



The Brick Layers in the first round of the playoffs show off their stuff. Photos courtesy Jon Atterbury

FIRST Lego League 'builds' a love of science and technology

By **Jon Atterbury**
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More than two hundred people brought their childhood love of Lego and passion for science to Leland High School as part of the FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science & Technology) Lego League competition on Nov. 13.

This year's "Body Forward" challenge, hosted by Leland's Quixilver 604 Robotics team, included repairing various medical ailments using technology such as a pacemaker, artery stent, bone graft and many more. In addition to the robot challenge, the teams had to complete a research project on a body part of their choice and present their accomplishments to a panel of judges who generously donated their time. Besides competition and research, the teams are judged on teamwork and innovative design.

Several Almaden teams were in attendance and two of the teams walked away with prizes. The Brick Layers were awarded the Best Rookie Team award.

"This was their first year in FIRST Lego League and we are really proud of what they accomplished," said Coach Martin Rauchwerk.

Aidan Atterbury, Nicholas Banas, Sang Gi Kim and Jason Rauchwerk along with their coaches met at least once a week to chip away at the challenge requirements. Alex Zafiroopoulos, a Leland junior and member of the Quixilver 604 Robotics Team served as a mentor for the boys.

"I have been through this

before and I am really impressed with what the boys accomplished in such a short period of time," said Zafiroopoulos.

The Eco Extructobots, Shalin Avlani, Yoel Beyene, William Chong and Evan Leung with Head Coach Ken Leung, placed second in the robotic challenge and won awards for Robot Design and Robot Performance.

"The kids all worked really hard and each solved some aspects of the missions with creative solutions," said Leung as his team collected their awards. "They realized how important teamwork was and that they had to work seamlessly together in order to accomplish as many tasks as possible within the two and a half minutes."

The Eco Extructobots along

with six other teams will continue their quest on Dec. 4 at Jefferson High School in Daly City.

The Brick Layers found out the hard way that making a plastic toy perform tasks consistently is not exactly easy. The last few days before the competition there was concern that the long hours invested might not show at the competition.

"We were really impressed with all the different ways the other teams solved problems," said Brick Layer Aidan Atterbury.

The teamwork and gracious professionalism exhibited by the competitors has the kids looking ahead to future competitions. "We'll be back," said Jason Rauchwerk as the team left Leland High School.



The Brick Layers (top row) Il Young Kim, Jon Atterbury, Martin Rauchwerk, (front row) Aidan Atterbury, Jason Rauchwerk, Nick Banas and San Gi Kim came home with the Best Rookie Team award.