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## Atlee H.S. Hosts State Robotics Championship



More than 1,000 students and cheering supporters converged on Hanover County's Atlee H.S. Feb. 2 for the statewide championship for FIRST Tech Challenge teams.

**By: Jim Babb/FIRST Chesapeake**

Nine of the region's best high school and middle school robotics teams won places to compete at the world's premier international robotics tournament this spring at the [FIRST Tech Challenge VA Championship](#) Sponsored by [ECPI University](#), held at Hanover County's [Atlee High School](#) February 2nd.

More than one thousand students and family members came together for the daylong event, where remote-controlled robots, designed and built by students, worked in alliances in a [contest](#) that simulated mining precious minerals on an alien planet.

"Building robots is fun," said 6th grader **Amia Robinson**, a member of the "[Lord of the Bricks](#)", a community based team in Richmond. "Whoever thinks that robotics is just for boys is wrong, and I know that what I'm learning will be good for my future."



Richmond's community-based FIRST Tech Challenge team "Lord of the Bricks."



FTC Team “Powhatan SPEAR” is based at Powhatan H.S.

“We had to solve a million problems,” said **Landon Hooks**, a 10th grader on the “Powhatan SPEAR” team, based at [Powhatan H.S.](#) “What I learned was that you don’t ever do everything right on the first try, and you need to work together to solve problems.”

“It’s so much more than just building robots,” **Boland** added. “One of our students described *FIRST* Chesapeake as, ‘your favorite food that your Mom makes, but she puts vegetables in it. You love it and it’s good for you!’ Our students are guided by adult mentors to develop not just technical, but also important life skills.”

Students participating in [FIRST](#) robotics programs also qualify to apply for more than \$80 million in [college scholarship](#) opportunities.

“I know that working together sometimes doesn’t come naturally,” said **Leanne Lightsey**, of the Powhatan high school team. “Communication is the key. Just learn and move on, and things will work out.”

Four teams advanced to the [FIRST World Championship](#) in Detroit April 24-27 based on their scores at the state tournament. Five other teams advanced to the international event because they were judged to embody important values such as teamwork, creativity, innovation, quality engineering and the ability to compete while showing “gracious professionalism” toward competitors.

Teams advancing to Detroit from the FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) Virginia Championship:

- FTC Team 15167 - Robo Troopers, Woodbridge, Va.
- FTC Team 11112 - RoboLords, Ashburn, Va.
- FTC Team 8788 - Hexadecimal, Suffolk, Va.
- FTC Team 14607 – Robot Uprising, Alexandria, Va.
- FTC Team 4634 – FROGbots, Gainesville, Va.
- FTC Team 9794 – Wizard.exe, Rockville, Md.
- FTC Team 3595 - Schrödinger’s Hat, Alexandria, Va.
- FTC Team 4924 – Tuxedo Pandas, Christiansburg, Va.
- FTC Team 6010 – Thunderstone, Alexandria, Va.

High school teams competing in the FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC) division participate in qualifying rounds in March, and top finishers will meet at a regional tournament at George Mason University April 12-13.

FIRST Chesapeake is an independent non-profit that brings STEM-based leadership programs to students in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. More than 7,000 students participate in the 300+ teams administered by FIRST Chesapeake. More than 58,000 people attended FIRST Chesapeake events and more than 90,000 watched them on line last year.

For more information, please visit [www.firstchesapeake.org](http://www.firstchesapeake.org)



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