

Report - FIRST Robotics Committee of the WTPEO

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In 1989, Dean Kamen, entrepreneur and inventor, in partnership with Professor Emeritus Dr. Woody Flowers, Mechanical Engineering, MIT, founded the FIRST Organization (FIRST - For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) (<http://www.firstroboticscanada.org/main/>, & <http://www.usfirst.org/?gclid=CP72oqz55sMCFefm7AodWCkAEg>), and the annual international competitions for teams of high school students, to get them interested in science, technology, and engineering. Last year there were over 65,000 students, in over 2700 teams, participating in over 55 competition centers internationally. Ontario has 5 Regional Competition Centres (GTR Center, GTR-East at UOIT, Waterloo, North Bay, and Windsor-Essex Great Lakes).

On the first Saturday in the new year teams receive a design challenge for their robots to solve. The teams have only six weeks to design, build, and test their robot before it is shipped to the first competition center in March. Winning teams from each regional competition vie for awards, prizes, and \$20,000,000US in university scholarships, and may become eligible to compete in the final competition in St. Louis in late April. A number of Ontario Teams have reached World Championship status at these finals (Teams 610 "The Coyotes" of Toronto, Team 1241 "Theory 6" of Mississauga, and Team 1114 "Simbotics" of St. Catharines).

This year our chapter is not sponsoring any FRC Team, including Team 919, "Tiger Techs" of Harbord Cl. Team 919 will however be competing with 41 other teams in the GTR Centre Competition on March 6 to 7, at Ryerson University, Mattamy Athletic Centre (a.k.a. Maple Leaf Gardens). The fun-filled days start at 8:00 A.M., when the doors swing open to let the students, mentors, and guests into the building. You may want to visit the pit area to chat with the teams. Please ask for safety glasses. Just return them when you leave.

You will recognize the competition judges, including myself, in the blue T-shirts and a judges badge. As safety is also of paramount importance at such an event, you will also see safety judges in green T-shirts. Raise any safety concerns you may have to them.

So come out, especially on the Saturday, enjoy the day, encourage the teams, and see what these students can accomplish on their own when they are being challenged. Stick around for the awards ceremonies on Friday and Saturday.

An animation of this year's challenge "Recycle Rush" may be viewed at: <http://www.usfirst.org/roboticsprograms/frc/2015-game>.