

News

Brothers eye Robo repeat

Morning Star Staff

Reigning Western Canada RoboCup Junior champions Nelson and Hudson Schier will return to Okanagan College in Kelowna today to compete in the fourth annual robotics competition.

After winning the robot dance competition in 2008, the Vernon brothers qualified to represent Canada at the World RoboCup 2009 in Graz, Austria, where they were awarded best presentation for their performance at the international event.

The brothers will join student competitors from across the region, all of whom have a keen interest in science and technology. They will test their problem-solving and team building skills in a variety of robotic challenges including soccer, rescue and dance.

"RoboCup is a project that integrates many technologies at the same time," said Nadir Ould-

Khessal, an electronic engineering technology instructor.

"Students have to develop skill in construction, programming and most importantly, problem-solving. We stress education over competition. That is why the three challenges remain the same from year to year - so students can build on their previous success."

Hosted by Okanagan College, the Western Canada RoboCup Junior is an internationally accredited educational competition which includes teams of students ranging from grades 1 to 12 working in teams to develop solutions to one of three specific challenges (soccer, rescue and dance) using robots.

A record number of students have signed up for the event, which will draw more than 100 elementary, middle, and secondary students from schools such as A.L. Fortune Secondary

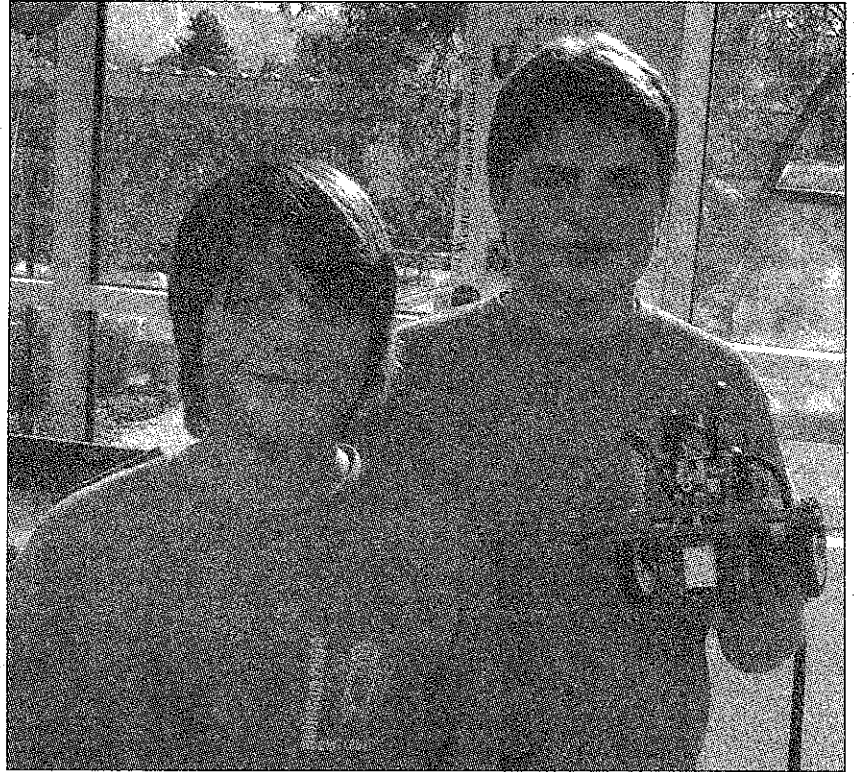


PHOTO SUBMITTED

Nelson (left) and Hudson Schier are preparing for the Western Canada RoboCup today in Kelowna.

in Enderby.

The event gets underway at 9 a.m. with the soccer and rescue challenges. In soccer, teams comprised of two autonomous mobile robots track a special light-emitting ball in an enclosed field and attempt to score goals. In search and rescue, robots follow a course, negotiate hallways of a two-storey building

filled with debris and identify victims within re-created disaster scenarios.

The dance competition begins at 12:30 p.m. and teams will perform with their robots in choreographed routines set to music and will be judged in a range of areas including robot programming, design, costume, use of stage and entertainment

value.

Top performing students in today's Western Canada competition will qualify to represent Canada in the World RoboCup Games in Singapore next June.