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Robots invade Camdenton High School campus

Students competed in Mid Missouri FIRST® LEGO League Qualifier Saturday



One of the Camdenton teams watches their robot as it starts its journey on the competition table.

Photo by [Debbie Hurr](#).

By [Debbie Hurr](#)

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Photo by Debbie Hurr

One of the Camdenton teams check in for their turn to go behind closed doors for judging without their teacher for guidance.

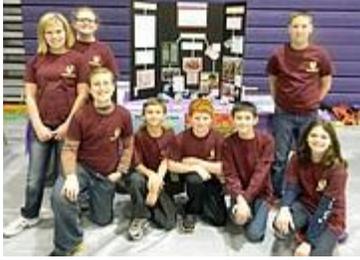


Photo by Debbie Hurr

Camdenton R-3 Hurricane Deck fourth-grade students participate for the first time this year. Pictured, from left, are Margaret Jones, Quaden Vandervegte, Corbin Fordyce, Spirit Meisner and Bailey Hurr.



Captain America, also known as Brent Stuart, a teacher for the Camdenton School District, high-fives team members as they enter the competition.



One of the Eldon teams pose in front of their display just before they take off for their turn in the first round of judging.



Photo by Debbie Hurr

The Richland team looks upon the competition table as their two team members start their robot.



Teams break for lunch.



Photo by Debbie Hurr

Just a few of the volunteers from the high school sit and wait to assist teams to their next judging station.



Photo by Debbie Hurr

The Waynesville team takes one of their turns in the competition.

Core values of inspiration, teamwork and Gracious Professionalism® brought masses of students to Camdenton High School Saturday where the 4-H FIRST® LEGO® League (FLL) held its Mid Missouri FIRST® LEGO League Qualifier.

On Nov. 15, the Camdenton R-3 campus started filling with students around 7:15 a.m. in order to prepare for the 9 a.m. competition. Kids participating in this event spent weeks working together, brainstorming, designing, constructing, programming and then testing a robot they built to compete with other teams for a chance to advance to the Eastern division FIRST® state championship that will take place in St. Louis in December.

Guided by their imaginations, the experience can be very exciting but also quite challenging. Students learn how important it is to work together, exercise critical thinking and demonstrate presentation skills, in addition to implementing the core values of FIRST®.

The process includes multiple awards that recognize a wide variety of accomplishments as students are observed throughout the day by judges. Judging is based on four categories, which included Project/Presentation, Core Values, Robot Design and Robot competition, in addition to the FIRST® core values.

According to the FLL website, these values are the cornerstone of the FLL program and part of what distinguishes the FLL from other similar programs. The participants learn that helping one another is the foundation of teamwork and that friendly competition and mutual gain are not separate goals.

To add to the excitement of the event, each year an overall theme is given to the students. They use this to create a message. This year's "World Class" topic is based around how learning occurs. Teams were given the challenge to come up with an innovative solution to improve learning around the world.

In the "pit area" where teams set up displays portraying their solutions, spectators and other teams had an opportunity to visit the booths and learn about the team's project. Topics such as health and

mental wellness, learning multiple languages, laser discovery and mathematics were just four of the subjects tackled. Many teams even had give-away materials available that had significance to their topic.

Though each team was assigned a number for competition identification purposes, they also came up with individual names, with some sporting costumes to match. Referees and judges wore various hats with LEGOS and such, and the master of ceremonies, Brent Stuart, a teacher in the Camdenton district, came as Captain America to add to the fun activities of that day.

Regardless of name, number or costume, excitement filled the air. Most students were not new to the event but that didn't seem matter; the children were observed working with others, helping with a flaw or giving a compliment to fellow competitors.

Logan Sassen, a sixth-grade student from the Richland Reach Bots said, "This is awesome. I believe it is a great learning experience."

Taylor Schmied, also a sixth-grade Richland Reach Bots concurred and added it that was a lot of fun too.

Laura Laughlin, the teacher and mentor for the sixth through ninth grade Waynesville Leaping LEGOs said she was excited to be there and loved the opportunity.

"This helps the kids learn social skills, technology and problem solving," she said.

Major John Dempsey of Fort Leonard Wood volunteers his time with the LEGO project for the Leaping LEGOs and said he felt this was great for kids.

"It is a great experience...some kids don't play sports where they get team stuff," he shared. "This is their team experience."

Parents expressed the same feelings about this opportunity for their children.

The end of the competition five hours later included a few games for students that wanted to participate while judges prepared the final results. Every participant received a ribbon for participating and individual teams won specific awards. They are as follows:

- Mechanical Design – Big Bot Theory 1290 (Nixa)
- Programming – Leaping LEGOs 767 (Waynesville Middle School)
- Strategy & Innovation – Camdenton 4-H LASER 563 Oak Ridge Intermediate
- Inspiration - Camo-Tronix 4751 (Troy)
- Teamwork – Camdenton 4-H LASER Oak Ridge Intermediate 564 Pre-Teen Mutant Ninja Robots
- Gracious Professionalism® - Camdenton 4-H LASER Osage Beach Elementary C-R-3- E

- **Research – Richland Reach Bots 12299**
- **Innovative Solution – Camdenton 4-H LASER 559 Hawthorn Elementary Sporty Minds**
- **Presentation – Big Bot Theory 10628 (Nixa)**
- **Rising Star – Camdenton 4-H LASER 567 Oak Ridge Intermediate – The Rocking Robots**

Four of the 24 teams participating qualified to advance to the Eastern Division State Championship Dec. 7th in St. Louis:

- **Project Award – Camdenton 4-H LASER 565 Oak Ridge Intermediate Supernova Sapphires**
- **Core Values- Camdenton 4-H LASER 566 Oak Ridge Intermediate Disco Bots**
- **Robot Design – Illuminatix 4358 Columbia**
- **Champion’s Award- R-Cubed 7149 Rolla**

The event was hosted by the Camdenton 4-H LASER 3284 (Laker Afterschool Science Engineering & Robotics) with over 130 volunteers helping to make the tournament successful.

“We appreciate the support, time and resources that our Administrators, technology department, LCTC Afterschool Graphics program, community, volunteers and sponsors have given to bring this event to the Lake area,” said Sherry Comer, Director of Afterschool Services and FIRST® tournament organizer.

Camdenton LASER 3284 will host the first annual Mid MO FIRST® Tech Challenge at Camdenton High School Dec. 13 for seventh through 12th grades that have official FIRST® Tech teams.

“We are honored and thrilled to have been asked to host both the FLL and FTC tournaments for Mid Missouri this year. FIRST® has been a tremendous addition to our afterschool system in Camdenton and has seen phenomenal growth in our district and nationally,” said Dr. Tim Hadfield, superintendent of Camdenton R-3 Schools. "It was just six years ago that our HS team started with 21 students. At this time 1 in every 19 students is a member of our FIRST® teams out of a student body of 4400 students in the Camdenton R-III district!”

FIRST® is an international program that was founded by famous inventor Dean Kamen. The goal of FIRST® is to get youth excited about STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math.) For more information about FIRST®, visit www.usfirst.org.