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Five Questions Friday: Senai Andai, student at University of Texas at Arlington

The following is reposted from the SolidWorks corporate blog

Name: Senai Andai
Title: Mechanical Engineering Student, Battlebots IQ Team founder
School: University of Texas at Arlington
Hometown: Dallas, Texas

1. Why do you choose to study engineering? How do you find yourself on this career path?

I was sitting in my 8th grade English class when our teacher asked everyone what they wanted to do for a career. I hadn’t really given the question much thought in the past, but like a bolt of lightning, it hit me. I am going to be an engineer. I am going to design and build robotic vehicles, mechanical equipment and other devices for the engineering industry. It’s such a pure, childlike happiness for me. I knew it was a perfect match and I’ve never thought about another career since.

2. Why do you compete in robotics?

Robots are about the simplest and most diverse field in engineering, and give you a wide array of skills that include everything from electrical components, to part design and manufacturing, to programming. It encompasses most of the disciplines in engineering, yet allows you to focus the design of your robot to specialize in whatever you feel it will have the greatest application.

3. What’s your favorite moment?

Personally, the most important moments during robot season are not only the time during the competition when you’re in
the heat of the battle and the pressure and excitement build, but also the little moments like back in lab at 3 a.m. when you and your teammates are busy CADing or manufacturing parts on your CNC. It’s all so much fun, so it’s hard to pick a favorite.

Also, winning the National High School Championship and later being ranked second among colleges doesn’t make choosing any easier. Ahhh, decisions, decisions.

4. What goal inspires you the most?
Our goal is simple. Build an indestructible robot that will kill everything. Sounds easy enough, but how do you do it? In order to be indestructible, you have to have a great defense, but that usually means you sacrifice your offense. The opposite is also true. Challenging the impossible and pushing the known limits of the field has always been my goal, and we have a heck of a lot of fun incorporating that into these robots.

5. How has SolidWorks made a difference in your life?
SolidWorks is by far one of the most intuitive and useful pieces of software I have ever used. It is easy for beginners but has higher features for advanced users, like stress and flow analysis. It easily integrates with our other software and is one of the most stable programs I’ve ever used.

The running joke we have on our teams is “unlike other 3D CAD software, when you tell SolidWorks to do something, IT ACTUALLY DOES IT!” Unbelievable, growing up, we always thought software was supposed to be confusing and hard to
Bonus: What do you do for fun? Well, obviously building killer robots is fun. Did I mention we also attack printers, monitors and any other household items we hope will result in an explosion of parts? Just don't use watermelon. Baaad idea. Trust me that one.

I've also built a hovercraft that is now sitting in my patio and being threatened by my parents to be thrown out. But the most fun I have is driving my family insane by taking anything and everything apart, promising I'll put it back together, but never doing it. They've since learned to hide their electronics and appliances from me.
The tips you give on everything is great, I read the whole article intently which is a big deal, normally I get side tracked and head over to facebook or twitter, haha :)

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