

Robotics team earns trip back to world championship

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The Camdenton 4-H FIRST LASER team stops for a photo at the St. Louis regional event held Thursday through Saturday. Posted Mar. 17, 2014 @ 2:45 pm

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FIRST — For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology — teams around the world are given a set of parts and a budget to build a robot to complete various tasks, including manipulating objects and navigating uneven surfaces. There are close to 3,000 teams around the world. The regional event is the step below the world championship event, which will be held in St. Louis through 2017.

At the conclusions of qualification matches this weekend, LASER 3284 was the fourth seed team with a record of eight wins and three losses. Team THRUST 1501 from Huntington, Ind. finished qualification matches undefeated at 11-0. They selected LASER 3284 to join the number one alliance along with Team 4500 Robo Hounds from Clayton, Mo.

The LASER alliance set the high score for the regionals taking place around the world the same time with a score of 305 points in the quarterfinals first round match. The alliance suffered an early loss in the best of three match format in the quarter finals when the LASER 3284 robot lost communications with the field management system for more than half the match. The alliance dominated the remaining semis and championship matches by winning their last four matches by an average of 73 points.

Winning the St. Louis regional for the fourth time in five years is an unprecedented accomplishment for a FIRST robotics competition team. As a result of victory, LASER 3284 earned a trip to the FIRST World Championship. Four hundred of the best teams from 17 countries will vie for top honors. Last year, LASER 3284 fell just short, losing in the finals on Galileo Field to the eventual World Champions finishing as one of the top 24 robotics teams in the world.

Being on the winning alliance was great accomplishment for LASER 3284. In addition, the team was selected to receive the most prestigious award that a team can attain, the “Chairman’s Award.”

LASER 3284 earned this award from the St. Louis contest judges as it honors the team that best represents a model for other teams to emulate and best embodies the purpose and goals of FIRST. Camdenton 4-H LASER will represent the St. Louis Regional to compete as one of the 54 Chairman’s Award winners for the International Chairman’s Award.

LASER 3284 head coach Mitch Comer commented, “I am extremely proud of how the LASER students conducted themselves throughout the event and that they learned what is possible through hard work, dedication, and team work.”

"The LASER 3284 success over the past five years can be attributed the support from the Camdenton R-III Schools, the Afterschool Program, and the adult community members that serve as mentors to the students inspiring them beyond the classroom experiences in the STEM field," Comer said.

Page 2 of 2 - Camdenton R-III Superintendent Tim Hadfield shared his excitement after he heard that LASER 3284 is heading to the world championship.

"Words cannot express the pride we have thanks to the accomplishments of our robotics program this past weekend. The team performed remarkably and the hard works of so many were certainly rewarded. Most notably we are thrilled to have our team win the coveted Chairman's Award," Hadfield said. "This would not be possible without the efforts of our talented students, staff members, mentors, and of course, our supportive community."

The team will be heading to the World Championship in St. Louis April 23-26.