**Selection**

1) Driver candidates may not touch the robot controls until they take a written test that covers every rule mentioned in that year's "The Game" document, and must score over 90%. They can take the test as many times as they want, and the test doesn't change - the only thing that matters is that they learn the rules of the game until they are second nature.  
--Having a test of any kind helps you identify the candidates who are willing to put in effort for this opportunity  
--No robot time until they pass the test makes for a great motivator for learning the rules  
--A drive team that knows the rules by heart can perform some fairly impressive feats and make quick judgment calls on the field  
  
2) Drive candidates then choose a specialization - Driver or Operator, and they only practice in those roles. They also list who they would prefer to Drive/Operate alongside with.  
--You already get so little practice time during the season, you want to make sure that candidates are spending as much time focusing on their area of expertise as possible. You want to have the best possible driver and the best possible operator, not the best possible driver and the second best driver who reluctantly is now the operator  
--Many of the candidates are probably friends, share classes, etc... and there can be excellent performance improvements when they bring that synergy to the field already instead of having to cultivate it in a few weeks.  
  
3) Drive candidates are then put through a series of practical tests using a practice chassis or old robot (a driver might go through a series of slaloms, or other difficult maneuvers, for example)  
--Some candidates will just have more aptitude for a particular robot or design, and you want to see that before you make your decision  
  
4) The drive team is then chosen, using all the data from steps 1-3. The other candidates become the backup drive team (in case of illness, etc).  
  
In the end drive team members need to be extremely dedicated. Arguably the most dedicated members of the team, willing to spend hours every day driving the robot, and repeating drills over and over. They need to be perfectionists, understanding that they are never done. Even if they've become "good" at driving, there is always more they can work on. They should never need to be asked to practice, or to do a drill again, or pestered to practice more. They need to want to do it themselves, and get angry and hold others accountable when for some reason they can't practice, or something is preventing them from practicing.  
Good reflexes, good decision-making, the knowledge of what can break and when it's all right to push your robot that extra step. Look for people who will back up to get a ball instead of turning around to pick it up, then turn around again to score it. Look for people who understand things will break, and that in some matches you may need to keep going even if it gets worse (elimination matches or sometimes high-priority matches) and some matches where it's alright to stop and be careful for the duration. Also, make sure they're aggressive enough to not back away from hitting something for a point, but not overly aggressive to get penalties or to hit things just to hit things. It's a balance that is hard to find and realize sometimes.

**Improvement**

Once you get two people selected have them practice together. Have you there when they're practicing, telling them what to do next as you might suggest when in competition. Practice with others watching, practice when others aren't watching. Make sure they see they're mistakes but don't overdo it when pointing out such mistakes. Little pointers that could help them here are there.   
  
Now that you've got your primary drive team, you should focus all your efforts on training them - time becomes a precious commodity.  
  
Given that your drive team will command the robot for about 2.25 minutes every match, with a rough average of 10-16 matches per regional, that's about 22.5 to 36 minutes of operation. Less than one hour. There's no way to master something in that amount of time.  
  
Thus, any direct or indirect practice you can do will vastly increase the skill of your drive team.  
  
1) Before shipping the robot, prioritize letting the drive team get their hands on the robot whenever possible. An incomplete robot with expert drivers will still be a force to be reckoned with, but an amazing machine with novices at the controls will generally be a disappointment.   
--Even if your robot doesn't have the right mechanisms to push for a win by itself, showing that you know how to use it will often lead to being picked by other teams during alliance selection.  
  
2) Have the drive team stick together, get used to each other as much as possible, and encourage a friendly rapport. Try to make sure they're doing the same activities, this will help them develop efficient non-verbal communication.  
--When your drive team really knows each other, you'll start to believe one incredibly effective person is operating the robot.  
  
3) Try to maximize "time on the sticks" whenever possible. If this year's robot isn't available, have them drive the old one. There are meta-skills at play (changing your mental reference frame when operating tank drive, for example) that will remain constant across years.  
  
5) If no robot is available, visualize. Have your drive team just spend time imagining matches, how they would respond to changing circumstances, how they'd move the robot around.