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## Central Texas robotics students make their mark at international competition

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Posted May 12, 2013 at 12:01 AM

Updated Sep 27, 2018 at 6:08 AM

Central Texas high school students competed well during the international robotics competition held April 24 to 27 at the Edward Jones Arena in St. Louis.

The Eanes school district's Westlake High School robotics Team 2468 "Appreciate" ranked fourth out of 100 teams in their division in the FIRST FRC Ultimate Ascent competition, advancing to the semi-final Archimedes competition.

"We were one of the top 400 robots in the world out of 2500-plus teams," robotics teacher and team coach Norman Morgan said. "Not only did we advance to the eliminations of the tournament for the first time, but we were also alliance captains. It was a great way to cap off an incredible year. It was exciting as well as motivational to see such high caliber robots and teams competing."

The junior and senior Westlake robotics students said they found a lot to learn during the national competition.

"You get to see how other teams looked at the challenge of the contest and how they went about approaching it differently from you," said Jake Cooper, who drove the team robot during the competition. "You get to see all of your hard work paying off."

More on the Westlake team can be found on their website, [www.chaprobotics.com](http://www.chaprobotics.com).

Robotics teams were challenged to build a robot that could shoot Frisbees into 10-foot-high goals both autonomously and under the control of a human driver. Teams were awarded additional points if their robot could climb a 90-inch pyramid structure.

FIRST was founded by MIT professor Woodie Flowers and Dean Kamen in 1992 to inspire student interest and participation in science and technology. WHS students and those at other competing high schools spent six weeks building a 120-pound robot to bring to the recent event.

The Leander school district's Vandegrift ViperBots Team 4546, "Team SnakeByte," battled through three days of intense competition to claim the honor of third place in the FIRST FTC Ring It Up! Challenge, in which teams were challenged to have their robots place plastic rings onto pegs.

"I am extremely proud of our team. We were the Cinderella story of the World Championships," SnakeByte sponsor Rad Allen said in an announcement on the team's website, [viperbots.org](http://viperbots.org). "I think everyone underestimated us. We had the least complicated robot, and everyone was surprised at how well it performed."