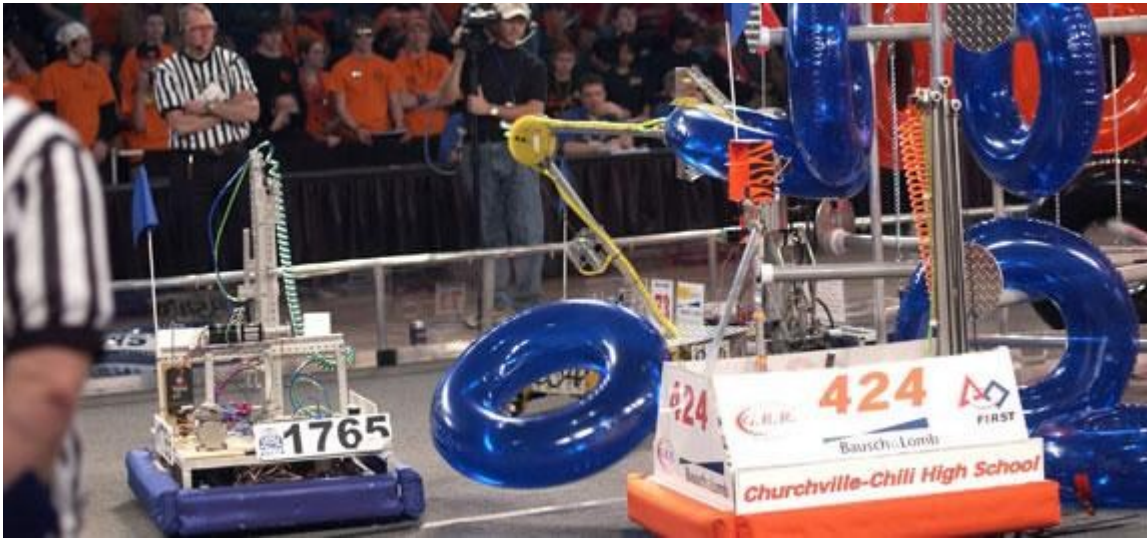


RIT News (2007)

Spirited FIRST Robotics rocks RIT



Bright colors, loud music, screaming fans, rough 'n' tumble robots, and a pumped-up emcee declaring, "Let's get ready to rumble!"—it *must* be a FIRST robotics contest.

RIT's Gordon Field House and Activities Center was the site of the third annual Finger Lakes Regional FIRST Robotics Competition, March 9-10, that pitted student-built, remote controlled robots and their creators against opponents in a sports-style contest. Among three-dozen teams, five advanced to the national competition next month in Atlanta.

The Penfield High School "Rolling Thunder," sponsored by Harris Corp., won the Regional Chairman's Award, the event's highest honor. In addition, Ed Hensel, professor and department head of mechanical engineering and a mentor to the Fairport High School "Blue Lightning," sponsored by Gleason Corp., received the Regional Woodie

Flowers Award, presented to an outstanding engineer for teaching excellence. RIT President Albert Simone and his wife, Carolie, received an Outstanding Volunteer Award.

The "X-Cats," from Joseph C. Wilson Magnet High School in the Rochester City School District and sponsored by Xerox Corp., earned the Johnson & Johnson Sportsmanship Award. "Delta Force," the Rush-Henrietta Senior High School team sponsored by RIT alumnus Lee Garelick '61 (engineering), earned the Imagery Award.

FIRST—For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology—aims to inspire students to pursue studies and careers in science, technology and engineering, and it succeeds. According to a recent study by Brandeis University, 88 percent of FIRST participants go on to attend college; and, compared with non-FIRST students, they are three times more likely to major in engineering and two to four times more likely to pursue careers in science, technology and engineering.