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Baldwin Park Unified Middle School Students Compete in Robotics Contest

BALDWIN PARK – Holland Middle School’s robotics team battled 23 teams from across the region during the second round of the VEX In The Zone Competition on Dec. 9 when the Bulldogs discovered a design flaw in their robot, placing 16th out of 20 spots.

Now, with two such competitions under their belts, the Bulldogs are drawing on the experiences and support from the team parents and sponsors as they prepare for a rematch Saturday, Jan. 6 at Chaminade College Preparatory High School in West Hills.

“I felt super nervous and I wondered if our robot was good enough,” Holland eighth-grader Amy Romo said. “I feel good about the new changes we’ve made, and the team is looking forward to giving it all we have at the next competition.”

The field is divided into red and blue alliances, with two randomly selected teams making up each alliance. Each team scores points by stacking cones on goal posts, having the highest stack of cones and parking the robot at the end of the one-minute and 45-second period.

With the help from sponsors and parents, the Bulldogs raised nearly \$3,000 in donations from their first competition in October, where they placed second in the middle school category. The team has used the funds to purchase advanced building parts and to register for five more competitions.

Romo said that when the team realized its motor-powered claw was ineffective, the students developed a passive-claw to reduce wait time and operational error. The new claw was upgraded with aluminum parts and zip ties.

“The team has been working furiously to prepare its robot for the January competition,” science academic leader and teacher Thomas Lau said. “The students are dedicated and passionate about robotics, and with the help of the team parents and sponsors, we are ready to re-enter the ring and beat some teams with grace and good sportsmanship.”

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The Bulldogs meet every day in their automation and robotics class, a course offered through Project Lead The Way, as well as on Tuesdays and every day after school during the week of a competition.

“Baldwin Park Unified is committed to offering students every opportunity to explore STEM fields, and through competitions like this, they can develop valuable engineering skills while also learning about teamwork, perseverance and critical thinking,” Baldwin Park Unified Superintendent Dr. Froilan N. Mendoza said. “We are so proud of our Bulldogs for their hard work and dedication.”

VEX Robotics Competitions, presented by the Robotics Education and Competition Foundation, is the largest middle and high school robotics program with more than 18,000 teams from 40 countries playing in over 1,350 competitions.

PHOTO

BPUSD_ROBOTICS_1: Holland Middle School’s robotics team is busy making adjustments to its robot as the students prepare for the third round of the VEX In The Zone Robotics Competition, to be held Saturday, Jan. 6 at Chaminade College Preparatory High School.

BPUSD_ROBOTICS_2: The Bulldogs are preparing to face off against middle and high school robotics teams from across the region during the third round of the VEX In The Zone Robotics Competition. The competition runs from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at Chaminade College Preparatory High School, 7500 Chaminade Ave. West Hills.

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