



**NAVAL BASE POINT LOMA
Public Affairs Office**



PRESS RELEASE

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Third Annual San Diego Regional FIRST Robotics Competition

SAN DIEGO, CA - The Navy recently supported and embraced the Third Annual San Diego Regional FIRST Robotics Competition held at the San Diego Sports Arena in San Diego, California, March 5th - 7th, 2009. The competition was an intense three-day competitive event showcasing robots developed and operated by dozens of high school teams from all over the world. This year the San Diego Regional FIRST Robotics Competition attracted 40 teams from across the United States and a team from Brazil and a crowd of over 1,000 high school students.

Imagine combining the action of a major sporting event such as football and the rhythm of a rock and roll concert, but with a mechanical engineering twist. The FIRST Robotics Competition provides an educational and engineering environment for students to learn skills that aid in future job placement. It couples international teams made of students and professional engineers to overcome design and functionality obstacles. *FIRST's* competition brings out the competitiveness of life with the fun of learning.

The Navy Southwest Region Band provided an opening ensemble as well as the national anthem for the event and Captain Paul Marconi, Commanding Officer, Naval Base Point Loma, delivered the opening remarks to get the competition rolling. Additionally, several local Navy commands provided volunteers and mentors for the various teams. In particular, SPAWAR Systems Center Pacific with their vast expertise in the area of robotics was a critical partner to making the event a huge success.

FIRST was founded in 1989 to inspire young people's interest and participation in science and technology. *FIRST*'s mission is to inspire young people to be science and technology leaders, by engaging them in exciting mentor-based programs that build science, engineering and technology skills that inspire innovation and that foster well-rounded life capabilities including self-confidence, communication, and leadership. Colleges, universities, corporations, businesses, and individuals provide scholarships to participants – over \$9 million in various programs. The competition shows students that the technological field holds many opportunities and that the basic concepts of science, math, engineering, and invention are exciting and interesting.

“All of the teams developed, built and operated highly sophisticated robots demonstrating outstanding engineering project management – these are people we want to attract in our active duty military and defense research and development laboratories,” said Captain Marconi.

Each January, teams across the world are given a new challenge and six weeks to develop a strategy to design, build and test their robots. The finished robots are then crated and shipped to events like this one all over the United States, Canada, and Israel. This year's challenge was called “LUNACY”. LUNACY is played on a 54'x27' low friction field and robots are equipped with slippery wheels and payload trailers. Two three-team robot alliances collect and score “Orbit Balls”, designated as Moon Rocks, in the trailers attached to the opposing teams' robots. Human players are positioned around the perimeter of the arena and can score from their stations.

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