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Members of Clara Brownell Middle School robotics team 7499 — The Nerdy Girls— discuss their robot design earlier this year. The all-girls team is competing at the super qualifier tournament this weekend in McMinnville with the Smarties, another all-girl team.

## ROBOTICS:

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work and learned all they could.

In addition to those, the two teams also overcame other obstacles. Their robotics kits arrived a few weeks after the competition season had already started, and in their first few competitions their robots didn't even have wheels and couldn't move around to score any points. Through the season, several members of the teams quit, so the remaining girls on both teams had to be well-versed in all aspects of the competition to make sure they could fill in for the people they had lost. Many of the students, however, said that acted in their benefit.

"We are at the point now where we can do anything the boys can do," Lauryn Journot, from The Nerdy Girls, said. "We worked and we learned and we were successful."

Because most of the boys already knew the basics on robotics, the girls said they relied on each other for support because their male peers treated them differently because they weren't used to working with girl competitors.

"When I would go to cut something, a guy comes up to me and asks if he can cut it for me," Smarties team member Makayla Chewning said. "I told them, 'I've cut things plenty of times myself. I can do it on my own.'"

Other times, when they asked for help from the largely all-male, more experienced teams, the boys wanted to solve the problem for them rather than taking the time to explain it so the girls could understand.

"A lot of the guys try to help you out because they don't think that you really understand it," Journot said. "Then they hurry and do it themselves without showing you how to do it."

Lougee said, as a result, the teams really had to research and do a lot of planning beforehand, which also worked in their favor later on in the competition season. She said they became pretty good planners,

which was not the boys' strongest suit.

"Not to be insulting, but the boys aren't the most organized," Lougee said. "The boys don't tend to draw it out and play it out. They like to throw pieces of metal together, but that usually means they have to take it apart to fix it."

Lougee said the girls relied on sketching their robot designs, which saved them the time of modifying their robots later because they could tell by their drawings if their plans would work or not. Even if they started on their build and something didn't work out, she said, they knew before it was complete and didn't have to waste time rebuilding the whole thing to see if it would work.

"With those ideas, we never had to take our robot apart," Journot said.

Many of the girls said doing just as well as the boys in a male-dominated sport made them feel good about themselves.

"It has boosted our self confidence," Lougee said. "In the beginning, many of us were shy and wouldn't say much."

Smarties team member Hope Cameron said having other people underestimate them and being new to the field altogether has also brought them closer together.

"Each one of us can build a robot by ourselves, but we choose to work together," Journot said.

Heading into this weekend's competition, the girls said both teams have some design issues to sort out, but they are very excited about the opportunity to compete.

"We had seven teams, and, out of those seven teams, the two girls teams are moving on," Journot said. "It's amazing."

Each said they will compete in what they refer to as "typical girl fashion" — dressed in matching teal and white shirts that display not only their team logos, but pride in the fact they are competing in a largely male-based science, technology, engineering and mathematics competition.

"It is an addiction, and we love it," Journot said.



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Clara Brownell Middle School The Nerdy Girls discuss their robot design earlier this year. The all-girls team competes at the super qualifier tournament this weekend in McMinnville.

## FLAGS:

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ing the flags in Hermiston to honor both men, as well as in Echo to honor Prior.

Drotzmann will also honor Rusty Brewer, who served as the Hermiston city attorney for 45 years. Brewer died Jan. 23 after

residing in Hermiston for almost 60 years. He also served as president of the Oregon Water Resources Congress, secretary and attorney for the Hermiston Irrigation District, attorney for the Hermiston School Board and a member of the Hermiston Development Corporation.



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Clara Brownell Middle School The Nerdy Girls team member Anna Lougee discusses robotics with some students at McNary Heights Elementary School earlier this year.



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