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Robotics Competition Experience & Reflection

By Edward Chou, Grade 8

Four months of coding, designing, and testing came down to that one day of the competition. Our team, "Create XOR," challenged ourselves with the FLL 2025 "Submerged" challenge, which focused on mission solving and addressing real-life water-related issues. As a team, my teammates—Tim, Michael, Andy, Maika—and I completed several difficult tasks, including programming, innovating, and maximizing partnership benefits. With teamwork and creativity, we were finally ready to see whether our hard work led to success on the competition day.

One of the main goals of this competition was to design and program a LEGO robot to solve missions related to underwater problems, including exploration, sustainability, and the conservation of sea creatures. Tim and I tackled this challenge by constructing a robot that prioritized accuracy and stability. One of our biggest design decisions was to maximize the use of gyro sensors and ensure that every turn was precise and didn't go wrong easily. With this goal in mind, we assembled a Spike Prime robot with the **gyro sensor(1)** built into the main block, ensuring it would always be stable and accurate, assuming that our robot didn't dismantle itself.

Another challenge was to innovate a way to solve real-life aquatic issues, fostering teamwork and problem-solving talents to create solutions for real-life challenges in marine science. Michael, Andy, and our instructor, Mr. Fritz, successfully constructed a manual push car fully based on upcycled materials. This push car is designed primarily to serve as a beach car for beach cleaning events, allowing it to collect and recycle discarded products and make them shine as brand-new creations once more. We also had lots of fun designing and riding on the push car during break periods. Nevertheless, it was a bit tiring when I had to take my turn pushing the car around; it really was exhausting!!!

Furthermore, we also had to prepare for our presentations on the designs and programs we made for the official judges. This resulted in a massive amount of practice and getting ourselves emotionally prepared for the day of the competition. During the process, every single one of us modified and made parts of the poster, while Maika made the last edits to the poster. From my perspective, I believe this competition improved our communication skills and also proved that teamwork does make the dream work.

All in all, as the leader and the programmer of this team, I truly believe that every single one of us gave our best efforts in this competition. Although there were many arguments and debates during the process, we overcame various obstacles as one. There are just too many emotions to express after accomplishing the challenging goals we set for ourselves before the competition. After competing in the FLL 2025 Submerged Robot Challenge, I have to admit that pushing myself over the limits made me acknowledge more key concepts that are crucial in my academic career. Finally, I sincerely thank every single person who made this competition possible from the bottom of my heart. 🌟

(1) **Gyro Sensor:** A sensor that measures how much the robot turns, helping it identify its position and direction while ensuring it moves smoothly and stays balanced.



Finding My Voice at PASMUN



By Bella Hsieh, Grade 9

I love to yap. Really, I do. Whether in different situations, I enjoy expressing myself fully and brightly, and after discovering my interest in Model United Nations, I found out that it's the perfect place for such an activity. I've attended 4 official conferences, from KHMUN to TCMUN, and PASMUN was my fifth one.

It was my first time coming to an American School MUN, so I have to admit I was quite nervous. However, I really wanted to speak up a lot more, and become more outspoken in conferences, so I promised myself: I would make at least one amendment during the conference.

My committee was the Human Rights Council, and I was debating on gender apartheid and organ trafficking. As the delegation of Pakistan, I had a major role: Pakistan was an illicit organ trafficking hotspot, and Pakistan is well known for..., well, violating women's rights. And what do you know? During the course of three days, I made three amendments to the Draft Resolution (it's kinda like a list of what the UN is gonna do about the topic, a few solutions to the issue)! Though only one of them passed, I'm proud of myself for speaking up, and helping contribute to the meeting. A lot of people hesitating to join MUN often use their English ability as an excuse to not attend MUN, but it's literally for everyone! Language is just a tool for communication, and in the end, just use Chinese if you're too frustrated, because just know, there are many people just like you.

I'd also like to think of MUN more or so as a discussion rather than a debate, a much more peaceful route. During MUN conferences, you can meet lots and lots of people,

and many lifelong relationships, (and get more Instagram followers) a place to make friends and socialize. I've already pulled many people in my class to attend an April conference with me... I think I might have MUN addiction! 🇺🇸



Wins, Teamwork, and a Moment of Pause at Inter-House Sports Day



By Roselyn Liao, Grade 10

The Inter-House Sports Day on March 11th was filled with excitement, intense competition, and a few surprising moments. My house, WuKong, was determined to do our best and show our spirit throughout the day. The day was divided into morning and afternoon events, and there were several sports that everyone could take part in, like volleyball, badminton, basketball, frisbee, and table tennis.

The day started with volleyball, and I have to say, my house, WuKong, did an amazing job! We played a total of 3 matches, and we won 1 of them. It wasn't easy, but we worked together really well, and our teamwork was on point. Even though the other houses, like Setna and Ixblam, played hard, our strategy and fast reaction helped us get the win. It was a great start to the day and got everyone pumped for the next events.

In the afternoon, I played in both badminton and frisbee events. Badminton was fun, but it was the frisbee that was especially exciting. Frisbee is fun and it requires a lot of energy and focus. The competition was exciting, and I am proud to say that WuKong WON the frisbee! It felt awesome to win. Our team had put in a lot of effort, and the victory was a great reward for our hard work.

Then came the basketball game, and things took a very serious turn. During the game, Dora accidentally bumped into Angel, and while it didn't seem too serious at first, it turned out to be much worse. Dora realized that she had broken her leg. It was a reminder of how unpredictable sports can be and how important it is to be careful during games.

Overall, despite the unfortunate injury, the day was still filled with great moments. WuKong had some solid wins, particularly in frisbee, and it was a lot of fun competing against the



houses, like Setna, Ixblam and Heracles. We showed good teamwork and sportsmanship, and even though we had a tough time in some events, we supported each other through it all. I am already looking forward to the next Sports Day. 🇺🇸

