

# Democrat and Chronicle

## 44 schools put robots to the test in regional competition

[James Goodman](#) • Staff writer • March 6, 2010

HENRIETTA — To the sounds of techno and pop music, remote-controlled robots scooted about the soccer field in Gordon Field House at Rochester Institute of Technology.

Teams of high school students directed the robots from computerized control boards sending wireless signals.

"Red alliance out front — 70 seconds remaining," said announcer JonDarr Bradshaw of Cleveland during one of the dozens of matches here on Friday.

High school students from 44 schools from the New York area — including 26 from the Rochester region — participated in Friday's regional FIRST Robotics Competition, hosted by RIT. About 4,000 participants and fans attended the opening day.

The regional event concludes today, with five teams qualifying for the championship round in Atlanta next month.



The Penfield High School robotics team, left, and the Fairport High School team compete with their robots in a seeding match at the regional FIRST Robotics Competition at Rochester Institute of Technology on Friday. (ANNETTE LEIN staff photographer)



TyShawn Bailey, right, and other members of Wilson Magnet High School's team cheer on teammates. (ANNETTE LEIN staff photographer)

Similar competitions are being held at 47 other sites.

The annual event is run by a nonprofit group, For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology, based in Manchester, N.H.

"I feel pretty confident about the operating of the 'bot,'" said Ryan Baldwin, 17, a Honeoye Falls-Lima High senior, who will pursue a career in engineering at RIT next fall.

With the help of mentors, students built the robots.

While there is no prize money, participants in this test of robotic skills can apply for scholarship money contributed by colleges and professional organizations.

Each match lasts a little more than two minutes, with three teams forming a red alliance and another three a blue alliance.

The point of these matches is for the students — using their remote controls — to direct their robots to kick the 12 soccer balls on the field into the goals.

Each of the six teams in a match has a robot on the field.

Different teams had different strategies.

Wilson Magnet High's team put a priority on defense and had team member Elliot Williams scouting other teams.

"Team 610's robot is fierce," said Elliot, a 16-year-old junior.

Irondequoit's Eastridge High, on the other hand, put a priority on offense.

"All our work is paying off," said Wesley Evens, a 17-year-old senior.