

Scandinavian Final, Oslo, Norway 2012

The Scandinavian Final was a great experience for our team 'Robotfalkarna'. We did everything that we could to prepare before the competition in Härnösand and then continued, intensely, in preparations during the next three weeks that led up to the competition in Oslo. The team did its best to improve its presentations and improve the robot's performance during that time. Some of the team's decisions for improvement were helpful and some were not. The team felt a lot of stress and a lot of excitement. Each member had the desire to participate and do their best. From a coach and parent's perspective, it is amazing to see how this program boosts the self confidence of each of the children.

We flew from Umeå on Friday morning, 30 November. The most difficult part of our journey came in transporting our larger than life sized wooden, board man named 'Gralf' (rightly named because he was created in a GaRage). He rode just fine on the airplane, but it was a little complicated carrying him, as well as our other presentation material and luggage as we rode the train and bus and then went by foot to the school where we would be sleeping. Once we arrived, the troubles with Gralf were forgotten.



Everyone was excited to be in Oslo. We didn't waste any time in getting ourselves to the Statoil building so that we could begin setting up and test our robot on the table. Everyone could feel the excitement in the air as all the teams were arriving and setting up their stations. Each team was also checking out the competition as they looked at the other Marknadsföring displays and observed robot programming and ideas. Despite the fact that it is a competition, there was still an attitude of hopefulness and helpfulness.

Our team ran into its first trouble on Friday night when they realized they had left their robot's starting block at home. They had used this piece of equipment to ensure that the robot was in the correct position for each mission. They had also forgotten a couple of other important pieces. They were very disappointed! We could not find any replacement LEGOs, so they did their best to adjust their programs and train themselves to start the robot independently. By the end of the night, they were worried about the robot's performance with the adjustments they had made, but felt as if it could still be OK.

Saturday morning, we arrived as early as possible to be able to take turns on the robot table in hopes of further adjusting the robot. However, with the bright day and morning sun, the team ran into their second robot problem! After the competition in Härnösand, the team had decided to try to adjust their programs to take better advantage of their light sensors in almost every program. Their hopes were in creating an even more reliable robot.



This approach worked well in the lighting atmosphere the team had practiced with in Umeå. The problem in Oslo was that the robot's light sensors were adversely affected by the amount of light in the building and they did not function as expected! The team did their best to make more frantic adjustments in hopes that they could correct the problem before the competition. However, there wasn't time to do everything they wanted to as there were other things to do and participate in.

One of the team's favorite events was the opening ceremony. Each team walked in carrying a banner. When they arrived to the front of the line their team's name was read to a cheering audience. The team's picture was shown on the large screen at the front of the stage. The kids all felt really cool and really important. It is so fun for them to participate in an event where they really feel like champions. The MC for the event, Andreas Wahl, was also a big hit. Our team thought that he was really funny. The music and entertainment that continued throughout the day were all so fun that even though our team felt badly about our robot's performance, it was impossible to remain that way for long.





Our team felt really good about and did a great job in our Marknadsföring presentation. The team member in charge of this presentation was the youngest in the group. He was definitely nervous, but he practiced and he wanted to do well, and he did! From a coach's perspective, it is fabulous to watch the children set goals, work hard and then reach their goals. This program teaches such great skills at such an early age.

Our team also did really well in their Forskning presentation. Throughout the season I was amazed at their ability to read and understand some very in depth scientific information as presented in scientific papers as they did their research for the project. It is always fun to have them meet professionals in the field of their research. I can only hope that it opens their minds to the possibilities they have in their future.



Another favorite event of our day in Oslo was the dinner following the award presentations. Once again Andreas Wahl was the MC. He did some really cool science experiments. All of the kids were in awe and came away with smiles!

The day after the competition, my husband, who is a scientist, was away for a week participating in a scientific conference. When my children, two of which are on the team, asked what he was doing there, it was really fun to give them my reply. 'Well,' I said, 'he is presenting a poster at what is called a poster session. It is where scientists can gather and share their research on posters. In fact, it is exactly like what YOU just did with your Marknadsföring presentation. Sometimes at these meetings he presents his research orally with a power point presentation. In fact, that is exactly like what YOU just did with your forskning presentation!'

FIRST LEGO League is an amazing program. It helps make science be something that is cool and fun. It expands children's minds in ways that other activities can not. Our team was very happy to participate in the Scandinavian Final. We would like to thank those of you who made it possible for us to attend as well as all of the teams who have participated before us and will participate after. It is a program that makes a difference in a child's life!

Rhonda Lucas, Robotfalkarna