



2439 Baldwin Robotics



H.P. Baldwin High School

www.baldwinrobotics.com

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Bearbotics capture regional competition, head to world championship

By Luly Unemori, Pono Communications

Baldwin High School captured the 2012 FIRST Robotics Hawaii Regional Competition, part of the winning three-team alliance that also included Waialua High and Island Pacific Academy. All three schools earned a berth at the FIRST Championship in St. Louis, Missouri, April 25 to 28, where they will compete against the best high school robotics teams from around the world.

“We’re so proud of the students,” said Gary Suter, lead advisor of Baldwin Robotics Team #2439. “They’ve worked extremely hard, not just this year but every year since our robotics program began five years ago. They’ve grown and improved with every season. Winning the Hawaii Regional is a testament to their tremendous dedication and long hours.”

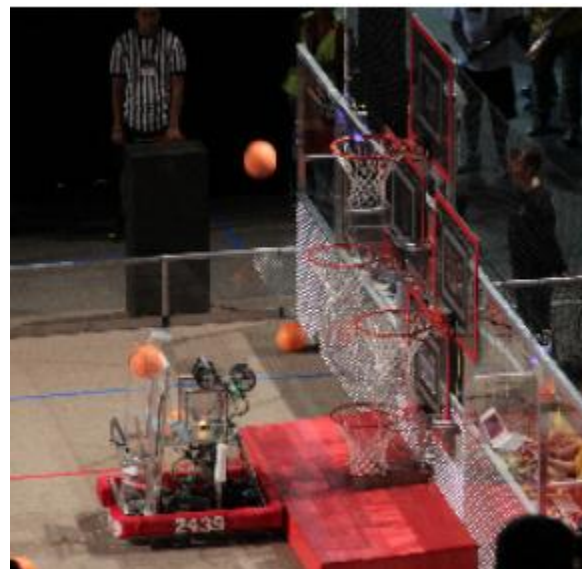
Baldwin Robotics was also ranked #1 following the tournament’s seeding matches—the first time a neighbor island team has ever been the top seed—and served as Captain of the winning alliance.

“We couldn’t have done it without the help and support of our school, our families and great support from our sponsors and community donors,” Suter said. “We can’t thank them enough.”

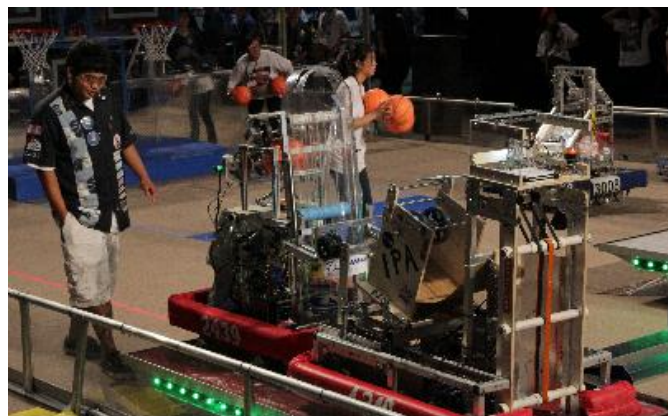
The FIRST Robotics Hawaii Regional Competition was held at the University of Hawaii’s Stan Sheriff Center from March 22 to 24, 2012, and drew a total of 38 teams including 2 from Louisiana and Taiwan. The robot competition is alliance-based: two alliances of three teams each compete in a series of timed matches during which their robots attempt to out-score the opposing alliance. This year’s game, Rebound Rumble, challenged the robots to pick up and shoot basketballs into hoops, and work together to balance on see-saw bridges.

During the initial qualifying matches, teams are randomly assigned to their alliance partners and ranked on an individual basis based on performance. The top-seeded teams not only get to advance to the elimination matches, they can also invite the two teams that will join them in their final alliance, a process that requires teams to gather information, analyze other robots and develop an optimal game strategy.

“Even if you’re not one of the top seeds, you still have a chance to make it to the elimination rounds if you’re invited to join one of the final alliances,” Suter said, “so even rookie teams have a shot at making it to the world championship if they’re part of the winning alliance. That’s what makes this year so special for our team since we ranked #1 after the seeding matches, selected our alliance team, and took it all the way to win the Hawaii Regional!”



Baldwin’s robot going for the high goal.



Jun Sasaki admires Baldwin’s signature move of balancing on the bridge with an alliance robot. (Chaz Antonio photos)

Member Spotlight

Name: Jun Sasaki

Years In Robotics: 4 Years

Team Position: Captain

Activities/Hobbies: Robots, robots, robots!

Clubs: Robotics, Band

Baldwin Robotics would like to recognize and thank Jun Sasaki for his outstanding leadership and contributions to our team and robotics education in our community. Jun is the driving force behind our winning team and success of our program!



For the past four years, Jun has served very capably as our team captain. Under his leadership, the team has grown its membership, secured new mentors, solicited more sponsors, and gained greater public recognition. Jun has devoted countless hours improving his skills and knowledge, sharing them with robotics students at schools throughout our county, volunteering at robotics events, and educating the public at community events about the value of youth robotics.

When it comes to technical expertise and passion, Jun is unrivaled. He thoroughly researches and understands the technical and functional aspects of various components prior to building. He's highly proficient in electrical, pneumatic and drive train work. He plays an instrumental role in ordering new parts from vendors, and spends numerous hours on Chief Delphi learning as much as he can about anything to do with robotics. He seeks and shares interesting ideas and information with fellow students and mentors alike. He builds and re-builds, and experiments with creative new design ideas, in a constant effort to be better.

Jun's technical prowess has earned him the respect and admiration of his teammates and mentors alike. Though he'd be embarrassed if you told him this, the other students call him our "robotics god." By example, he inspires and motivates them to strive harder.

But Jun's dedication goes well beyond building a better robot. When he first joined robotics, our team had just completed our rookie year. We had only a few members, virtually all of them new to robotics. Jun was voted captain almost by default. But he accepted the job, rolled up his sleeves and dove in. He solicited new members and mentors. He sought out more sponsors, helped fundraise and began learning as much as he could about FIRST. He helped develop the team's uniform and flag, and familiarized himself with the business functions of the team, such as budgeting and marketing. Though he prefers to avoid the limelight, he ably represents the team on campus and at public events, and in interviews by media. He spends literally hundreds of hours during the build season to help ensure our robot will be competition-ready.

Over the past couple of years, interest in educational robotics has continued to grow in our community. Together with his teammates, Jun has helped rookie teams get established at three other high schools and several middle schools in our county. He's offered to help teach workshops on wiring and pneumatics. He's volunteered at numerous FLL and VEX tournaments throughout the year. Earlier in this school year, at a regional VEX competition, Jun was in constant demand helping other teams fix their robots, including those of his "competitors." As a result of his tireless efforts, he was invited by the head coach of a local middle school to serve as their team's head building advisor and assistant coach at the VEX robotics finals.

As team captain, Jun represents Baldwin Robotics at school events. He's spoken at Rotary Club meetings, demonstrated our robot at public events including MECO in the Community and the Maui Economic Development Board's Ke Alahele Education event, and shared his experiences in robotics with distinguished members of our community including our Mayor, Lt. Governor, Maui County Council members and Hawaii's U.S. congressional delegates.

Jun plans to pursue a college degree in engineering and continue his involvement with robotics as a mentor and volunteer. He is bright, focused, driven and a true inspiration for our team and community!

Mentor Spotlight

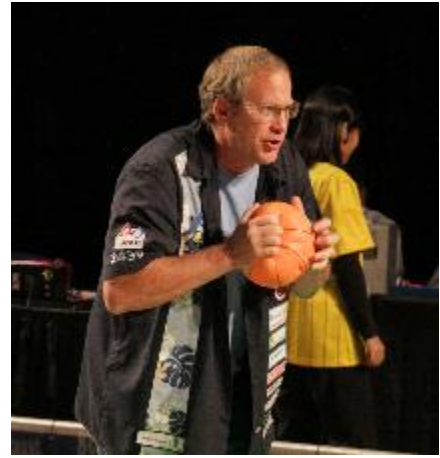
Name: Gary Suter

Years In Robotics: 6 Years

Team Position: Head Advisor

School Position: Construction/industrial technology teacher

Years Teaching: 28 years



The students of Baldwin Robotics would like to recognize and thank Gary Suter for his dedication and commitment to motivating and inspiring us in the world of robotics and science, technology, engineering and mathematics education and careers. The continued success of our team demonstrates the contributions Mr. Suter makes to our lives and our program!

Mr. Suter teaches Industrial Technology at Baldwin High School and is very passionate about robotics. He established the robotics programs at Iao Intermediate and co-founded Baldwin Robotics when he transferred back to Baldwin High in 2007. Mr. Suter sacrifices countless hours of his personal time to enhance his knowledge of robotics and supervise our team. Although he's not an engineer himself, he put together an excellent team of mentors who provide expertise on a diverse range of skills.

Mr. Suter really motivates student participation. He set up the team to be student-driven rather than advisor-driven. In managing the team, Mr. Suter created a network of project teams, each one responsible for a different area, such as building, machining, CAD, programming, website design, video production, marketing/public speaking, and business/fundraising. Each project team works independently, which allows the overall team to complete tasks more quickly and efficiently, and then comes together to meet the overall team objectives. Project teams let us be creative and solve problems in the areas that interest us the most.

Mr. Suter has a great teaching style, and breaks down mathematical, scientific and engineering concepts into terms we can understand. He has a very positive attitude, praising everyone for their efforts and accomplishments. He welcomes all ideas and pushes us to try new things and improve on our skills. He accepts us as we are and doesn't judge people on appearance or lack of experience, and he never discourages anyone. In fact, the opposite is true. One of our seniors said, "I remember when I first joined, Mr. Suter told me 'Don't be afraid to be a part of the club just because you are a lady.' Mr. Suter's support and determination caused me to believe in myself."

Mr. Suter is very big on communications. He holds weekly meetings where project teams give updates on their progress, and encourages everyone to provide input. He frequently talks to us in person or by phone to see how we're doing and keeps us focused on our tasks and responsibilities.

Mr. Suter has a huge impact not only upon the team, but also on the lives of our members. He helped mentor our Co-Captain since she was in the seventh grade, and inspired her to pursue engineering in college. She said: "Mr. Suter showed me how to do things step by step. He gave me what I needed and challenged me to create something on my own. He taught me everything I know about building and gave me the freedom to learn what I wanted." Another member who graduated last year had no plans to go to college until Mr. Suter encouraged him to join robotics in his senior year. Because of his experience, he changed his mind and is now enrolled at a local college.

Mr. Suter is a great advisor who inspires by letting us explore what we want, pushes us to do a good job and lets us get the full experience of being in FIRST Robotics. He helps us overcome feelings of fear or insecurity due to lack of experience, and creates a welcoming environment where we can feel accepted for who we are and have fun participating with our peers in an activity we all enjoy. We feel very fortunate to have Mr. Suter leading our robotics program!

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