

E-Bots sending a trio of teams to Worlds

By Dominik Kurek
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If sending one robotics team to a world-level competition isn't impressive enough, how about three?

That's exactly what the Oakville-based E-Bots afterschool robotics organization is doing, sending three of its teams to three world-level robotics competitions this spring.

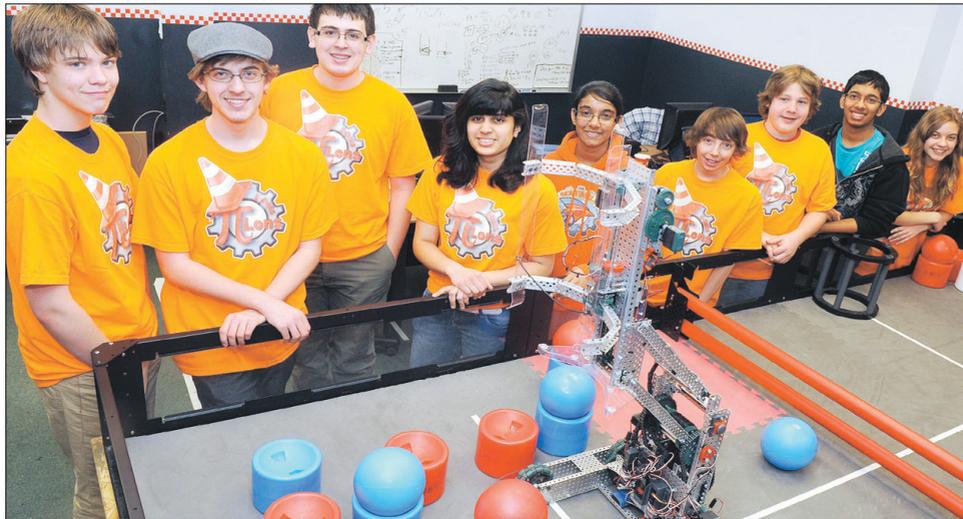
However, members of the E-Bots organization quickly point out the achievements are a result of the work of the teams themselves.

"It is a good thing to have the kids recognized. At this point, this has nothing to do with us and our business, it's about the kids," said coach Pam Catricala.

E-Bots has a history of success at local and world-level competitions. This year, it has a chance to continue that success at the three international competitions.

Its high school-aged robotics group, the Pi-lons 5225 team, will compete at the VEX World Championships in Anaheim, California April 18-21. The Safety Shrinkers team will compete in the FIRST LEGO League (FLL) World Invitational Open Championship in Orlando, Florida May 3-6. The Strawberry Saviours team will compete in the FLL North American Open in LEGOLAND in Carlsbad, California May 18-20.

"We just want more people to recognize



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VEX-ING COMPETITORS: The high-school aged E-Bots team competing at the VEX world championships this spring are, from left, Henry Boyd, Sam Rasmussen, Anthony Meola, Pranali Rathi, Amanda Rampertab, Ryan Chiricosta, Eddie Schmidt, Jacob Rampertab and Ella Rasmussen.

this robotics thing is really cool. It really helps kids who are not sports inclined," she said.

VEX team

The Pi-lons VEX team consists of 11 high school students: Henry Boyd, Chris Lyons, Eddie Schmidt, Jack Enders, Jacob Rampertab, Amanda Rampertab, Sam Rasmussen, Ella Rasmussen, Ryan Chiricosta, Anthony Meola and Pranali Rathi.

VEX is a separate robotics organization

from FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology). The organizations are similar, however, there were some advantages to competing in VEX for a Canadian team, which is why E-Bots entered this competition, Catricala said. In Ontario alone, there are more than 100 VEX teams.

"We're all interested in this kind of thing," said team member Boyd. "We're all interested in something to do with VEX, mostly the engineering, but some of us, the animation

and video editing."

VEX is about more than building a robot, though that is a major component. There are also online challenges teams can enter. The Pi-lons have completed two of the online challenges. One, the animation challenge, in which the students made a video animation of a possible VEX robotics competition. The other challenge was a promotional video.

The VEX robots competition this year puts robots in teams of two, in a two-on-two battle, with teams scoring points by placing objects found on the playing field into barrels.

"It's going to be exciting," said member Rasmussen. "It's definitely going to be exciting. This is our first year ever participating in VEX and we're already going to worlds. We've already won two qualifying awards: design and excellence in the Ontario competitions. So, it's really exciting."

The Safety Shrinkers

The Safety Shrinkers team consists of seven boys aged 10-14 — Justin Szymczak, Jeevan Vasdani, Devon Goping, Alex Burguete, Liam McLeod, William Cai and Camden Malowany.

The FLL competition consists of a robotics component and, for this year's competition, a food factor requirement that identifies a problem of contamination or spoilage, and asks teams to solve it.

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