



Sequoyah High School's 2016 Robotics State Champions and VEX Worlds Qualifying Team, AIs 2398 - Delta, sophomore Kylee Myers and seniors Ashley Baldrige and Kiana Bell give hearty thumbs up while posing for photos at the VEX Worlds competition April 21 in Louisville, Ky. During the opening ceremonies, the Sequoyah school was introduced as the Cherokee Nation.

Hollywood Boys & Girls Club member Kiana Bell represented her school and the Seminole Tribe when she competed on the Sequoyah High School team at the 2016 VEX Worlds-VEX Robotics Competition High School Division April 20-23 in Louisville, Kentucky.

Kiana's team placed 43rd in their 100 team bracket with a record of five wins and five losses. They also won the Sportsmanship Award, which was voted on by all the teams in the bracket. During the opening ceremonies, the Sequoyah School was introduced as the Cherokee Nation.

To qualify for the VEX Worlds competition Kiana and her team, the AI's- Delta, bested eight teams at her Tahlequah, Oklahoma school's competition. They went on to beat 35 teams statewide to win the state championship in robotics March 5.

"It was surprising to me," said Kiana, 17. "I didn't know anything about robots before I took the first class two years ago."

The class taught her how to build and program robots. She liked it so much she decided to join the school robotics club.

"I like to build robots, but programming it is the hard part," said Kiana, a senior. "Once you get used to it, you know what to do."

Kiana and her two teammates spent a lot of time practicing how to operate the 18-by-18 inch robot

while learning strategies for tournaments.

The robot has a cannon that shoots balls into goals of two different heights. The higher goal is worth more points, so Kiana's team practiced aiming high. That strategy helped put them on top and sent them to the VEX Worlds.

"This was my second year competing," Kiana said. "The first year we were nervous, but this year we knew what to do."

Kiana's mother Dawna Bell, compliance manager for the Boys & Girls Club in Hollywood, said the experience has done wonders for her daughter.

"She has always been hands on, likes to build stuff and put things like appliances together," Dawna said. "Kiana got into robotics in her sophomore year. This year she had the opportunity to graduate early, but chose to stay just to make the state robotics tournament."

The 2016 VEX Worlds robotics competition brings robotics teams from around the world together for rigorous and fun competition. VEX Worlds is affiliated with Robotics Education & Competition Foundation, which helps to promote and support robotics and technology events to inspire students about science, mathematics and physics.

Teams from North America, South America, Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia flock to the challenge.

At the competition, 500 three-member student teams vied for trophies as they commanded their robots to play the fast-paced game "Nothing but Net." The game pitted teams against each other on a 12-by-12-foot field as they tried to control their robot and score points by shooting balls into low and high goals.

Students programmed the robots to compete in a 15-second hands-off, autonomous bout. That was followed by the driver's mode one minute, 45 second session in which the students operated the robots with hand-held controllers.

To prepare for the competition, Kiana and her team practiced fixing damage to the robot, shooting the balls and discussed strategies.

"We wanted to see how far the robot will hold up," she said. "If the robot breaks down in the field, you can't touch it but you can pick it up when the match is over."

Kiana, who has attended Sequoyah for two years, will be the third generation of her family to graduate from the boarding school. Her grandmothers graduated from the school and her mother and her father, Adrian Condon, met there.

"Robotics has helped Kiana's self-confidence level and brought her out of her shell," Dawna said. "She used to be very quiet and wouldn't even answer questions. Now she is a completely different person."

She hopes the experience will help broaden Kiana's post-secondary choices and open doors for her.

"I just want her to see there are multiple possibilities," Bell said.

Please follow and like us:

