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## ◆ Germany wins the Soccer World Championship!

**Congratulations!** (2005-07-18)



- Henning Scherf collects the baton for Bremen
- Official hand-over at RoboCup 2005 in Osaka



It was 'off to Japan' recently for Bremen's Mayor, Dr Henning Scherf or, more correctly, to Osaka, where this year's Soccer World Championship for robots is being held until 19 July. On 17 July 2005 Henning Scherf officially took over the baton for next year's RoboCup when Bremen will be hosting the tournament from 14 to 20 June 2006. Bremen Mayor Henning Scherf: "The fact that so many internationally reputed specialists for artificial intelligence will

be meeting in the city of Bremen is a sign of recognition for our many year's work to promote both our university and colleges and the companies and institutes around them as excellent facilities for new technologies. This is something we can be proud of as we look forward to the RoboCup World Cup."

Already on Sunday 17 July 2005 there was something to celebrate when the "German Team" (which includes members from Bremen) defended its title as world champion in the so-called Sony Four-Legged League. The final score in the match against the "NUBots" from the University of Newcastle in Australia was 4:3. Following a draw of 2:2 at the end of regular time the winner had to be decided by penalties and the German team triumphed with 2:1.

The competitive atmosphere during a robot soccer match is just the same as when human kickers are playing. Visitors to RoboCup 2006 at the Bremen Fair Centre next year will be able to experience this for themselves. The world champions of robot soccer will be decided at the RoboCup for the tenth time in 2006 - parallel to the FIFA World Cup for the 'real' players. The jubilee tournament will for the first time offer fans in Germany the chance to see the full spectrum of robot soccer live. About 2.000 information technologists and engineers from all over the world will gather in Bremen to determine who their champion is.

Several hundred teams from about 50 countries are expected to take part - a further boost to RoboCup's reputation as the biggest and most significant robotic event in the world. But the main purpose of the event is not to entertain the crowds. A soccer match serves rather as a uniform test environment that enables comparison of different technologies of robotics and artificial intelligence.

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The machines are not remote controlled. Once the whistle has been blown they have to move autonomously over the field - on wheels, on four legs, on two legs or as virtual players. They have to know as exactly as possible where they are at any time, have to follow the movements of the other players and the ball, and react to these in an appropriate way - and do all of this, of course, as fast as possible or at least faster and more accurately than their opponent. No other robot competition sets its contestants such a complex challenge. Technologies that are successfully tried and tested here stand an excellent chance of cutting a good figure in other application fields, too, e.g. in the household, offices, factories or on other planets.

The RoboCup stands out from other comparable events in another respect, too. It is the only robotic competition to pursue a long-term goal: by the year 2050, to develop a team of fully autonomous humanoid robots that can play - and win - against the human world soccer champions to official FIFA rules. When the championships are held in Bremen nearly a fifth of this time span will already have passed.

"In contrast to the presentation of prototypes at exhibitions, nothing is dressed up here", says Hans-Dieter Burkhard, Professor of Artificial Intelligence at the Berlin Humboldt University and the Vice-President of the International RoboCup Federation. "Any inadequacies are mercilessly revealed by the opponents."

More information:  
[www.robocup2006.org](http://www.robocup2006.org)  
[www.messebremen.de](http://www.messebremen.de)

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