

Lego robots compete in Würzburg



The student teams must build their own robot and complete as many of the 15 tasks as possible with it in two and a half minutes

Würzburg (13. January 2017) The Wolfskeel Realschule school in Würzburg hosted the First Lego League (FLL) robotics competition and research project with more than 120 participants between the ages of ten and 16. Over the past weeks, 14 teams from 13 area schools have been working together in project teams just like scientists and engineers do. They competed against each other and had to master different challenges using their own specially developed robots. This was the third time that the scientific educational program took place in Würzburg. The international automotive supplier Brose once again organized the regional competition as the main sponsor.

"The First Lego League combines fun with technology and science with the exciting atmosphere of a sporting event," explained Michael Stammberger, Head of Apprenticeship and Training Brose Group. "It helps us get kids and young adults excited about natural sciences at an early age and encourages them to pursue careers in engineering and IT." Brose has sponsored the regional competition from the very beginning. The mechatronics specialist develops and produces electric motors and drives at its location in Würzburg. "Our company trains young people across the globe and also offers dual-track studies opportunities. The robotics and ideas competition enables us to introduce school-age students to the professions of mechatronics technician, engineer or computer scientist in a fun and interesting way," said Stammberger.

FLL teams comprise three to ten members. They spent at least ten weeks – mostly in their free time – preparing for the tournament with the assistance of an adult coach. "We worked on our robot for nine months," said 14-year-old Paul from the Röntgen-Gymnasium school in Würzburg. The participants used sensors, motors and Lego blocks to construct an autonomous robot. They designed, tested and programmed it so that it can solve as many of the 15 assigned tasks as possible on its own in two and a half minutes. "It was important to us that it is stable, drives straight and can do as much as possible at one time," explained Nikolai (16), a member of the RoboSun team from Leopold-Sonnemann-Realschule Höchberg.

The theme of this year's competition was "Animal Allies" and focused on the relationships between humans and animals. The robot's task was to move Lego minifigures on a game table, for example transport a shark together with a pool, get honey out of a beehive, or reintroduce pandas to the wild. "The most difficult task for us this year is to distribute the animal feed," said RoboSun team member Tobias. "Unfortunately, our robot keeps bumping into obstacles during this task," the student noted.

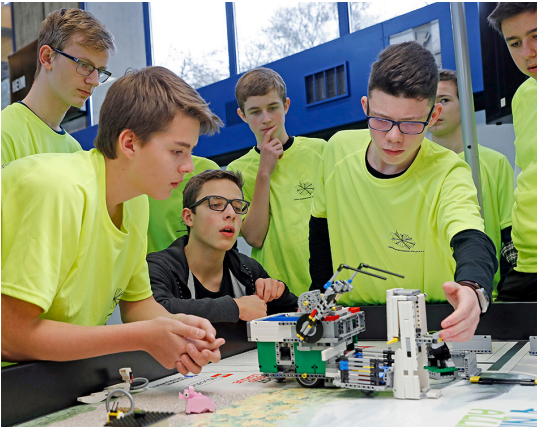
In the theoretical part of the competition, the teams had to complete a research task. They worked together to develop innovative ideas to improve how people and animals can live together. They used creative techniques to present the results of their research findings to a panel of judges.

Team X-Rays from Röntgen-Gymnasium Würzburg won the regional tournament and qualified for the state finals on 18 February 2017 in Regensburg together with the second-placed Robo-Knights from Realschule Marktheidenfeld. The European finals will also take place in Regensburg and are scheduled for 3 and 4 March 2017.

Over 25,000 teams in 80 countries participate in the educational program. The non-profit organization "HANDS on TECHNOLOGY" is responsible for the tournament showcasing robots and ideas in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. More than 7,000 boys and girls in 900 teams registered for the FIRST® LEGO® League in these countries.



Michael Stammberger, Head of Apprenticeship and Training at Brose, talks to students from the Deutschhaus Gymnasium about the details of their robot during the First Lego League in Würzburg.



A very focused Team RoboSUN from the Leopold-Sonnemann-Realschule tests their robot.



The X-Rays from the Röntgen-Gymnasium Würzburg are the champions of this year's regional competition of the First Lego League.