



Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Foundation Inc.



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**Montgomery Blair High School Robotics Team
Earns Fourth Place at Chesapeake Regional Competition**

Silver Spring, MD—The Montgomery Blair High School Robotics Team won fourth place at the 10th Anniversary Chesapeake Regional Foundation for Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST) Robotics Competition, which took place March 8-10 at the Baltimore Convention Center. More than 70 Blair students were involved, both from within an outside of the Montgomery Blair High School Science, Mathematics, and Computer Science Magnet Program. In addition, team member Sagarika Das of Silver Spring was presented with one of two FIRST Dean's List Finalist Awards.

The FIRST Robotics Competition is designed to inspire young people's interest and participation in science and technology, as well as build self-confidence, leadership, and life skills. More than 1,000 high school students, representing 63 schools from 11 states and the District of Columbia, participated this year in the Chesapeake Regional FIRST Robotics Competition. In January, each robotics team was informed about the nature of this year's competition, which was to construct a robot to play a game called REBOUND RUMBLE™, a 3-on-3 basketball game described at <http://www.youtube.com/user/FRCTeamsGlobal>, and given six weeks to build their robot. At the contest, matches lasted two minutes each and were played by two alliances of three robots each, for a total of six robots on the playing field at a time. The goal was to make baskets, in one of four baskets per side using compressed foam balls, to earn as many points as possible. More difficult shots and those made during an initial period of the game, when the robot had to operate autonomously, were awarded higher point value. In the final period of the game, teams were awarded additional points if they balanced one, two, or three robots on a bridge. During ten such qualifying matches, the Blair team earned a spot among the top eight teams and the right to participate in the elimination rounds as an alliance captain. At this point, it advanced to the semifinal rounds and earned fourth place.

The team will compete next at the Washington, D.C. Regional FIRST Robotics Competition to be held March 29-31 at the Walter E.

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Washington Convention Center. Blair Magnet science teacher, Mr. Erik Lodal, mentors the Blair Robotics Team.

Mr. Lodal describes the odds against the team's success, "There were teams from [other states] which are traditionally very well funded and extremely competitive. Our robot was built almost exclusively here in room 361 at Blair, and 95% of the work was done by Blair students. On practice day, we did not have a functional robot until all the practice time had ended for the day. This means we went into competition on Friday with no experience on the particulars of how to control the robot. We have some brilliant kids, though, and throughout the weekend they kept making minor improvements to the robot and the robot's code, and clearly we did very well for ourselves."

Eric Huang of Potomac and Sagarika Das, Blair Robotics Team president and vice-president, respectively, express their gratitude, "Our ability to participate and compete in the Chesapeake Regional would not have been possible without the hard work of our mentors and our students. We couldn't be prouder of being members of such a talented and amazing group of people, and we look forward to the Washington, D.C. Regional."



Team robot drivers from the Montgomery Blair High School Robotics Team, from left: Matt Bernstein, Brian Oluwo , Marcus Clarke, and Richard Lin. They are dressed as Mario Brothers characters, following the theme of the team robot's name, Bowser's Castle. (Photo courtesy of Blair team mentor, Dr. Timothy Judkins)

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The Montgomery Blair High School Robotics Team with their robot.
(Photo courtesy of Blair team mentor, Dr. Noemi Kedei)



Montgomery Blair High School Robotics Team vice-president and FIRST Dean's List Finalist Award recipient, Sagarika Das, on right, with teammate Sarah Wilson.
(Photo courtesy of Blair team mentor, Dr. Timothy Judkins)

About The Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Foundation

This organization was founded by a group of concerned students, teachers, administrators, and alumni in 2008. Its purpose is to promote science, mathematics, and computer science education by supporting the Magnet Program at Montgomery Blair High School in its efforts to develop resources and refine practices needed to provide a rigorous and enriched education for students, staff, and the community at large. The Foundation is incorporated in the state of Maryland and is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

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