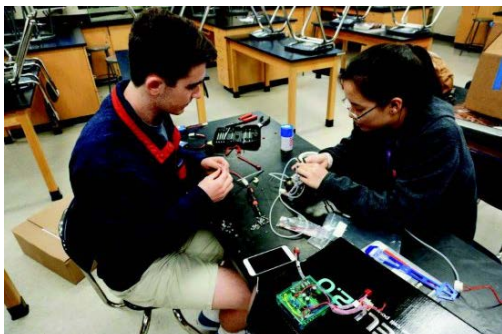


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RC competition a first for Campolindo

By Cathy Dausman



Students work on constructing the hydrogen fueled RC car. Photos Cathy Dausman

The rubber meets the road for the first time as Campolindo High School students enter the 2018 Hydrogen Horizon Automotive Challenge. The first round of H2AC, as it is called, allows science and automotive class students in 20 Northern California high schools to compete in a four-hour-long endurance race on an indoor track using a hand-built, hydrogen fueled RC car.

The race is sponsored by Toyota, whose Mirai runs on a hydrogen fuel cell. Toyota provides each school with a kit and model specifications. Car dimensions are roughly 18 by 9 by 6 inches.

The Campolindo entry will feature a red and blue paint scheme; it was constructed by a team of students including Connor Gregg, Christian Meckfessel, Aiden Roake, Goldie Zhu and Sean Wright.

Meckfessel, who said he has always been a car person, thought working with the new technology sounded like fun. "I'm not nervous because I am a good driver. I think we have a good chance of going to finals,

and winning," he added.

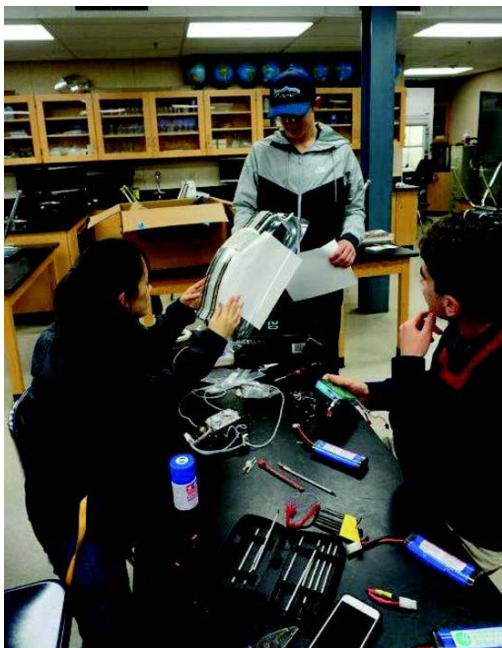
Auto shop teacher Steve Boone pitched the contest to his students "because alternative fuel is one portion of my class."

Environmental science teacher Tren Kauzer says the chemistry and physics behind the alternative power source is this: a hydrogen fuel cell generates an electrical current which then turns the engine. Emissions are carbon-neutral. "The only thing that comes out of the tail pipe is water, which is pretty cool," Kauzer said.

Entrants are provided with a set of four nickel metal hydride batteries (and may use two more) and 16 hydro sticks. The Campolindo car shell was designed and built on a 3-D printer.

While hydrogen itself is flammable, Kauzer said the power cells that the students use are small and safe. "It's not hydrogen gas in the little tanks, it's hydrogen that is trapped in a gel," he explained.

The race runs Feb. 24 at Richmond's Craneway Pavilion. The top 10 teams will then compete March 10 against 10 teams from Southern California at the UC Davis Pavilion.



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