



Building America's technology leaders, one robot at a time.

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For Immediate Release

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**National Robotics League Championship sparks student interest
in high-paying careers in manufacturing
*Record number compete at Baldwin Wallace May 15-16***

Cleveland, OH – May 5, 2015 -- Months of work by a record number of 65 teams and nearly 300 student participants from eight states and Puerto Rico will be on display as the National Robotics League (NRL) national competition returns to Lou Higgins Center at Baldwin Wallace University in Berea on Friday and Saturday, May 15-16. Student teams have competed in NRL sanctioned regionals to prepare for the national competition to name a Grand Champion and other honors.

The NRL, a program of the National Tooling and Machining Association (NTMA), provides a national structure for educational robotics where students design and build remote controlled robots to face off in a gladiator-style competition. Friday the teams will complete required safety, documentation and team interviews. The robot competition on Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. is free and open to the public, with an awards ceremony at 7:30 p.m.

While the double elimination bouts are where the sparks fly, competing in the National Robotics League nationals is much more than meets the eye. Teams complete stringent engineering and detailed documentation requirements and face-to-face interviews with NRL officials to determine points toward the Grand Champion title. The Grand Champion Trophy and \$500 prize goes to the team with the highest combined score. First, second, third place, Best Engineering, Best Documentation and Best Team Presentations awards also will be presented. Best Sportsmanship, Coolest Robot and People's Choice winners will be recognized.

As an estimated 10,000 baby boomers retire each day over the next two decades, the manufacturing industry faces a substantial loss of skilled workers.

Manufacturers support the National Robotics League because its "wow" factor helps to overcome two of the industry's greatest challenges -- to attract the best and brightest into a variety of manufacturing careers and to align public perception of manufacturing with today's clean, high-tech, advanced facilities.

Students enjoy the NRL, a manufacturing workforce development program disguised as a high school robotics program, because it is fun, organizers say. "Well before they are thinking about building their resume, they are busy building a robot designed to battle. That's exciting and challenging," said Steven Tamasi, NRL Commissioner who heads the competition committee.

“They get excited all over again when they see that the technical and soft skills they learn can directly lead to broad career options – direct to industry, technical school certificates, associate’s or bachelor’s degrees, and a career track with family-wage earnings.”

The NRL is the only combat robotics league that formalizes ties with middle to post-secondary school teams, teachers and manufacturing partners, introducing them to real-world manufacturing experiences.

This exposure to the manufacturing process captures students’ imaginations as they work for months as a team to create their own robot. The hands-on STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) applications support an increasing emphasis on those skills in education today. Students meet deadlines, use CAD software and test the feasibility of their designs. The “pit crew” utilizes learned critical thinking skills to troubleshoot and repair a robot after a hard-fought battle.

Most first-year teams spend less than \$1,500 to build their robot and entry fees for competitions average \$50 per robot, making the competition affordable and accessible to most schools.

“The NRL attracts smart, capable students who love to build things, figure out how to solve problems, and win, exactly the sort of people we hope will make up the next generation of manufacturing leaders,” stated David Tilstone, NTMA president. “By attracting and supporting these students now, our industry helps ensure that some will become the workers, engineers, shop owners and industry leaders we need to ensure a bright future for American manufacturing.”

The NRL believes that closing the nation’s growing skills gap will provide Americans with high-paying job opportunities and employers with the talent they need to have sustained success, Tilstone added.

Industry sponsors supporting the competition are:

- NTMA Akron Chapter -- Premier Competition Awards Sponsor
- Boston Centerless and Voss Industries -- Pit Sponsors
- +GF+ and MPM (Moseys’ Production Machinists) -- Bleacher Sponsor s

Other company sponsors are Homeyer Precision Manufacturing, Grainger, and Gears. T-shirt sponsors are Royal Product, PartnerShip LLC, and the NTMA Training Centers.

For additional information about the NRL, contact Bill Padnos, NRL director of youth engagement, 412-258-6629, bpadnos@ntma.org, or visit www.gonrl.org.

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Editor’s Note: A complete list of participating schools will be available at: <http://gonrl.org/press-room/>

About NTMA: *NTMA’s 1,400 member companies design and manufacture special tools, dies, jigs, fixtures, gages, special machines and precision-machined parts. Some firms specialize in experimental research and development work as well as rapid prototyping. Many NTMA members are privately owned small businesses, yet the industry generates sales in excess of \$40 billion a year. NTMA’s mission is to help members of the U.S. precision custom manufacturing industry achieve business success in a global economy through advocacy, advice, networking, information, programs and services.*