

Northwoods Press



Nevis Robotics Team #3102 set for World Regional Robotics FIRST Championship in Detroit, Michigan

It all started back in January when Nevis High School and Robotics Team #3102 (a.k.a. the Tech-No-Tigers) hosted the game reveal for the 2019 robotics game – this year dubbed “Deep Space Exploration” – for teams across the north. From that point on it has been all hands on deck as team members focused on the strategy and design of this year’s robot – “Astro Bob” – and how to get it to best perform within the parameters of the game and to interact with the field pieces, all while scoring the most points. The team also maintained the game’s ethos of “gracious professionalism.”

Fast forward six weeks, and team TNT had a working robot ready for competition, and they were able to conduct their first field test in Tiger Arena – the NHS gym. Team #3102 hosted what is known as the “Week Zero Event” at which all the invited teams get to check out the practice field constructed in Nevis and have an opportunity to see what tweaks they need to make on their own robots before “bagging” their robot for official competition a couple of days later.

“The robot performed really well at Week Zero, and after a couple minor adjustments, we were ready to compete,” said Team #3102 Mentor Olaf Netteberg. Competition is what the Tech-No-Tigers seem to live for, and just a couple weeks after the trial run the team was ready to compete.

TNT competed in the Lake Superior Regional event in Duluth March 6-9, and at the end of the qualifying rounds they were ranked fifth out of 63 teams with a 12-3-1 overall record after combined 87 rounds of competition over the first two days. The top eight teams then chose two alliance partners each in the selection process, and in the final competition TNT’s three-team alliance defeated all others to win the event and give them the opportunity to participate in the World Championship in Detroit, Michigan.

This opportunity, however, comes at a great cost. It is something that most teams don’t budget for, if any. To celebrate this special accomplishment, the Nevis team stayed an

extra night in Duluth – also because of because of a terrible snowstorm that night and on a directive from the school administration.

“The support of the community, our families, our businesses, organizations, and the school, and of course our sponsors, including 3M, is just mind-boggling,” Netteberg said.

The Tech-No-Tigers started fundraising with the thought of taking all of the students along on the trip to Detroit. They reasoned that all the team members helped get them this far, so it is only right to take the whole team. For perspective, a basketball or volleyball team wouldn’t only take their starters to a state tournament game, and they feel the same way. To start the fundraising, they asked each team member’s family to donate \$100, thus raising \$3,200 right off the bat to get started toward their goal.

“The funding coming in has really been amazing,” Netteberg said. “We started out with a no-food budget, figuring we would just make sandwiches, etc., and not eat out for any meals. Thanks to all those who have donated so generously, we will exceed our goal and be able to feed our students at a restaurant or two during our trip.”

Netteberg shared that funding has come in from proud sponsors in communities all around Nevis, from Walker to the east and Park Rapids to the west and from individuals living in every direction from the bedroom community of Nevis. “Our little community of Nevis has supported us so much, from the fire department, the banks, the local clubs and organizations, and of course the families who live in and around the community, and many of their family members, too.”

The fundraising efforts of these students has gone beyond the traditional, too, to include things like celebrity bagging at Super One in Walker, where students helped bag groceries and made tips for their trip; a donation from the Nevis Fire Relief Association, a Nevis Lions Fish Fry, a Pulled Pork Buffet at the Red River Event Center in Akeley, and a continuing

list of things done on TNT’s behalf, with or without the help of students and mentors.

“This event has really pulled the community together, and we are thrilled at the support for our team,” Netteberg said. “The school has not had to help fund the trip in the traditional sense, and it’s really not something they would budget for. And thanks to our sponsors, it’s something they don’t need to worry about. Still, they have been very supportive of the team. They have allowed kids to step out of class for a photo opportunity, or to speak with a club, or for a variety of other reasons associated with this. In addition, they are allowing 32 students to miss nearly a full week of school and paying for three substitute teachers for four full days of school. All of this support is phenomenal.”

The team also has established a Go Fund me page that has raised approximately \$2,500.

Travel Plans

The Tech-No-Tigers will depart Nevis High School at 4 a.m. on Tuesday, April 23, heading for Detroit, Michigan via a charter bus, with an estimated 13.5 hours of straight travel time. They will travel all day Tuesday and through the night, and will arrive at Cobo Center in Detroit on Wednesday for the “World Robotics Event.”

At the arena on Wednesday they will participate in some practice rounds, set up their pits, present the robot for inspection, and then go on a tour the Henry Ford Museum and the Ford Factory Museum. They will be competing at Cobo Center Thursday through Saturday, from morning to night, and return home on Sunday. The tour bus will also serve as their transportation to and from the event venue.

“Logistically, this was the best and safest plan for us. Everyone will be in one vehicle, and all together, all the time,” Netteberg said. “We looked at a variety of options including flying and Amtrak, which in terms of just transportation was

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