On January 4th, 8 members of the HHS Robotics Team attended the much anticipated Kickoff of the 2014 competition at SUNY StonyBrook. The teams in attendance were all very excited to see this year’s task, but everyone fell silent when the game was formally announced, and the words “AERIAL ASSIST” appeared on the screen.

This year’s game is very different from past competitions – no longer will the robot that scores the most points win. Robots now will earn the most points by passing the 2ft diameter ball to alliance members and playing together as a team to score a goal.

The HHS team started brainstorming right away. Designs ranging from a basic “defensive” robot to an “offensive” flame throwing one (which btw is illegal 😊) were discussed. Mentors Julian Aptowitz (team 3624 HHHW) and Mark McLeod (team 358 Hauppauge) came to listen and advise the Devildroids. The 71 pages of the game manual rules were analyzed so the team understood how to play the game, how to earn points, how to be a valuable alliance partner…and most importantly…how not to lose points to technical fouls.

Then the building of the basic robot began! A talented construction crew began by building a sturdy table with a shelf to use as a workbench, and then moved on to assembling the gear boxes and base frame.
Meanwhile, an equally talented electrical crew began wiring the control circuits on a temporary board under the close supervision of Captain Joe Saginaw.

The awesome programming group began loading JAVA software onto the Robotics room computers and testing the joystick controllers.

As the week progressed, the team members have begun to realize how important teamwork is and how an actual engineering design firm analyzes the positive and negative aspects of competing ideas and strategies.

The first week culminated with a team of students from Half Hollow Hills with their mentor coming to Huntington High School to assist with the setup of the electronics board.

To show their support for our team and our mentors a parent support group spearheaded by Mr. & Mrs. Saginaw treated the combined teams to pizza and soda. It was the end of a great week and hopefully inspired some future engineers.

Junior Joe Saginaw, the Devildroid Team Captain, along with Senior Victor Tellez (team Co-Captain) again wish to invite all staff members and students to stop by, say hello, and watch our progress during January and February. The team intends to make the long nights pay off and will be hoping for a “sea of blue” support at the Hofstra Competition.

The Devildroid News will be published weekly during the 6 week build cycle.