



Ron Baselice/Staff Photographer

Students from Waxahachie Global High School cheered for all the robots on the court at the Dallas Convention Center on Friday. More than 80 teams were in the competition.

EDUCATION

High school teams build hoops-shooting robots

Science competition's net effect: Everyone feels like a winner

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There's nothing all that novel about high school students shooting hoops in their spare time — except when they build robots to do it for them.

More than 80 teams from five states and Mexico each hope their machines drain the most buckets at this weekend's For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology Robotics Competition at the Dallas Convention Center.

In six weeks, the teams built and programmed a pile of parts into fully functioning basket-shooting robots. The competition wraps up Saturday, with a trip to next month's championships in St. Louis on

the line.

"The most rewarding part of working with my team is that I got to work with people that I never thought I'd get to work with," said Maya Johnson, a senior at Skyline High who led the team from the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Dallas.

The team's members live in cities from Coppel to Oak Cliff to Richardson, and none go to the same school or club. Even so, last year they won an award from the judges in the first year competing, Johnson said.

Chants, dances, cheers, claps and sheer concentration filled the competition floor as students faced off in groups of three for the "Rebound Rumble."

Cherri Rowe, the teen coordinator for the Boys & Girls Club, believes her team's robot has an edge.

"It can go across the brid-

ges, it can balance, it can shoot, it can pass," she said. "So they've done a lot, and regardless of whether they win or not, I'm always proud of them."

The team worked with sponsors from Texas Instruments, and Johnson said working with the people who helped make the calculator she uses every day at school was "really cool." She hopes to be back to mentor the team next year, when she plans to study criminal justice at the University of North Texas.

In the meantime, she'll be matching robotic wits with her competition this weekend. If they don't win, they'll have learned some valuable lessons, Rowe said.

"They've learned that it's OK to be wrong sometimes," she said. "Just dust yourself off, ask someone who knows and get the right answer."