

**Title of Session:** FIRST Robotics

**Moderator:** Patricia Chen

**Title of File:** 20070227robotics

**Date:** February 27, 2007

Room: FIRST Robotics Group (K-12)

**TomHo** joined the room.

**PatriciaCh:** hello

**TomHo:** hi

**BjB :** here to learn about FIRST Robotics?

**PatriciaCh:** are you a teacher?

**TomHo:** dropping in for FIRST robotics

**TomHo:** I'm a teacher at a Jr College

**PatriciaCh:** ok....I am a mentor for a robotics team located in Florida

**PatriciaCh:** where are you located?

**TomHo:** Tyler Junior College in Tyler, Texas

**PatriciaCh:** are you near Houston?

**TomHo:** North of Houston by about 5 hrs

**PatriciaCh:** the website is [www.usfirst.org](http://www.usfirst.org)

**PatriciaCh:** Houston has a regional...you can locate schools that may be in your area

**PatriciaCh:** these schools have FIRST teams

**TomHo:** Is it only K-12?

**PatriciaCh:** yes it is....the colleges are allowed to mentor teams

**BjB :** might be a very cool community service project for your students, Tom

**PatriciaCh:** some teams are mentored by teachers and engineers...like my team do not have the luxury of college mentors

**PatriciaCh:** it is very rewarding project

**TomHo:** What is the time commitment? Weeks? Months?

**PatriciaCh:** the time commitment is 6 weeks...design, build and ship to a regional...but if you are the leader of the team...the commitment is 6 months

**PatriciaCh:** the team leader has to connect with the kids before the season kicks off in January...then travel to the competitions

**PatriciaCh:** if you are only mentoring the 6 weeks of build season....6 weeks is max

**PatriciaCh:** but it is very hard to just build and not travel to one competition

**TomHo:** I'm checking out the website now. Doesn't look like we're talking about building battle bots. Are these designed to maneuver an obstacle course or something?

**PatriciaCh:** Don't let that fool you.....you do try do maneuver around....but each year's competition is different ....it can get fierce and vicious out there

**PatriciaCh:** check out this is the link to the Florida Regional  
<http://soap.circuitrunners.com/2006/movies/florida/>

**PatriciaCh:** the veterans' teams are more apt to push and shove.... and if allowed ...they will ram you

**PatriciaCh:** FIRST had to write rules so competing robots would not be destroyed

**PatriciaCh:** We do not try to build a battle bot....it cost too much money and also....you can only bring one robot to a competition and to Championship

**TomHo:** It looks like the robot is built from a kit. Each group has the same kit, I assume. No extras allowed?

**PatriciaCh:** it has to been pretty much the same robot to championship that is

**PatriciaCh:** some teams build from a kit....I am with team 180...we do not

**PatriciaCh:** we decide how we want to play the game ... design the robot to do so ....

**PatriciaCh:** you have to have machining capabilities to not use the kit....and we are lucky to have a machine shop that helps us

**PatriciaCh:** certain extras allowed.....it will be in the rules...what is allowed and not

**TomHo:** very cool!

**TomHo:** I see that L-3 has a team that is planning to attend the Houston regional. I used to work for L3.

**PatriciaCh:** actually...most robots are not the same....except for a Canadian team (s)- they are 2 teams...but they build a twin set every year

**PatriciaCh:** you should attend the Houston Regional .... it is really hard to understand or feel the energy while watching a video.... I equate this whole thing .. to the NCAA Final Four

**PatriciaCh:** It is incredible to feel the energy and the excitement from a group of geeks and nerds

**PatriciaCh:** as a teacher in a middle school...I explain to kids that ...this is one way that can put what they learn in my class to practice

**TomHo:** Houston regional is the end of March. I won't be able to go. Maybe next year. Do you know if such events are annual? Will it be end of March next year?

**PatriciaCh:** Pretty much....most regionals do take place about the same time frame...

**PatriciaCh:** it is a shame that you cannot attend the Lonestar Regional

**TomHo:** very sad But this is something for me to consider. I teach a class on Introductory Circuits. This would probably make a good project for my students to be involved in...mentoring.

**PatriciaCh:** yes....the robot is controlled by the joystick....so definitely...circuitry is involved as well as programming

**PatriciaCh:** is New Orleans close by?

**TomHo:** Houston is probably closer than Nowleans.

**PatriciaCh:** they have a regional next week

**PatriciaCh:** if not....you can check out 2006 Florida Regional ... to get an idea

**TomHo:** Thanks for your time, Patricia. I think a regional is in my future sometime.

**PatriciaCh:** also.... this is not just about building robots .... they encourage students to write essays and use 3d Max studio to create a 30 sec animation about themselves or game

**PatriciaCh:** no problem...please come back and ask more questions

**TomHo:** Thanks, bye.

**PatriciaCh:** we do need people to mentor the kids....there is tons of money out there...scholarship money that is