

FTC 4140 – Fish in the Boat



FishintheBoat.org

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Hello!

We had the experience of a lifetime this year at the World Championships! It was so much fun and we learned a ton working with other teams.

We left Minnesota Monday morning April 22nd arriving in St. Louis that night. We spent Tuesday organizing, setting up our judging presentation, and running drive practice, taking over the hotel conference room. We met a German FLL team and another FTC team staying in the same hotel and hung out with them a few times after competition.

Wednesday signaled the first day of competition! There are 3000 FTC teams around the world and the top 128 teams compete at the World Championships, split into two divisions, Edison and Franklin. These two run independently until the final robot rounds and the awards ceremony. This is our third year competing at Champs and we have been in the Franklin division each year. On Wednesday we set up our pits, passed robot inspection, talked strategy with the other teams, and went through our judging session detailing our outreach, engineering process, and team during the season. We were challenged to communicate to the judges everything we did over the season in only fifteen minutes. It was a lot of information to convey.

Thursday was the beginning of qualification rounds. Each team had eight matches to determine their ranking going into the elimination rounds. The challenge this year is like a big game of tic-tac-toe – but there's no taking turns. Small rings are hung on a center rack with points given depending on the level with bonus points for getting three in a row. There are four robots on the field at a time in a two on two format. On Thursday, we finished the day winning four matches of six. Other notable matches include scoring the second and fifth highest scores of the competition; 467 and 412! We really had the chance to show off our offensive prowess, taking a lead in scoring for the entire tournament.

On Friday, qualification rounds continued through the morning. When the elimination matches finished, we were ranked 17th of the 64 teams in our division. The top four seeded teams after qualification matches pick alliance partners to play with during elimination rounds (where teams compete to win the best 2 out of 3 matches and the winner moves on). Each elimination alliance has three teams on it, two playing at a time while one sits out. We were the first pick by the first seed, team 4251 Cougar Robotics from Ohio. That was one of the greatest moments at the tournament as we now had one more day of competition. Our other partner was team 5096 Monkey Madness from Alabama. We spent Friday night at Monkey Madness's hotel in their conference room, working out strategies against our opponents for the next morning. We also practiced driving the robots together, focusing on on-the-spot decisions during matches. The teams shared huge tips that were easy to implement by all the teams but made our alliance as a whole much better.

The elimination matches began Saturday morning at 7:00am. The teams competing in the elimination matches moved their pit and tools to the arena next to the playing fields to allow matches to go quicker. This was awesome to be right in the action throughout the morning. After a final mechanical check and fresh batteries we were ready. The twenty three other teams in the elimination rounds - both divisions - were down with us, all ready to go.

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We went undefeated in the elimination rounds, advancing steadily through the bracket. Our autonomous program worked well and we were in sync with Cougar Robotics.

We advanced into the final rounds – the Edison division champions and the Franklin division champions came together to compete in the finals on the cumulative DaVinci field. Cougar Robotics and Monkey Madness won the first match easily against the Edison champions and then it was our turn to play. We scored our autonomous ring. The other alliance scored one ring and we entered driver controlled period at a five point disadvantage, 55 to 60. Entering the teleop period our strategy was to hang rings and then switch to defense if necessary. It worked well for the beginning of the first match, though we were at a slight disadvantage against the much heavier robot playing against us. Cougar Robotics had a slight advantage and was hanging well. And then – disaster. Our wrist locked and took us out of ring hanging. We had to switch to defense in the middle of the match. And we kept up. The other robot didn't score a ring for the rest of the match. We waited with baited breath for the announcement of the winner. If we won, we were World Champions. If we lost we had to play one more round.

We won – 251 to 230. Two rings separated us from one more match. We celebrated with our alliance and then congratulated our opponents.

We were World Champions! It was almost unbelievable.

The last part of the competition was the awards ceremony. There are six judged awards in FTC for teams' outreach, robot, strategy, design, and teamwork. To be even nominated for one of these at the World Championship level is a feat. We were nominated for four awards – including the Inspire Award, the top judged award in FTC - and won the PTC Design award. Not only were we successful at the robot game, but we were recognized by the judges as a competitive team. We couldn't have been prouder and we still can't convey the emotion that we felt at the time. Thank you so much for your support of our team! We couldn't have been this successful without you!

