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TAR UMT underdogs triumph

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Team crowned champion at maiden combat robotics challenge

Winning team: (From left) Gurtej Singh Ranjit Singh, Teh, Mak Sew Liong, Muhammad Fikri, Max Yeap Yong Jie, Koay Zi Xian, Lim Jian Bang, Yeoh Dao Zheng, and Tan Hai Xiang.

DEFYING all odds, a team from Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology (TAR UMT) was crowned the champion at the recent "Robot Tempur Beregu Tag Team" (RTB Tag Team) Malaysia 2023.

Not only did they lack experience in combat robotics, but the team of nine students also had to overcome obstacles at every stage of the competition.

RTB Tag Team was a combat robotics competition held in conjunction with Malaysia Techlympics 2023, an initiative by the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry (Mosti) to generate more interest in science, technology and innovation among Malaysian youths.

Participating teams were tasked with building two combat robots, with the objective of disabling their opponents' robots or pushing them out of the robot combat arena.

Ultimately, it was teamwork, grit and determination that saw the TAR UMT team winning the competition.

Diploma in Mechatronics Engineering student Muhammad Fikri Haffizaddin Abdul Hamid, who was one of the robot pilots, said the team did not have high expectations entering the competition, which was held on Nov 19 and 20 in Putrajaya.

"It was our first combat robotics competition. Our confidence only grew after we won our first match.

"After defeating our opponents in the finals, we were overwhelmed and happy because the victory meant that all our hard work was not in vain," he said in a press release.

Fellow robot pilot Teh Zhen Wye recounted how much the team had struggled to build the robots for the competition.

"Due to time constraints, we only had eight days to build, test and prepare the robots for the competition.

"This entire process usually takes weeks or months. So, this accomplishment was not only because of Muhammad Fikri Haffizaddin and me, but also the effort of all our team members who supported us during the building, testing and repairing stages, and cheered us on during the competition," the Bachelor in Mechatronics Engineering (Hons) student said.

All the participating students are members of the TAR UMT Makers Club, a platform that gathers like-minded students who are interested in understanding, building and operating devices such as robots and drones to share their passion with their TAR UMT peers.

"I was ecstatic when I found out about the club after joining this university as I always have a deep passion for machines, such as robots, drones and remote-controlled cars, since secondary school.

"Now, I can introduce combat robotics to the club and I am determined to continue fuelling my passion for robotics through the club activities and through my studies," Muhammad Fikri said.

He added that robotics and automation would be prevalent in the future, so it is advantageous for him to study mechatronics and put his knowledge into practice at the varsity.