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VEX AIR DRONE COMPETITION

PICK & DROP

2025 - 2026
Game Manual
Version 0.1.1

Table of Contents

Prefix

Changelog iii
Quick Reference Guide iv

Section 1 - Introduction

Pick & Drop: A Primer 2
About the Game Manual 3
Updates 4
The Q&A System 5

Section 2 - The Game

General Definitions 11
Game-Specific Definitions 15
Scoring 18
Safety Rules 22
General Rules 23
General Game Rules 27
Specific Game Rules 30

Section 3 - The Drone

Inspection Rules 31

Section 4 - Drone Skills Challenge

Section 5 - The Event

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Changelog

Version 0.1.1 - October 15, 2025

- Minor typo/formatting fixes
- Revised <SC2> for clarity
- Changed defined term from Floor to *Field Tiles*
- Revised definition of *Pilot* for clarity
- Updated Game Manual Link

Version 0.1 - October 10, 2025

- Initial Release

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Quick Reference Guide

Scoring Rules	
<SC1>	All scoring statuses for *Scoring Objects*, *Goals*, and *Drones* are evaluated after the *Match* ends
<SC2>	Scoring status for Ring Tunnel Passes is evaluated during the *Match*
<SC3>	All scoring statuses are evaluated visually by a Head Referee
<SC4>	White *Scoring Objects* are wildcards
<SC5>	*Orbit Ball Scored* on the *Pole Goal*
<SC6>	*Orbit Ball Scored* in the *Drop Tower Goal*
<SC7>	*Orbit Ball Scored* in the *Drop Zone Goal*
<SC8>	*Cargo Scored* on the *Cargo Platform Goal*
<SC9>	Ring Tunnel Pass criteria
<SC10>	*Drone Landed* on a *Field Platform*
<SC11>	*Obstacle Completion Bonus* criteria

Safety Rules	
<S1>	Be safe out there
<S2>	*Students* must be accompanied by an *Adult*
<S3>	*Drones* stay inside the *Field*
<S4>	Wear safety glasses
<S5>	Hands away when propellers are spinning

General Rules	
<G1>	Treat everyone with respect
<G2>	VEX AIR Drone Competition is a *Student*-centered program
<G3>	Use common sense
<G4>	All work must represent the skill level of the *Students* on the *Team*
<G5>	Each *Student* can only belong to one *Team*. *Students* may fulfill multiple roles on a single *Team*

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General Game Rules	
<GG1>	*Flight Team Members* fly their drones, and stay in the *Flight Station*
<GG2>	A *Team's Drone* should attend every *Match*
<GG3>	*Drones* on the *Field* must be ready to play
<GG4>	Hands out of the *Field*
<GG5>	Controllers must stay connected to the field network
<GG6>	*Match* Replays are allowed, but rare
<GG7>	*Disqualifications*
<GG8>	Timeouts
<GG9>	*Drones* must land at the end of each *Period*
<GG10>	*Disabled Drones* must wait until the next *Break*
<GG11>	Handling the *Drone* mid-*Match* is allowed only under certain circumstances
<GG12>	*Breaks* are not fixed in length

Specific Game Rules	
<SG1>	Starting a *Match*
<SG2>	Keep *Scoring Objects* in the *Field*
<SG3>	A *Drone* may carry, push, or plow an unlimited number of Scoring Objects

Inspection Rules	
<D1>	One *Drone* at the *Field*
<D2>	*Teams* must use the VEX Robotics AIR Competition *Drone* and official accessories
<D3>	*Drones* and Controllers must be updated to the latest firmware
<D4>	*Drones* must pass inspection
<D5>	One Battery at a time
<D6>	One Module at a time
<D7>	*Drone* LED Status Indicator must remain visible at all times
<D8>	Officially registered *Team* numbers must be displayed on *Drone*
<D9>	Decorations are allowed
<D10>	There is a difference between accidentally and willfully violating a *Drone* rule

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Section 1 - Introduction

Overview

This Section provides an introduction to the VEX AIR Drone Competition and this year's game, Pick & Drop.

The VEX AIR Drone Competition

Technology is reaching new heights - literally. The world of *Drones* and aerial robotics is becoming an industry in high demand. As aerial robotics "takes off" in logistics, agriculture, public safety, and other industries, the skills needed to program and operate *Drones* are becoming essential. The VEX AIR Drone Competition provides a platform for *Students* to develop these skills, introducing them to an exciting new learning experience that goes beyond the reach of the average classroom environment.

The VEX AIR Drone Competition blends cutting edge *Drone* technology with a competitive environment to provide *Students* with a hands-on, collaborative opportunity to learn about STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math). As *Students* fly, test, refine and work as a *Team* to overcome challenges, they also realize their true potential as future leaders. Through this competition, *Students* combine innovation and technical skill with communication and perseverance to make STEM education more practical, dynamic, and inspiring than ever before.

The VEX AIR Drone Competition isn't just about piloting a *Drone*, it's also about developing the mindset to solve problems in the ever-changing, modern world with confidence. The same problem solving skills that *Teams* will use while they program their *Drone* to navigate the *Field* autonomously are the skills used by professional engineers every single day. The VEX AIR Drone Competition Field becomes a training ground for the innovators of tomorrow, where every iteration and strategy decision teaches lessons that go far beyond this competition.

Within this manual, you'll find the rules that define this year's game. These rules are designed to create a fair and competitive environment that rewards creativity, precision, and strategy. Just like in the real world, constraints don't exist to limit your potential, but to inspire new approaches and bold solutions. As you embark on this aerial challenge, remember that every obstacle is an opportunity to grow. Whether you're tuning your flight controls, refining your autonomous code, or learning from unexpected setbacks, the lessons you take away will last long after the competition ends.

Good Luck, and we look forward to seeing you and your newfound skills take flight!

Sincerely,

The VEX Robotics AIR Game Design Committee

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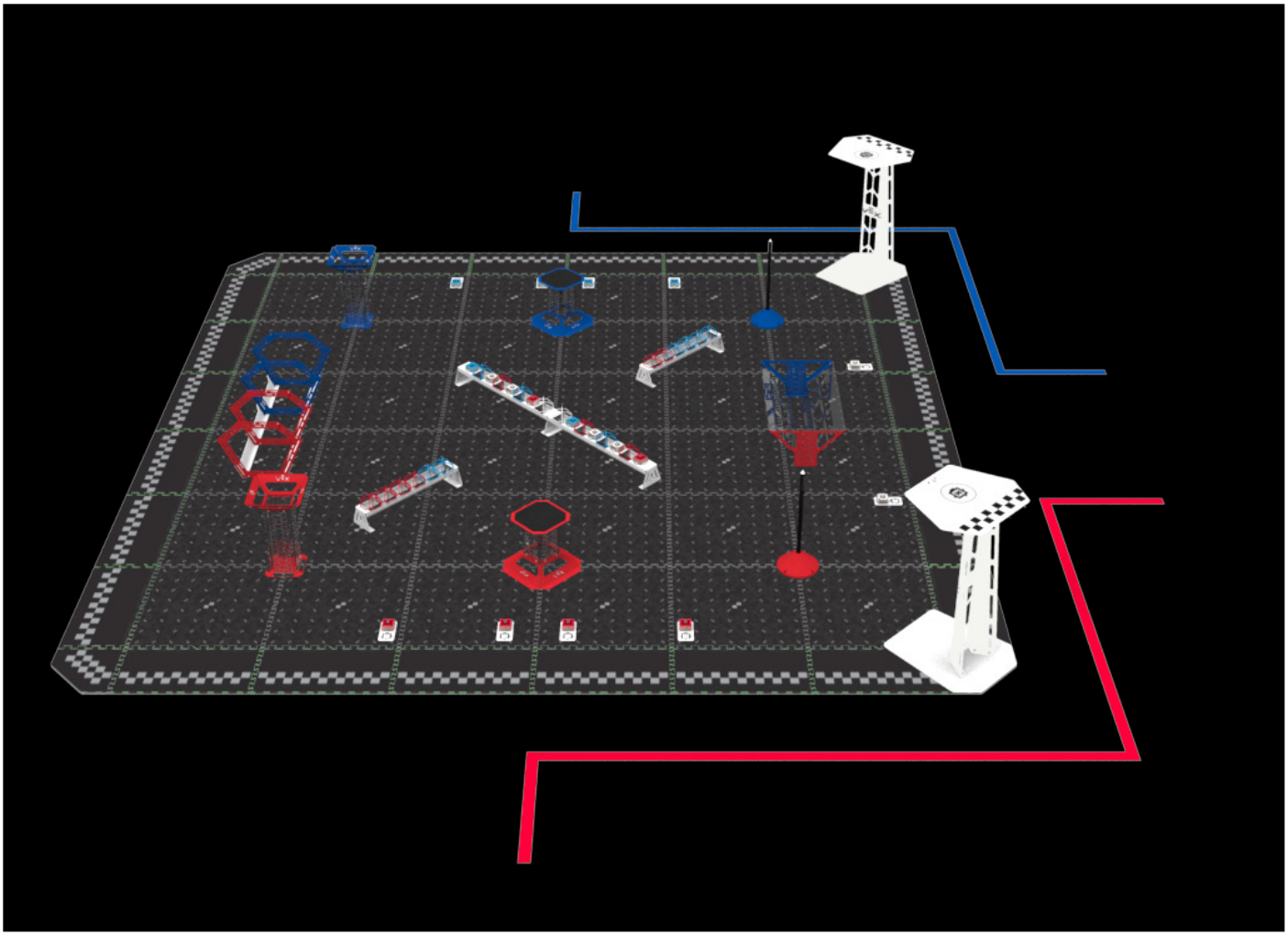
Pick & Drop: A Primer

VEX AIR Drone Competition Pick & Drop is played on a 12' x 12' square *Field*, set up as illustrated in the figures throughout.

The primary objectives of the game are to retrieve *Orbit Balls* and *Cargo* from around the *Field* and score them into and onto *Goals* positioned around the *Field*. Points are awarded based on how many *Scoring Objects* are placed in *Goals* at the end of a *Match*, if a *Drone* has passed through the *Ring Tunnel* and if they are able to land on the *Field Platforms* at the end of the *Match*.

In Teamwork *Matches*, an *Alliance* composed of two (2) *Drones* works together to score as many points as possible in a four minute long *Match*. The *Match* is broken up into 3 *Periods*, 80 seconds each, to allow *Teams* to change batteries, modules, and rescue downed *Drones*, if needed.

Teams may also compete in *Drone Skills Matches*, where one (1) *Drone* tries to score as many points as possible with a different set of rules designed to test the piloting and programming skills of the *Team*. More information will be released in a future manual update.



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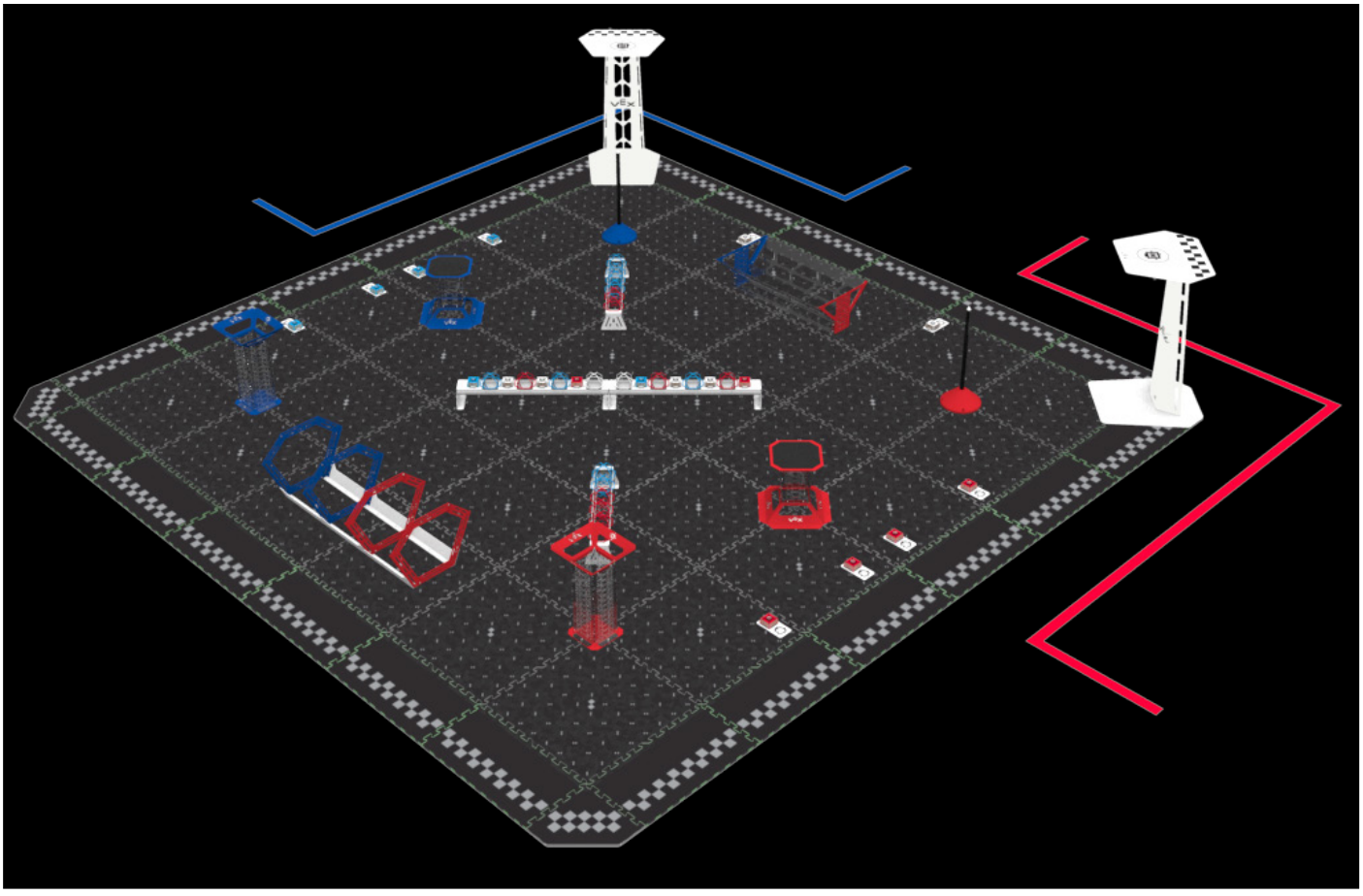
About the Game Manual

This *Game Manual* contains everything there is to know about this season's game, Pick & Drop. It is intended to be a resource for all *Teams*, Head Referees, Event Partners, and other members of the VEX AIR Drone Competition community.

The rules contained in the following pages can be thought of as "constraints" that define this game, just as engineers begin any design project by defining their constraints. At the beginning of a season, "constraints" are all we have. We don't know what the winning *Drone*, best strategy, or most-frequently violated rule will be any more than you do. Isn't that exciting?

When exploring a new game, please approach this *Game Manual* with that mentality of looking at rules as "constraints." The *Game Manual* and its appendices—and the official Q&A on events.vex.com—contains the full and complete list of constraints that are available for a competitor to strategize and configure their *Drone*.

Obviously, all *Teams* must adhere to these rules, and any stated intents of these rules. However, beyond that, there is no "right" way to play. There are no hidden restrictions, assumptions, or intended interpretations beyond what is written here. So, it is up to you, the competitor, to find the path through these constraints that best suits your *Team's* goals and ambitions.



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Updates

This manual will be updated over the course of the season at the discretion of the *Game Design Committee*. Each version is official and must be used in official VEX AIR Drone Competition events until the release of the next version, upon which the previous version becomes void.

The latest version of the *Game Manual* can always be found at: https://link.vex.com/VEX_AIR_Drone_Competition/25-26/game-manual.

There is no defined schedule of dates for updates of the *Game Manual*. Manual updates will always be released on a Thursday, no later than 5:00 PM CST (11:00 PM GMT) . These updates will be announced via the VEX Forum.

Game Manual updates are effective immediately upon release; it is every *Team's* responsibility to be familiar with all rules and updates. There are no "grace periods" if an update prohibits a previously legal part, mechanism, or strategy.

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The Q&A System

When first reviewing a new robotics game, it is natural to have questions about situations which may not be immediately clear. Navigating the *Game Manual* and seeking out answers to these questions is an important part of learning a new game. In many cases, the answer may just be in a different place than you first thought—or, if there is no rule explicitly prohibiting a gameplay strategy, then that usually means it is legal!

However, if a *Team* is still unable to find an answer to their question after closely reviewing the relevant rules, then every *Team* has the opportunity to ask for official rules interpretations and clarifications in the VEX Robotics Question & Answer System. These questions may be posted by a *Team's Adult* representative via the events.vex.com account that is associated with that *Team*.

All responses in this Q&A system should be treated as official rulings from the VEX Robotics *Game Design Committee*, and they represent the correct and official interpretation of the VEX AIR Drone Competition Rules. The Q&A system is the only source besides the *Game Manual* for official rulings and clarifications, and is functionally an extension of the *Game Manual*. Like *Game Manual* updates, Q&A rulings are effective immediately upon release.

The VEX AIR Drone Competition Question & Answer System can be found at events.vex.com.

1. Before posting on the Q&A system, be sure to review the Q&A Usage Guidelines.
2. Read and search the *Game Manual* before posting.
3. Read and search existing Q&As before posting.
4. Quote the applicable rule from the latest version of the *Game Manual* in your question.
5. Make a separate post for each question.
6. Use specific and appropriate question titles.
7. Questions will (mostly) be answered in the order they were received.
8. This system is the only source for official rules clarifications.

If there are any conflicts between the *Game Manual* and other supplemental materials, the most current version of the *Game Manual* takes precedence.

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Section 2 - The Game

Field Overview

The VEX AIR Drone Competition Pick & Drop *Field* consists of the following:

- 20 *Orbit Balls*
  - 9 Red
  - 9 Blue
  - 2 White
- 18 *Cargo*
  - 6 Red
  - 6 Blue
  - 6 White
- 3 *Racks*
  - 1 Long *Rack*
  - 2 Short *Racks*
- 2 *Drop Tower Goals*
  - 1 Red *Drop Tower*
  - 1 Blue *Drop Tower*
- 2 *Cargo Platform Goals*
  - 1 Red *Cargo Platform*
  - 1 Blue *Cargo Platform*
- 2 *Pole Goals*
  - 1 Red *Pole Goal*
  - 1 Blue *Pole Goal*
- 1 *Drop Zone Goal*
- 2 *Field Platforms*
- 10 *Cargo* Tile Plates

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Note: The illustrations in this section of the Game Manual are intended to provide a general visual understanding of the game.

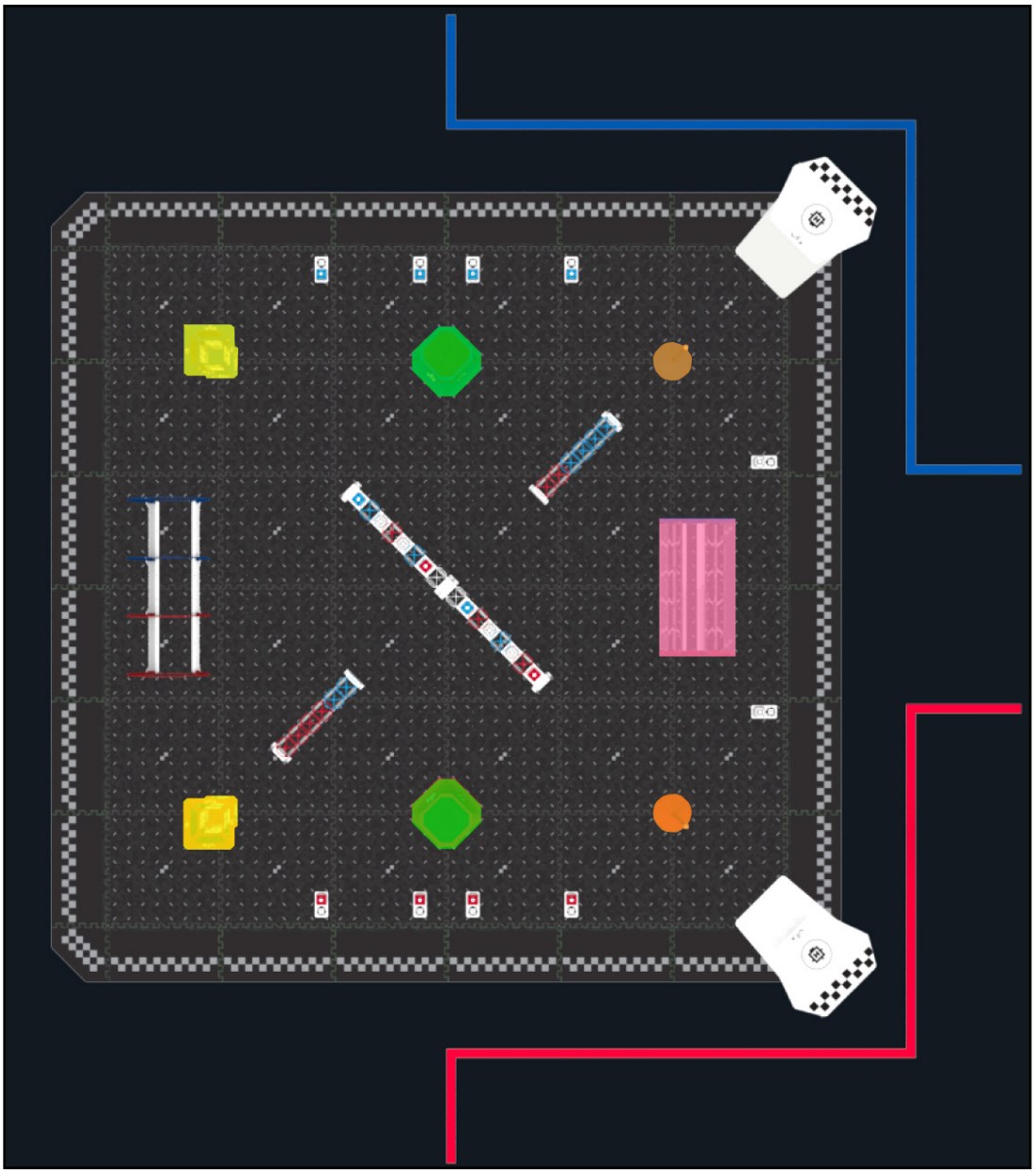


Figure FO-1: *An overhead view of the VEX AIR Drone Competition Pick & Drop Field, with the Drop Tower Goals (yellow), Cargo Platform Goals (green), Pole Goals (orange), and Drop Zone Goal (pink) highlighted.*

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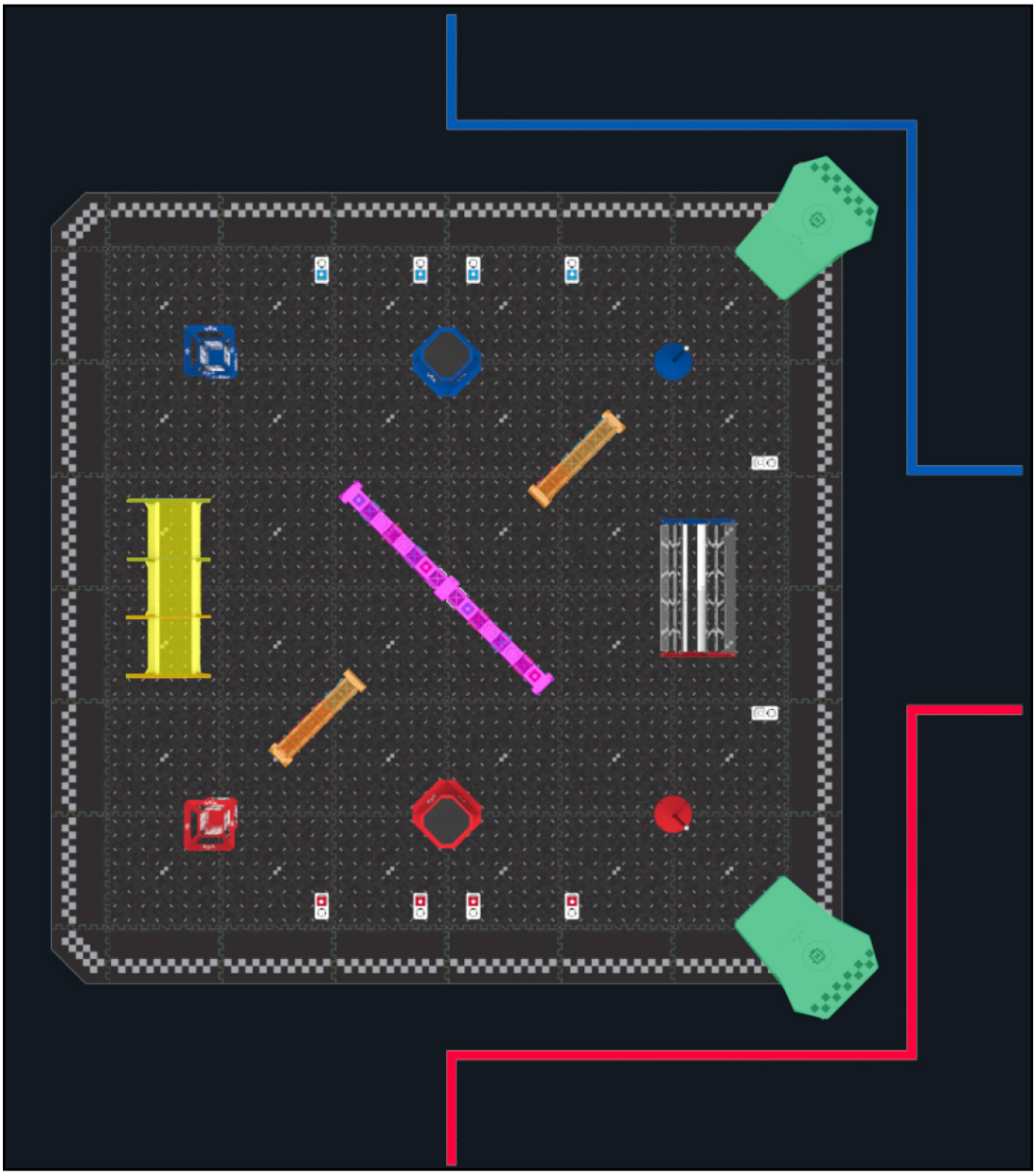


Figure FO-2: *An overhead view of the VEX AIR Drone Competition Pick & Drop Field, with the Ring Tunnel (yellow), Field Platforms (green), Short Racks (orange), and Long Rack (pink) highlighted.*

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Red Orbit Ball

Blue Orbit Ball

White Orbit Ball

Red Cargo

Blue Cargo

White Cargo

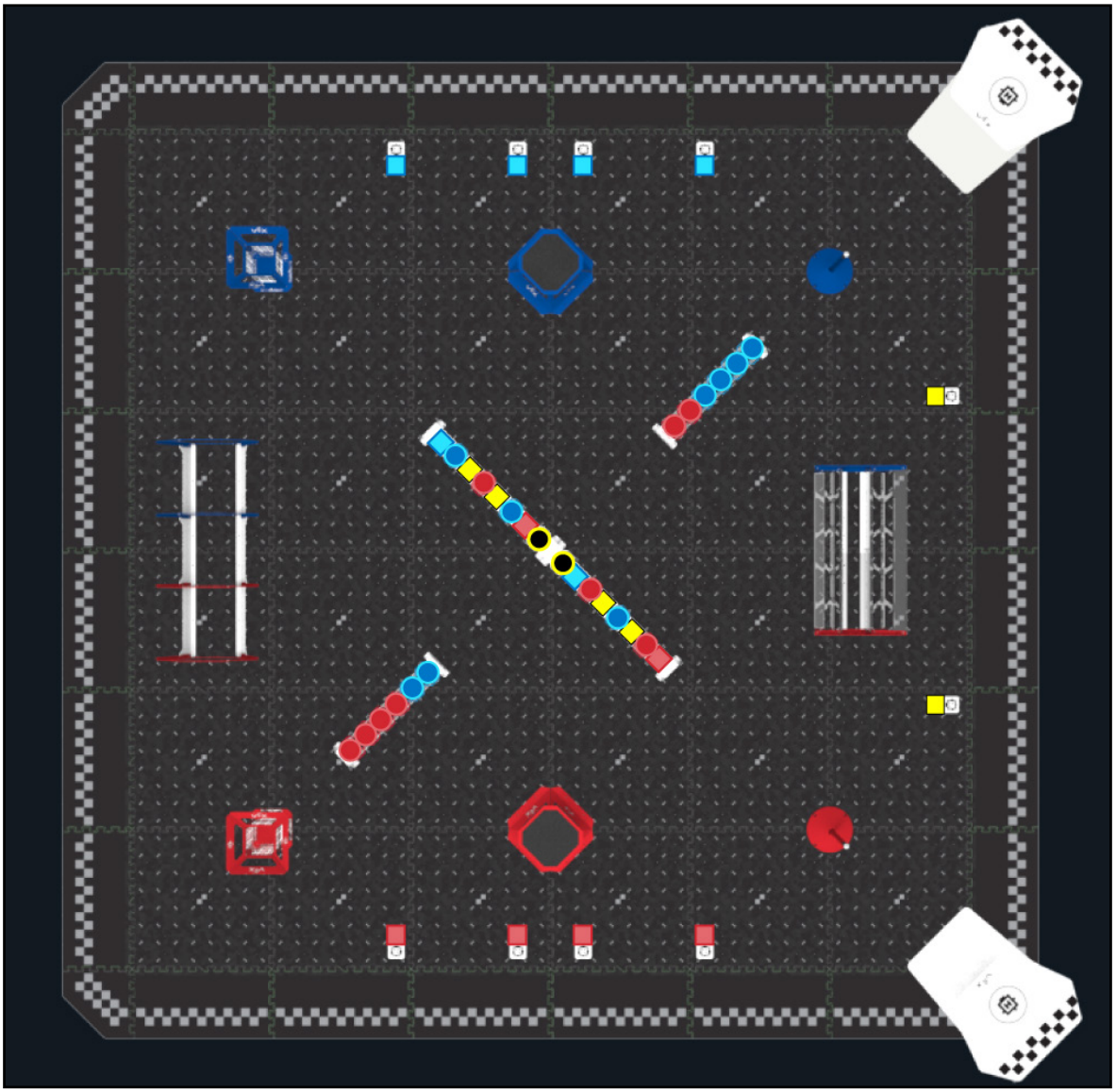


Figure FO-3: *An overhead view of the VEX AIR Drone Competition Pick & Drop Field, with the Orbit Balls and Cargo highlighted. See the key above.*

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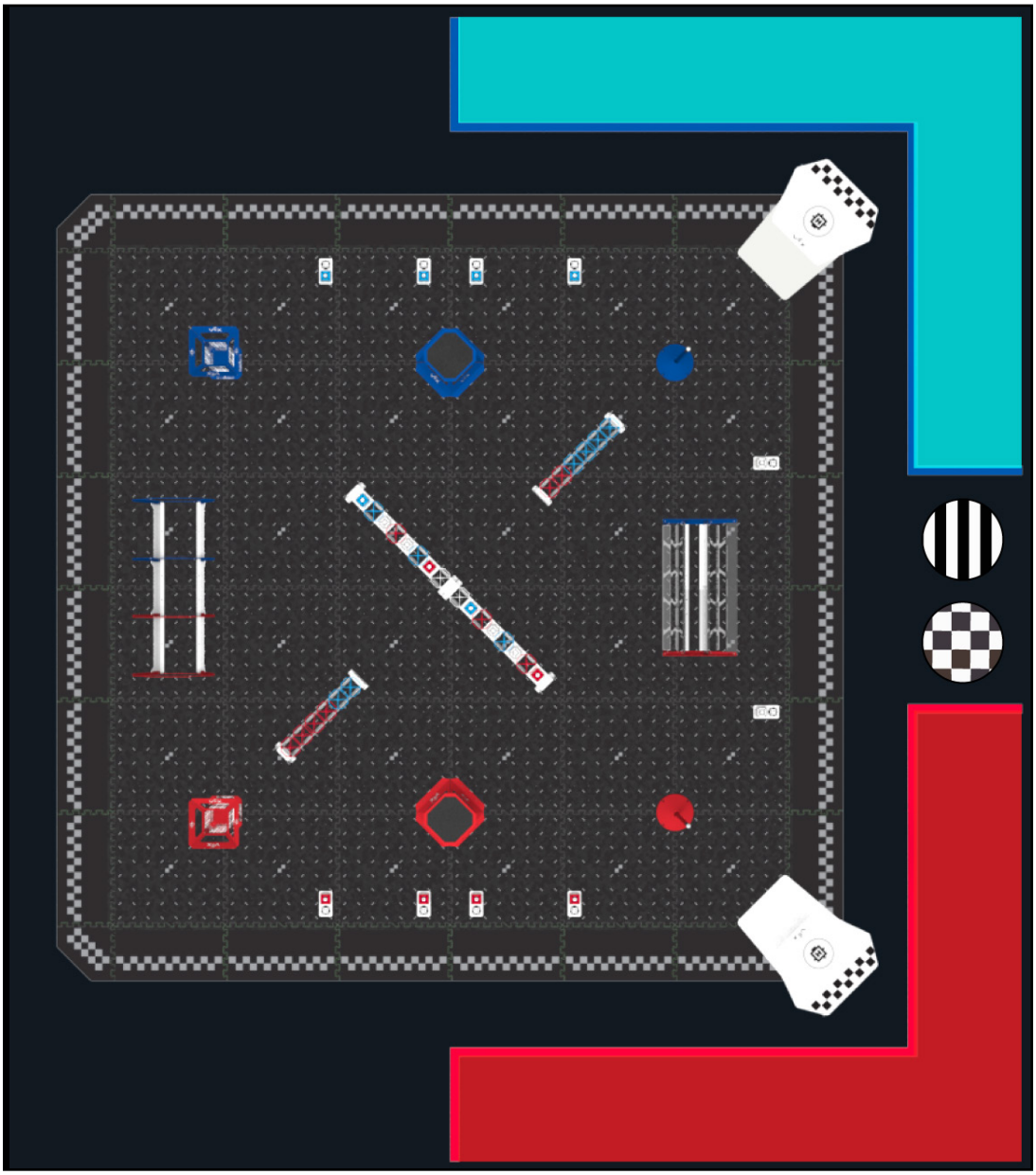


Figure FO-4: *The recommended locations for where Head Referee (black and white stripes), Scorekeeper Referees (black and white checkerboard), and Flight Team Members (red and blue) should stand.*

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General Definitions

Adult - Anyone who is not a *Student* or another defined term (e.g., Head Referee).

Alliance - A pre-assigned grouping of two (2) *Teams* that are paired together during a given *Match*.

Alliance Score - Points scored in a *Match* that are awarded to both *Teams*.

Border - The outer perimeter of the *Field*, comprising twenty-four (24) *Border* foam *Field Tiles* and four (4) corner foam *Field Tiles*.

Break - A Pause between periods to allow *Teams* to change batteries, modules, and re-strategize.

Disablement - A penalty applied to a *Team* for a safety *Violation*. A *Team* that receives a *Disablement* is not allowed to operate their *Drone* for the remainder of the *Period*, and the *Flight Team Member*(s) will be asked to place their controller(s) on the ground or *Field Platform*. A *Disablement* is not the same as a *Disqualification*.

Disqualification - A penalty applied to a *Team* for a rule *Violation*. If a *Team* receives a *Disqualification* in a *Match*, the Head Referee will notify the *Team* of their *Violation* at the end of the *Match*. At the Head Referee's discretion, repeated *Violations* and/or *Disqualifications* for a single *Team* may lead to its *Disqualification* for the entire event.

Drone - An official VEX Robotics AIR Competition *Drone*, consisting of a *Drone*, a legal battery, a legal module, legal motors, and legal propellers.

Field - The entire playing *Field*, comprising the *Field Tiles* and the *Border*.

Field Element - The *Field*, *Goals*, *Racks*, *Field Platforms* and all supporting structures or accessories (such as field monitors, etc.).

Field Tiles - The interior flat part of the playing *Field*, made up of six (6) foam *Field Tiles* wide by six (6) foam *Field Tiles* long (totaling thirty-six (36) foam *Field Tiles*).

Flight Team Member(s) - A *Student* who stands in the *Flight Station* during a *Match*. *Adults* are not allowed to be *Flight Team Member*(s).

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Flight Station - A region beside the *Field* where the *Pilot* and *Flight Team Members* must remain during their *Match* unless legally interacting with their *Drone*. The *Flight Stations* are represented by the red and blue lines in Figure FO-4.

Game Design Committee - The creators of VEX AIR Drone Competition Pick & Drop, and authors of this *Game Manual*. The *Game Design Committee* is the only official source for rules clarifications and Q&A responses.

Game Manual - This document, containing the official rules, definitions, and specifications for VEX AIR Drone Competition Pick & Drop.

Match - A set time period during which *Teams* play a defined version of Pick & Drop to earn points.

Match Type	Participants	Pertinent Rules	Length
Teamwork Match	One *Alliance*, on one *Field*, made up of two *Teams*, each with one *Drone* each	Scoring ("SC"), General Game ("GG") and Specific Game ("SG") sections	Four Minutes (4:00) (Three One Minute and Twenty (1:20) Second *Periods*, concurrently) (not including *Breaks*)
Drone Skills Match	One *Team*, with one *Drone*	More information coming in a future update.	

Period - A distinct phase of a *Teamwork Match* lasting eighty seconds (80s). Each *Teamwork Match* consists of three (3) *Periods*.

Pilot - A *Student Team* member who stands in the *Flight Station* and is responsible for operating and controlling that *Team's Drone* for an entire *Match*. There is no requirement that the same *Student*(s) serve as *Pilot* in multiple *Matches*.

Student - A person is considered a *Student* if they meet both of the following criteria:

1. Anyone who is earning or has earned credit toward a secondary school (i.e., high school) diploma, certificate, or other equivalent during the six (6) months preceding the VEX Robotics World Championship. Courses earning credits leading up to high school would satisfy this requirement.
2. Anyone born after May 1, 2006 (i.e., who will be 19 or younger at the 2026 VEX Robotics World Championships). Eligibility may also be granted based on a disability that has delayed education by at least one year.

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Team - One or more *Students* make up a *Team*.

- *Teams* may be associated with schools, community/youth organizations, or groups of neighborhood *Students*.

Violation - The act of breaking a rule in the *Game Manual*.

- **Minor Violation** - A *Violation* which does not result in a *Disqualification*.
  - Accidental, momentary, or otherwise non-*Score Affecting Violations* are usually *Minor Violations*.
  - *Minor Violations* usually result in a verbal notification from the Head Referee during the *Match*, which should serve to inform the *Team* that a rule is being Violated before it escalates to a *Major Violation*.

- **Major Violation** - A *Violation* which results in a *Disqualification*.
  - Unless otherwise noted in a rule, all *Score Affecting Violations* are *Major Violations*.
  - If noted in the rule, egregious, intentional, or strategic *Violations* may also be *Major Violations*.
  - Multiple *Minor Violations* within a *Match* or tournament may escalate to a *Major Violation* at the Head Referee's discretion or as specified in a rule.

- **Score Affecting** - A *Violation* which improves an *Alliance's* score at the end of a *Match*.
  - Multiple *Violations* within a *Match* can cumulatively become *Score Affecting*.
  - When evaluating whether a *Violation* was *Score Affecting*, Head Referees will focus primarily on any *Drone* actions that were directly related to the *Violation*.
  - Determining whether a *Violation* was *Score Affecting* can only be done once the *Match* is complete and the scores have been calculated.

Some rules include Violation Notes in *red italicized text* to denote special circumstances or provide additional clarifications. If no *Violation* Notes are found in a given rule, then it should be assumed that the default definitions above apply.

To determine whether a *Violation* may have been *Score Affecting*, check whether the *Violation* directly contributed to increasing the score of the *Match*. If it did not increase the *Alliance's* score, then the *Violation* was not *Score Affecting*, and it was very likely a *Minor Violation*.

See the following flowchart for more information.

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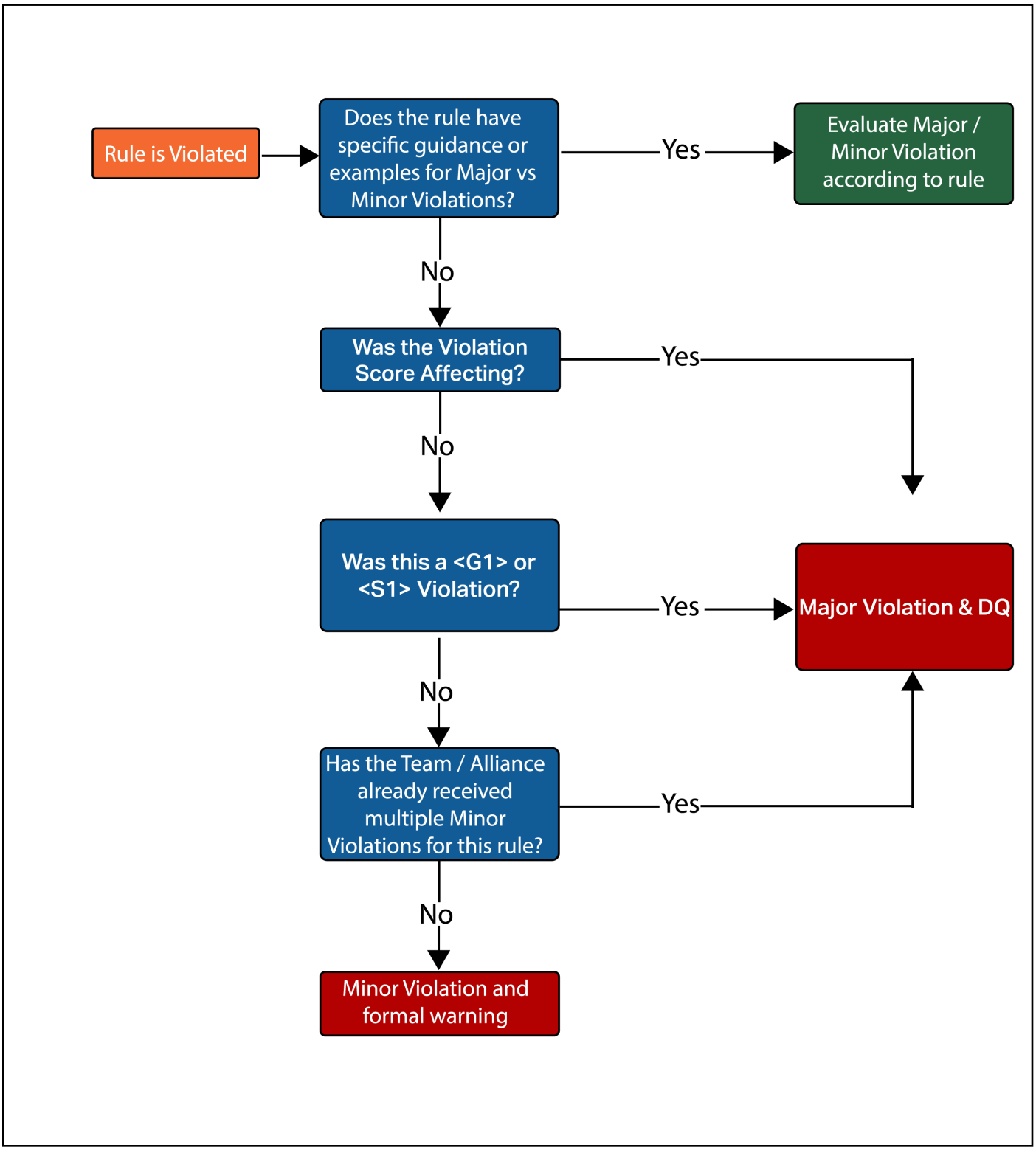


Figure V-1: *The process for determining whether or not an infraction should result in a Major Violation or Minor Violation.*

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Game-Specific Definitions

Field Platform - A *Field Element* that *Drones* must take off from at the beginning of the *Match* and optionally land on at the end of a *Match*.

Goal - A place where *Scoring Objects* can be placed. There are four (4) varieties of *Goal* in VEX AIR Drone Competition Pick & Drop:

- **Drop Tower** - A plastic and metal structure with a funneled top that is mounted to the *Field*. This *Goal* is taller than it is wide. There are two (2) *Drop Tower Goals* on a *Field*. Each *Drop Tower Goal* is assigned a color, Red or Blue, determined by the color of its funnel and base.
- **Drop Zone** - A plastic and metal structure with a funneled top that is mounted to the *Field*. This *Goal* is wider than it is tall. There is one (1) *Drop Zone Goal* on the *Field*.
- **Cargo Platform** - A plastic and metal structure with a flat plate mounted on top, covered with loop tape. There are two (2) *Cargo Platform Goals* on a *Field*. Each *Cargo Platform* goal is assigned a color, Red or Blue, determined by the color of its top plate and base.
- **Pole Goal** - A Pole, composed of a vertical PVC Pipe with a conical top cap, placed inside of a conical base that is mounted to the *Field*. There are two (2) *Pole Goals* on a *Field*. Each *Pole Goal* is assigned a color, Red or Blue, determined by the color of its base.



Figure G-1: *A Drop Tower Goal*



Figure G-2: *A Drop Zone Goal*

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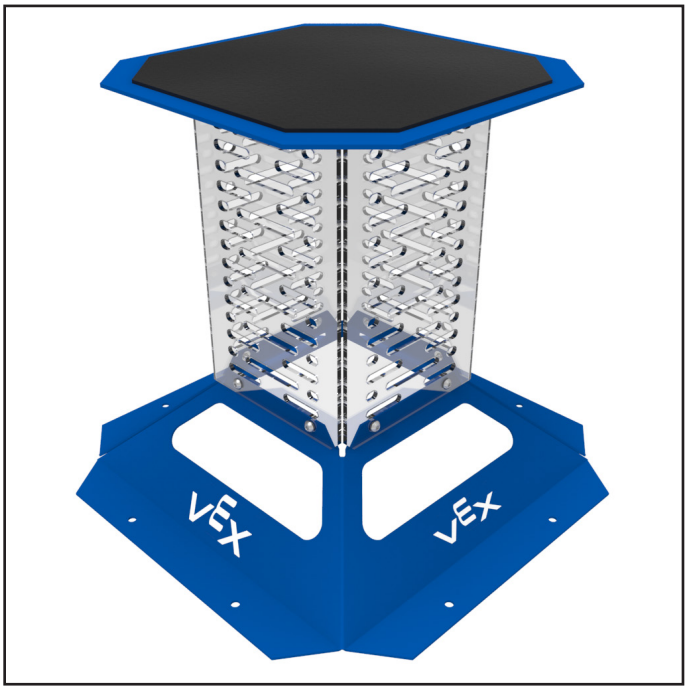


Figure G-3 *A Cargo Platform Goal*

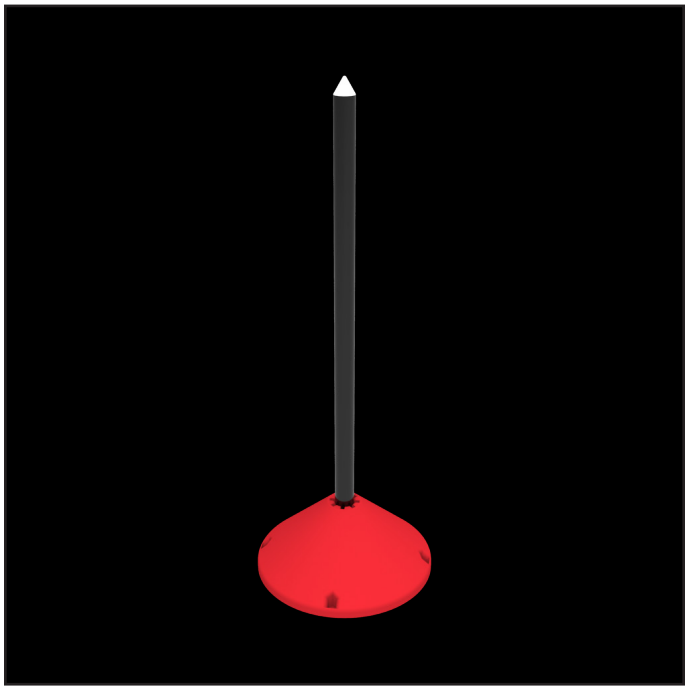


Figure G-4: *A Pole Goal*

Landed - A *Drone* Status. See <SC10>.

Obstacle Completion Bonus - A Bonus awarded to a *Drone* that has completed both a Ring Tunnel Pass and *Landed* on a *Field Platform* at the end of the *Match*.

Rack - A *Field Element* that *Scoring Objects* begin the *Match* on. There are two types of *Racks*, Long and Short. Long *Racks* hold *Orbit Balls* and *Cargo*, Short *Racks* only hold *Orbit Balls*.

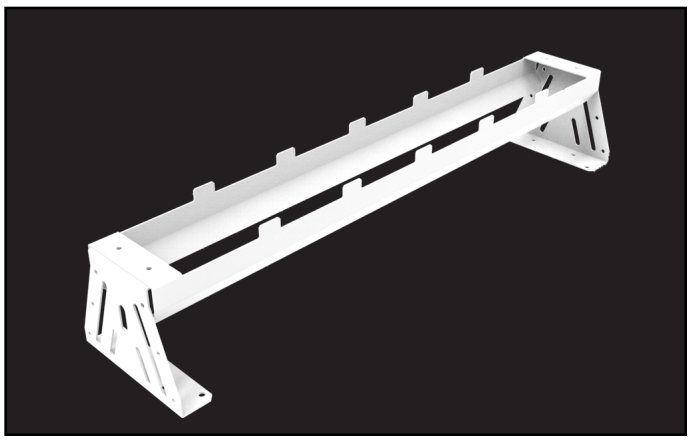


Figure R-1: *A Short Rack*

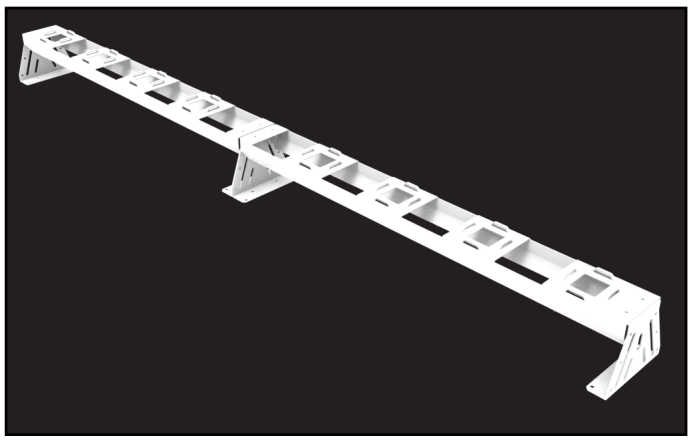


Figure R-2: *A Long Rack*

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Ring Tunnel - A *Field Element* made up of a series of rings intended for *Drones* to fly through at the end of the *Match*.

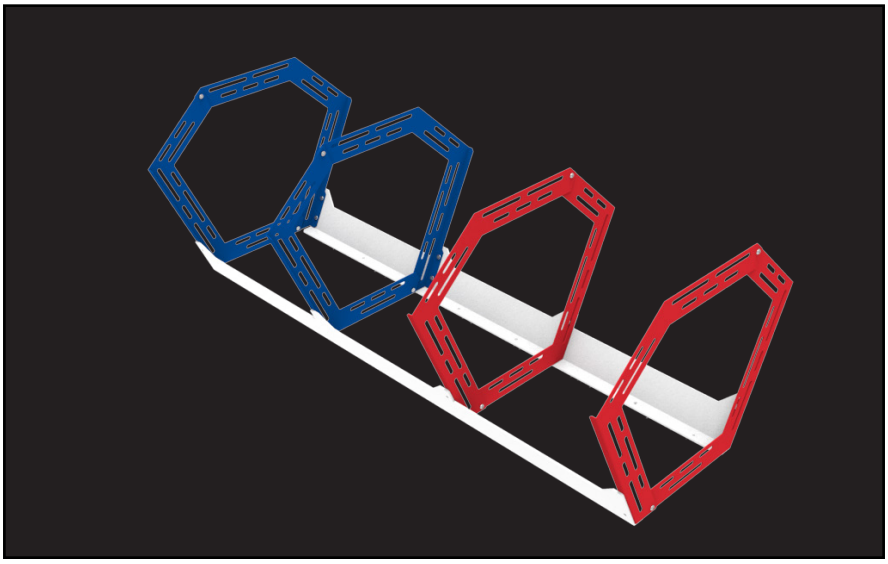


Figure RT-1: *A Ring Tunnel*

Scored - A *Scoring Object* status. See the Scoring section.

Scoring Object - An object that is used to play the game. There are two types of *Scoring Objects* in Pick & Drop:

- **Orbit Ball** - A Red, White or Blue *Scoring Object* made of three interlocking plastic rings, approximately 4″ in diameter.
- **Cargo** - A Red, White or Blue square *Scoring Object* that expands when picked up to the approximate size of 2.2″ x 2.2″ x 2.75″ (55mm x 55mm x 70mm).

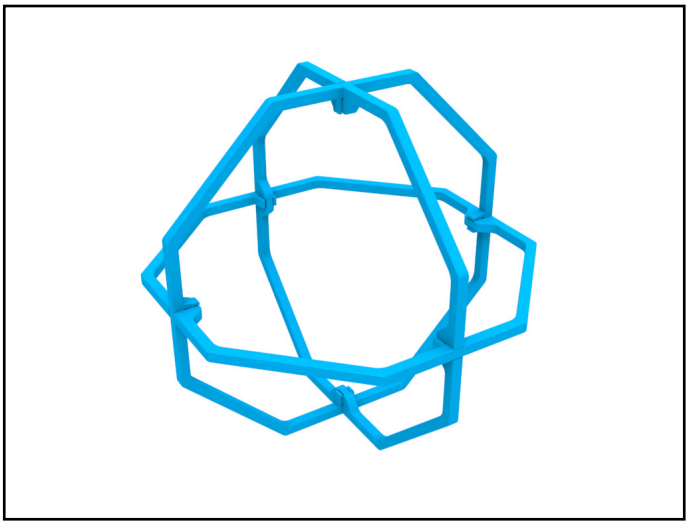


Figure SO-1: *An Orbit Ball*



Figure SO-2: *Cargo*

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Scoring

Each *Orbit Ball Scored* in *Drop Zone Goal*	1 Point
Each *Orbit Ball Scored* in matching color *Drop Tower Goal*	4 Points
Each *Orbit BallScored* in non-matching color *Drop TowerGoal*	2 Points
Each *Orbit Ball Scored* on matching color *Pole Goal*	5 Points
Each *Orbit Ball Scored* on non-matching color *Pole Goal*	3 Points
Each *Cargo Scored* on a matching color *Cargo Platform Goal*	6 Points
Each *Cargo Scored* on a non-matching *Cargo Platform Goal*	4 Points
Each unique *Goal* containing a *Scored Scoring Object*	10 Points
Each Ring Tunnel Pass	5 Points
Each *Drone Landed* on a *Field Platform*	5 Points
Each *Obstacle Completion Bonus*	5 Points

<SC1> **All scoring statuses for Scoring Objects, Goals, and Landed Drones are evaluated after the Match ends.** Once all *Scoring Objects*, *Field Elements*, and *Drones* on the *Field* come to rest.

a. Referees should avoid contacting or moving *Scoring Objects* as much as possible while evaluating Scoring statuses. If a *Scoring Object* must be moved to evaluate the status of another object, its status must be agreed upon by all *Teams* and the Head Referee, and noted or recorded, before it is moved.

<SC2> **Scoring status for Ring Tunnel Passes is evaluated during the last 20 seconds of the Match.** Referees must count Ring Tunnel Passes while the *Match* is being played, at the time the pass(es) occur.

Each *Match* is required to have a Head Referee and at least one Scorekeeper Referee. Exact scoring processes may vary depending on event staff preference and/or resources, and should be communicated to all *Teams* before *Matches* begin. Our recommended starting point is as follows:

a. The Head Referee stands between the two *Field Platforms* and observes overall gameplay.

b. The Scorekeeper Referee stands besides the Head Referee, but focuses on the *Ring Tunnel* when the end of the *Match* nears, preparing to count any Ring Tunnel Passes.

c. Scorekeeper Referee and *Pilots* confirm Ring Tunnel Passes with each other in real time, as they occur, either verbally or with agreed upon signals.

<SC3> **All scoring statuses are evaluated visually by a Head Referee**, to the best of their ability within the context of a given *Match*/event.

a. Referees and other event staff are not allowed to review any videos or pictures from the *Match*.

b. If there is a concern regarding the score of a *Match*, only the *Flight Team Members* from that *Match*, not an *Adult*, may share their questions with the Head Referee.

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<SC4> **White Scoring Objects are wildcards.** White *Scoring Objects Scored* into a *Goal* are considered to be *Scored* in a matching color *Goal*, if applicable.

<SC5> **An Orbit Ball is considered Scored on the Pole Goal if it meets all of the following criteria:**

a. The *Orbit Ball* is not in contact with any VEX Robotics AIR Competition *Drones*.

b. The Pole is at least partially within the volume defined by the outer edges of the *Orbit Ball*. (See Figure SC5-1.)

<SC6> **An Orbit Ball is considered Scored in the Drop Tower Goal if it meets all of the following criteria:**

a. The *Orbit Ball* is not in contact with any VEX Robotics AIR Competition *Drones*.

b. The *Orbit Ball* is at least partially within the volume of the *Drop Tower Goal*. (See Figure SC6-1.)

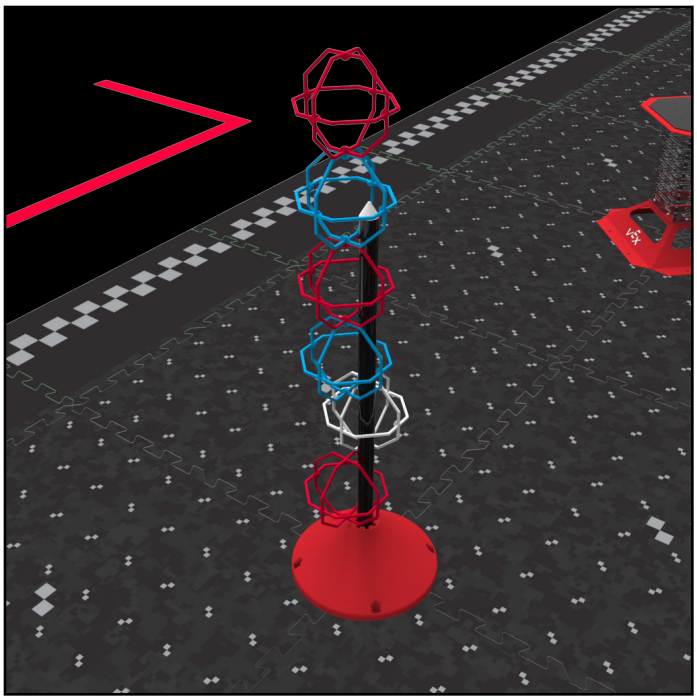


Figure SC5-1: *The top-most Red Orbit Ball would not be considered Scored, as the pole is not within the volume of the Ball. All other Orbit Balls would be considered Scored.*

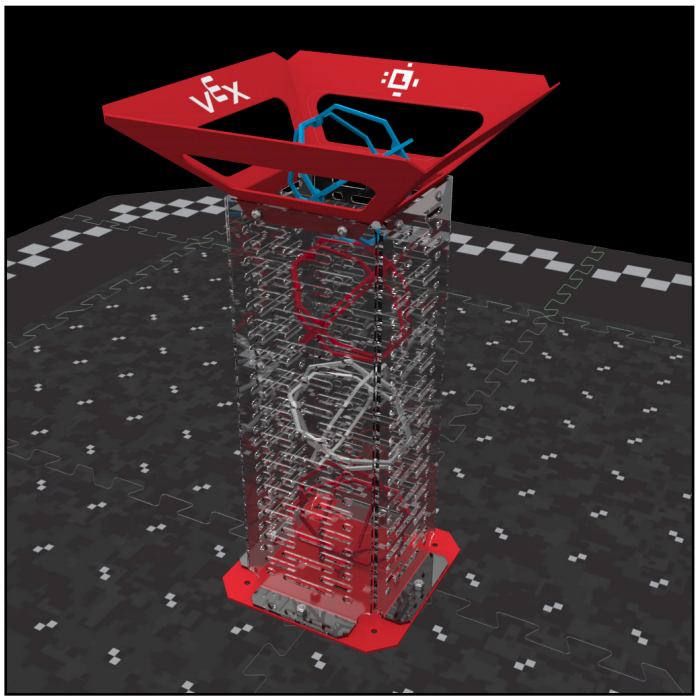


Figure SC6-1: *All four Orbit Balls in this Drop Tower Goal would be considered Scored, as they are all at least partially within the volume of the Goal.*

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<SC7> An Orbit Ball is considered Scored in the Drop Zone Goal if it meets all of the following criteria:

a. The *Orbit Ball* is not in contact with any VEX Robotics AIR Competition *Drones*.

b. The *Orbit Ball* is at least partially within the volume of the *Drop Zone Goal*. (See Figure SC7-1.)

<SC8> Cargo is considered Scored on the Cargo Platform Goal if it meets all of the following criteria:

a. The *Cargo* is not in contact with any VEX Robotics AIR Competition *Drones*.

b. The *Cargo* is supported entirely by the *Cargo Platform Goal* and/or other *Cargo* meeting the <SC8> criteria. (See Figure SC8-1.)

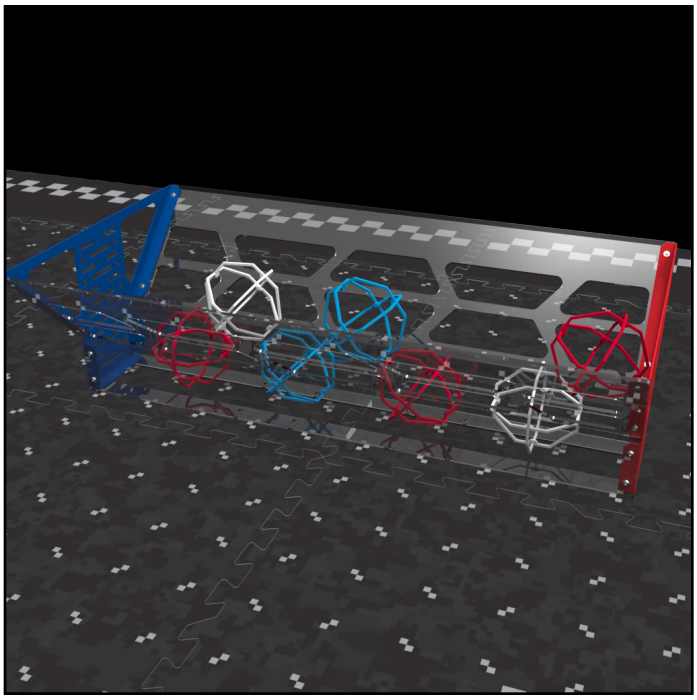


Figure SC7-1: *All seven Orbit Balls in this Drop Zone Goal would be considered Scored, as they are all at least partially within the volume of the Goal.*

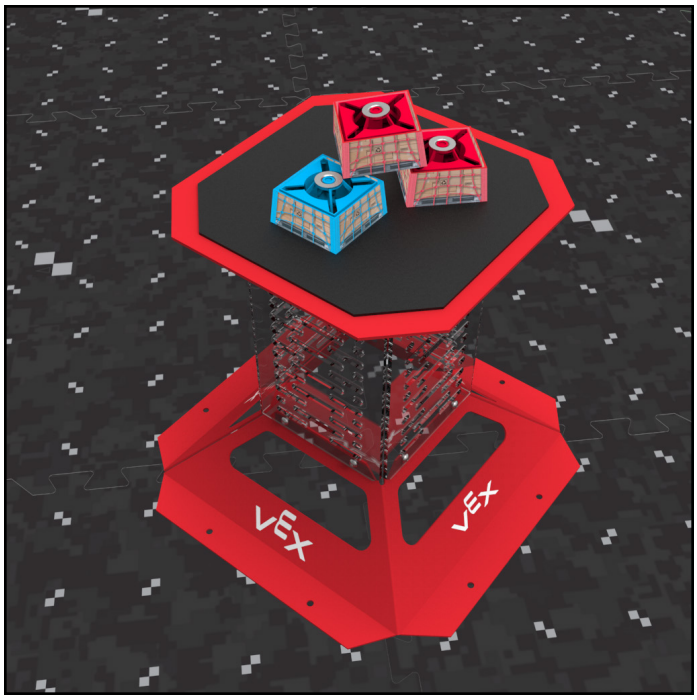


Figure SC8-1: *All of these Cargo would be considered Scored, as they are all supported by either the Cargo Platform Goal or another Cargo that is fully supported by the Goal.*

<SC9> A Drone is considered to have completed a Ring Tunnel Pass if the following criteria is met:

a. The *Drone* travels sequentially through all four Rings of the *Ring Tunnel*, in order from left to right or right to left, during the last 20 seconds of the *Match*.

b. The *Drone* does not contact the *Field Tiles* before traveling through all four Rings.

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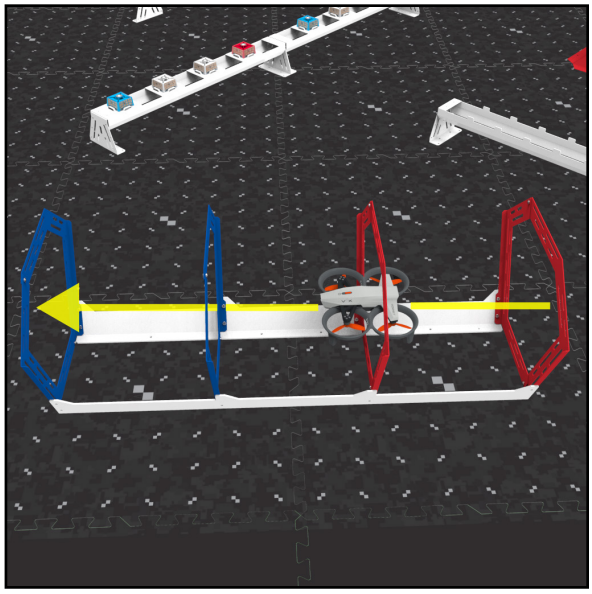


Figure SC9-1: *This Drone is in the process of completing a Ring Tunnel Pass.*

<SC10> A Drone is considered to have Landed on a Field Platform if it meets the following criteria:

a. The *Drone* is not contacting the *Field Tiles*, another *Field Element*, or a *Scoring Object*.

b. All four (4) *Drone* feet are in contact with the top plate of the same *Field Platform* they began the *Match* on, at the end of the *Match*.

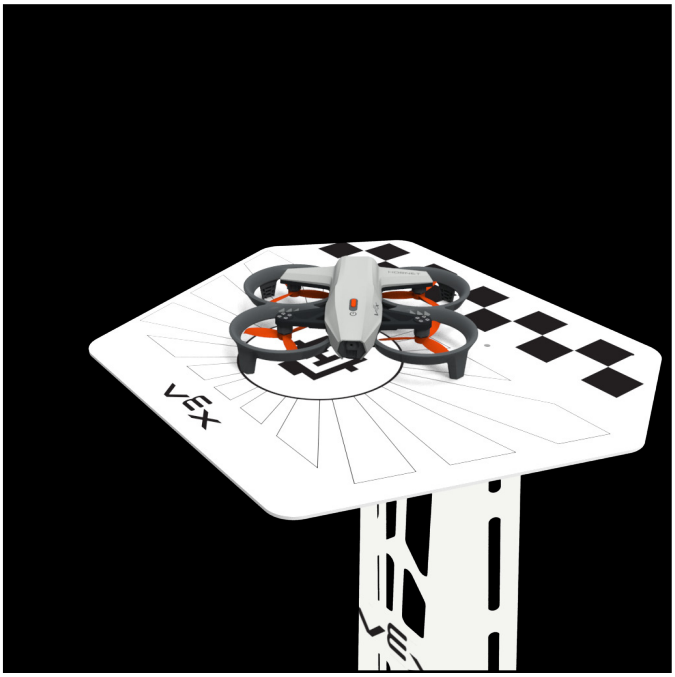


Figure SC10-1: *This Drone would be considered Landed because all four Drone feet are in contact with the top of the Field Platform.*

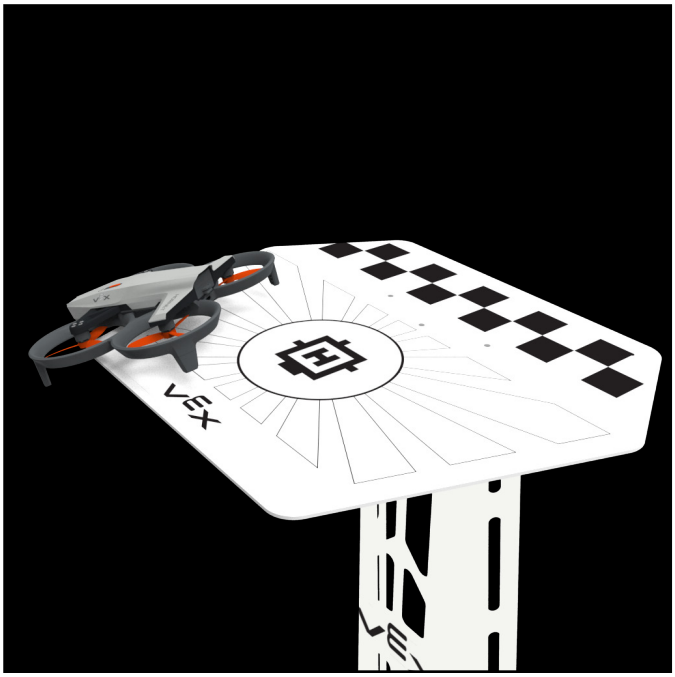


Figure SC10-2: *This Drone would be not considered Landed because all four Drone feet are not in contact with the top of the Field Platform.*

<SC11> An Obstacle Completion Bonus is awarded for each Drone that completed both a Ring Tunnel Pass and Landed on a Field Platform at the end of the Match.

a. The same *Drone* must complete both tasks in order to earn this bonus.

b. Each *Drone* can earn a maximum of one (1) *Obstacle Completion Bonus* per *Match*.

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Safety Rules

<S1> Be safe out there. If at any time the *Drone* operation or *Team* actions are deemed unsafe or have damaged a *Field Element*, *Scoring Object*, or the *Field*, the offending *Team* may receive a *Disablement* and/or *Disqualification* at the discretion of the Head Referee. The *Drone* will require re-inspection as described in rule <D4> before it may take the *Field* again.

Violation Notes: Major <S1> Violations should be reported to and/or discussed with the Event Partner during the event, and should be reported to VEX Robotics following the event.

<S2> Students must be accompanied by an Adult. No *Student* may attend a VEX AIR Drone Competition event without a responsible *Adult* supervising them. The *Adult* must obey all rules and be careful to not violate *Student*-centered policies outlined in <G2>, but must be present for the full duration of the event in the case of an emergency. *Violations* of this rule may result in removal from the event.

Violation Notes: <S2> Violations should be reported to the Event Partner during the event, and should be reported to VEX Robotics following the event.

<S3> Drones stay inside the field. If a *Drone* is completely out-of-bounds (outside the *Field*), it will receive a *Disablement*.

<S4> Wear safety glasses. All *Flight Team Members* must wear safety glasses or glasses with side shields while in the *Flight Stations* during *Matches*.

<S5> Hands away when propellers are spinning. If the *Drone's* propellers are spinning, *Flight Team Members* are not permitted to touch or handle the *Drone*. *Teams* must wait until the propellers stop spinning and the *Drone* Status Indicator displays that the propellers are locked.

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General Rules

<G1> Treat everyone with respect. All *Teams* are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful and professional manner while competing in VEX AIR Drone Competition events. If a *Team* or any of its members (*Students* or any *Adults* associated with the *Team*) are disrespectful or uncivil to event staff, volunteers, or fellow competitors, they may receive a *Disqualification* from a current or upcoming *Match*. *Team* conduct pertaining to <G1> may also impact a *Team's* eligibility for judged awards. Repeated or extreme violations of <G1> could result in a *Team* being *Disqualified* from an entire event, depending on the severity of the situation.

We all can contribute to creating a fun and inclusive event experience for all event attendees. Some examples include:

When dealing with difficult and stressful situations, it is…

- Okay for *Teams* to be gracious and supportive when your *Alliance* partner makes a mistake.
- Not okay for *Teams* to harass, tease, or be disrespectful to your *Alliance* partner when a *Match* does not go your way.

When a *Team* does not understand a *Match* ruling or score, it is…

- Okay for *Flight Team Members* to consult with a Head Referee to discuss a ruling in a calm and respectful manner.
- Not okay for *Flight Team Members* to continue arguing with the Head Referees after a decision has been finalized, or for *Adults* to approach a Head Referee with ruling/scoring concerns.

When *Teams* are getting ready for an upcoming *Match*, it is…

- Okay for *Teams* in an *Alliance* to develop a game strategy that utilizes the strengths of both *Drones* to cooperatively solve the game.
- Not okay for *Teams* in an *Alliance* to intentionally play beneath their abilities to manipulate the *Match* results.

A *Major Violation* of <G1> can result in *Disqualification* from a current *Match*, an upcoming *Match*, an entire event, or (in extreme cases) an entire competition season depending on the severity.

Violation Notes: Any Violation of <G1> may be considered Major Violations and should be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Teams at risk of a Major Violation of <G1> due to multiple disrespectful or uncivil behaviors will usually receive a "final warning", although the Head Referee is not required to provide one. All <G1> Major Violations/Disqualifications should be reported to and/or discussed with the Event Partner during the event, and should be reported to VEX Robotics following the event.

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<G2> VEX AIR Drone Competition is a student-centered program. *Adults* should not make decisions about the *Drone's* configuration, code, or gameplay, and should not provide an unfair advantage by providing 'help' that is beyond the *Students'* independent abilities. *Students* must be prepared to demonstrate an active understanding of their *Drone's* strategy and programming to judges or event staff.

Some amount of *Adult* mentorship, teaching, and/or guidance is an expected and encouraged facet of VEX competitions. No one is born an expert in robotics! However, obstacles should always be viewed as teaching opportunities, not problems for an *Adult* to solve for the *Team*.

When a *Team* encounters a complex coding concept, it is…

- Okay for an *Adult* to guide a *Student* through a flowchart to understand its logic.
- Not okay for an *Adult* to write a premade command for that *Student* to copy/paste.

During *Match* play, it is…

- Okay for an *Adult* to provide cheerful, positive encouragement as a spectator.
- Not okay for an *Adult* to explicitly shout step-by-step commands from the audience.

Violation Notes: Potential Violations of this rule will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. By definition, all Violations of this rule become Score Affecting as soon as a Drone which was built or coded by an Adult wins a Match. All reported and/or suspected <G2> Violations should be reported to the Event Partner during the event, and should be reported to VEX Robotics following the event.

<G3> Use common sense. When reading and applying the various rules in this document, please remember that common sense always applies in the VEX AIR Drone Competition.

For example…

- If there is an obvious typographical error (such as "per <D5>" instead of "per <G5>"), this does not mean that the error should be taken literally until corrected in a future update.
- When in doubt, if there is no rule prohibiting an action, it is generally legal. However, if you have to ask whether a given action would violate <S1> or <G1>, then that's probably a good indication that it is outside the spirit of the competition.
- In general, *Teams* will be given the "benefit of the doubt" in the case of accidental or edge-case rules infractions. However, there is a limit to this allowance, and repeated or strategic infractions will still be penalized.
- This rule also applies to *Drone* rules. If a component's legality cannot be easily/intuitively discerned by the *Drone* rules as written, then *Teams* should expect additional scrutiny during inspection. There is a difference between "creativity" and "lawyering." Basically, if there's not a rule that makes a part legal, it's not allowed.

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<G4> All work must represent the skill level of the Students on the Team. The *Team's Drone*, coding, strategy, and ongoing work must represent the skill level of the *Students* currently on the *Team*.

a. *Teams* must avoid academic dishonesty and should not copy software or a strategy that has been provided for them. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of instructions, pictures & videos, notebooks, and/or any other documentation useful to the development process provided by anyone that is not a *Student* on the *Team* (including *Students* on another *Team*).

b. *Teams* may be inspired by other *Teams*, and use an idea from someone else to spark innovation, but are expected to document and demonstrate this evidence of iteration. *Teams* are required to present this evidence if asked to do so by a *Drone* inspector, Head Referee, Event Partner, or Judge.

   i. Using ideas from another as a starting point is acceptable if the *Team* is capable of demonstrating evidence of iteration, innovation, and/or modification that makes the design uniquely their own. Documentation should clearly demonstrate the idea that was used for inspiration, and how it was changed for the final implementation on the *Team's Drone*.

   ii. Failure to demonstrate evidence of iteration, innovation, and/or modification will result in a *Violation*.

c. *Teams* may use code (e.g., VEXcode configurations, etc.) provided by VEX Robotics,but are encouraged to use these only as a starting point that *Students* modify, improve, or replace as their skills increase.

d. This rule still applies to *Teams* within the same school, organization, or club. Code sets that are identical or substantially similar to one another across *Teams* within the same school/organization/club will be considered in *Violation* of this rule, regardless of whether they compete in the same or different events.

It is the responsibility of each *Team* to be able to explain and defend the programming of their *Drone* if questioned by referees, inspectors, Event Partners, or judges. *Teams* should be prepared to describe their process, justify decisions, and demonstrate a full understanding of how their *Drone* and code function.

If a Team is unable, for any reason, to provide reasonable evidence (when requested by event staff) that their Drone and code are the result of their own work, it is appropriate to assume that the Team is in violation of <G2> and/or <G4>.

When questions of authenticity arise, the only direct and fair approach is to require *Students* to explain and defend their work. This is not unlike academic honesty concerns in schools, and intellectual property concerns in business. By requiring *Students* to defend their designs, we ensure that they are developing not only technical skills, but effective communication skills and accountability, as well.

Consequences may include *Disqualification* from *Matches*, removal from events, and/or escalation of the investigation to VEX Robotics for further disciplinary action, which may include sanctions up to and including removal from the program.

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<G5> Each Student can only belong to one Team. Students may fulfill multiple roles on a single Team. No *Student* may participate for more than one VEX AIR Drone Competition *Team* in a given competition season.

a. *Team* members may only move from one *Team* to another for non-strategic reasons outside of the *Team's* control.

   i. Examples of permissible moves may include, but are not limited to, changing schools, conflicts within a *Team*, or combining/splitting *Teams*.

   ii. Examples of strategic moves in *Violation* of this rule may include, but are not limited to, one *Student* "switching" *Teams* in order to program multiple *Drones*, or one *Student* acting as the *Pilot* for multiple *Teams*.

   iii. If a *Student* leaves a *Team* to join another *Team*, <G4> still applies to the *Students* remaining on the previous *Team*. For example, if a *Student* leaves a *Team*, then that *Team's Drone* must still represent the skill level of the *Team* without that *Student*. One way to accomplish this would be to ensure that the *Student* teaches or trains a "replacement" in their absence.

   iv. Points ii and iii are intended to represent real-world situations that are found in industry engineering. If a vital member of a professional engineering team were to suddenly leave, the remaining members of the team should still be capable of working on / maintaining their project.

b. When a *Team* qualifies for a Championship event (e.g., States, Nationals, Worlds, etc.) the *Students* on the *Team* attending the Championship event are expected to be the same *Students* on the *Team* that was awarded the spot.

   i. An exception is allowed if only one (1) member of the *Team* is able to attend the event. The *Team* can make a single substitution of a *Flight Team Member* or Student for the Championship event with another *Student*, even if that *Student* has competed on a different *Team*. This *Student* will now be a member of this new *Team* and may not substitute back to the original *Team* during the season.

Note: Teams cannot "borrow" Students from other Teams. However, Teams can add permanent members throughout the season under the guidelines of this rule.

Event Partners should bear in mind <G3>, and use common sense when enforcing this rule. It is not the intent to punish a *Team* who may change *Team* members over the course of a season due to illness, changing schools, conflicts within a *Team*, etc.

Event Partners and referees are not expected to keep a roster of any *Student* who has ever been a *Flight Team Member* for one day. This rule is intended to block any instance of loaning or sharing *Team* members for the sole purpose of gaining a competitive advantage.

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General Game Rules

<GG1> Flight Team Members fly their drones, and stay in the Flight Station. During a *Match*, each *Team* may have up to two (2) *Flight Team Member*(s) in their *Flight Station*, and all *Flight Team Member*(s) must remain in their *Flight Station* for the duration of the *Match*.

Flight Team Member(s) are prohibited from any of the following actions during a *Match*:

a. Having or using any external communication devices that are not already included in the VEX AIR kit. This is intended to prevent *Flight Team Members* from communicating with anyone not on the Flight Team during a *Match*, (i.e., communicating with a parent in the stands via a cell phone). *Flight Team Members* are allowed to communicate with each other via the VEX AIR Communication Headset.

b. Standing on any sort of object during a *Match*.

c. Bringing/using additional materials to simplify the game challenge during a *Match*.

Point c is intended to refer to non-*Drone*-related items that directly influence gameplay. Provided no other rules are Violated, and the items do not pose any safety or *Field* damage risks, the following examples are not considered *Violations* of <GG1>:

- Materials used before or after a *Match*, such as a pre-*Match* alignment aid
- Strategic aids, such as a whiteboard or clipboard
- Earplugs, gloves, or other personal accessories

Note: Flight Team Members are the only Team members that are allowed to be in the Flight Station during a Match. Adults (other than event staff) are not permitted to be in the Flight Station during a Match.

Note 2: During a Match, Drones may be operated only by the Flight Team Members and/or by software running on the Drone's control system.

Violation Notes: Major Violations of this rule are not required to be Score Affecting, and could invoke Violations of other rules, such as <G1>, <G2>, or <G4>.

<GG2> A Team's Drone should attend every Match. The *Team's Drone* must report to the *Field* for the *Team's* assigned *Match*, even if the *Drone* is not functional. If the *Drone* is not at the *Field* at the start of a *Match*, the *Team* will be considered a "no-show".

a. *Teams* are expected to participate in all scheduled Qualification *Matches*, Alliance Selection, and Elimination *Matches* (if they're an Alliance Captain or were selected to join an *Alliance* for Elimination *Matches*). Failure to attend scheduled *Matches* or Alliance Selection may be considered a *Violation* of <G1>. *Teams* that do not participate in any Qualification *Matches* cannot be considered for judged awards.

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<GG3> Drones on the Field must be ready to play. When a *Team* puts their *Drone* on the *Field*, it must be prepared to play (i.e., batteries charged, ready for takeoff, etc.).

a. *Drones* must be placed on the *Field* promptly. Repeated failure to do so could result in a *Violation* of <G1> and/or removal of the *Drone* from the current *Match* at the Head Referee's discretion.

b. If a *Drone* is not placed on the *Field* prior to the start of a *Match*, it cannot be placed on the *Field* during that *Match*.

The definition of the word "promptly" is at the discretion of the Event Partner and Head Referee, who will consider event schedule, previous *Violations* or delays, etc.

<GG4> Hands out of the field. *Flight Team Members* are prohibited from making intentional contact with any *Scoring Objects* and/or *Field Elements* while the *Match* is being played.

> *Note: Any concerns regarding Field Element or Scoring Object starting positions should be raised with the Head Referee prior to the Match. Team members may never adjust Scoring Objects or Field Elements themselves.*

<GG5> Controllers must stay connected to the field network. Prior to the beginning of each *Match*, *Flight Team Members* must connect their controllers to the field network. The controller must remain connected to the network for the duration of the *Match*, and may not be disconnected until the "all-clear" has been given for *Flight Team Members* to disconnect.

> *Violation Notes: The intent of this rule is to ensure that Drones abide by commands sent by the tournament software. Temporarily disconnecting to assist with mid-Match troubleshooting, with an Event Partner or other event technical staff present and assisting, would not be considered a Violation.*

<GG6> Match Replays are allowed, but rare. *Match* replays (i.e., playing a *Match* over again from its start) are at the discretion of the Event Partner and Head Referee, and will only be issued in the most extreme circumstances. Some examples that may warrant a *Match* replay are as follows (note that this is not an exhaustive list):

a. *Score Affecting* "Field Fault" issues.
   i. *Scoring Objects* not being reset before the *Match* starts.
   ii. *Field Elements* detaching or moving beyond normal tolerances, not as a result of *Drone* interactions.

b. *Score Affecting* game rule issues.
   i. A *Field* is reset before the score is determined
   ii. A *Match* is run before its scheduled time without a *Team*.

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<GG7> Disqualifications. A *Team* that is issued a *Disqualification* in a Qualification *Match* receives zero (0) points for the *Match*. The other *Team* on their alliance will still receive points for the *Match*.

a. In Finals *Matches*, *Disqualifications* apply to the whole *Alliance*, not just one *Team*. An *Alliance* that receives a *Disqualification* in a Finals *Match* will receive zero (0) points.

b. A *Team* that receives a *Disqualification* in a *Drone Skills Match* will receive a score of zero (0).

<GG8> Timeouts. There are no timeouts in VEX AIR Drone Competition tournaments.

<GG9> Drones must land at the end of each Period. At the conclusion of every *Period*, all *Drones* must immediately land or otherwise come to rest within the *Field*. *Teams* who fail to do so in a timely and safe manner may be subject to a *Minor Violation* at the discretion of the Head Referee.

Drones that remain airborne or attempt to score after the official end of a *Period* will not receive points for those actions. Repeated offenses can escalate to a *Major Violation* at the discretion of the Head Referee.

<GG10> Disabled Drones must wait until the next Break. *Disabled* and/or downed *Drones* must remain inactive until the next *Break*. If a *Team* cannot safely reach their downed *Drone* during the break from the *Flight Station*, they must ask the Head Referee for help retrieving it. *Teams* may not enter the *Field* under any circumstances.

<GG11> Handling the Drone mid-match is allowed only under certain circumstances. During a *Match*, *Flight Team Members* may only handle their *Drone* if all of the following criteria are met:

- The *Match* is in a *Break* phase or the *Drone* has not moved since the last *Break* ended
- The *Drone* is fully at rest on the *Field Tiles* or *Field Platform*
- The *Drone's* propellers have completely stopped spinning

<GG12> Breaks are not fixed in length. The Head Referee controls the length of the *Break*. They should attempt to keep each *Break* near one (1) minute in length. The next *Period* may begin when:

a. Both *Teams* have signaled to the Head Referee they are ready to resume and/or

b. Approximately one minute has elapsed and both *Teams* are warned that the *Match* is about to resume.

c. *Breaks* may be shortened or extended at the discretion of the Head Referee and/or Event Partner as needed.

Teams are expected to be prompt before, during, and after *Breaks*. Intentional delay of the resumption of play will result in a *Minor Violation*, and repeated *Violations* may result in *Disqualification*.

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Specific Game Rules

<SG1> Starting a Match. Prior to the start of each *Match*, the *Drone* must be placed such that it meets all of the following criteria:

a. Not contacting any *Scoring Objects*.

b. Not contacting any other *Drones*.

c. Completely stationary on the *Field Platform* (i.e., no motors or other mechanisms in motion).

Violation Notes: The Match will not begin with any conditions in this rule unmet. If a Drone cannot meet these conditions in a timely manner, the Drone will be removed from the Field until the situation is corrected. They will not receive a Disqualification, but they will not be permitted to play in the Match.

<SG2> Keep Scoring Objects in the Field. *Teams* may not intentionally or strategically remove *Scoring Objects* from the *Field*. A *Scoring Object* that leaves the *Field* during *Match* play, intentionally or unintentionally, will be placed back into an appropriate starting location for a piece of that color at the next available *Break*.

a. The exact location the *Scoring Object* is replaced at is up to referee discretion.

<SG3> A Drone may carry, push, or plow an unlimited number of Objects. There is no possession limit for *Scoring Objects*.

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Section 3 - The Drone

Overview

Every *Drone* must pass a full inspection before being cleared to participate in the VEX AIR Drone Competition. This inspection will ensure that all *Drone* rules and regulations are met. Initial inspections will typically take place during *Team* check-in / practice time. Every *Team* should use the rules below as a guide to pre-inspect their *Drone* and ensure that it meets all requirements.

Inspection Rules

<D1> One Drone at the Field. *Teams* may present any number of *Drones* for inspection. However, *Teams* may only bring one (1) *Drone* to the *Field* for a *Match*. Only that *Drone* may be powered on, paired and/or connected to the Field Control System for the duration of the *Match*.

a. *Teams* may switch *Drones* between *Matches*, provided the second *Drone* has also passed inspection.

b. *Teams* may not switch *Drones* during a *Match*, however there is no limit on the number of batteries or modules that are used per *Match*.

<D2> Teams must use the VEX Robotics AIR Competition Drone and official accessories. All *Teams* must use the VEX AIR Drone Competition drone, official VEX Robotics Modules, Batteries, controllers, etc.

a. The following parts are legal for the VEX AIR Drone Competition:

VEX AIR Competition Drone Kit Contents:
VEX AIR Competition Drone
VEX AIR Drone Controller
Passive Mission Module / Hook
Motorized Mission Module / Hook
Magnet Mission Module
VEX AIR Drone Battery (LiHV 1200 maH)
VEX AIR Drone Battery (LiHV 900 maH)
Headset
4-Blade Propeller - Orange / Gray
Landing Legs

b. Any part not listed above is not considered legal for use in the VEX AIR Drone Competition.

c. Modification of any official VEX AIR part is not legal in the VEX AIR Drone Competition.

<D3> Drones and Controllers must be updated to the latest firmware. VEX AIR Drone Competition Drones and VEX AIR Drone Competition Controllers must be updated to the latest firmware versions in order to pass inspection and be able to be used in competition.

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<D4> Drones must pass inspection. Every *Drone* will be required to pass a full inspection before being cleared to compete. This inspection will ensure that all *Drone* rules and regulations are met. Initial inspections will take place during *Team* registration/practice time. Noncompliance with any *Drone* rule at the *Field* will result in removal from *Matches* or *Disqualification* of the *Drone* at an event until the *Drone* is brought back into compliance.

<D5> One Battery at a time. *Drones* may only use one (1 Official VEX AIR Drone Battery at a time.

<D6> One Module at a time. *Drones* may only use one (1 Official VEX AIR Drone Module at a time.

<D7> Drone LED Status Indicator must remain visible at all times. *Teams* are not allowed to cover or obscure the Drone LED Status Indicator located next to the power button.

<D8> Officially registered Team numbers must be displayed on Drone. To participate in an official VEX AIR Drone Competition Event, a *Team* must first register on events.vex.com and receive a VEX AIR Drone Competition *Team* Number.

This *Team* number must be legibly displayed on the top of the *Drone*. *Teams* may use the official VEX AIR Drone Competition *Team* Number Stickers included in their welcome kit, a marker, or custom stickers to mark the top of the *Drone* shell.

<D9> Decorations are allowed. *Teams* may add decorations to their *Drones*, provided that they do not affect *Drone* performance in any significant way, or affect the outcome of the *Match*. These decorations must be in the spirit of the competition. Inspectors and Head Referees will have final say in what is considered “non-functional.”

<D10> There is a difference between accidentally and willfully violating a Drone rule. Any violation of *Drone* rules, accidental or intentional, will result in a *Team* being unable to play until they pass inspection (per <D4>).

However, *Teams* who intentionally and/or knowingly circumvent or violate rules to gain an advantage over their fellow competitors are in *Violation* of the spirit and ethos of the competition. Any *Violation* of this sort should be considered a *Violation* of <G1>.

A *Team* that circumvents a *Drone* rule for a competitive advantage should receive an immediate *Disqualification* for the current *Match* and be reported to the Event Partner for discussion with VEX Robotics. As a result of that discussion, the *Team* may be *Disqualified* from the event.

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Section 4 - Drone Skills Challenge

More information about the Drone Skills Challenge will be released in a future Game Manual update.

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Section 5 - The Event

More information about Event and Tournament Rules will be released in a future Game Manual update.

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