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Roarbotics Team wins best performance at provincials

By Martha Tanner Kingston This Week
 Updated 6 hours ago

There's a reason they call themselves the Lego Roarbotics Team.

In their first ever competition, the eight-member team from Lancaster Drive Public School, home of the Lancaster Lions, came out with a roar, winning both Best Robot Design and Best Robot Performance at the FIRST Lego League regional competition December 3 in Kingston. Accompanied by school mascot Lanny the Lion, the team headed to the provincial championship in Oshawa January 14, where they won the award for Best Robot Performance over 30 other regional winners in the Ontario East competition.

Held at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, the competition attracted nearly 600 students and their coaches and some 200 volunteers, judges and referees.

"It was really exciting," said principal Peggy Browne. "There were 16 tables set up in the gym and each team had two-and-a-half minutes to complete the mission. Our team had 204 points, the highest of all the teams."

"It was just a fun experience," said team member Thomas Stathopoulos. "It's cool when you hear your name being called up, and it's fun to see your robot do what it's supposed to do."

"It's treated like a sports event," added Daniel Howells. "It's fun cheering your team on, and you get to meet new people."

The FIRST Lego League (FLL), for children aged nine to 14, is one of several international competitions of the FIRST organization, which stands for 'For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology', in partnership with the Lego Group. The program is designed to introduce children aged six and up to science, technology, engineering and math.

Each September FLL releases a new challenge, based on a real-world scientific topic. This year's challenge was food safety. Each challenge consists of three parts: a Robot Game, a Project, and the FLL Core Values.

Teams have at least two months to design, build and program a robot using Lego Mindstorms software that can complete the missions and score points in the Robot Game.

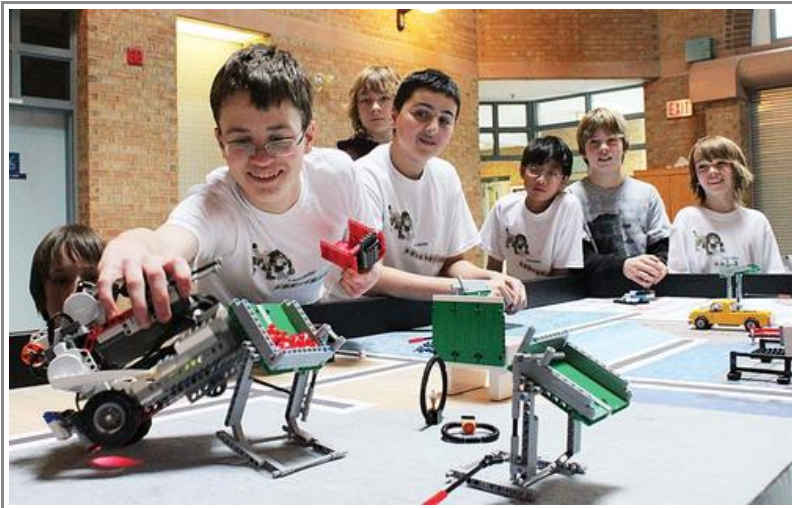
For the Project, team members must identify a problem and come up with an innovative solution and present that solution to the judges. At every stage, participants are judged on the FLL Core Values of inspiration, teamwork, and 'gracious professionalism'.

"The hardest part was the Project," said Daniel. "It was about vertical farms. We prefer to be working on the Robot Game."

Following the provincial competition, the team was able to do just that, demonstrating how their robot and the Robot Game work to every class in the school. With the Lego table set up in the Great Hall of the school, the team put their robot through its paces and showed off their trophies, including the impressive provincial robot performance trophy made of yellow Lego.

"It's a real alternative to sports and the arts," said Browne, who hopes that the Roarbotics team will inspire younger students to become involved.

The Roarbotics honed their skills at a practice tournament before the regional qualifying competition, both hosted by the K-Botics FIRST Robotics Competition team at Kingston Collegiate and Vocational Institute. Also advancing to the provincial competition were the WAFFLES, a club whose name stands for Wild About Family & Friends Learning Engineering and Science.



Michael Jaansalu, a member of the Lancaster Drive Public School Lego Roarbotics Team, lends a helping hand to the robot the team designed, built and programmed for the FIRST Lego League competition. The team won awards for Best Robot Design and Best Robot Performance at the regional qualifying tournament in Kingston December 3 and won the trophy for Best Robot Performance at the provincial championship in Oshawa January 14. With Michael are, from left, Connor Wood, Thomas Stathopoulos, Jack

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