Newsletter 1

Welcome to the RoboCupJunior Soccer Championship 2021!

Thank you for registering your team, we are more than happy to have you on board for this year's competition. Facing the challenge of a global pandemic, we are hosting all events and tournaments virtually only. That's why we are even more grateful for your participation and support. Feel free to share any feedback that you have with us - it's a first for us, too.

During RoboCup week, we plan on doing many different things, including
- Technical Challenges,
- SuperTeam Challenges,
- lots of Interviews, as well as
- Video Presentations
- and (maybe) even some simulated live-streams.

In this email, we will share the most important milestones and information about this year's competition, be it physical or not. Also, we will share the rubrics and requirements for your first submissions.

We wish you good luck and lots of fun!

Gather.Town

To make it more fun, this year's RoboCupJunior is held in Gather.Town! In this cute console-game-like environment we will meet with you: For the Welcome Call, for interviews, for Video Presentations (a.k.a. "Poster Session") and much more! Also, you can talk to other RCJ Soccer teams in there, as well as teams of other leagues, and to the OC members of course.

The link for the Gather.Town will be shared later, alongside more detailed instructions. However, feel free to already have a look at their page. We've tried it in the OC/TC group and it did seem a bit quirky at first but a lot of fun later -- we think you'll like it :)

The Schedule

The first and most important thing: RCJ Soccer **starts on June 22nd** - even before the opening ceremony! We are starting things off with a *Welcome Call*. In this call, where we will
- share the SuperTeam compositions,
- share the first Technical Challenge for your league,
- give updates on your league and timetable, and
- answer any questions that you might have.

On the following days, in order to keep in touch with you, we will have Daily Gatherings that are timed and structured just like the Welcome Call. During these gatherings, we will release

new challenges and provide time for your questions. All those calls will be recorded, so they are not mandatory. Depending on your timezone, you may choose to skip the call, and watch the recordings later. You can also participate by asking your questions in the forum.

Generally, time zones are tricky for a global event. We will try our best to care for that as much as possible but daily calls and submission deadlines are strict and the same around the globe.

Please also note that sometimes we might need to re-adjust the schedule a little. If that happens, we will let you know ASAP via all available channels (primarily newsletters and/or the forum).

The schedule (the current version of which you can find here) has various activities spread out throughout the whole week. We would like to specifically highlight **the Symposium** on the 28th of June (Monday). The Awards Ceremony will also take place during the Symposium and to make the most of it, each of the teams with a prize will have a chance to present their work to the larger RCJ Soccer audience.

Technical Challenges

Speaking of submission deadlines: For each individual Technical Challenge you will have 24 hours to solve it. You will have 48 hours to solve the SuperTeam Challenge. The submission period ends with the next Daily Gathering, respectively:

		Technical Challenge 1	SuperTeam Challenge	Technical Challenge 2	Technical Challenge 3
Physical	shared at	June 22nd 15:00	June 22nd 15:00	June 24th 15:00	June 25th 15:00
	deadline	June 23rd 15:00	June 24th 15:00	June 25th 15:00	June 26th 15:00
Simulation	shared at	June 22nd 14:00	June 22nd 14:00	June 24th 14:00	June 25th 14:00
	deadline	June 23rd 14:00	June 24th 14:00	June 25th 14:00	June 26th 14:00

(all times in UTC)

We will let you know all the details about the challenges and how to submit them during the Welcome Call and subsequent Daily Gatherings. These submissions will mainly require you to send in videos of your solution and/or potentially some code/additional documentation. If you happen to have some ideas about what a good challenge may look like, please do not hesitate to share it with us on the forum:
https://junior.forum.robocup.org/t/call-for-suggestions-technical-challenges/2072

We will talk about and evaluate your solutions during the interviews:

Interviews

A big part of RoboCupJunior is communication. Remember: It is not about whether you win or lose, it is about how much you learn along the way! This is why, for each Technical and SuperTeam Challenge, there will be an interview.

Interviews will be held in groups of 5 Teams each. This way, you will present your solution for each challenge to 4 other teams. Also, you will be able to listen to the solutions of 4 other teams and get a chance to get inspired by their ideas.

You will be able to enroll for interviews at a later stage. We will make sure that each team gets a chance to participate in an interview appropriate for their time zone.

Video Presentations aka "Poster Session"

On the first day, you may find yourself asking the question: "Who am I competing against?"

To satisfy your curiosity, we will collect Team Videos and Team Description Papers of each team. Then, on the first day of competition, we will share your submission with all the other teams here: https://github.com/RoboCupJuniorTC/awesome-rcj-soccer

On top of that, we will have a small Video Presentation a.k.a. "Poster Session". For this session, you will have a designated spot in Gather.Town where you can present your video & where you should be available with your avatar to answer questions. We will share more details about the "Poster Sessions" during the Welcome Call.

Important: The submission deadline for Team Videos and Team Description Papers is on June 22nd at 10:00 am UTC! We will share more details about how to submit your videos & papers later, but you can start working on them now. Ready … set … go!

Important: Both, the Team Video as well as the Team Description Paper, will be included in your overall score. Your submission will be judged according to specific rubrics. You can find them at the following link:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/189Zbma380ozOLJfblAGCKXoi9PBDq0eA/view

Simulation Only: Code Submission

Given our experience with the SoccerSim Qualifications, we'll do code submission differently.

We've put together a quick platform which you can use to upload your code and check that it works as you'd expect (by simulating a very quick 10 second match against a dummy team). You can find it at https://checker.rcjsim.soccer/

All the participating teams should have received their login details already -- if you have not, please do reach out to us immediately by responding to this email.

Important: The submission deadline for the SoccerSim code is on the 14th of June, 23:56 Anywhere on Earth.

Simulation Only: Tournament and Live Streams

After submitting your code, we will simulate your matches! The tournament will be held in a FIFA-WorldCup-like mode:

- Group phase (home- & away rounds)
- Round-of-16
- Quarter Finals
- Semi-Finals
- Finals + 3rd-place-playoffs

On each competition day, we will share the results of the next round with you right after the Daily Gathering. On some competition days, we may even have live streams (4pm UTC time). We will randomly decide which matches to stream - so expect the worst to happen :)

What's next?

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to us on the forum. It's the first fully-virtual competition that we're hosting, so there's going to be some hiccups and flaws for sure! (For instance, we probably should have sent this email at least a month ago, not a week before the competition.) We heavily rely on your feedback and would very much appreciate any advice you may have.

Still, we home it's going to be a lot of fun, as that's the actual reason why we in the OC/TC do this in the end :)

Good luck!

- The RoboCupJunior Soccer OC 2021