



Robotics continues history of success

Jack McManus January 4, 2017

As competitive robotics becomes more popular internationally, Westlake's program has been recognized for its string of successes.

"Robotics has many benefits, including learning about engineering, teamwork and learning to solve problems," freshman Philobots team member Amelia Leveille said. "We also get a chance to show off our work in competitions, just like in sports."

FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) robotics teams compete in either the First Tech Challenge (FTC) or the First Robotics Competition (FRC). FIRST teams design, build and program robots to compete against each other by completing different objectives for points.

In addition to during class, FTC teams, made up of underclassmen, meet every Monday and Wednesday evenings and on Saturday mornings. Their dedication has clearly paid off, as two out of four FTC leagues are currently led by Westlake teams, Philobots and Phi-Ro Maniacs.

"We're very passionate about the robots and their performance," freshman FTC student Joey Huang said.

FRC robotics has had considerable success, too. The summer before last season began in September, three students, junior Abby Audet and seniors Lewis Jones and Rachel Gardner, travelled with robotics coach Norman Morgan to China for the China Robotics Challenge, where they had the opportunity to spend six days interacting with and mentoring Chinese students. The team went on to compete in the World Championships in St. Louis, an accomplishment reached by only 128 out of the more than 4,500 teams worldwide.