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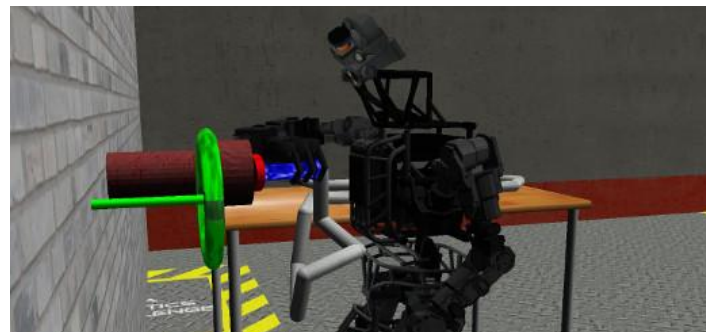
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Results of first stage in DARPA Robotics Challenge released

Posted by [Mike Davin](#) | on June 27, 2013 | No Comments



If robotics has anything close to a Super Bowl, it's probably the DARPA Robotics Challenge, which launched last year and will conclude in December 2014 with teams competing for a \$2 million prize. The goal of the competition is to develop a robot that can provide meaningful assistance in disaster relief efforts.

Sticking with the football analogy, today we found out who made it past the first round of the playoffs with the announcement of the teams moving forward from the competition's first stage, the Virtual Robotics Challenge.

In all, 26 teams from eight countries qualified to compete in the VRC, which was held from June 17-21. DARPA had allocated resources for the six teams that did best, but according to a release announcing the winners, good sportsmanship will allow members of the top nine teams to move forward (that's where the football analogy probably breaks down).

They are:

1. **Team IHMC, Institute for Human and Machine Cognition, Pensacola, Fla. (52 points)**
2. **WPI Robotics Engineering C Squad (WRECS), Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Worcester, Mass. (39 points)**
3. **MIT, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass. (34 points)**
4. **Team TRACLabs, TRACLabs, Inc., Webster, Texas (30 points)**
5. **JPL / UCSB / Caltech, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, Calif. (29 points)**
6. **TORC, TORC / TU Darmstadt / Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va. (27 points)**
7. **Team K, Japan (25 points)**
8. **TROOPER, Lockheed Martin, Cherry Hill, N.J. (24 points)**
9. **Case Western University, Cleveland, Ohio (23 points)**

To understand the purpose of the VRC, you have to understand that the challenge is made up of four tracks. Tracks A and D are developing both control software and hardware for their robots, while tracks B and C will only develop control software for use with an Atlas robot created by Boston Dynamics. The Virtual Robotics Challenge used a simulated environment to test the control software from the two tracks that will be using an Atlas robot. Finally, of the four tracks, only tracks A and B received initial funding from DARPA. Still following? If not, [all the details are available here](#).

Here's where the good sportsmanship comes in: Jet Propulsion Laboratory, which also has a Track A effort with its own robot, decided to merge its two efforts and offer the bulk of the resources it earned in the VRC to other teams. In addition, Team K and Case Western merged into a single team known as HKU. DARPA split the freed JPL resources between TROOPER (Lockheed Martin) and HKU, with the robot associated with the JPL win going to TROOPER and HKU using an Atlas robot donated to it by Hong Kong University.

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