

# Quixilver kicks into gear for intense competition

BY JANET HSUEH AND NIKHIL SUBRAMANIAM

*Staff Writers*

Robotics team 604, also known as Quixilver, gears up and spurs into action to face the challenges of another year of competition.

The team, led this year by Senior **Alejandro Arambula**, competed at Calgames on Oct. 13, a rerun of last year's For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST) challenge, "Rack 'n Roll". Teams from as far away as Oregon traveled to Woodside High, where the competition was held.

On a 28-by-58-foot field, robots competed in alliances of three. The objective was for teams to score as many points as possible by placing red or blue ringers on a rack.

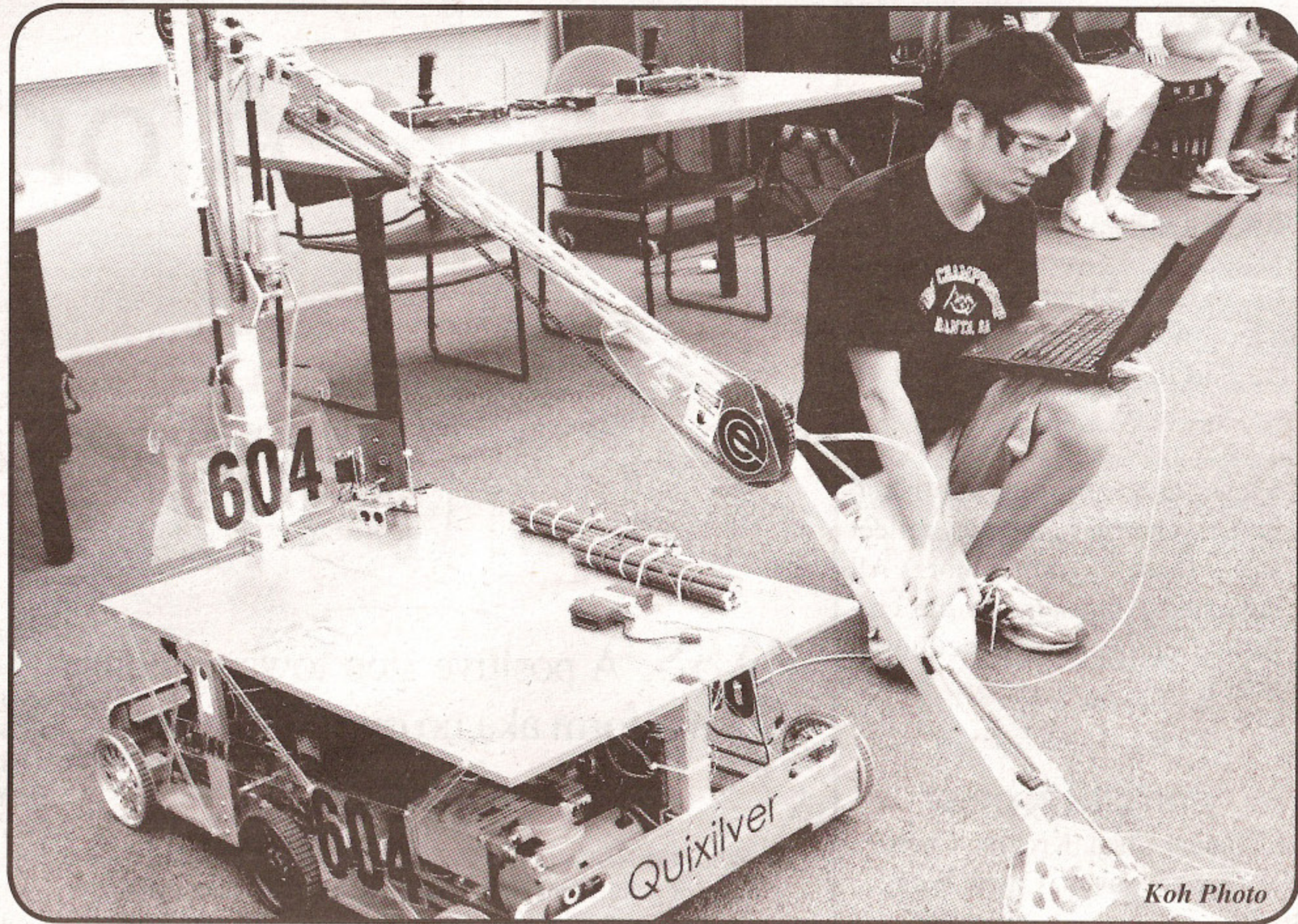
Teams could earn additional points by scoring keepers – ringers emblazoned with the words "FIRST" – during autonomous mode, as well as lifting alliance robots on ramps.

Quixilver quickly set a high score of 256 in the first round and stayed undefeated until their final qualifying match. Although the team faced several mechanical difficulties, problems were quickly resolved: "We have the fastest pit crew in the world!" Vice President Junior **Natalie Mukhtar** said.

At the end of the day, Quixilver emerged from the fray third out of 30 teams. "We did really well. We got 15 ringers in one round – including restarts. It was a great way to start the year," Senior **Edward Levin** said.

The team has also held a fundraiser at Starbucks, and in one recruiting session, managed to bring the number of members from a total of eight to 48. Currently, they are working on bringing new members up to par, as well as raise money for "build season", which begins Jan. 5 when the new challenge is released.

Alongside Arambula, the team is led by **Helen Arington**, Math Dept. The many members of the team are divided into groups based on their interests and abilities. Some students are programmers, while others are fabricators. Each group of students is a vital link in the chain that keeps the team running smoothly.



*Sophomore Eugene Fang reviews the commands and executes the programming to prepare the robot for competition.*

The team's goal is to raise \$20,000 to support the team this year. "[Fundraising]'s not something [members] can just get away with not doing. Everyone has to do it sooner or later. We expect everyone to bring in at least \$300 – and with 48 students, that's moolah!" Arambula said.

From March 6 through March 8, the team will journey to San Diego to participate in the San Diego Regional Tournament. The very next weekend, they will compete in the Silicon Valley Regional Tournament at San Jose State University.

In recent years, the robotics team has set a competitive record, winning the Safety Award and the Regional Chairman's Award. This year, along with maintaining their past successes, the team hopes to receive the National Chairman's Award and to compete at Nationals.

Many members are optimistic about the upcoming year. "I think that we are in good shape because we have a lot of new members, we have a bigger team than last year, and everyone is very enthusiastic," Sophomore **Eugene Fang** said.