral Zone

- ii. Contacting Neutral Mobile Goals

- iii. Contacting Rings that begin the Match on the double white tape line in the center of the Neutral Zone

- b. If opposing Robots contact one another while both engaging with the Neutral Zone, and a possible <G12> violation results (i.e. damage, Entanglement, or tipping over), then a judgment call will be made by the Head Referee within the context of <G12> just as it would if the interaction had occurred during the Driver Controlled Period.

- c. If opposing Robots contact one another while both engaging with the Neutral Zone, ****and an incidental violation of <SG4> occurs, **no penalty will be assessed on either Alliance.**

- d. <G15> does not apply during the Autonomous Period.

- e. Intentional, strategic, repeated, or egregious offenses of points "b" or "c" may still be deemed a violation of <SG4>, <G12>, <G13>, <G14>, <G1>, and / or <S1> at the Head Referee's discretion.

As well as the following portion of the "red box" underneath SG5:

The Neutral Zone is intended to be a zone that Robots from both Alliances can utilize during the Autonomous Period. This will inevitably result in Robot-on-Robot interactions, both incidental and intentional. The overarching intent of <SG5> is for the vast majority of these interactions to result in no rule violations and / or penalties for either Alliance, just as no rules violations occur in 99% of Driver Controlled interactions.

So, with those quotes in mind...

if two robots grab a goal and the Red robot pulls the Blue robot across the alliance line. is this a violation for the Blue robot?

This sounds like an incidental violation of SG4. Therefore, point "c" would apply, and no penalty would be assessed on either Alliance.

But what if the Blue robot still in auton then Disables the Red robot? Is there any penalty by either robot?

This sounds like a possible violation of G12. Therefore, point "b" would apply, and the Head Referee will make a judgment call within the context of G12 just as if the interaction had occurred during the Driver Controlled Period. In most cases, this would be considered "no violation".

As stated in G11, G12, and SG5, Teams are responsible for the actions of their Robot at all times. Robots who choose to engage with the Neutral Zone during the Autonomous Period should be aware that opponent Robots may also choose to do the same, and prepare for the risks associated with doing so.

948: SG3 Clarification

30-Nov-2021

G13 G14 SG3 Referee Decisions

Here are 2 possible ways of interpreting SG3. Please let us know which is correct.

Scenario In Question: You get the scenario where there are 10 seconds left in the match and you (red) are going back towards your platform with a neutral mogo (ie going from neutral zone to your alliance zone) and there is a blue robot playing defense on you to prevent you from getting back to your platform. The result of the interaction is that the blue robot gets pushed into the red platform by the you (red robot)

Relevant Rules: **SG3** states:

"Platforms are "safe" during the endgame. During the last thirty (30) seconds, Robots may not contact the opposing Alliance's Platform."

SG3b states:

"For the purposes of this rule, G13 supersedes rule G14. Any Robot which is contacting its own Platform during the last thirty (30) seconds, provided that no other rules are being violated, will automatically receive the "benefit of the doubt". Therefore, any contact with this Robot will be considered a violation, regardless of intent"

G13 states:

"Offensive Robots get the "benefit of the doubt". In the case where Head Referees are forced to make a judgment call regarding a destructive interaction between a defensive and offensive Robot, for an interaction which results in a questionable rules violation, the referees will err on the side of the offensive Robot"

G14 states:

"You can't force an opponent into a penalty. Intentional strategies that cause an opponent to violate a rule are not permitted, and will not result in an infraction on the opposing Alliance. Minor violations of this rule that do not affect the Match will result in a warning. Match Affecting offenses will result in a Disqualification. Teams that receive multiple warnings may also receive a Disqualification at the Head Referee's discretion"

Interpretation A: You can interpret this as SG3 saying the platform is safe and offensive robots get the benefit of the doubt supersedes the ruling of forcing an opponent into a penalty (i.e you cannot apply G14 to a ruling on this interaction because it explicitly says that G13 supersedes G14 and we must err on the side of the offensive robot) This ruling would result in issuing the red alliance a free elevated robot or DQing the blue robot for interfering with gameplay by not letting you score your mogo on the platform. (the DQ comes from the last lines of SG3 "Violations of this rule which do interfere with gameplay, such as preventing a Platform from becoming Balanced, will result in a Disqualification, regardless of whether the interference was Match Affecting or not")

Interpretation B: You can also interpret this ruling as SG3 saying platforms are safe and SG3B clarifying the context of G13 superseding G14 to mean "if you are touching your platform, you will receive the benefit of the doubt" (i.e if you are already touching your platform and an opposing robot touches you, we err on your side and award you the free elevated robot). This ruling would result in not issuing the red alliance a free elevated robot because SG3b is not meant to apply to this type of interaction based on its clarification of what context it applies to ("Any Robot which is contacting its own Platform during the last thirty (30) seconds, provided that no other rules are being violated, will automatically receive the "benefit of the doubt")

I can kind of understand both interpretations but would like to know which is correct.

Answered by Game Design Committee

We apologize for the delay in responding to this question. Thank you for the well thought-out post with all relevant rules / quotes included.

Please see these similar Q&A's for more detail on this subject:

<https://events.vex.com/VRC/2021-2022/QA/968>

<https://events.vex.com/VRC/2021-2022/QA/973>

Interpretation A: You can interpret this as SG3 saying the platform is safe and offensive robots get the benefit of the doubt supersedes the ruling of forcing an opponent into a penalty (i.e you cannot apply G14 to a ruling on this interaction because it explicitly says that G13 supersedes G14 and we must err on the side of the offensive robot) This ruling would result in issuing the red alliance a free elevated robot or DQing the blue robot for interfering with gameplay by not letting you score your mogo on the platform. (the DQ comes from the last lines of SG3 "Violations of this rule which do interfere with gameplay, such as preventing a Platform from becoming Balanced, will result in a Disqualification, regardless of whether the interference was Match Affecting or not")

This interpretation is correct. That is to say, the intent of SG3-b is to remove any need for Head Referee judgment regarding "offense"/"defense", "which Robot touched first", etc. Put simply, any time when the following criteria are met, SG3-b has been violated, regardless of intent or context:

- It is during the last 30 seconds of the Match
- A Robot is physically contacting its own Alliance Platform, either directly or transitively through other Robots or Scoring Objects
- An opposing Robot is physically contacting that Robot, either directly or transitively through other Robots or Scoring Objects

847: ****Updated **SG(3) - further clarification of scoring objects blocking the platform**

19-Aug-2021

G14 SG3

in an earlier Q&A, a question was asked but not answered by the game committee. The situation in question happens often and there are too many questions this year that have been answered leaving a decision to the 'head referee's discretion'. This is too vague, and has already created issues at an event.

Here's one question that needs to be answered -

If a **** blue**** robot pushes a mobile goal under one end of the **** red**** platform, but neither red robot makes any attempt to get on the red platform, is the mere presence of an object enough to warrant a violation of #SG(3) or must the red alliance make an attempt to get on the Platform?

Answered by Game Design Committee

Edit 2021-12-07: The v2.2 Game Manual update included the following revision to rule <SG3>. We recommend reviewing the full text of <SG3>, including the “red box” clarifications, for more information.

Point “d” applies to Robot actions prior to the last thirty (30) seconds of the Match:

d. Placing a Scoring Object on or under the opposing Alliance's Platform, at any point during the Match is considered a minor violation of this rule that, at a minimum, will result in a warning.

i. If the placement is accidental, and immediately rectified (i.e. the Scoring Object is immediately removed), then this violation will be considered a warning.

ii. If the placement is intentional and / or not immediately rectified, as judged by the Head Referee, then it will be considered a violation.

iii. Repeated, strategic, and / or egregious warnings may also escalate to a violation, at the Head Referee's discretion.

[...]

Violations of this rule which do interfere with gameplay will result in a Disqualification, regardless of whether the interference was Match Affecting or not.

Note: If point “d” has escalated from a warning into a violation, then it will automatically be considered a violation which has interfered with gameplay, i.e. will result in a Disqualification.

Per this new verbiage, yes, mere presence of a Scoring Object is enough to warrant a violation, regardless of whether the opponent attempts to utilize the Platform or not.

827: Can students use the plastic sheet to help with high hang?

24-Jul-2021

G14

<G14> Don't damage the Field. Robots may not grasp, grapple, or attach to any Field Elements other than the Hanging Bar. 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. ... b. While the Hanging Bars are excluded from this rule, their supporting structures are not. Incidental contact with other Field Elements while Hanging will not be penalized, but Teams are not permitted to grapple, clamp, or attach to any Field Elements other than the Hanging Bars while Hanging. ... BLUE BOX: The key words in this rule are “clamping” or “anchoring”. The intent of this rule is to prevent Robots from actions which could unintentionally damage the Field during standard gameplay. Passive contact that does not cause damage, such as bumping into the clear plastic sheet or using Field Elements for alignment, are fine.

I have seen some damage happening to the plastic sheet when students attempt to high hang. While the blue box refers to anchoring, the word isn't found in the rule. Are students allowed to anchor their bot on the plastic sheet while attempting to high hang?

Answered by Game Design Committee

Are students allowed to anchor their bot on the plastic sheet while attempting to high hang?

It is impossible to provide a blanket answer that will encompass all possible hypothetical Robot mechanisms, interactions with the clear plastic sheet, and levels of damage.

The intent of G14 is to prohibit Robots from causing excessive or intentional damage to the Field. It is expected that Robots in the act of Hanging will bump in to, lean on, or otherwise react against the clear plastic sheets found near the Hanging Bars; this type of interaction is explicitly referenced in G14's blue box as an example of legal contact. Any “clamping” mechanisms must only interact with the Hanging Bars.

That being said, "damage" is not solely limited to clamping mechanisms. If a given Team is consistently found to be causing excessive damage to any Field Element, it may still be considered a minor violation of the rule, and Teams may be warned accordingly.

Minor violations of this rule that do not affect the Match will result in a warning. Offenses which improve the score will result in a Disqualification. Teams that receive multiple warnings may also receive a Disqualification at the Head Referee's discretion.

548: Applicability of Rule G14

13-Feb-2020

G14

The game manual has the following entires for rules G13 and G14:

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. **G14 You can't force an opponent into a penalty.** Intentional strategies that cause an opponent to violate a rule are not permitted, and will not result in an infraction on the opposing Alliance. Minor violations of this rule that do not affect the Match will result in a warning. Match Affecting offenses will result in a Disqualification. Teams that receive multiple warnings may also receive a Disqualification at the Head Referee's discretion.

In [Q&A 449](#), it was ruled that, in one of the presented scenarios, a robot may be forced into a penalty by their opponent, notwithstanding rule G14. The explanation cited G13 as the reasoning, and explicitly indicated that G14's protection from being forced into a penalty does not apply in the given situation; we read that as indicating that G13 can, in some (but not necessarily all) scenarios, overrule G14.

The game manual does not appear to place any limits on the application of first clause of G14, however this ruling does. Our question is: What are the limits of G14? In what scenarios is it overruled by G13? Are there other rules that can overrule it or scenarios in which it does not apply, and if so, under what conditions?

Thank you for taking the time to answer our question.

Answered by Game Design Committee

We cannot provide a blanket response for this question that would encompass all hypothetical Robot interactions, Match contexts, and Head Referee judgment calls.

Q&A 449 provided a specific and detailed scenario that uniquely placed SG3, G13, and G14 in conflict. Therefore, we were able to answer in the context of that specific instance (and provide some guidelines for similar interactions).

451: <SG3> indirectly contacting scored stack

10-Dec-2019

G13 G14 SG3

<SG3> Stay away from your opponent's protected areas. Robots may not intentionally or **accidentally**, directly or **indirectly**, perform the following actions:

A> Contact an opponent Robot which is fully contained within their Protected Zone.

B> Contact any Scored Cubes in either of opposing Alliance's Goal Zones.

D> Contact either of the opposing Alliance's Goal Zones or Barriers.

Minor violations of points A, B, C, or D that do not affect the Match will result in a warning. Match Affecting offenses will result in a Disqualification. Teams that receive multiple warnings may also receive a Disqualification at the Head Referee's discretion.

E> Contact an opposing Alliance's Inner Protected Zone

F> Cause Scored Cubes within the opponent's Protected Zone to no longer meet the definition of Scored (i.e. "knock over their stack"). Any violation of points E, F, or G will result in a Disqualification, whether the interaction was Match Affecting or not.

<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.

<G14> You can't force an opponent into a penalty. Intentional strategies that cause an opponent to violate a rule are not permitted, and will not result in an infraction on the opposing Alliance. from QA 376, <https://events.vex.com/VEXU/2019-2020/QA/376> , "one Robot pushing another into causing some action is considered "indirect contact" by the first Robot."

<https://youtu.be/66ef8Nk3NsM?t=109> At 1:55, one blue robot bumped into another blue robot, causing cubes from one of the blue robot's tray to hit the stacked cube and descored the stack.

Now, if, in the case where the robot got hit was a **red** robot, would this fall under the case of SG3 case F, since the robot that was hit "accidentally, indirectly" caused the blue scored stack to no longer meet the definition of scored? G14 only considers **intentional strategies**, where in this case, it is clearly not a intentional strategy, the intention of the robot is clearly trying to score, Thus G14 would not apply in this case.

To summarize it, if a red robot is hit by a blue robot, and the end result is blue's scored stack is no longer scored, will the red robot be DQed for violating SG3 case F, provided that the blue robot didn't intentionally try to force red into a penalty?

Thanks for taking your time to answer this question!

Answered by Game Design Committee

It is impossible to issue a blanket ruling to this question that would cover all hypothetical interactions without the context of a Match.

If all contact was completely incidental, such as two Robots driving past each other in the middle of the field, a Head Referee would likely make the judgment call that no G14 or SG3 violation has occurred.

There are context factors that could lead a Head Referee to make the judgment call that the actions of the Blue Robot were intentional (and therefore a G14 violation). One example would be driving directly into an opponent near the Blue Goal Zone with a Cube precariously balanced on the edge of their (Blue) Robot.

There are context factors that could lead a Head Referee to make the judgment call that the actions of the Red Robot were intentional (and therefore an SG3 violation). One example would be playing defense around the Blue Goal Zone for an entire Match, therefore forcing the Blue Robot into some Robot-to-Robot interaction.

449: Wallbot/Protected Zone Clarifications

9-Dec-2019

G13 G14 SG3

At our previous tournament, one of our teams took a wallbot and the referees were making some calls that we did not understand. While my students came with the rulebook highlighted, and met with the referees before the first round to discuss rules, they disagreed with our interpretation. Normally I would let it go, but these referees will also be judging our

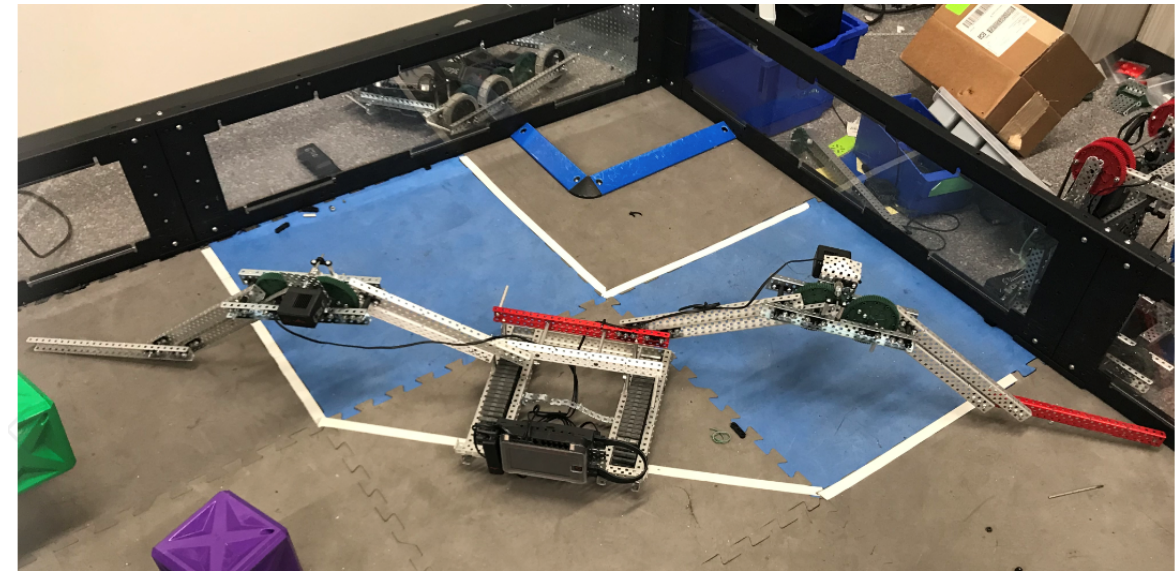
state event and they recommended posting on the Q&A to get an official ruling. We realize that in the heat of the moment these minute decisions are tough for a referee to make. This was more a case of after the tournament was over that we could not agree on definitions in the rules.

Relevant rules for reference: **SG3 A** (robots may not) Contact an opponent Robot which is fully contained within their Protected Zone **SG3 E** (robots may not) Contact an opposing Alliance's Inner Protected Zone

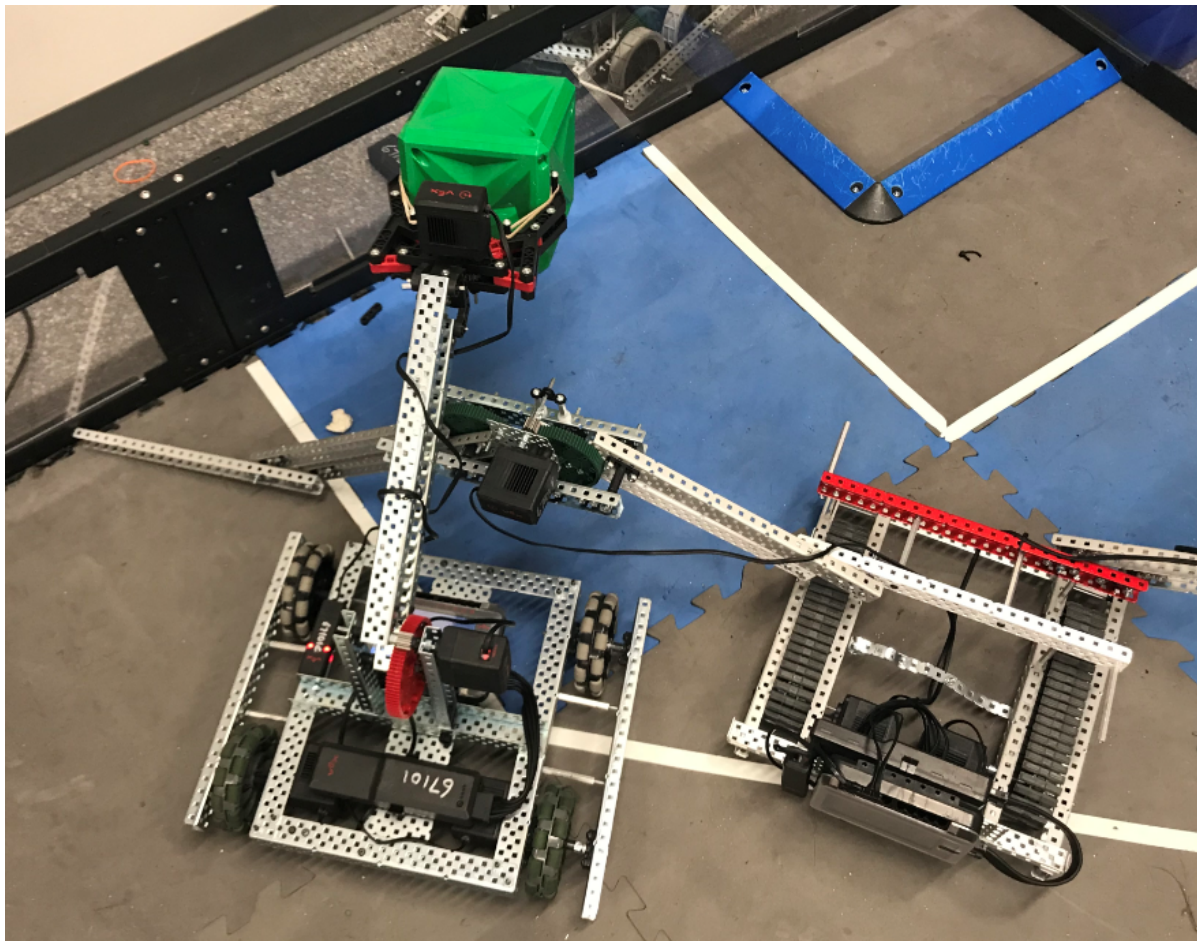
Definition of outer protected Zone: The 3-dimensional volume extending upwards from the foam tiles and bound by the field perimeter, outer edge of the Protected Zone tape line, and the inner edge of the Inner Protected Zone tape line.

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. **G14** You can't force an opponent into a penalty. Intentional strategies that cause an opponent to violate a rule are not permitted, and will not result in an infraction on the opposing Alliance. Minor violations of this rule that do not affect the Match will result in a warning. Match Affecting offenses will result in a Disqualification. Teams that receive multiple warnings may also receive a Disqualification at the Head Referee's discretion.

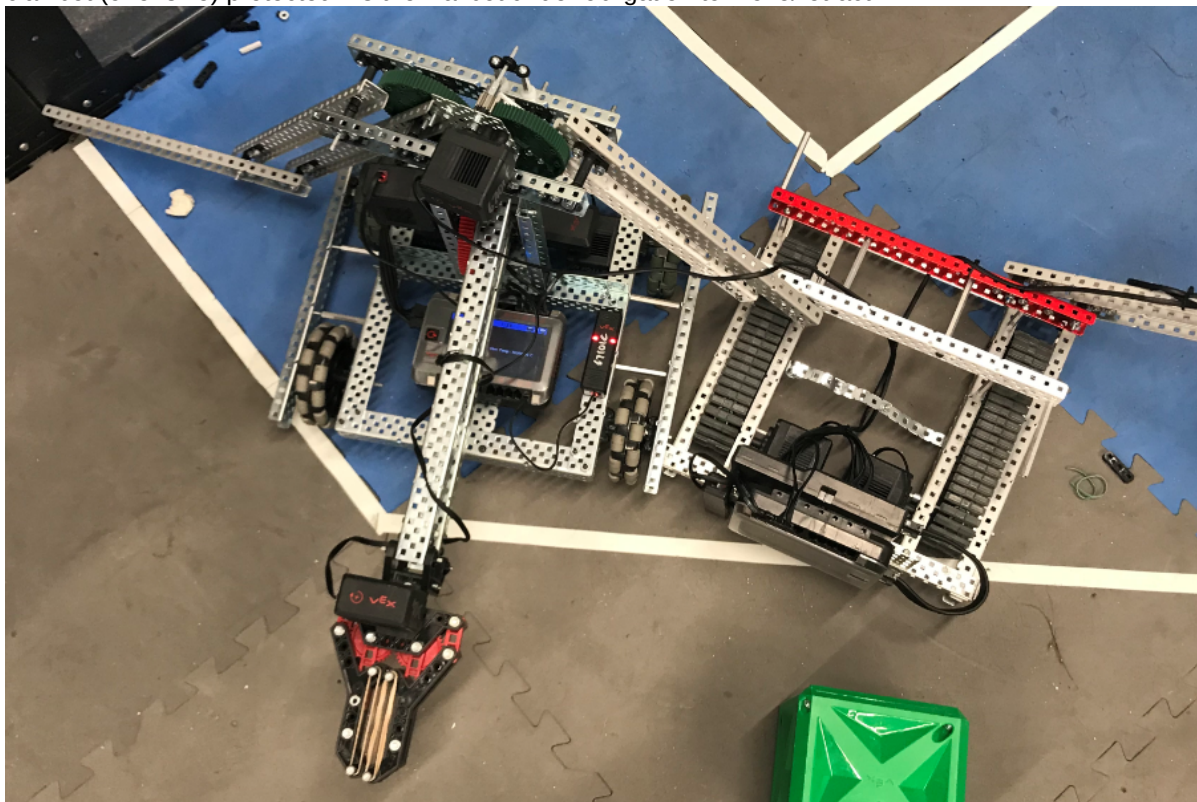
Here is what our robot looks like fully deployed. I will lay out 3 scenarios with pictures. Take a look at each of the scenarios before answering as I tried to cover the different ways it could play out.



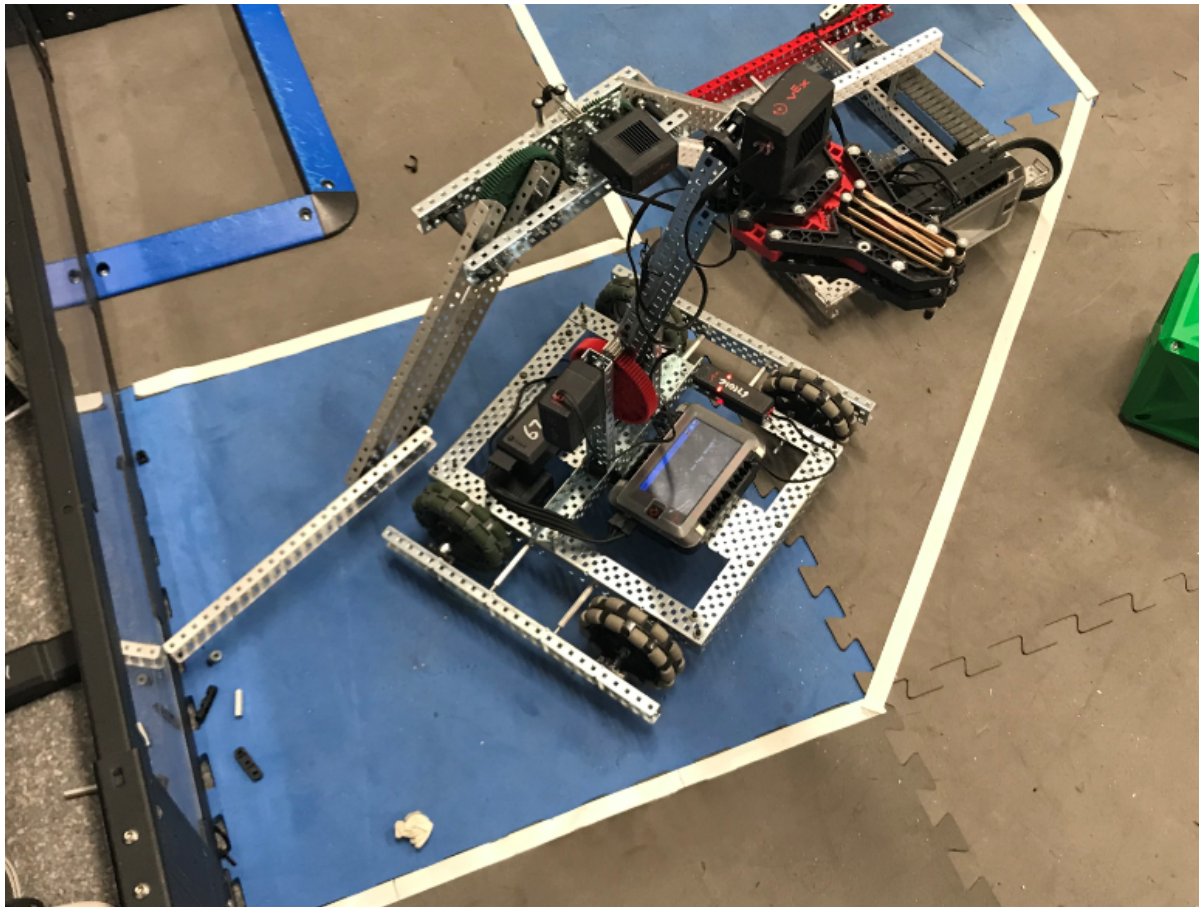
Scenario 1: A robot possessing a cube comes to score against our deployed wallbot. When part of the offensive robot entered the outer protected zone we were warned that we must move our robot because of rule G13. While we were definitely playing defense and they were on offense, there were no rules being broken, so we did not see why our robot should have to move. In the picture below, is the wallbot under any obligation to move/retract at this point?



Scenario 2: A robot attempts to push us out of the way, and all 4 of their wheels are in the outer protected zone, but part of their robot was in the vertical space outside the zone. We were told to move because they met the definition of a "protected robot" under SG3 A. We argued that because the protected zone is a volume, not an area (per definition of the outer protected zone), that their robot was not fully contained within the outer protected zone. In the picture below, is the clawbot (offensive) protected? Is the wallbot under obligation to move/retract?



Scenario 3: A robot attempts to push us out of the way and forces our robot deep into the protected zone. The offensive robot is now fully in the outer protected zone and/or our robot is now contacting the inner protected zone and we are in violation of SG3 A and/or E. The referees recognized that we should not be DQ'ed because we were forced there, but they then said that we had to retract and move because of rule G13 gives the benefit of the doubt to the offensive robot. I recognize that if the offensive robot backed away that our defensive robot should drive out of the zone and get in legal position, my questions are assuming that they continue to push on us. In the picture below, where the defensive robot has been forced into an illegal position under SG3 A or E, does the wallbot have to retract and exit the protected zone? Or may they simply sit still? Or may they push back on the robot pushing them into the protected zones?



Goodness! Just writing these questions I have a new appreciation for your job to answer them. Thanks in advance!

Answered by Game Design Committee

Thank you for quoting the relevant rules, providing photos to help understand the scenarios, and being patient with the Head Referee who volunteered at your event.

Scenario 1: A robot possessing a cube comes to score against our deployed wallbot. When part of the offensive robot entered the outer protected zone we were warned that we must move our robot because of rule G13. While we were definitely playing defense and they were on offense, there were no rules being broken, so we did not see why our robot should have to move. In the picture below, is the wallbot under any obligation to move/retract at this point?

SG3 does not contain any restrictions on a Robot encroaching on an opponent's Outer Protected Zone. One intent is for it to be a "warning" zone for Head Referees, since a Robot that is in an opponent's Outer Protected Zone is very likely about to violate SG3-B, D, or E.

In the instant captured by the attached photo, the defensive Robot is not under any obligation from SG3 or G13 to move, provided that no other rules are being violated.

Scenario 2: A robot attempts to push us out of the way, and all 4 of their wheels are in the outer protected zone, but part of their robot was in the vertical space outside the zone. We were told to move because they met the definition of a "protected robot" under SG3 A. We argued that because the protected zone is a volume, not an area (per definition of the outer protected zone), that their robot was not fully contained within the outer protected zone. In the picture below, is the clawbot (offensive) protected? Is the wallbot under obligation to move/retract?

Your interpretation of the Outer Protected Zone as a volume, not an area, is correct. In the instant captured by the attached photo, the defensive Robot is not under any obligation from SG3 or G13 to move, provided that no other rules are being violated.

Scenario 3: A robot attempts to push us out of the way and forces our robot deep into the protected zone. The offensive robot is now fully in the outer protected zone and/or our robot is now contacting the inner protected zone and we are in violation of SG3 A and/or E. The referees recognized that we should not be DQ'ed because we were forced there, but they then said that we had to retract and move because of rule G13 gives the benefit of the doubt to the offensive robot. I recognize that if the offensive robot backed away that our defensive robot should drive out of the zone and get in legal position, my questions are assuming that they continue to push on us. In the picture below, where the defensive robot has been forced into an illegal position under SG3 A or E, does the wallbot have to retract and exit the protected zone? Or may they simply sit still? Or may they push back on the robot pushing them into the protected zones?

This question is more context-sensitive, and it is impossible to provide a blanket answer that would cover all hypothetical interactions. In general:

- All Robots are responsible for their own actions. An offensive Robot who pushes a defensive Robot into any SG3 violation, as the result of offensive maneuvers, should be considered a G13 interaction. Therefore, the offensive Robot should receive the "benefit of the doubt", and the defensive Robot should receive the appropriate penalty for whichever portion of SG3 was violated (B, D, E, or F).
- However, in order to be considered a G13 interaction, the Head Referee must judge that the offensive Robot is actually acting "offensively", not just trying to draw a penalty. An example of "offensive intent" could mean a traditionally offensive Robot carrying Cubes towards an empty Goal Zone.
- If the Head Referee determines that the Robot in question is not acting offensively, then the interaction would be considered a G14 violation on the non-defensive Robot.
- However, in either case, if the defensive Robot does not make an immediate and visible attempt to escape upon landing in their violation, this interaction could then return to an SG3 violation. The defensive Robot is still responsible for their actions, and is now using their position for a defensive advantage.

With the above points in mind, the instant captured by the attached photo would likely be considered a G14 violation on the Clawbot. It is not carrying any Cubes and therefore not capable of acting offensively. "Defending a defender" does not equal "offense".

431: <SG3> Defense Strategy in Protection Zone

22-Nov-2019

G12 G14 SG3

Hi, First, I want to reference some previous rulings back in Nothing But Net Protection Zone. The climbing/loading zone in Nothing But Net received similar protection to Inner/Outer protection Zone this year. I know Q&A from previous rulings do not carry over but they may affect any rulings that will be made for this season. I am also referencing previous rulings in case any other teams want to check on any of the decisions made in the past.

<https://www.vexforum.com/t/answered-question-regarding-sg11/30136> It was ruled here that it is allowed to block opponents from entering the protection zone, and the opponent's robot is allowed to push the robots in an attempt to enter the zone.

<https://www.vexforum.com/t/answered-legal-defense-of-elevation/31912> It was ruled here that being pushed into the protection zone does not result in a violation if the robot being pushed in leave the zone immediately.

<https://www.vexforum.com/t/answered-forced-into-climbing-zone/33118> However, the decision was overturned here, robot being pushed into the zone DOES cause a violation here, even if the robot being pushed leaves the zone immediately.

Now comes to this year's game.

<SG3> Stay away from your opponent's protected areas. Robots may not intentionally or **accidentally**, directly or indirectly, perform the following actions:

A> Contact an opponent Robot which is fully contained within their Protected Zone.

B> Contact any Scored Cubes in either of opposing Alliance's Goal Zones.

D> Contact either of the opposing Alliance's Goal Zones or Barriers.

Minor violations of points A, B, C, or D that do not affect the Match will result in a warning. Match Affecting offenses will result in a Disqualification. Teams that receive multiple warnings may also receive a Disqualification at the Head Referee's discretion.

E> Contact an opposing Alliance's Inner Protected Zone

F> Cause Scored Cubes within the opponent's Protected Zone to no longer meet the definition of Scored (i.e. "knock over their stack"). Any violation of points E, F, or G will result in a Disqualification, whether the interaction was Match Affecting or not.

<G12> a. VEX Robotics Competition Tower Takeover 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. d. Game elements in possession of a Robot are an extension of that Robot. Therefore, Entanglement (e.g., grasping, hooking, attaching) with Cubes that are in the possession of an opposing Robot is a violation of this rule.

<G14> **You can't force an opponent into a penalty.** Intentional strategies that cause an opponent to violate a rule are not permitted, and will not result in an infraction on the opposing Alliance. Minor violations of this rule that do not affect the Match will result in a warning. Match Affecting offenses will result in a Disqualification. Teams that receive multiple warnings may also receive a Disqualification at the Head Referee's discretion.

Are robots allowed to park in the outer protection zone with the intention to block opponent robot from entering the inner protection zone?(Assume Case A is not met)

Will robots be in violation of Case D, E if the robots playing defense are being pushed into the inner protection zone/ by the opponents if they leave immediately upon being pushed into the inner zone?

Will robots be in violation of Case D if the robots playing defense are being pushed to contact the barrier/goal zone in the unprotected zone if they leave immediately upon being pushed into the barrier/goal zone?

Will robots be in violation of Case B,F if there are scored cubes in the goal zone, and robots playing defense are being pushed into the inner protection zone and touched/ knocked over a stack if they leave immediately upon being pushed into the inner zone?

Will the two robots playing defense in this scenario receive protection from G12? My interpretation is that since they are partaking in defensive strategy, they will not receive protection for trapping, is this interpretation correct?

Robot 1 and 2 are in the Blue Alliance Outer Protected Zone.

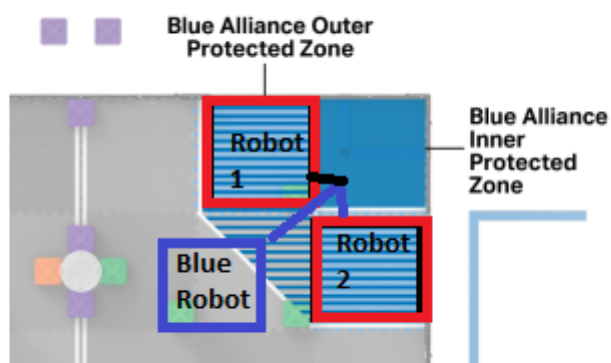


Figure 11: Close-up of a corner of the field, depicting the Protected Zones.

Answered by Game Design Committee

Are robots allowed to park in the outer protection zone with the intention to block opponent robot from entering the inner protection zone?(Assume Case A is not met)

There are no rules prohibiting this, thus it is legal.

Will robots be in violation of Case D, E if the robots playing defense are being pushed into the inner protection zone/ by the opponents if they leave immediately upon being pushed into the inner zone?

Will robots be in violation of Case D if the robots playing defense are being pushed to contact the barrier/goal zone in the unprotected zone if they leave immediately upon being pushed into the barrier/goal zone?

Will robots be in violation of Case B,F if there are scored cubes in the goal zone, and robots playing defense are being pushed into the inner protection zone and touched/ knocked over a stack if they leave immediately upon being pushed into the inner zone?

SG3 does not supersede G14. Therefore, it will be at the Head Referee's discretion whether this contact was solely the result of being pushed by their opponents. If this is the case, then it would not be considered a violation, provided that the defensive Robot makes immediate and visible attempts to leave the Inner Protected Zone.

That being said, it is impossible to provide a blanket answer that would cover all possible hypothetical interactions. G13, which states that offensive Robots receive the "benefit of the doubt", may be used liberally in these judgment calls. Therefore, in contrast with the above, a Head Referee may make the judgment call that G14 is not applicable, and an SG3 violation would result. Some scenarios that could drive this judgment call are as follows (although this is not a comprehensive list):

- A defensive Robot "baiting" an offensive Robot into causing contact
- A defensive Robot driving in a manner that causes accidental contact ("A Team is responsible for the actions of its Robot at all times" per G12)
- A defensive Robot not making an immediate and visible attempt to exit the Inner Protected Zone upon entry

Teams attempting a defensive strategy such as the one included in your attached image should be very cognizant of this possibility, and the risk they are taking in doing so.

Will the two robots playing defense in this scenario receive protection from G12? My interpretation is that since they are partaking in defensive strategy, they will not receive protection for trapping, is this interpretation correct?

We are not entirely sure what you mean by "protection for trapping". To be clear - if you are asking about an offensive Robot attempting to utilize their Goal Zone, if they will receive a Trapping count for confining the defensive Robots, then your interpretation is correct. Per G13, the offensive Robot should receive the "benefit of the doubt" and not receive a Trapping violation.

367: Playing offense while a part of your robot is playing defense

30-Sep-2019

G12 G13 G14

Hello my team was wandering what rules could and could not be used on a possible design, a design that has a big defensive strategy (a part of the robot) and an offensive strategy(a cube stacker). So if a robot got in tangled, flipped over, or stuck on the defensive part of our robot while we were playing offense and not moving or forcing the defensive part of our robot to do such things would that count as our fault or would the team that got suck on us be there fault. I was wandering this because some of the defense rules use words like solely, only, and purely defensive strategies will pretty much always be at fault but this design is not a purely, solely or only a defensive robot it is both. Sent from my iPhone

Answered by Game Design Committee

It is impossible to issue a blanket ruling that would cover all hypothetical interactions or Robot designs. This is the type of question that is why VRC utilizes human Head Referees who can observe the context of a specific Robot and/or Match to provide a judgment call when needed.

G13 states the following:

< 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.

The Note in G12 states the following:

Note: A Robot which has expanded horizontally in an effort to obstruct the field, or is legally covering the top of a Tower in a solely defensive manner, should expect vigorous interactions from opponent Robots. Damage that is caused by opponent Robots pushing, tipping, or Entangling with them would not be considered a violation of <G12>. Gratuitous damage or dangerous mechanisms may still be considered a violation of <R3>, <S1>, or <G1> at the Head Referee’s discretion.

The first portion of this Note does not require a “solely defensive manner”, it simply requires the Robot to have expanded horizontally in an effort to obstruct the field.

In the context of these rules, specific mechanisms or Robots are not assigned “defensive” or “offensive” roles. It is interactions and strategies that are assigned “defensive” and “offensive” roles.

There are scenarios where a primarily offensive mechanism is used defensively (e.g. an intake being used to entangle an opponent). There are scenarios where a primarily defensive mechanism is found on a Robot playing offense at any given moment (e.g. [this video](#) which has now been referenced on the Q&A three times).

When making a G12 or G13 judgment call, Head Referees will need to look at the specific interaction at the moment it occurred, alongside any relevant context (such as previous interactions or strategies of those two Robots).

2619: When is Entanglement not “Normal Gameplay”?

12-Mar-2025

G13 G14 G16

Hello GDC!

Is it ok if a team uses their lady brown to stop another team's lady brown from raising, even if some entanglement occurs that a Head Referee determines was incidental?

Is there any guidance that can be given to help Head Referee’s in determining when edge case entanglement situations should be considered outside of “normal gameplay”?

Relevant rules are [<G13>](#), [<G14>](#), possibly [<G16>](#)

Thank you for your time! :D

Answered by Game Design Committee

Entanglement situations should be considered outside of “normal gameplay” and result in [<G13>](#) Violations when a Robot that is playing offensively is tipped, Entangled, or damaged by an opponent Robot that is playing purely defensively. Per [<G14>](#), the offensive Robot gets the benefit of the doubt if a judgment call must be made.

In cases where it's not clear which Robot should get the benefit of the doubt from rule [<G14>](#), a Robot that is actively interacting with a Ring (including de-scoring) should be considered "more offensive" than a Robot that is not interacting with a Ring.

If both Robots are playing offensively (for example, two Robots that are pushing each other back and forth while each is trying to put a Ring on a Wall Stake) it should generally qualify as normal gameplay that does not result in a [<G13>](#) Violation for either Team even if they become Entangled.

2518: Determining Holding When Defensive Robot Drives On Top of Offensive Robot

9-Feb-2025

[G14](#) [G15](#) [G16](#)

SITUATION: RED is camping in the positive corner holding a goal while protecting its placed goal (not touching placed goal). A lightweight, BLUE pushbot comes quickly at RED in order to get to the placed goal and remove it. RED never moved in the direction of BLUE. BLUE drives upon the side of RED and gets stuck. Blue cannot free themselves despite still having two wheels on the ground. Offensive RED in no way is controlling the movements of the BLUE defensive robot. RED sits still until the 30-second buzzer, then drives straight, which frees the BLUE robot from their side. Obviously, RED could have moved earlier and freed the BLUE robot that drove on top of them, but it would have been at the risk of letting the defensive robot drive in and remove their goal from the positive corner.

QUESTION: Should RED be called for lifting and a 5-count started? Or would it not be considered lifting because of the following reasons: 1) the RED robot never "raised or tilted" the blue robot off the ground. Instead, the BLUE robot drove on top of the RED. 2) The RED robot never was controlling the BLUE robot's movements. 3) According to [<G15>](#), you can't force an opponent into a violation. 4) According to [<G14>](#), the offensive robot gets the benefit of the doubt.

I called it the latter yesterday and feel like it's the correction interpretation of the combined rules, but I thought it would be beneficial for the VEX community as a whole (Refs and students) to get it clarified in a Q&A. As a ref, I'd love to have a specific Q&A to point the teams to. Or, if I'm incorrect, it would also be beneficial to know the correct interpretation.

RULES IN CONSIDERATION:

Lifting – Controlling an opponent's movements by raising or tilting the opponent's Robot off of the foam tiles.

[<G16>](#) No Holding for more than a 5-count. A Robot may not Hold an opposing Robot for more than a 5-count during the Driver Controlled Period

[<G14>](#) Offensive Robots get the "benefit of the doubt." In a case where Head 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 Violation, referees will decide in favor of the offensive Robot.

[<G15>](#) You can't force an opponent into a penalty. Intentional strategies that cause an opponent to break a rule are not permitted, and will not result in a Violation for the opposing Alliance.

Thank you! The GDC is doing an awesome job this year answering our questions. Much appreciated!

Answered by Game Design Committee

This falls squarely under [<G15>](#), and the red Robot has no obligation to move in this scenario. Blue got themselves stuck, and the red Robot has broken no rules.

232: clarification on trapping.

3-Feb-2019

[G11](#) [G13](#) [G14](#)

This question focuses around "trapping", which is defined in the game manual as a robot status where "a robot is trapping if it has restricted an opposing robot into a small, confined area of the field, approximately the size of one foam field tile or

less, and has not provided an avenue for escape. Trapping can be direct (e.g. pinning an opponent to a field perimeter wall), or indirect (e.g. preventing a robot from escaping from a corner of the field). <G14> also states that there should be no trapping for more than 5-seconds, and is effectively over once the opposing robot has driven away by 2 feet and has driven away for 5 seconds.

Trapping however, has a loose definition of "avenue of escape" and "confined area of the field". Pinning, has also not been defined. If a robot were to push an opposing robot, this would be deemed legal, because there is open space around the robot. If a robot were to push another robot into the wall, and then back away, leaving enough space in the front and back for the robot to escape, but would push the robot every couple seconds, would this be legal? The defending robot in this instance, is not technically trapping the robot as it has not confined the robot, the robot can escape, however is not doing so fast enough, and the defending robot is pushing (which, is not trapping), the robot ever so slightly. Would this be considered trapping?

A follow up to the above question, what is the definition of an avenue of escape? If there is a robots-width of space between a post and my robot, then that should be sufficient for a count to NOT be held against me. By that sense, if a robot is in a corner, and caps/balls are piled beside them (which should not be hoarding, the caps are not in the corner because the corner is occupied by a robot), and can not escape, it should not be a trap, correct?

We would also like to seek clarification on pushing, there have been many referees at local tournaments who start counting as soon as robot-robot contact has been made (ie, RED1 pushing BLUE1 away from flags so they can not line up for flags), however, as per the rules, this should be legal, correct? Now, suppose a robot, say BLUE1 were to push RED1 into their partner, RED2, in the middle of the field. RED1 has a clear avenue of escape, all RED needs to do is have RED2 drive away, and RED1 can then drive away. Would this still be counted as a trap? Now what if BLUE1 was preventing RED1 from moving, who was then preventing RED2 from moving. If BLUE1 backed away, then returned to trap RED2, should the count be restarted (BLUE1 was never defending RED2) or should the count continue (BLUE1 has been preventing RED2 from moving as well, albeit indirectly). It would be nice if the GDC could give clarifications on these, as the local refs have had very unclear rules, and there has been a lot of variation with the rulings, which means that students are often left confused to as why one team at one tournament could act in such a way, whereas these actions were ruled illegal at another tournament.

The last question, if RED1 were trapping BLUE1 against a perimeter, and BLUE1 was then incidentally trapping RED2, would there also be a count against BLUE1? Even if RED1 were to back away at 5 seconds, it would be almost impossible for BLUE1 to also move away fast enough (especially if the trap has put them in an awkward position) to allow RED2 to move away. Again, this refers to <G13> and <G11>. If BLUE1 were an offensive robot about to score, but then got trapped by RED1 - they should not be at fault, and should not be allowed to be forced into a penalty, correct?

Thank you for taking the time to carefully read and answer these questions!

Answered by Game Design Committee

Your question(s) appear to be answered by [this similar Q&A](#). If this is not the case, please feel free to rephrase and re-submit. Please especially take note of the following portions:

Please remember that the VEX Robotics Competition is a volunteer-driven program with over 1700 events across 50 countries each season. While the Game Design Committee and the REC Foundation strive to continuously improve our training materials, requisite certifications to run an event, and overall consistency between events, providing absolute guidelines for subjective topics is one of the largest challenges that we face each year.

The interactive and dynamic nature of a VEX Robotics Competition game makes it impossible to provide absolutely black-and-white clarifications of inherently non-black-and-white topics, such as defensive interactions. If everything in a game was absolute and explicitly clear, then the role of a Head Referee to provide in-the-moment interpretations would not be needed!

These answers represent the intent of the Game Design Committee within the guidelines and training materials that we have provided for VRC Turning Point referees, not an ultimate expectation or guarantee that all Head Referees will interpret a given edge case in exactly the same way.

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.

2212: <G14> Offensive Robot Clarification

22-Oct-2024

G14

Hello! I hope your season has been well!

Generally the offensive robot is seen as the robot "trying to score points" in an interaction, in a scenario where a red and blue robot are both trying to score a mobile goal into a corner, both robots are attempting to score points and can both be seen as the offensive robot, in situations like this who should be given benefit of doubt in the event a violation occurs?

Similarly, if an interaction happens in the Negative Corner, both robots are attempting to "remove points" from the opponent which would be considered a defensive action, but preventing the other robot from scoring a goal in the negative corner can also be seen as a defensive action as they are not scoring points (but are preventing a swing of points), In this scenario are both robots considered defensive? Who should be given benefit of doubt?

Finally, If two robots are fighting over a positive corner, and RED1 momentarily placed a goal in the corner whilst BLUE1 is attempting to take control, would RED1 now be considered the defensive robot as its goal has been scored, and it is now taking a "defensive" position by preventing BLUE1 from controlling the corner?

Cheers

Answered by Game Design Committee

Generally speaking, Head Referees only need to consider whether a Robot is acting offensively or defensively in instances where a judgment call must be made regarding a destructive interaction or a questionable Violation (see the full text of rule [<G14>](#)). By definition, interactions in which a Head Referee must invoke rule [<G14>](#) will be highly context-based, and blanket rulings are impossible.

Both of the Robots are acting offensively when both are actively attempting to add Mobile Goals to Corners, so rule [<G14>](#) probably won't apply. These scenarios will require Head Referee judgment on a case-by-case basis, and it's likely that neither Robot should receive the benefit of the doubt.

In your final scenario, in which one Robot has Placed a Mobile Goal into a Corner, the Robot that is not actively attempting to add a Mobile Goal would be considered as acting defensively.

209: Trapping G14 clarification

14-Jan-2019

I would request that GDC help clarify how trapping should be regulated correctly. Here are the pertinent rules and apparent confusion.

Game manual Trapping definition (Page 13) **Trapping** – *A Robot status. A Robot is Trapping if it has restricted an opposing Robot into a small, confined area of the field, approximately the size of one foam field tile or less, and has not provided an avenue for escape. Trapping can be direct (e.g. pinning an opponent to a field perimeter wall) or indirect (e.g. preventing a Robot from escaping from a corner of the field).*

<G14> *No Trapping for more than 5 seconds. A Robot may not Trap an opposing Robot for more than five (5) seconds during the Driver Controlled Period. A Trap is **officially over once the Trapping Robot has moved away and the Robots are separated by at least two (2) feet** (approximately one [1] foam tile). After ending a Trap, a Robot may not Trap the same Robot again for a duration of five (5) seconds; if a Team does Trap the same Robot again, the count will resume from where it left off when the Trapping Robot initially backed off.*

From videos- The requirement is added that a robot must be actively trying to escape for a trap to be in effect.

There seem to be two areas where these rules seem to be often misapplied.

1. When the trap should start. What I often see is that the trap is not declared until the defensive robot is actually pinning the opposing robot.
2. When the trap should end. What I often see is that as soon as the trapped robot is able to move significantly, or an escape path becomes possible, counting stops. Basically, the same criteria are applied to initiating the trap as ending it even though the rules don't seem to support this interpretation. The concern with this application is that especially in this game with three other 18-36 inch wide robots and large and protruding field elements, mobility is already significantly impeded. Not requiring a full tile can prolong the impact of a trap much longer than 5 seconds if a trapped robot is not given some room to maneuver.

Based on this, I believe it would be helpful to clarify the following questions.

Is it required for a defensive robot to be in direct contact with another robot to be trapping?

Once a trap is declared, when does the timed count stop (more than one if appropriate)?

- A. When the defensive robot either moves a full tile away or the trapped robot is not trying to escape.
- B. When the defensive robot pulls back enough for the trapped robot to move even if its obviously not a full tile?
- C. As soon as there is a path of escape?
- D. Other?

When should the count stop (more than one if appropriate)?

- A. When the defensive robot either moves a full tile away or the trapped robot is not trying to escape.
- B. When the defensive robot pulls back enough for the trapped robot to move even if its obviously not a full tile?
- C. As soon as there is a path of escape?
- D. Other?

If a defensive robot initiates a trap in a confined area and becomes unable to separate a full tile, does this negate their requirement to move back a full tile before the trap\count is stopped?

- A. No, the defensive robot assumes this liability when opting to play defense and should avoid trapping when they are uncertain that they can comply with the rules to separate a full tile prior to a 5 count.*
- B. Yes, so long as robot that initiated the trap is doing everything possible to avoid contact.*

*Neither of these are assumed to change the obligation that the trapped robot must be continuing to attempt to escape. If the trapped robot were to attempt to produce or prolong either of these situations by doing anything other than attempting to escape the trap would be resolved. This strategy would also be attempting to cause another robot to perform an

infraction and a violation of G11.

Answered by Game Design Committee

Thank you for the well thought-out and descriptive post, complete with the necessary reference materials. Before answering your specific questions, please remember that the VEX Robotics Competition is a volunteer-driven program with over 1700 events across 50 countries each season. While the Game Design Committee and the REC Foundation strive to continuously improve our training materials, requisite certifications to run an event, and overall consistency between events, providing absolute guidelines for subjective topics is one of the largest challenges that we face each year.

To be more specific - the interactive and dynamic nature of a VEX Robotics Competition game makes it impossible to provide absolutely black-and-white clarifications of inherently non-black-and-white topics, such as defensive interactions. If everything in a game was absolute and explicitly clear, then the role of a Head Referee to provide in-the-moment interpretations would not be needed!

So, with that in mind, let's dive in. These answers represent the intent of the Game Design Committee within the guidelines and training materials that we have provided for VRC Turning Point referees, not an ultimate expectation or guarantee that all Head Referees will interpret a given edge case in exactly the same way.

Is it required for a defensive robot to be in direct contact with another robot to be trapping?

No. As demonstrated in the Referee Training video, and defined in the definition of Trapping as "indirect" Trapping, direct contact is not required for a Trapping count to begin.

Once a trap is declared, when does the timed count stop (more than one if appropriate)?

- A. When the defensive robot either moves a full tile away or the trapped robot is not trying to escape.
- B. When the defensive robot pulls back enough for the trapped robot to move even if its obviously not a full tile?
- C. As soon as there is a path of escape?
- D. Other?

The intent is for a combination of A and C, although a "path of escape" is very difficult to define. The demonstration in the Referee Training video is one example; a Robot which is being Trapped against the field perimeter may technically have an instantaneous path of escape while a Trapping Robot maneuvers around them, but it is not a realistic expectation that the Trapped Robot would be able to escape in that brief moment. This is where some amount of referee subjectivity is required, to interpret the context of a given Match and the interactions they are seeing on the field.

When should the count stop (more than one if appropriate)?

Although you seem to be implying a specific and/or subtle difference between this and the last question, we are not quite understanding what you are getting at. If the answer to the previous question was not sufficient, please feel free to rephrase and re-submit.

If a defensive robot initiates a trap in a confined area and becomes unable to separate a full tile, does this negate their requirement to move back a full tile before the trap\count is stopped?

- A. No, the defensive robot assumes this liability when opting to play defense and should avoid trapping when they are uncertain that they can comply with the rules to separate a full tile prior to a 5 count.*
- B. Yes, so long as robot that initiated the trap is doing everything possible to avoid contact.*

The intended answer to this question would be your option A, with the pretty significant disclaimer that it is impossible to rule absolutely on snapshot descriptions of hypothetical scenarios. There are many scenarios where a Head Referee could subjectively interpret that a Trap is not occurring. Take the following two examples to illustrate this point:

- Picture two Robots who drive into the "lane" between the Platforms and the Field Perimeter from opposite directions, contact each other, and become unable to get out of the "lane". However, both Robots are clearly attempting to break free, such as by pausing driving to let the other Robot maneuver out, or verbally calling across the field to explain their movement, or rapidly turning back and forth away from the opponent. It would be a fair interpretation that neither Robot has "restricted" the other to a small confined area of the field, and no Trap should be called.
- Picture this same scenario, except the two Robots become "stuck" because one of them turned 90°, began directly Trapping an opponent against the field perimeter, and then became unable to turn themselves 90° back around due to the Trapped Robot now being there. In this scenario, your option A applies - any Robot attempting to legally Trap for less than 5 seconds should have an "exit strategy".

1975: tipping blocking robots

27-Feb-2024

G13 G14

<g14> states that the offensive robot will receive the benefit of the doubt when determining if something was match affecting. Does this refer to the robot that is performing an offensive action or that it is in its offensive zone? <g13> states that "A Team is responsible for the actions of its Robot at all times, including the Autonomous Period. This applies both to Teams that are driving recklessly or potentially causing damage, and to Teams that drive around with a small wheel base. A Team should design its Robot such that it is not easily tipped over or damaged by minor contact."

With this in mind if a red robot was shooting from the match load zone and had a low hanging mechanism that was low enough for a blue robot to drive on and it results in the blue robot being tipped would the red robot be penalized? The blue robot stays on the red robot after the red robot finishes shooting and the only things the red robot can do is drive forward or raise the low hanging mechanism. Both of these options will result in the tipping of the blue robot but staying still will not tip the blue robot. They were performing an offensive action and the mechanism in question is an intake and not meant for tipping other robots, but <g13> states that a team is responsible for the actions of their robot at all times

Would the red robot be penalized for moving? If the blue robot is successfully blocking the red robot would the red robot be penalized for driving forward to push the blue robot off and returning to shoot if the blue robot got tipped in the process?

Answered by Game Design Committee

<g14> states that the offensive robot will receive the benefit of the doubt when determining if something was match affecting. Does this refer to the robot that is performing an offensive action or that it is in its offensive zone?

Rule [<G14>](#) protects robots that are engaged in offensive actions (e.g., scoring, match loading, elevating) during a Match, regardless of their position on the field. This guidance is modified by clause B of rule [<SG10>](#), which specifies that during the Autonomous Period of a Match a Robot is considered to be playing offense only when in its own Offensive Zone.

In the scenario you've described, once the red Robot stops Match Loading and begins to move away from the Match Load bar, the Head Referee should begin a Holding count. Holding is an inherently defensive action, regardless of where on the field it occurs. If red attempts to escape blue's Holding and cannot do so without incidentally tipping the blue Robot, the red Robot will generally have the benefit of the doubt provided by rule [<G14>](#) and should not be penalized.

192: Blocking Opponent Shots

20-Dec-2018

G14 SG5

Hi There,

Would it be legal for a team, let's say BLUE1, to have a large piece of legal material, provided they have passed inspection and are within the expansion limits (18"x18"x18"), on field used *solely* with the intent to block opponent shots. In this hypothetical scenario, RED1 has lined up to take a shot at two flags, and BLUE1 has driven in front of RED1. From here, there are a few scenarios that can occur, I will outline them below.

Scenario 1) BLUE1 is holding a ball and actively pushing RED1, while RED1 is not showing any attempt to escape (eg. no drive motion on joysticks). RED1 fires two balls, both of which hit BLUE1's plate and then bounce off. Would this be legal, or would it go past the possession limits outlined in rule SG5?

Scenario 2) BLUE1 does not have any game objects and is actively pushing RED1, while RED1 is not showing any attempt to escape. Both balls are fired, again bouncing off. Would this be legal?

Scenario 3) BLUE1 has game objects and is actively pushing RED1, while RED1 is actively fighting back. RED1 is approximately 1 tile away from the platforms, and BLUE2 is behind RED1, however they are just "passing through", on their way to score their own game object and in no way showing an intent to block RED1. RED1 fires, again both balls bouncing off BLUE1's blocker. Would this violate SG5 for hoarding, as well as G14 for trapping. Would BLUE be called for trapping if this situation passed 5 seconds? There is an open avenue for escape on both sides of the RED1 robot, RED1's robot may not however, be capable of 'strafing', or sideways motion and are thus unable to back away.

Scenario 4) This is similar to Scenario 3), however BLUE1 is not holding any game objects (scenario 4 is to scenario 3 as scenario 2 is to scenario 1).

Scenario 5) BLUE1 has game objects, and is pushing both RED1 and RED2. RED is being pushed towards the alliance platforms, RED1 and RED2 both fire two balls and both are blocked by BLUE1 - what call (if any) would be made?

Last question - if BLUE1 has this blocker, but RED1 comes underneath and forces the blocker above 18" (for example, by bending a piece of metal). What is the ruling here? Would it be different if RED1 bent it with for example, an arm or lifting mechanism, or if RED1 bent it with the sheer force of hitting it repeatedly with a ball.

Thanks, Anthony.

Answered by Game Design Committee

We apologize, but it is always difficult to rule absolutely on hypothetical scenarios, and we are having a hard time understanding the root of the question that you are attempting to ask.

Please review the [Q&A Usage Guidelines](#), specifically points 1, 3, 4, and 5, and re-submit your question. It will be much easier to provide a clear interpretation if you phrase your question concisely and in terms of a specific rule.

1843: Tipping in Match Load Zone & G13 / G14

26-Dec-2023

G13 G14

<G13>

A blue alliance robot was in their own match load zone and a team member was placing triballs in the robot to be introduced to the field. A red alliance robot came over quickly to the blue robot, and the blue robot team member stopped match loading to avoid injury. The immediate contact interaction between the red and blue robots resulted in the tipping of the blue robot into the blue match load zone. Upon completion of the match, the referee ruled that the red alliance robot would not receive a major violation and disqualification for the tipping of the blue alliance robot citing G13a/b.

<G13> Don't destroy other Robots. But, be prepared to encounter defense. Strategies aimed solely at the destruction, damage, tipping over, or Entanglement of opposing Robots are not part of the ethos of the VEX Robotics Competition and are not allowed. VRC Over Under is intended to be an offensive game. Teams that partake in solely defensive or destructive strategies will not have the protections implied by <G13> (see <G14>). However, defensive play which does not involve destructive or illegal strategies is still within the spirit of this rule. VRC Over Under is also intended to be an

interactive game. Some incidental tipping, Entanglement, and damage may occur as a part of normal gameplay without violation. It will be up to the Head Referee's discretion whether the interaction was incidental or intentional.

The head referee stated that G14 would not be applicable due to the statement given by the blue alliance team member, who was engaged in the match loading, in which they stated that they stopped match loading just prior to the interaction to avoid being injured in contact from the oncoming red robot.

<G14> Offensive Robots get the "benefit of the doubt." In a case where Head 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 Violation, referees will decide in favor of the offensive Robot.

The referee ruled that the blue alliance robot was not engaged in any offensive actions and therefore not considered the offensive robot in this situation due to the blue alliance team not being actively engaged in match loading at the moment of interaction that resulted in the tipping, and therefore the contact between the red and blue robots was deemed incidental per G13b.

The question regarding the situation is as follows:

Due to the nature of match loading for this game and the safety concern of the blue alliance team member, and given that active match loading was occurring immediately prior to the action that resulted in the tipping, should the blue robot have still been considered as the offensive robot?

Answered by Game Design Committee

First - when a ruling is made that required an in-match judgment call, it is difficult for us to provide an answer that directly justifies or vilifies a given Head Referee's handling of a given situation. We weren't there, and didn't see what they saw; the red box note in [<G1>](#) should be kept in mind.

Note from the VEX GDC: The rules contained in this Game Manual are written to be enforced by human Head Referees. Many rules have "black-and-white" criteria that can be easily checked. However, some rulings will rely on a judgment call from this human Head Referee. In these cases, Head Referees will make their calls based on what they and the Scorekeeper Referees saw, what guidance is provided by their official support materials (the Game Manual and the Q&A), and most crucially, the context of the Match in question. The VEX Robotics Competition does not have video replay, our fields do not have absolute sensors to count scores, and most events do not have the resources for an extensive review conference between each Match. When an ambiguous rule results in a controversial call, there is a natural instinct to wonder what the "right" ruling "should have been," or what the GDC "would have ruled." This is ultimately an irrelevant question; our answer is that when a rule specifies "Head Referee's discretion" (or similar), then the "right" call is the one made by a Head Referee in the moment. The VEX GDC designs games, and writes rules, with this expectation (constraint) in mind.

With that all being said, we do not see any decision-making in this scenario that was outside the boundaries of "Head Referee discretion" provided by [<G13>](#) and [<G14>](#).

Yes, in most cases, Match Loading can be considered an offensive action. However, this does not mean that "any Robot near a Match Load Zone is immediately offensive", and it is within the Head Referee's discretion to judge whether [<G14>](#) applies to a given interaction. We cannot provide a blanket "yes/no" answer to all possible versions of these interactions.

1776: How to consider G14 and G15 when determining a potential SG11 violations

20-Nov-2023

G14 G15 SG11

Hello, At a recent tournament we encountered a situation where there was a robot that disconnected and was unable to move, but happened to be in front of the opposing elevation bars. We determined that going into the 30 second mark the robot was not in violation of [<SG11>](#) until an opposing robot attempting to elevate pushed them into the elevation bar. The disconnected robot was then preventing them from elevating. We interpreted that because they were pushed into the

elevation bar, they would not be penalized as per [<G15>](#). We considered that in Tipping point there was an explicit phrase that said the offensive robot gets the benefit of the doubt supersedes you cannot force an opponent into a penalty, this year that clause is absent so we determined that [<G14>](#) does not supersede G15. Is this the correct interpretation.

If this is the correct interpretation, if a robot were intentionally try to block an opponent's access to their elevation bars, would they be afforded the same protections against being forced into an SG11 violation.

Answered by Game Design Committee

Your interpretation is correct. As described in rule [<G15>](#), a Robot cannot be forced into a penalty for a Violation of [<SG11>](#).

We believe [our response to Q&A 1725](#) addresses your follow-up question, regarding a Robot that blocks an opponent's access to their Elevation Bars without violating rule [<SG11>](#).

1731: Incidental vs Intentional Tipping

29-Oct-2023

G13 G14

Per [<G14>](#), offensive robots get the "benefit of the doubt".

Per [<G13>](#), point b, robots may encounter defense, including "incidental tipping, Entanglement, and damage... It will be up to the Head Referee's discretion whether the interaction was incidental or intentional."

Considering the below scenarios:

- What would be considered intentional versus incidental?
- What would be considered offensive versus defensive?
- Which alliance, if any, would be issued a minor violation? A major violation? A DQ?

1. Blue goes to get a triball on the red offensive side and causes Red to tip.
2. Blue goes to get a triball on the blue offensive side and causes Red to tip.
3. Blue goes to park and causes Red to tip.
4. Blue tries to manipulate some triballs with subsystem(s), Red gets caught on the subsystem, and Red tips when robots disengage.
5. Blue merely goes to prevent Red from crossing into the red offensive zone and tips the Red robot.
6. Blue tries to get to the blue offensive zone and is taking the shortest route to get there, thus going through/pushing the red alliance robot.
7. Blue goes to get a triball; said triball unintentionally gets underneath Red's drivetrain; Red tries to get off the triball and tips.

Would the Blue robot position relative to its own offensive zone play a role in determining whether it is considered the offensive/defensive robot? How does this affect the issuance of a warning/DQ?

How much does the direction of the robot's travel affect offensive versus defensive, intentional versus incidental?

Answered by Game Design Committee

We believe [our response to Q&A 1628](#) answers your question. In each of the scenarios you propose, the Head Referee would have to consider the larger context of the interaction to determine whether it was incidental or intentional. It is impossible to issue a blanket answer beyond what is written in the Game Manual that encompasses all possible situations based on a snapshot description of a hypothetical interaction.

When deciding whether tipping, entanglement, or damage should be penalized for being intentional or egregious, pay attention to whether the 'pushing' robot backs away when their opponent begins to tip, become entangled, or risk damage or if they continue to force the other robot over or into entanglement or damage. A team that backs away

should generally *not* be penalized based on intent, and the one that continues to push probably should. Clear verbal warnings are important in this situation, to give all teams opportunities to avoid violations. For more information on these interactions, view the Head Referee training videos from the [Turning Point](#) or [Change Up](#) seasons (note that the pertinent rule number has changed since these seasons, and some of the game-specific information no longer applies). These tips and links have also been added to the [VRC Referee Guide in the REC Library](#).