

Smithtown wins rookie award at robotics competition

BY JOHN RODERICK

Smithtown High School's Mechanical Bulls competed this past Thursday and Friday in the Long Island FIRST Regional Robotics Competition for the first time.

The event, held at the Suffolk Community College West Campus field-house, pitted 39 middle school and high school teams from Long Island, Massachusetts and Connecticut against one another in an adrenaline-pumping battle of the brains.

FIRST, or For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology, conceived the event in which students are

given six weeks to build a robot that will perform a predetermined task. This year's mission: create and pilot a robot that will gather volleyballs, scoop the balls into moveable goals and then place the goals into scoring position. The Long Island regional event is sponsored and produced by School Business Partnerships of Long Island.

Smithtown had a strong showing, winning the Highest Rookie Seed Award, which recognizes outstanding performance by a first-year team. Putting their robot, "El Toro," up against teams with several years of competition experience,

the Mechanical Bulls were highlighted as a team to watch in upcoming competitions.

"Smithtown High School has stepped into the new millennium," said science

and technology research coordinator Elaine Champey. "We're working now to design curriculum that will incorporate the design of a mini-robot to use in other projects."



SMITHTOWN ROBOT PILOTS Ian Woloschin, Rich Muscolino and Dan Lopich lining up to compete. They were assisted by instructor Charles Dennis.

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