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news release

Attention: News/education editors

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UK TEAM SELECTED FOR ROBOT WORLD CUP IN LISBON

Pupils from five schools in the UK will attempt to emulate the recent success of the English football team in Portugal when they represent the United Kingdom in the junior league at RoboCup 2004, the robot world cup, in Portugal.

The ultimate goal of the junior league robot competitions is to develop children's technology skills. So by the year 2050 a team of fully autonomous humanoid robot soccer players shall play (and win!) a soccer game against the human world champions.

Organised by the Robotics Outreach Group at the Open University, the UK team will mingle with the world's leading robotics researchers at RoboCup 2004, to be held at the Lisbon Industry Fair from 27th June to 5th July.

The teams are made up of pupils from Walton High School and Shenley Brook End School in Milton Keynes, Ridgmont Lower School in Bedfordshire, Bishop Challoner School in Birmingham and Green Lane City Learning Centre in Dagenham.

RoboCup is an international programme whose purpose is to foster Artificial Intelligence (AI) and robotics research by providing a standard problem where a wide range of technologies can be integrated and examined.

RoboCupJunior offers several challenges, each emphasizing both cooperative and competitive aspects. The junior initiative provides an exciting introduction to the field of robotics, a new way to develop technical abilities through hands-on experience with electronics, hardware and software, and a highly motivating opportunity to learn about teamwork while sharing technology with friends.

Ridgmont Lower School and Walton High School will be participating respectively in the Primary and Secondary Robot Dance competitions. Shenley Brook End School and Bishop Challoner School will be representing the UK in the Robot Soccer 1-on-1 and 2-on-2 competitions. Green Lane CLC will be participating in the Primary Robot Rescue competition.

Professor Jeffrey Johnson of the Open University's Department of Design and Technology and member of RoboCupJunior International Committee said: "The experience of attending a high-quality, international research forum will serve to introduce the pupils to possible career paths and show them directions that they might not otherwise see until they're on undergraduate degree courses".

RoboCupJunior began in 1998, with a demonstration at RoboCup-98 in Paris. The following year, RoboCup-99 in Stockholm exhibited the first interactive RoboCupJunior workshops.

At RoboCupJunior 2000 in Melbourne more than 100 children participated from 25 schools around Australia, as well as from Germany and the USA. Students entered one of three challenges: soccer, line-following sumo and dance. In addition, more than 500 local schoolchildren toured the RoboCup venue and learned about the initiative.

At RoboCupJunior 2001 in Seattle, 25 teams from the USA, Australia, Germany and the UK entered soccer, rescue and dance challenges. A brother and sister team, Max and Grace Petre Easty from Heronsgate Middle School in Milton Keynes earned the title of World Robot Dance Champions.

RoboCupJunior 2002 was held in Fukuoka, Japan. A total of 59 teams from 12 countries participated.

RoboCupJunior 2003 was held in Padova, Italy and 68 teams from 15 countries took part.

Editors' Notes:

For more information on Robocup activities and events log onto

<http://www.robocup2004.pt/>

<http://www.robocupjunior.org/>

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