

Cornell tops AUVC for second straight year

2010-08-30 10:00:00 by Rons_ROV_Links



Cornell University's team topped this year's 13th International Autonomous Underwater Vehicle Competition, securing what could become a AUV Competition dynasty with its second win in a row.

The university's staggeringly large team - 45 members including students that couldn't make it out to SPAWAR Systems Center San Diego's Transducer Evaluation Center for the 14-18 July competition - was able to pull out a first place win despite a glitch in their robot Tachyon which left the sub floundering to complete the highest point portion of the underwater obstacle course.

Twenty-one teams, six of them international, programmed robotic submarines to autonomously swim through a gate, touch colored buoys, follow an array of paths, glide over goal post-style hedges, shoot underwater darts through a window and drop an object in a bin. The final test of the course was to pick up an object, surface with it and then drop the item back down to the pool floor.

Cornell was able to complete each type of activity on its practice runs, but Tachyon seemed stuck in a time out before it could find the underwater object, which represented a drowning person. Despite the last-minute snafu, the team's overall score, which included static judging on a paper and website, landed them the \$6,000 top prize, made available by the AUVSI Foundation and the Office of Naval Research.

The top-slot team had more than 200 in-water practice hours prior to coming out to TRANSDEC, according to team members, and also showed its work ethic on-site, competing informally with other teams to see who could get to the pool earliest for practice time-even as early as 5:15 a.m. when the day officially began at 7:30.

Even winning was not enough to hamper the team's need to dominate - they spent the night of the awards dinner in the hotel pool working with one of their sponsors to perfect their Doppler velocity logger for next year's competition.

The following teams rounded out the rest of the winning teams:

- 2nd: U.S. Naval Academy, \$5,000
- 3rd: University of Maryland, \$2,250
- 4th: École de Technologie Supérieure, \$1,750
- 5th: Amador Valley High School, \$1,000
- 6th: University of Texas at Dallas, \$1,000
- 7th: Kyushu Institute of Technology, \$1,000

Special Prizes:

Second Chance Award: University of Central Florida, \$1,000

Best Group Presentation: San Diego City College, \$500

Determination Award: Reykjavik University, \$500

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