

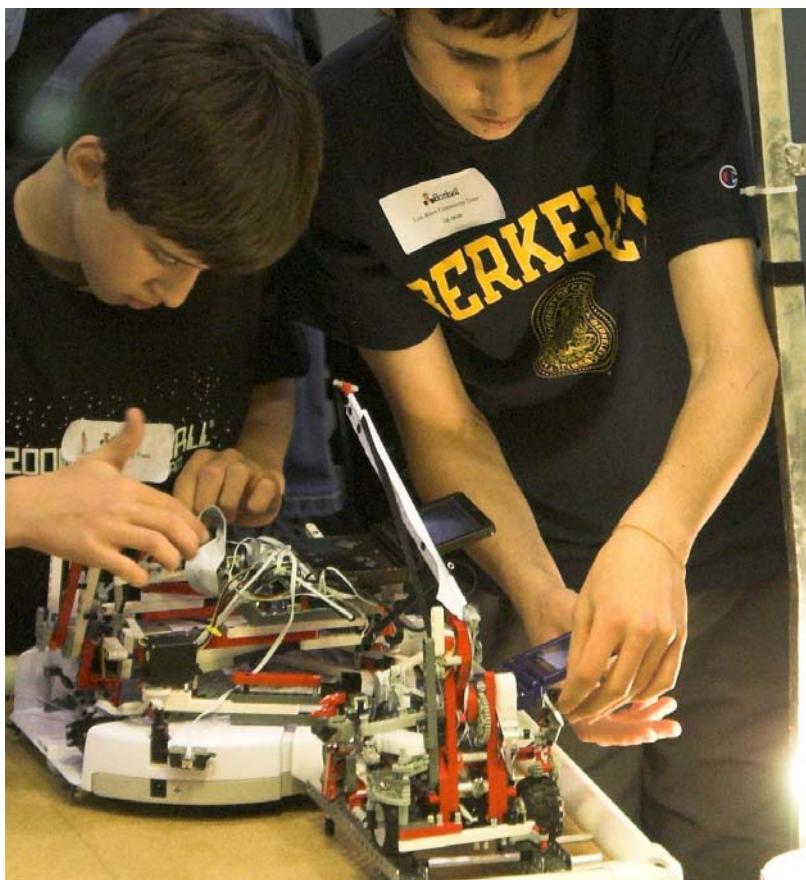
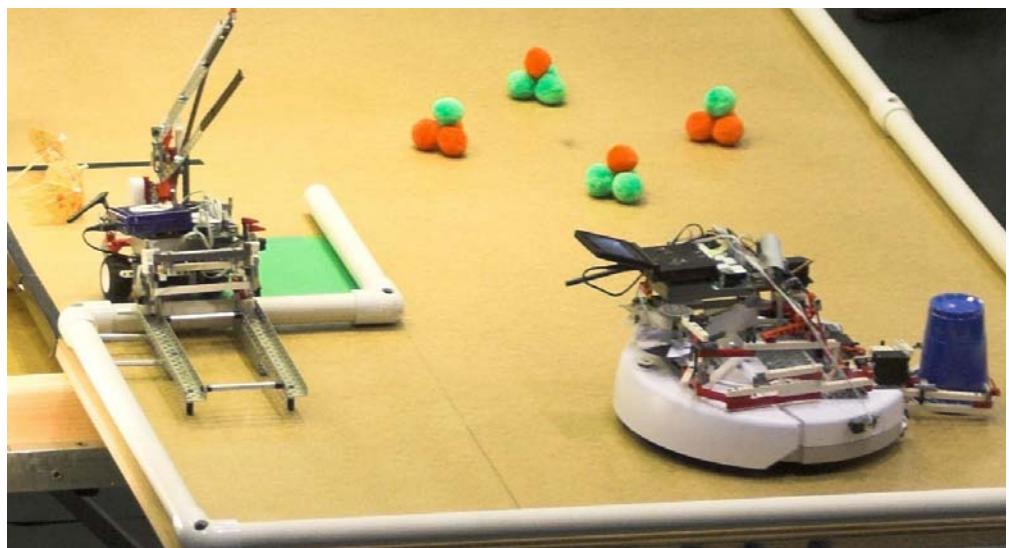
Los Altos Community Botball Team Announcement for 2011 Season

Michael, Steven M, Brian, Joshua, Brandon, and Parker

Summary

Botball is a robotics sports program that is made up of teams that use a robot controller, motors, switches, analog sensors, digital sensors, and LEGO pieces to construct a robot. The teams use their robots to compete against each other in a game that takes place on a 4' x 8' playing field.

The robots try to score more points by moving and placing playing field objects in scoring positions. Through the last nine years, the Los Altos Community Botball Team has won many awards at the Northern California Botball Tournaments and the National Botball tournaments. For the 2011 season, we are looking for highly motivated and interested Jr. High and High School students to join the team. We also need parents to support the team. For more information, contact me at Michael@Boardsailor.com or at my home phone number (650) 965-8037.



Botball Competition

The goal of the KISS Institute Botball program is to interest and excite high school and middle school students in the areas of science and engineering as they design, construct, and program autonomous robots. The Botball program gives teenagers a fun competitive environment where they learn engineering and programming skills through hands-on experience with robots. The Botball program has been around for many years with local area competitions. The next Botball Northern California Competition will be held on Saturday April 16, 2011 at the San Mateo Fairgrounds in the Redwood Building. The challenge will be announced on February 27, 2011. More information about Botball can be found at www.botball.org and www.kipr.org.

Time Commitment

We have found that robot team participants often quickly grow to love the robotics program and want to spend as much time on it as they can. We usually schedule five hours of meeting time a week, but we have learned that the most enthusiastic members will spend much more time working on the project. This will of course be at the discretion of the team members. We will likely meet on Fridays after dinner and on Sunday afternoons. Typically, parents spend most of their time with regards to the team transporting their children to and from the meetings and cheering them on at the competition.

Pre-Season Meetings

We will be holding meetings before the competition is released to teach new members how to program and to bring returning members back up to speed. These meetings are important because we have found that once the challenge is released, most fundamental robotics learning stops and team members focus on building robots for the game. **It is very important that team members attend all of the training meetings.**

Coaching Style

Michael, the head coach, thinks the team members benefit the most from the robotics programs if they do all the designing, building, and programming. He encourages them, stays out of the way, and as needed requests that other parents do the same. He makes sure that all of the materials are available and that the team members understand the task. Then he steps back and helps only when needed. The teams that he has coached have had fun, learned a lot, and done well in competitions. The team this year will be run by a team captain selected by vote of the team. We will likely have other coaches to support a second team this year. Scott Montgomery also coached a Botball team last year and used a very similar coaching style.

Cost

The cost of a team is \$2,400 of which \$2,300 is the team registration fee. We have already fund raised most of this for a first team. We will likely have three teams depending on how much interest and parental support we have. We would like to keep the cost per team member to be between \$200 and \$300. Unfortunately, fundraising this season has not gone well so we will need to rely on parents to cover the expenses for the team. For reference, we spent \$376 per team member last year. This amount varies based on the number of team members and playing field expenses. I think the optimal size of a team is six students and the maximum team size is eight students. The main organization is the KISS Institute for Practical Robotics (KIPR). It is a public



charity under IRS code 501(c)(3). All contributions to KIPR for our team are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law and will defray the expenses for all the team members of the Los Altos Community Team. Since donations are tax deductible and fees are not, we encourage all parents to make a tax deductible donation in the \$300 to \$400 range to cover the team registration. After we have received all of the donations, each team member will be responsible for their part of the remaining cost. Anyone who drops out by February 12 will be given a full refund. Any extra funds raised this season will be saved for use for the next year's team(s).

If your family is having a tough year financially or this is more than your family can afford, feel free to donate whatever amount you want or even skip a year until your conditions improve. I have seen a correlation between donation amount and team member participation. There have been bigger donations from families where their child has spent a lot of time working on Botball and smaller donations from those less active. This works for me and makes a lot of sense. We do this for the kids and somehow all of the funding works out.

Meeting Place

For the meetings, we are planning on using Michael's home at 1630 Elmhurst Drive for the training meetings and for hosting one team once the season begins. Last year it was a bit crowded at our home with two teams meeting here so we are seeking a meeting place for the second team if there is enough interest for two teams. The meeting place needs to have room for a 4' x 8' playing field and several laptop computers. Regular PCs or Macs with OSX are also fine.

Schedule

January 11	Informational Meeting for potential team members and their parents at 1630 Elmhurst Drive, 7:30 PM – 9 PM.
December - January 14	Identify potential team members.
January 14	Applications due.
January 19	Notify applicants who are on the team.
February 12	Last day to drop and receive full refund.
January 14-February 25	Team training meetings from 7:00 PM until 9:30 PM to cover <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1/14 – Programming the robots in Interactive C• 1/21 – Subversion & Programming• 1/28 – State Program Structure• 2/4 – Control Theory & Doxygen• 2/11 – More programming and building• 2/25 – Team organization including discussing expectations and determining team guidelines.
February 26-27	Botball training workshop – 3 team members/team can go. Game announced on February 27.
February 27-April 15	Build, design, program, and prepare for the competition. Meetings will likely be Fridays 7:00 PM until 9:30 PM and Sundays 1:00 PM – 3:30 PM.
April 16	Northern California Tournament at the San Mateo Fairgrounds in the Redwood Building
July 9-13	National Competition Tournament in Orange County, California (near Disney Land)

Assistance is Needed

Michael has volunteered to coach a team. He will need some help managing the teams. We will certainly have two teams and will likely have enough interest to support three or more teams so we will need a more coaches and additional meeting places. The teams also need help with fundraising.

Expectations/Rules

All team member participants are expected to help design, build, and program the robots. Team members can specialize or work on a variety of tasks. In order to be an effective team, members who are disruptive or disrespectful inside or outside of the team meetings will be warned and then removed from their team. The coach will have final say in who is accepted, removed or kept on the teams. Michael has yet to remove a team member but reserves the right to do so if the need arises. Most of the team meetings are lots of fun with some great camaraderie.

Other Options for being on a Botball Team

If you want to be on a Botball team other than this one or you didn't make our deadlines, you can find all of the information you need to form a team at www.botball.org or you can talk with us about it. If you missed the application deadline and are still interested, check with us to see if we have room for you.

How to Apply

Send in your Application Information to Michael Schuh and mail him your donation. We would also like applicants to email Michael Schuh at michael@boardsailor.com letting him know of your desire to join a team. The check will not be cashed until applicants are notified that they are on a team. Applicants can request their money back and remove their name from the list at any time before February 12. We would like everyone to donate to KISS Institute for Practical Robotics in the \$300 to \$400 range. If this is more than you can contribute, please include a check for what you are able to contribute. Botball qualifies for some company donation matching programs, so please consider this if one of these is available for you. Botball is not an educational institution so company donation matching programs that require the organization to be an educational institution will not work.

Application Information

Name: _____

Grade: _____ Age: _____ School: _____

Phone number: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Parent's Name(s): _____

Parent's Email Address(es): _____

Check Amount (Made out to the KISS Institute for Practical Robotics): _____

I have read the cost and expectations/rules sections of the announcement and understand that the team coach makes all decisions as to who will be on a team and reserves the right to remove a member after one warning for unacceptable behavior.

_____ Student's Signature

_____ Parent's Signature

Mail your signed application form and check to Michael Schuh at 1630 Elmhurst Drive, Los Altos, CA 94024.

The application is also available at <http://www.boardsailor.com/botball>