

Team 1511 Rolls through RIT & Annapolis Maryland feels the Thunder!

Submitted By: Kim O'Toole Eckhardt, Lead Systems Engineer

Harris-sponsored FIRST Robotics team 1511, Rolling Thunder, has successfully completed two regional competitions, culminating with the team's win of the most prestigious and highly coveted award in FIRST Robotics – The Chairman's award.



At the Finger Lakes Regional (FLR), March 5 – 7, Rolling Thunder had the honor of competing with 49 of the finest FIRST Robotics teams from the Rochester area, New York, Connecticut, New Jersey and Ontario. Team 1511 was one of the powerhouse teams of FLR seeded 19th with a 4-3-1 record. The team was part of the 7th alliance and made it all the way to the finals.

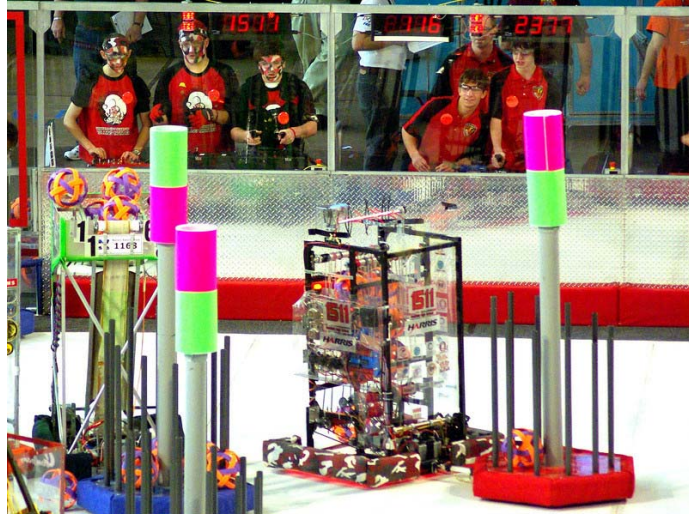
Alliance pairing and pre-match strategy was made easier for all by team 1511's sophisticated labview based scouting system designed by the team's mentors and students.

The judges (including Harris' Rita Sherman and Chip Renzi) were impressed with the team's entrepreneurial spirit and awarded 1511 the "Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers Entrepreneurship Award." This award celebrates the entrepreneurial spirit by recognizing a team that, since inception, has developed the framework for a comprehensive business plan to scope, manage and achieve team objectives. Winning this award shows that 1511 has a well-rounded, highly functional team – it's more than just creating a robot.

A safe team is a happy team. At both the Finger Lakes Regional and Chesapeake Regional, team 1511 was lauded for its safe work and pit environment. Team 1511 was a runner up for the UL Industrial Safety Award at RIT and received an unprecedented 79 safety tokens at the Chesapeake Regional. Team 1511's Safety Captain was also awarded the "safety star of the day" at the Chesapeake regional.

At the Chesapeake Regional last weekend, March 20 – 21, Team 1511, Rolling Thunder competed with 55 teams, seating 11th with a record of 5-2-0. The thunder was heard by all at the Naval Academy, as not only did 1511 make it to the quarter finals, they left with three awards: The Imagery Award, The Website Award, and the most prestigious, most high sought afterward of all in FIRST Robotics – The Chairman's award.

The Chairman's award is described as: "FIRST's most prestigious award, it honors the team that best represents a model for other teams to emulate and best embodies the purpose and goals of FIRST. The award helps keep the central focus of the FIRST Robotics Competition on the goal of inspiring greater levels of respect and honor for science and technology."



Of course, the most important thing to come out of the Finger Lakes and Chesapeake regional is the experience and fun the students, mentors and parents have with the team. The FIRST Robotics experience is more than just building a robot in six weeks. FIRST Robotics fosters engineering, business planning and time management skills that can last a lifetime. Team 1511, Rolling Thunder, is an exceptional team, and is honored to have Harris RF Communications as the primary sponsor.

We leave you with what the Judges at Chesapeake said about the team:



And now, here's what the judges have to say about this Regional Chairman's Award team. This team is a notable role model for all other teams to emulate.

Volunteering for FRC, FTC and FLL keeps them busy even when they are not out demonstrating their robots, raising funds and spreading the word of FIRST. They have completed over 100 demonstrations at schools and career fairs, but also county fairs and parades.

They've not only assisted teams in building and learning (over 60 FRC teams in the past 3 years and sponsored 32 FLL teams in the past 4 years) they even FUNDED a FLL team to go to Atlanta. In 2008 they held 6 robotics camps for over 100 students in their area.

They're a tech-savvy group with a flare for design, costumes, Web experience, wikis, calendars, and social networking. They work with mentors and each other on homework, because school comes first before FIRST. They create their own form of a yearbook, filled with accomplishments, photos, mentor info and corporate sponsors. They have met with over 250 businesses.

Sure they don't eat sleep and breath robotics, they take breaks to do charity events in their community recognizing that teams take on tough challenges (like delivering 600 Thanksgiving baskets). And in terms of preparing their members for the future, after 5 years all (100%) of their alumni are attending college and some even travel with the team to competitions.

Watch out.

The barometer is dropping.

The wind is gusting.

There is a storm approaching, can you hear the THUNDER?!?

The 2009 Chesapeake Regional Chairman's Award Winner is Team # 1511

Rolling Thunder!

