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**UNIVERSITY OF UTAH MEDIA RELEASE**

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Bundle of energy

FIRST Robotics returns to the Maverik Center for high-energy combat March 3 and 4.

 March 2, 2023 — High school students from all over the country will be arriving in Utah and powering up their homemade robots to do battle at the Maverik Center!

 Forty-four high school student teams from Utah and nine other states will converge **Friday, March 3, and Saturday, March 4, in the center’s main arena at 3200 S. Decker Lake Drive in West Valley City** to compete in the annual Utah Regional FIRST Robotics Competition in which robots designed and built by the student teams perform specific tasks. The event, co-organized by the University of Utah’s John and Marcia Price College of Engineering, is free and open to the public. **(The best place to park for news media is on the south side of the stadium near the “VIP/Will Call entrance where they can check in for a press pass. Parking is free.)**

 This year’s game, called “Charged Up,” profiles the importance of renewable energy in our world today. It involves robots controlled both autonomously and by student operators that must move game pieces onto docking stations on the playing field. Teams that win the Utah regional competition as well as select award winners will move on to the FIRST national championship held April 19-22 in Houston.

“We’re excited to see what the teams come up with to meet this season’s challenges,” said Utah Regional FIRST Robotics Director Chelsey Short. “Our competitions are cool because teams compete in cooperative alliances of three robots against three, so they can be on the same alliance with a team for one round and competing against them the next round. The competitive cooperation creates a dynamic we call ‘coopertition,’ and it’s just awesome to witness.”

 The FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics Competition helps promote and foster science and technology learning among the nation’s high school students, creating a new generation of engineers, programmers, and scientists. Each year, the competition takes on a different theme, and the nature of the game changes.

 For coach Bryan Holder and his North Sanpete High School RoboHawks, the experience of building their first robot has been an exciting and rigorous experience. The small team of three students got the help of engineering firm Jacobsen Innovations and financial backing from Motorola and the U.S. Department of Defense to design and build their inaugural robot.

 The team is based in a rural region of central Utah, making it sometimes difficult to get the parts they need for their robot. In one instance, Holder had to make the 100-mile trek to Salt Lake City just to purchase pool noodles, a long buoyant piece of foam for swimming, to make bumpers for their machine. Despite the challenges, he said the experience has been rewarding, and other students are excited to join the team for next year’s competition.

 “At the very beginning, it was hard to see what this would all look like, but once we caught that vision it has been nothing but a great experience,” said Holder. “One of the students said he would rather be here doing this than anything else. This has been a way to express themselves in a way no one has been able to do at this school.”

Along with the University of Utah’s John and Marcia Price College of Engineering, the event’s main sponsors include the Larry H. and Gail Miller Family Foundation (Founding Sponsor), Motorola Solutions Foundation, BD, Jacobsen Innovations, L3Harris, Merit Medical, Northrop Grumman, STEM Action Center, Staker Parson, BioFire Diagnostics, Dominion Energy, and Boeing.

**Video and photo opportunities for news media include:**

 • Opening ceremonies: Friday and Saturday, 8:30 to 9 a.m.

 • Qualification matches: Friday, 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 5:45 p.m., and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

 • Final rounds: Saturday, 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.

 • Awards ceremonies: Saturday, 4:30 p.m.

 • Pits: Opens Friday and Saturday at 8 a.m.

 For more information about this year’s game and to view the “Charged Up” demo, please visit [www.firstinspires.org/robotics/frc/game-and-season](http://www.firstinspires.org/robotics/frc/game-and-season).

A full press packet with additional materials, including a description of the game, team list, arena map, and background on Utah’s FIRST Regional Competition, will be available at the volunteer desk at the stadium (enter through the VIP/Will Call ground-level entrance on the south side) beginning Thursday, March 2. Digital copies of the packet are available at: [www.utfrc.utah.edu/press-kit/](http://www.utfrc.utah.edu/press-kit/).

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