



# Robots ready for second AfrikaBot 2017

Around 40 teams from Gauteng schools are ready to hit the Zwartkops International Raceway with their robots on Saturday, 22 October 2017, for the second AfrikaBot competition.



A 2016 winning team prepping their robot

In the AfrikaBot 2017 challenge, the robots have to drive autonomously through a maze without wireless control, which introduces learners to the types of challenges faced by engineers at Google with their self-driving car.

The junior high and senior high school teams will be competing in separate categories and 20 teams of university student teams will be competing in the undergraduate categories. There is also a category for “makers” which includes graduated engineers and even “moms” and “pops” with a technical inclination looking for a chance to showcase their talents.

AfrikaBOT is a robotics challenge hosted by the University of Johannesburg’s Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment (FEBE) Technolab.

“The competition is an ideal opportunity for young people to get a taste for careers in advanced technology and engineering,” says AfrikaBOT organizer, Michael Ettershank, from UJ Technolab.

Ettershank facilitates the robotics classes that form part of the UJ Technolab community outreach programme in Alexandra Township and Diepsloot.

“Because the teenagers build their robots themselves, the cost of their AfrikaBOT robots is a fraction of typically imported robots that are used in global competitions,” adds Ettershank. “There is no compromise in quality however. The robots are world class and could hold their own in overseas competitions. The AfrikaBOT 2 is built around Arduino, an open source hardware platform, and programmed in C++. The C family of programming languages is the world standard in robotics, mechatronics and industrial automation,” adds Ettershank.

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