# History of RoboWar Tournaments

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Click here to read the results of the Fourteenth Tournament. Click here to read the results of the Thirteenth Tournament. Greetings. You have come seeking an expansive review of the history of the official RoboWar tournaments. Look no further!

The only thing that this history assumes is that you have perused the text of the Theory of Robot Design, at least sufficiently that when this writing speaks of "dashers", "wall huggers", or whatever, that you know what is being talked about. If not, it is *strongly* recommended that you go to that page and familiarize yourself with the common terms that are used amongst RoboWarriors to describe the tactics being used.

## The Greatest RoboMasters Of All Time

### Most Tournament Prizes

1. Eric Foley - 13
2. Robert Hogg - 9
3. Doug Harris - 8 *(two shared with Tim Seufert)*
4. Jean-Francis Lechat - 7
5. *(tie>* Colin Jaffe - 5
5. *(tie)* Alex Landraitis - 5
5. *(tie)* John Abbot, Jr. - 5
8. *(tie)* Tim Seufert - 4 *(two shared with Doug Harris)*
9. *(tie)* Paul Schmidt - 3
9. *(tie)* Stephen Linhart - 3

### Or, to be more specific . . .

Greatest Mortal RoboMaster Of All Time - Jean-Francis Lechat (7 prizes)

Greatest Mortal-RoboMaster Of All Time: Jean-Francis Lechat (7 prizes)
Greatest Titan-RoboMaster Of All Time: Eric Foley (6 prizes)
Greatest Team-RoboMaster Of All Time: Doug Harris (3 prizes) *(two shared with Tim Seufert)*
Greatest Icon-RoboMaster Of All Time: Robert Hogg (2 prizes)
Most Dominant Combatant, One Tournament: Two with four apiece - Colin Jaffe (Tournament XI) and Eric Foley (Tournament XIII)
Most Dominant Combatant, Consecutive Tournaments: Robert Hogg (9 prizes from Tournaments III to V)
Most Tournaments With Titles Won, Consecutive: Jean-Francis Lechat (4 - VIII to XI)
Most Tournaments With Titles Won, Total: Eric Foley (7 - IV, V, VI, XII, XIII, XIV, and XVI)
Most Complete Sweep Of A Tournament Round: Eric Foley (top 7 places, titan round of Tournament XII)

## The Ancient Days of RoboWar

I will begin this discussion by attempting to explain fully to those who were not there just how different the game of RoboWar was at its beginning than it is today. Robots had no interrupts to make search routines flow swiftly, no doppler register to make the leading of one's shots an easy thing. Robots were restricted to only 500 instructions, putting severe limits on complexity. The only weapons available were bullets of every kind, missiles, and TacNukes. The fastest processor speed available at that time could process only 15 instructions per chronon. In addition, robots were governed by a very different hardware store that allowed the equivalent of only 8 hardware points in our modern reckoning, compared with the 9 we have today.

This led to an extremely different environment than is known today. Indeed, the introduction of doppler and interrupts essentially meant the end of RoboWar as the ancient hackers knew it and the introduction of what essentially amounted to a sequel of the original game. If robots of the older days seem simplistic, blind, blumbing, and even klunky by our

modern standards, it is because the limits of the game required them to be

that way. This must be clearly understood by any would-be RoboWar historian who seeks to understand what it was like back then.

## Tournament I

The very First RoboWar Tournament was a very in-house thing, with most of the contestants being people who knew David Harris halfway closely. RoboWar had not yet become the widely-distributed thing it is today, and as such there were few entries from fewer authors. At the time of the first RoboWar tournament, the dominant paradigms of RoboWar were the wall hugger and the wanderer. The wall hugger, in particular, was the primarily effective tactic in RoboWar, simply because it was best suited to exploit the limits of accurate shooting in those days. A wanderer moved diagonally and aimlessly, and could often unwittingly move right into a shot coming straight at him fired by another wanderer or a wall hugger. However, wall huggers moved perpendicular to anyone in the center of the arena, and unless wanderers were to look along walls and fire at any wall huggers that they saw, it was largely impossible for them to hit one.

Also, although the team provisions were in the game at this point, no tournament category was held for teams. It is not clear to this author as to exactly how the scoring system of the tournament was arranged.

The winner of the tournament was Matt Sakai's Silo Plus. Silo Plus used both a wall hugger and a wanderer strategy. In the beginning of the battle, he would go to the walls immediately and begin taking several counterclockwise loops around the perimeter of the arena. The intent was to search for other wall huggers in the early going and destroy them with missile fire before they could pose a threat. After a few loops around the arena, Silo Plus would shift into wanderer mode and finish the rest of the battle moving in that manner.

The second place robot was Dave Gangon's ShazBot. This robot was the first robot known to make use of radar for defensive purposes. It was a wall hugger that used a rotating turret algorithm to look all around the

arena from its position at the perimeter. If it spotted a shot on radar either

in front or behind it, it would track that shot until it either seemed to be moving away or came too close. If it came too close, ShazBot would hop out from the wall in order to avoid it, and continue on its way. This defense was quite sufficient, since the main threat to wall huggers in that era when leading one's shots was unheard of was from other shots coming towards them from the same wall. ShazBot's defense mechanism was thus quite useful in this day. However, it did have one weakness that sometimes was very painful: if a missile were coming at it from behind, it would track that missile until it got close enough to dodge . . . even when ShazBot is slamming its head against the wall because it's too busy watching this weapon.

Third place went to Tim Seufert's Timbot V Mark II. This was a wanderer that surprised many people with its placing.

## Tournament II

The Second Tournament was quite a sea change from the first. Not a single one of the winners followed the strategies that had been previously explored in the first one.

Rammer AMT, by Jon Newman, won this tournament going away. Newman arrived at this strategy by observing the way robots fought up to that point. Long-distance shooting was so horrid and the awareness of other robots of events around them so pitiful that the vast majority of kills at that time occurred when two robots collided with one another, at which point the kill went to whichever one went into its collision check routine and vaporized the other machine. Seeing this, Newman constructed a robot that simply would not bother firing a shot, and would methodically and systematically rove around the entire middle of the arena with an innovative movement technique, seeking to collide with other robots and optimizing its operation so that it would almost always be the first robot to check its collision status. The movement technique also optimized its movement pattern so that Rammer would know which wall it would run

into next, thus reducing overhead used for movement purposes. (Remember, there were no interrupts, so you had to "poll", or constantly

(Remember, there were no interrupts, so you had to "poll" or constantly check, to see if you had gotten too close to a wall.)

Rammer did exactly what Newman designed it to do, and scored a crushing victory. Almost lost in the shuffle were two other paradigms which would far outlast Rammer through history. The second place winner, Chicken & Corn by Tom Morrison, displayed the first "corner hopper" defensive scheme. Meanwhile, the third place winner, MX III by Doug Harris, was the first robot to fall through the loophole that would eventually become known as the "suicidal destroyer". This robot would use stack manipulation to put all the commands for a huge array of movements and releases of TacNukes, then execute them all in a single chronon with one line of store instructions. Trouble was, at this time it wasn't even suicidal -- there was no such thing as "overload" at this time, and as such MX III could cheerfully sit there, over a thousand energy points in the hole, and spend the next 500 chronons trying to recover. As a direct result of this loophole's discovery, David Harris integrated the -200 energy deficit limit, beyond which a robot would overload and melt down.

In the team ranks, Mx3, a robot identical to the solo version MX III, and Mortician, a robot that would sit in the lower left corner with a stiff shield up both to survive the nukes and to stave off enemy attacks, won the first team competition.

## Tournament III

The Third Tournament saw many changes from the second. RoboWar saw many modifications added. The "robots" register, allowing bots to know how many enemies they had at any given time, was introduced. The basic trigonometric operators of sine and cosine were added. The instruction limit was raised from 500 to 5000, allowing far more complex robots to be built. The hardware store was changed, permitting robots which made use of the full 9 hardware points available today. More weapons were added -- mines, drones, lasers, and early hellbores (which were different from

modern hellbores).

As far as RoboWar design went, the Third Tournament saw the advent of

the individual who would go on to become one of the most prolific RoboMasters in the history of the game, Robert Hogg. Hogg's lineup of five robots filled out the five top spots in this tournament. This ironclad domination set two precedents that would not be matched for years. The first was to set a record for the most prizes gathered at a single tournament at three, which would not be broken until the Eleventh Tournament. The second was to fill out the top five rankings of the individual tournament, a feat that went unparalleled until the Twelfth Tournament.

The prize winners were basically a "who's who" of Robert Hogg's machines. The winner, Charger IV was a near-clone of Rammer AMT that performed a slightly different movement pattern that was more effective against wall huggers: it would move nearly vertical, then nearly horizontal, in its quest to find people to run into and kill. This made it much harder for wall huggers to evade the ramming strategy.

The second place winner, Whumper, was a heavily shielded bot that would move in a small area in the middle of the arena, standing off against the common wall huggers and firing at a distance. The shields made it virtually impervious to wall hugger fire as well as able to survive most kill shots fired by rammers, and the short area in which it travelled meant that it would not be following any path long enough to be struck by stray shots very often.

The third place winner, Blazer, was a robot that would go either to the upper right or lower left corners. It would then move diagonally between those two corners indefinitely, firing shots diagonally out at anything it saw while it was traversing the middle and firing shots along the walls while it was in the corners. The result was a thorough search pattern that covered all parts of the arena with fire very nicely.

In the team competition, something happened which I suspect to have been a mistake on the tournament organizers' part. The official winners were Knuckles and Sword & Shield — yet the comments in Sword & Shield

were Knuckles and Sword & Shield -- yet the comments in Sword & Shield seem to indicate that there should have been *two* Sword & Shield bots as the team, and just one Knuckles bot in the *individual* tournament. The Sword & Shield bots were designed to operate as twins, whereby one robot would act as the "sword" -- a robot similar to Charger IV that would execute a rammer sequence in the middle of the screen -- while the other would act as the "shield" -- a wall hugger that would ram other wall huggers. Meanwhile, Knuckles incorporated a strategy similar to Silo Plus, intended for the individual rounds: it would alternate its ramming strategies between wall hugger ("shield") and wandering ("sword") mode, covering the entire arena. However, somebody screwed up at RoboWar Hindquarters, the two wholly seperate designs were accidentally entered as a single team, and managed to run off with the team tournament nonetheless. It's almost a shame, because Knuckles might well have been able to seriously compete with Robert Hogg in the solo rounds.

## Tournament IV

Robert Hogg returned at the Fourth Tournament, but this time, he had competition. The RoboWar game was changed slightly to allow a processor of 50 speed for the first time. However, since hackers were used to relatively low-tech battles of attrition and hadn't envisioned the technology that could make use of this lightning-fast processor well enough to justify the cost of two hardware points, it was relatively unused -- except by one robot, Excelsior, that got lost in the mail on the way to the tournament and didn't arrive until after it was held.

Doug Harris was able to overcome his earlier mediocrity in the solo rounds with what probably is the most dull robot of all time, Pacifist Penquin III, or, as I prefer to call him, Boring Birdo. This robot brought new attention to the corner hopper strategy, which had not gotten the attention it probably deserved earlier due to Rammer AMT's sound crushing of the field in which the previous corner hopper, Chicken & Corn, had been a part. Boring Birdo/Pacifist Penquin would do nothing but dodge from corner to corner all day, otherwise ignoring all enemies unless they came within close enough range that even the inaccurate shooting of the day could assure a kill. Since it did very little, it often had large excesses of

energy -- and when it found itself with a full battery, it would divert half of it to a temporary shield. This basic defensive scheme was extremely effective in those days, since there was no way to stop Birdo at the time unless you happened to shoot a shot at it from the walls and then intercept it out in the center of the wall while it was moving. More on that later...

Robert Hogg failed to win a second consecutive tournament, scoring second place with Beholder Jr. This was an upgrade of the Beholder which had been among his field that didn't make it to the Hall of Fame behind his top three bots in Tourney III. Beholder (and Beholder Jr.) were missile-using robots that were very similar to the much older ShazBot, only they would only dodge if a shot was coming in from in front rather than behind it.

After the Third Tournament introduced the individual who would long hold the mark of the most prolific RoboMaster of all time in Robert Hogg, the Fourth Tournament introduced the hacker who would eventually succeed him in that honor, Eric Foley (this author). Foley made his debut here with the first Orb of Doom. This robot was a wall hugger that pursued a strategy with which Eric was quite familiar, as it was in common use at his university. The wall hugger would first move one direction along the walls, firing a shot at all other wall huggers that were found and moving out diagonally to complete the trek to the next wall. If it was forced to do so, it would again go along the same direction as it had before, until it had completed a full loop around the arena without having to go into the middle. Then it would turn around and perform the same task going the other way. In this way, the Orb of Doom could ensure that the walls were completely clear of other wall huggers. While it was at it, it would keep some track of what was going on in the middle of the arena, and fired a spray of shots to attempt to assure a hit by at least one of the bullets. It would also fire a lethal shot at close range, thus eliminating the threat of

rammers against this machine. After it had assured itself that the walls were clear, it would turn its full attention to bombarding the center of the arena with sprays.

The Orb of Doom seemed to be in an interesting position to flush Pacifist Penquin out of his defensive reveries as-is, but the temporary shielding and the speed of Boring Birdo's defensive movement often meant that the Orb's lethal shots with normal bullets were insufficient to kill the Penquin, or its movement out into the center of the arena -- originally intended to avoid head-on collisions with other wall huggers coming the other way -- was of insufficient speed to catch the corner hopper going between walls. In addition, there was something of a miscommunication of which version of RoboWar would be used to run the tournament. Hellbores had been added before the third tournament, but were a very different weapon then: instead of eliminating all shields, they did 3x damage to shields and 1/2x damage to the robots themselves. The version of RoboWar in which hellbores were changed to their modern form was available in time to use them for the Fourth Tournament, but the rules had said that it would not be used. In fact, it *was* used -- and Eric's grudging refraining from using hellbores on the first Orb of Doom was thus made pointless, when it might have seriously affected the outcome: many close-up confrontations between the Pacifist Penquin and the first Orb of Doom ended with the Orb dying and the Penquin surviving due to the latter's shields, a situation that would have been very different had the Orb been able to make use of modern hellbores.

Robert Hogg also tied for third place with Lewis, who also won the icon contest, giving Hogg three prizes in the Fourth Tournament as well to tie his record set in the Third. In a somewhat muddied precedent, the glory was given to both warriors.

In the team competition, the suicidal destroyers were returning from their narrow defeat in Tourney 3, and won going away in the form of Tim Seufert's Terminator II and Doug Harris' Miracle Penquin.

## Tournament V

The Fifth Tournament was, in many ways, a comedy of errors on all parts. Doug Harris withdrew from the mortal individual tournaments in favor of modifying Pacifist Penquin for the new titan rounds -- yet he either

neglected or just didn't plain recognize the power of weaponry tipped with modern hellbores and that they would be utterly necessary in the titan ranks, an oversight that may have cost him the tournament. Jeff Rommereide's Excelsior, the winner of this tournament, was originally entered with the intent of being used in the Fourth Tournament. Sadly, Excelsior undoubtedly would have won the Fourth Tournament, but had to settle for winning the Fifth instead due to getting lost in the mail. Robert Hogg, having come off of two tournaments in a row with three prizes in each, went on to build the Lug as his primary weapon for his third go-around. Lug was a robot that was completely stationary and relied wholly on shields for defense, also completely ignoring or neglecting the power of the new hellbores to eradicate such defenseless machines. And finally, in the Fifth Tournament an overriding truism of the RoboWar tournaments was demonstrated: being able to completely smash a robot in single combat does not mean that you are going to place ahead of that robot in a tournament. In the Fifth Tournament this was clear more than at any other: the second Orb of Doom placed behind Lug (whom he unfailingly destroyed), Shredder IVC placed behind the second Orb of Doom (ditto), and Skittish placed behind Excelsior (pretty much likewise).

First place, as has been said, went to Jeff Rommereide's Excelsior. This robot incorporated a number of tactics that had never been seen before. It was the first defensive gun turret in history. It was the first robot that was able to effectively lead its shots to hit moving targets, an astounding feat in the *pre-doppler* age.

Continuing his expected grappling with Doug Harris while looking over his shoulder at Eric Foley waiting in the wings, Robert Hogg entered the Lug and won second place. The design behind Lug is obvious: it fired pairs of missiles towards the corners from a stationary position in the middle of the arena that were fired perfectly timed so that Pacifist Penquin, in dodging from one corner to the next, would be hit by the next missile headed for whichever corner it ran to. At the same time, Lug put up a very stiff shield that made it impervious to the spray shots of the first Orb of Doom.

Unfortunately, things didn't work quite as well as Hogg hoped. Pacifist Penquin didn't show up in the mortal rounds, leaving Lug's missiles largely pointless. The second Orb of Doom was the first robot in the mortal tournaments to make effective use of modern hellbores, and with Lug incorporating no movement defense at all, Orb II crushed Lug without mercy. Excelsior's tracking similarly made life hell for Lug, locking onto him and pumping shots into him nonstop. Skittish, the first machine gunner, did much the same thing. In the end, there were only two of the other five bots against whom Lug got anywhere in the finals: Hogg's own Dirty Lewis and Shredder IVC, a robot that would hover close to the walls and kill wall huggers, a clearly intended answer for Beholder Jr and the first Orb of Doom -- only one of which showed up in any form -- but which never fired a single shot out at the center of the arena, leaving Lug unmolested.

Lug wound up winning second place, but largely on a fluke: the Orb of Doom II, given any length of time in the arena, would slaughter the Lug, either in solo or group combat. But the presence of Shredder IVC, with his effective method of reaping out wall huggers, eliminated the Orb quickly in the group arena, leaving Lug sitting in the middle all the time with no one else in the finals' group rounds built with the inclination to shoot at him. As a result, Lug's group score in the finals went through the roof, allowing him to overtake and upset the Orb for second place. The Orb was left in the same third place its predecessor had won in the Fourth Tournament.

The Fifth Tournament was also the final tournament in which suicidal destroyers dominated the team ranks. Doug Harris and Tim Seufert, who had run riot through the previous tournaments with their teams, did little

more than small tinkerings with their victorious team from the Fourth. Meanwhile, Robert Hogg and Eric Foley both built suicidal destroyer teams that could cover the entire arena with a wall of bullets -- something that Harris and Seufert had never built to that point. These two teams tied for first place. In a somewhat muddied precedent -- when these same two

for first place. In a somewhat muddled precedent -- when these same two combatants had tied for third place at the previous tournament, both had been awarded the honors -- a run-off was held. Hogg's team of Lucky Flea and Miracle Flea defeated Foley's team of Pyros and Skullgrin 4 to 3, denying Foley the co-title.

In the inaugural titan round, four robots entered. The end combat came to a close battle between Eric Foley's Krulockh Lord and Doug Harris' Zuper Penquin. However, due to Doug's oversight of using hellbores and possibly Robert Hogg's Super Lug hurting the Zuper Penquin to some extent in solo combat, the Krulockh Lord won this first titan tournament. The Krulockh Lord was a somewhat more complex corner-hopper than the Penquin, and would fire both long-range hellbullets and, if it found that another robot was along the same wall as itself while it was moving between corners, would go out diagonally into the center of the arena similar to the Orbs of Doom, and continue to the next corner after the one it was originally headed to.

The first little league tournament was also held at the Fifth. Doug Harris held off the competition with Wimp, winning this contest.

*One small trivia note: this tournament was the last time when a finals round of an individual combat would be completely free of dashers until the titan round of Tournament XII.*

## Tournament VI

Having been so narrowly denied several places of glory in the Fifth Tournament, Eric Foley went and made the same mistake in the Sixth as Robert Hogg made in the Fifth with the Lug: he built his robots with the previous tournament's winners specifically in mind, not looking very well to what might show up unexpectedly. As a result, his defending titan crown slipped away, and the winning tradition of the Orbs of Doom faltered.

In the mortal rounds, the first hesitator appeared in Sylvestre. This machine was designed with the thinking that such a passive defense would ruin Excelsior's accurate shooting. Excelsior didn't show up, but it did

throw off the shooting of the Dragon Knight, and the shielding and general wall hugger philosophy carried it through sufficiently that it won first place despite being crushed soundly in solo combat by the third Orb of Doom. (see truism of RoboWar tournaments earlier...)

In second place was Darling, one of the first effective dashers. The dasher paradigm was nothing new -- Eric Foley had dabbled with them briefly but unsuccessfully as early as the Third Tournament, and another dasher called The Terminator had indeed been entered to that same tournament. Darling did not use a constant tracking algorithm as most dashers before or since have; he would use an optimized rotating turret and, if he saw someone, he would adjust his course to move towards them and fire a potshot. When he reached close range, he would fire a lethal shot. This dasher strategy threw off the defensive gun turret philosophy of Excelsior by forcing it into its sidestepping defensive movement while Darling approached, where it was far less prepared for Darling's kill-shot than it was while stationary.

Eric Foley took third place for the third consecutive tournament, but this time with the Dragon Knight rather than with his third Orb of Doom (who, due to a gross miscalculation in thinking out his group mode, fell to sixth). Foley had observed that Excelsior regularly was mauled by the machine-gunning tactics of Skittish, and so he built a similar machine gunner for the Sixth Tournament with the same goal in mind. Seeking to make the shooting more effective, he built his own crude mechanism for leading the Dragon Knight's shots. Unfortunately, it wasn't as effective in the solo arena as the Orb of Doom's old-fashioned wall hugger tactics, but Dragon

Knight managed to take third place anyway on the basis of his yo-yo group mode, which did quite well at keeping it alive. Meanwhile, the Orb's better solo scores got offset by poor group scores, leaving it in sixth place.

In the team competition, suicidal destroyers were banned by this time, leaving Stephen Linhart's team of two Darlings to duke it out with only

leaving Stephen Eikhart's team of two Darlings to duke it out with only two competitors: Eric Foley's Jachyras and a team entered by Matt Sakai. Both the Darlings and the Jachyras crushed Sakai's team, and the Darlings managed to squeak by the Jachyras with a one-point margin in the end. The Jachyras were wanderers that had been constructed at about the time of the Third Tournament, and made use of a very effective spray that virtually ensured at least a small hit even at long range except against the fastest defensive bots. They had been a long-time favorite of Foley's, for they had faced off quite well against most of the tournament entries clear to the end of the pre-doppler age. Foley's suicidal destroyer team that had been edged out at the Fifth Tournament had been based on the Jachyras for their backup tactics once the nuclear fire was done, leaving the Jachyras marked in history as one of the great tactics that never quite managed to garner any glory.

In the titan competition, Foley's Eye of Shorshirsh (and, for those who complain of the seeming impossibility of pronouncing this last word of the name, it's "SHORE-sheersh" :) went into the fray confident of defending the crown won by the Krulockh Lord at the previous tournament. The Eye used a rather strange tactic designed to kill corner hoppers. It would sit at the midpoint between walls and fire a hellbullet that would fool the corner hoppers into dodging it, but would strike them on their way out from the wall because it was actually aimed at where they would dodge, not at the robots themselves. This tactic was interesting, but it was completely useless against the two dashers against whom it was matched in this titan round.

Doug Harris' Death Penquin was -- despite the jockeying for bragging rights going on in modern times -- the first "jerking" dasher. Using a somewhat crude (by modern dasher standards) dashing method that made no use of trigonometry, he would sprint out from the left wall at an enemy and fire a shot from point-blank range, hopping out a distance of about 60 once it fired. The algorithm was somewhat buggy, as the Penquin would

not be able to make a second dash with as much effectiveness as the first one. This appeared not to have been tested, as no robots were apparently able to survive the first one anyway that were available to Mr. Harris. However, it got the job done sufficiently well in solo combat to win the title. The Eye of Shorshirsh scored second place, doing well enough against Stephen Linhart's Big Darling and the ineffective Ulysses in solo combat to add to its group scores, which were considerably better than anyone else in the arena. However, there are no prizes for second place in the titan arena (at least there weren't then), so the Eye was merely honored for the excellent animation of its icons. (And, for some reason, is erroneously included in the basic RoboWar package as though it won, instead of Death Penquin.)

In the second (and, to date, last) little league tournament, Stephen Linhart's Lil Darling defeated the defending champion Doug Harris' Grand Wimp to win. Both the titan and little league contests were phased out after this tournament; the former was brought back at Tourney 11, and the latter has not returned.

Having collected a record of nine prizes in three consecutive tournaments, Robert Hogg apparently chose to retire after the Fifth Tournament, and has (sadly) not been seen in RoboWar since. Hogg's mark went untouched for years until the Thirteenth Tournament, when Eric Foley at last passed him with his tenth title.

## Tournament VII

After the Sixth Tournament, Eric Foley and Doug Harris temporarily decided to join Robert Hogg in retirement, leaving the tournament field apparently open for new blood. And indeed, it was new blood that won it.

At this point, the doppler register and interrupts were introduced to the game, completely changing the way it was played. The room for innovation under the new was astounding but was left largely unrealized, as simple wanderers, wall huggers, and the occasional early dasher dominated the tournament.

Paul Schmidt tied Robert Hogg's and Stephen Linhart's then-record of three victories in one tournament, taking the top two spots with Vortex and Cloak Folk's Revenge. Both were wanderers; Vortex adopted a passive defense of constantly changing directions, making him difficult to shoot at. Cloak Folk's Revenge was mostly a machine gunner, opening up with a 150-point shot in hopes of killing an enemy with a single accurate blow, then going into firing large numbers of shots before stopping and repeating the process.

Andrew Lindsey, clearly somewhat peeved by Eric Foley's Eye of Shorshirsh entry in the Sixth Tournament (who, admittedly, was modelled largely upon Lindsey's first His All Seeing Eye from way back in the Third Tournament), came out of obscurity to enter His All Seeing Eye III to the Seventh Tournament. This was a slow-moving dasher that moved in an arc in hopes of throwing off shots coming at him. In group mode, it was essentially the same keep-away corner hopper that the first His All Seeing Eye and the Eye of Shorshirsh had been. Lindsey's was the first dasher to make use of a tracking algorithm that was successful in doing so. However, the slow movement gave enemies plenty of chances to shoot at it as it came in, lessening its effectiveness enough that it only scored third place despite the field's general lack of any effective anti-dasher defense.

No titan round was held at the Seventh Tournament. In the team rounds, Team Wonderdog and Team Cloak Folk, by the same Paul Schmidt who captured the top two spots in the individual mortal rounds, took the prize. These were a wall hugger and a clone of Cloak Folk's Revenge.

## Tournament VIII

As if to fill the void left by the disappearance of some of the dominators of elder days, Jean-Francis Lechat made his first appearance at this tournament, touching off something of a revolution in RoboWar design that was of sufficient magnitude that the rest of the field couldn't even touch this guy until Tournament XI. Lechat, more than perhaps any other individual, was responsible for the tide of dasher dominance that held the

tournaments in a stranglehold for long after his debut.

Several things were hallmarks of Lechat's robots. They would all simply sit there until a shot was fired at them, not firing until fired upon. This had the effect of Lechat's bots scoring full points against each other, since aggressive scoring had not yet been introduced and survival was all that mattered. (Tim Seufert and Doug Harris with their gun turret bots arrived at this same observation, further boosting Lechat's score.) Once fired upon, they would move aside for a short distance before going into a crushing offensive mode.

The tetrahedral warriors, Delsevart and Jade, were the machines that brought dasher technology to full maturity. Using trigonometry to calibrate a light-speed approach, combined with a hop-aside defense to avoid damage to their flimsy frames while they charged their enemies, these two were virtually unstoppable in their day. Delsevart was what could be called a "glommer" -- he would jump directly onto an enemy and crush them with the collision while assuring his own survival with a constant light shield. Jade used the more conventional hop-up-and-kill mechanism. Delsevart and Jade took first and second place at this tournament.

However, largely ignored in all the hubbub about Lechat's dashers were his equally innovative group modes. Lechat hit upon a principle of group combat that revolutionized it just as surely as his dashers changed the solo arena. The "Jade Principle", as it has come to be called, holds that it is not enough to simply dodge the shots of other robots. You must also maximize the distance between yourself and them, shooting small spook shots to

keep them moving in a direction other than at yourself and actively running away from them if necessary. This principle was based upon the observation that the greatest threat to a robot was not incoming fire (though it was certainly a threat), but enemy robots that approached too closely. The hyper-defensive measures consistent with the Jade Principle effectively neutralized this threat, giving Jade the advantage in the tournaments long after Lechat's competitors had caught on to the dasher

idea itself.

Lechat also introduced the first stun-streamer, the innovative Arachnee, at this tournament. However, the corner hopper Artful Dodger edged out Arachnee for third place. Lechat perhaps never truly realized the potential of the stun-streamer paradigm, for Arachnee never evolved much past the basic proof-of-concept phase in stun-streamer evolution. It would be left to Lechat's successors to grab onto this tactic and use it more effectively.

In the team competition, Tim Seufert and Doug Harris continued their winning ways with a somewhat different but nonetheless effective strategy. Reasoning that the doppler register made defensive movement largely pointless, they each built a team of gun turrets that would fire lethal shots at all enemies. The strategy worked against the wanderers and the like that appeared at this tournament, who had rather poor defensive abilities. Doug Harris' Chlorinated Benzene Man and Woman edged out Tim Seufert's Snow Goons for first place.

## Tournament IX

The Ninth Tournament probably goes down as one of the more disappointing tournaments from an aesthetic point of view. The various authors realized the dynamic behind complete pacifism in the solo arena, and that it was essentially unstoppable within the scheme of tournament scoring then in force. As a result, the bulk of authors that got anywhere in the tournament joined the Alliance of Pacifist Scum, seeing that it was the only way to victory.

In addition, the tournament entry system was temporarily replaced with one that allowed all tourney-goers to enter up to two robots for free. This system was not repeated at subsequent tournaments.

Jean-Francis Lechat again captured first place with Jade, leaving Delsevart out of the fray in favor of entering Arachnee as his second bot. Arachnee placed third.

Jeff Lewis, combining the advantages of pacifism with the stiff shielding and passive defense of the hesitator paradigm, took second place with Horta Jr. The few robots that didn't realize the significance of pacifism were no match for either Horta Jr. or Arachnee, rendering the more effective counter-offense of Arachnee moot. It was in group combat, where Horta Jr's resilience with its shielding made it very tough to kill, where he defeated the more complex spider-bot.

In the team rounds, the pacifist machine gunner team of Superzot III and Superzot Jr. by John Abbott Jr. managed to slightly edge out the Death Bunnies by the coming-out-of-retirement Eric Foley. Unfortunately for Foley, he didn't come out of retirement in time to refamiliarize himself with the new game before the tournament as well as he had been in the old days, leaving him at somewhat less than his old tournament form.

## Tournament X

Having realized the potential boredom that would result if pacifism were not crushed by a change in the tournament scoring system that would make it pointless, David Harris implemented the aggressive scoring system for this tournament. However, there was a small loophole in it that let an old genie out of the bottle: in group mode, there were five potential kills to be had if you ensured that they all died at your hands. And thus, suicidal destroyers made their brief return.

However, enough people realized this that the suicidal destroyers weakened one another in the finals, permitting the less loophole hungry Lechat to post his third consecutive first place with Jade once more, thus

tying the record then shared by Robert Hogg, Eric Foley, and Doug Harris for three consecutive tournaments in which a RoboMaster won a title. Jade was greatly upgraded for this tournament, optimizing the principles that made his group mode so dominant in a survival-oriented arena and giving him a slow creep-up algorithm to go for the early kill before switching to the old hallmark step-aside-and-dash if he were fired upon. However, Lechat saw any hope of Delsevart reappearing vanish with the new scoring rules, since kills caused by collision did not count for points.

Always hungry to exploit the suicidal destroyer loophole whenever it appeared, Doug Harris constructed the CL79, which took the same hideously out-of-date dasher algorithm from the much older Death Penquin and ported it to a mortal shell, then combined it with a routine to nuke most of all of the arena within the first 4 or 5 chronons of combat. The obselescence of the robot's solo mode and the presence of other suicidal destroyers in the finals weakened him when it was all on the line in the end, however, and Jade passed him by for first place in the finals.

Lechat also did a little bit of more innovation and built a drone-swarmer, Carne, to take third place. The rather glaring inconsistency with which this robot was greeted flies in the face of the contemptuous disqualification and dubious honors of the first "Golden BozoBot" award for an earlier drone-swarmer, Beehive-9 (a dishonor which only been given out a second time since, to Thong Nguyen's Merlin in this same tournament). However, the effectiveness of the algorithm was actually permitted to be demonstrated this time (instead of being removed from the tournament as was Beehive), and he won third place.

In the team rounds, Colin Jaffe made his debut with the Killer DogCows, a rather amusing team that made a comical "moof" sound as they dashed in for the kill. Colin Jaffe's victory here would start his career as Lechat's successor as the pre-eminent dasher visionary.

## Tournament XI

From a perspective of opening the field to new competition, the Eleventh Tournament was both good news and bad news. The good news was that Lechat's dominance finally came to and end after three consecutive victories -- giving the game a somewhat welcome breath of fresh air. The bad news was that the successor was simply yet another dasher, making it four consecutive tournaments dominated by dashers -- making it clear that "fresh" was *very* loosely defined here.

The Eleventh Tournament had two different robots that only managed to avoid the dishonor of being the third Golden BozoBot by either the good

avoid the dishonor of being the third Golden BoZoBot by either the good graces or lack of attention from the judges. Lechat's fourth and final incarnation of Arachnee had several print statements left in its code that were not taken out before being entered to the tournament. This grievous oversight required the tournament judges to monitor the tournament constantly, since there was no timeout on these print statements. However, by far the more shameful act was the entry of Dave, a robot that was an instruction-for-instruction copy (or, to tell it like it is, theft) of the Tenth Tournament version of Jade.

Colin Jaffe cemented his place in history as Lechat's successor for dasher excellence with the introduction of SPAMbot in its various incarnations. This was essentially the tale of the tournament. The various incarnations of SPAMbot won first place at the mortal rounds, first place in the newly-reinstated titan rounds, first place in the team round, and since Jaffe was under 18 at the time, first place in the youth category. This broke Robert Hogg's, Stephen Linhart's, and Paul Schmidt's shared record for most titles at the same tournament, setting the new record at four. *(Side note: although, if you ask Colin, he doesn't really think the youth prize should count, and as such he really only considers himself to have won three prizes here and four overall thus far.)*

SPAMbot revived the strategy of the jerking dasher, pushing it to an effectiveness not seen before. SPAMbot would fire small potshots to throw off the front-end creep-up strategy of robots such as Jade (or the stolen Dave), sending them into a step-aside mode in which they were ill

prepared for the final kill shot. The final kill sequence was a hop-up-and-shoot in the same way as Jade's was, but also would hop aside afterwards to avoid a counterattack. The group mode was nowhere near as effective as Jade's hallmark, but it was well enough that the dominant solo mode that no one was prepared for carried SPAMbot to its sweeping victory.

Andrew Clinton's Defense Drone, another jerking dasher with less effectiveness, won second place. Nearly forgotten in the cacaphony of getting trod upon by the new innovations, Lechat's Jade took third place --

breaking Hogg, Foley, and Harris' shared record for consecutive winning tournaments.

## Tournament XII

Words cannot describe the gloom that had come to overtake RoboWar by the time of the Twelfth Tournament. Lechat had finally fallen (and faded into retirement after the Eleventh), but RoboWar had not really progressed by his overthrow. Dashers were still holding a death grip on the Hall of Fame, leaving many authors to forego entering this tournament out of boredom with the monotony. From this aesthetic viewpoint, it can perhaps be said that the Twelfth Tournament was the best thing ever to happen to the game.

Denys Seguret, having been frustrated in his attempts to get his defensive designs to work well enough to win him a title in the Tenth or Eleventh Tournaments, finally pulled himself up by the bootstraps and built the phenomenon known as Dialectix. Dialectix introduced the fadeaway strategy, a tactic that avoided the over-optimized dashers of the day by moving aside at great speed when they were making their approach, throwing off their final target acquisition preparations and forcing them to make a turn at high speed which their energy reserves could usually not support. This, on top of a dasher algorithm which was itself optimized to kill other dashers, made for a fairly complete anti-dasher tactic. Dialectix broke the tide of dasher dominance and won first place at this tournament.

Second place went to Andrew Clinton, who tinkered with Jaffe's SPAMbot to build the slightly upgraded S'pht'kr. S'pht'kr amounted to little more than an incremental improvement upon SPAMbot, however, and as a result Clinton was stuck in the same second place he was in at the previous tournament. (Hmmmm . . . sounds just like me getting third place three times in a row at Tourneys IV-VI . . . :)

Third place went to another bit of innovation, Merantes by the newcomer Paul Olson. Merantes employed a bit of further work upon the jerking

dasher technique, making it more robust at reacquiring and killing other robots of that type. The exact routine was quite similar to what Dialectix used in its dasher subroutine. However, Merantes was not as polished as Dialectix and had a rather buggy group mode, holding him back to third despite the new idea.

In the titan mode, a rather crushing but aesthetically disturbing event took place. Eric Foley, having come out of retirement for Tournaments IX through XI only to see rust, intermittent access to a Mac upon which he could play RoboWar, and lack of preparation for jerking dashers turn his once-great reputation for crushing RoboWar dominance into a fading memory of an old-timer who couldn't seem to cut it any more, finally snapped and went to play some serious hardball.

Determined to see dashers crushed as well as to ensure that his frustrating drought was ended, he designed a group of three robots in a horde. Each robot in the horde would recognize one another in group mode by use of some innovative probing for the look and scan registers of each other, which would be set to screwy values that would never be used for any (legitimate) strategic purpose. This recognition algorithm allowed them to combine forces to crush anything that was not one of them. The solo modes incorporated a front-end designed to meet the charge of jerking dashers on top of either a stun-streamer, machine gunner, or dasher main offense. Spreading the wealth to assure complete dominance by the horde of all angles of the group arena, he made two of the robots defensive

corner-hopping shooters and balanced it out with a machine gunner. Then he sent two copies of the stun-streamers with corner-hopper group modes, two copies of the dashers with the same, and four largely pure-bred machine gunners, resulting in a horde of eight robots with three strategies between them to divide and conquer the tournament.

The result was largely a foregone conclusion. The horde made up eight of the fifteen total robots, meaning that on average three of the horde members would be in the arena to crush the other three, who would put up no similarly organized resistance. This complete dominance of the group

arena, put together with some voluntary shutdowns to assure the inflation of the solo score of the horde's chosen champion, Nightshade, swept the titan round entirely, taking the top seven spots and eight of the top nine -- S'pht'kr Titan by Andrew Clinton squeaked past one of the horde's two dashers for eighth place to put the only chink in the horde's complete stranglehold on this tournament's titan round. Nightshade, a stun-streamer that put a number of innovations on Arachnee's original engine, took the first place prize pretty much through democratic election by his fellow horde members.

Historically speaking, this set a number of records. The sweeping of the top seven spots broke Robert Hogg's record of sweeping the top five spots of the mortal individual round at Tournament III. Perhaps more significant for the anti-dasher purists, none of the horde members that made it to the finals were dashers: the two stun-streamers and four machine-gunners were the strongest members. This resulted in the first finals round of any individual-based tournament where not a single dasher appeared since Tournament V.

Aesthetically speaking, however, this was a rather horrifying spectacle, for it amounted to buying the tournament, no matter how innovative the horde idea had been. If people were permitted to do the same thing in the future, the winner would not be who entered the best robots, but who entered the largest horde. As a result, although a fair number of aesthetes

applauded the non-dasher result, there was a great deal of distaste for the means employed (even for Foley himself, who immediately followed the entry of the horde with a request to David Harris that no one be allowed to do it twice).

The team competition was almost completely ignored at this tournament, despite the addition of a second prize for the category. (Indeed, I can't even remember who got second place, and I almost forgot to mention it in this history altogether...) Only three teams were entered, two of which won prizes. None of the teams consisted of the people who had engineered

the upheavals in the mortal and titan rounds, resulting in John Abbott Jr. and Alex Landratis winning the top two prizes with dasher teams.

## Tournament XIII

Feeling that he could no longer give the tournaments the attention and analysis that they deserved, David Harris passed off the running of the official tournaments to Eric Foley. Foley had logged the most time in the game of any active RoboMaster, and had dedicated a great deal of time and effort to put together some of the defining documents on RoboWar strategy. Foley was not rendered ineligible to enter any portions of the tournament himself (other than the subjective icon contest), a fact which allowed him to finally fully return to his former greatness in the arena.

*(Author's note, stepping out of third person narrative: I maintained, and will continue to maintain, a strict policy of not looking at any robots submitted to me for tournament purposes without the permission of the authors until after the tournament deadline and the completion of my own robots. My success at this tournament, and any future success I may enjoy, was and will not be the result of any abuse on my part of my position as the tournament operator. I have way too much self-respect for my work in this game to throw it all away by frivolous cheating. If I can't win it fair and square, I'd rather not win it at all.)*

The Thirteenth Tournament featured a vast departure from the path that the official tournaments had been following. Since the advent of Jean-Francis Lechat, the tournaments had been uniformly dominated, if not by dashers, then by robots with light armor and fast CPUs in general. The techniques that were traditionally used against dashers required the same fast CPUs that dashers themselves used. Armored robots that fought battles of attrition had not been particularly successful since the Seventh Tournament. Not only did the writing on the wall for dashers, scribed by Dialectix at the Twelfth Tournament, become even more clear at this tournament, but the high-finesse, low-armor bots also took a surprise hit -

changing the question from "can dashers be defeated" to "has RoboWar design theory come full circle"?

Finally returning to his old tournament form with a vengeance, Eric Foley posted a dominant showing here. Sensing that the winds were headed back towards the simple armored gunner machines that he had excelled with back in his college days, Foley constructed Obsidian, a hesitating semi-machine-gunner that fired a two-shot spray designed to aim both at where robots would be if they maintained a constant speed and heading, and at a second position slightly behind it in case they either hesitated or stopped along the way. Obsidian started all rounds by putting up a stiff shield that made it difficult for many robots to kill him early in a battle, a tactic borrowed from the very similar Magic Sword by Seth Zenz. Obsidian and 'Sword dominated the mortal and team rounds of the Thirteenth Tournament, sharing the first place prize in the mortal round and placing first and second in the team round (with Obsidian a short distance ahead of 'Sword). However, it was a very close battle - only 15 points out of nearly 600 seperated first from sixth place. The lightly-armored robots did not go out without a fight, as they dominated the solo rounds in the finals. However, Magic Sword and Obsidian held them off by equally dominating the group rounds, where the flimsier frames of the high-finesse machines were simply incapable of trading blows with these two armored bruisers over long periods of time.

As was mentioned before, dasher tactics failed completely to re-establish their dominance in this tournament, prompting a fair amount of belief amongst several of the active RoboMasters that they are finally destined for the history books. A certain historical irony exists, in that the one trace of dasher strategy that found its way into the Hall of Fame in this tournament came from Dialectix himself, who defended his mortal title with a respectable third place finish here.

Foley also shut the door on the doubters who believed that he could not win a titan round without the use of questionable tactics such as the horde that had won him the Twelfth Tournament. His innovative robot B-ko won

a decisive and clear first place victory. B-ko defined the "machine stunner" paradigm, combining it with a dominant group mode that doesn't look too impressive or innovative . . . until one glances at the scores after she's been in there a while and notices that she's taking off and leaving everyone else's group scores in the dust.

Foley's defending champion, Nightshade, also demonstrated that he didn't need a horde to do well, as he posted a close second place victory, catching up to Colin Jaffe's SPAMBurger after gaining only the third seed going into the finals. Colin inadvertently shot himself in the foot with his other machine, MegaSPAM, against whom SPAMBurger had no defense (but Nightshade did). MegaSPAM's long range "glommer" tactic was reminiscent of Jean-Francis Lechat's Delsevart, and caught a great many people napping. However, MegaSPAM had a glaring weakness, in that his long-range hops onto people - covering as much as half the arena without overloading at times - left him with huge energy deficits. If someone simply were prepared for it and jumped off, it usually took place when MegaSPAM could do nothing about it. B-ko and Nightshade were the only two bots that retained a defense against this, so Nightshade consistently demolished MegaSPAM. Not wishing to cripple his own robot after knowing full well that B-ko and Nightshade would do this, Colin gave SPAMBurger no such defense so that MegaSPAM would do better. Unfortunately, this was disastrous for SPAMBurger's hopes for holding off

Nightshade for the second place victory, as Nightshade was thus able to make up a lot of solo points that he lost in various other matchups in the finals, particularly against B-ko and SPAMBurger himself. Nightshade was thus able to overtake SPAMBurger and squeak by for the second place prize.

As an additional note, B-ko captured something of a unique distinction in her victory: she was the first robot in the history of the current two-tiered scoring system that measures solo and group scores seperately to score the highest solo *and* group scores in *both* the preliminary rounds and the finals of an individual tournament. This feat would not be matched until her descendant Mor did so at the titan round of the Sixteenth Tournament

her descendant Mar did so at the titan round of the Sixteenth Tournament.

Eric Foley captured a few more records here. By posting four prizes in one tournament, he tied Colin's mark for the most prizes in one tournament. Together with his previous six titles, he also finally passed Robert Hogg as the winningest RoboMaster of all time.

## Tournament XIV

The Fourteenth Tournament featured a sudden throwback to dasher days, as several of the more common anti-dasher talents took a rest, leaving a few innovative dashers to dominate the tournament in the mortal and team rounds. The titan round remained a bastion of anti-dasher machinery, however, leaving little doubt that dasher can and do get defeated despite what happened in the other rounds.

Eric Foley only put up halfway serious defenses of his titan and team titles from the Thirteenth Tournament, and Denys Seguret sat this tournament out, leaving the mortal round to a free-for-all of young blood. The various cautious dasher tactics of Paul Hansen's Automaton and the tandem of Noah Hoffman-Smith and Paul Olson's The Porcelain God ruled the day, with long-time frustrated hacker Thong Nguyen's Vigor not far back on their heels. Automaton would sit back and watch his opponent for a while before (usually) dashing in and striking, though he also incorporated more defensive tactics against other theoretical paradigms which went unrepresented in this tournament. (There was not a single stun-streamer anywhere in the Fourteenth Tournament.) The Porcelain God incorporated a two-step hop similar to Mortal Ent and Gnarled Tree by Lucas Dixon, which had gone largely unnoticed back in the Eleventh Tournament amidst the stampeding SPAMbots. These two captured the best two solo scores of the mortal round and two of the best group scores, and fought a fierce finals for the first place spot. Automaton was strong in the preliminary group rounds, where there were more brute-force machines reminiscent of the missing defending champions Obsidian and Magic Sword, but was very weak in the finals, often getting killed cleanly by all five other finalists in ways that made him almost seem embarassingly blind. However, The Porcelain God was unable to keep up

embarassingly blind. However, The Porcelain God was unable to keep up the pressure in the group rounds due to bugs in his own group mode that had him running into his own shots and smearing himself off the walls, preventing him from catching Automaton despite the latter having the weakest group score of the finalists.

In the titan round, Hansen edged out Eric Foley's prized defending champion B-ko with Plis'dkU, a robot which employs some interesting shielding techniques that make him virtually impervious to non-hellbored attrition attack while preserving a large reserve of energy for his own movement and shooting. Both machines utterly dominated the solo rounds of the tournament against all comers, with Plis'dkU doing somewhat better against the attrition machines due to his shielding while B-ko did better against the dashers (and, due to an ironic bug in Plis'dkU's emulation of B-ko's own machine-stunner tactics, she also defeats Plis'dkU himself rather handily). While B-ko came out with the slightly better solo score through to the end, Plis'dkU's group mode preserved him better against attrition attack without running low on energy, which was critical in a group arena where most of the robots emulated B-ko's tendency to assassinate robots who had gone into negative energy, a key factor in her dominance of the Thirteenth Tournament group rounds. Having been defeated with much of her own crowd control formula, B-ko failed to repeat in first place in the titan round.

Foley quietly won a wild team round with his dasher team, the third pair of Death Bunnies, repeating in the team round on a luck shot. (The first two pairs were entered at the Ninth and Eleventh Tournaments.) Due to the large influence of luck in this tournament, the runner-up dasher team of Adam Locke-Norton's Mayo Twins also were given an unplanned second place prize. The Death Bunnies achieved effectiveness by fairly quick striking and ability to switch to a new target when the first one is destroyed; the Mayo Twins won by having some of the quickest attacks in the tournament full of dashers. Foley winds up, by this stroke of utter luck, joining Colin Jaffe as the only repeat team tournament winner.

## Tournament XV

Tournament XV was woefully undermanned, but it also did have some decent innovation in it. The mortal round was the only contested round; only one titan and no teams were entered.

Alex Landraitis took a triple crown in this tournament, placing first with his unlikely-named hesitator ItWasLate&IWasTiredBot, and both third and the icon contest with the probe-sniping counter-dasher Dave Harris Saves The Day. The former used an anti-dasher front end to shore up a strafing hesitation main solo mode, while the latter dashed at its enemy and goaded them into making a kill shot, punishing them afterwards with a probe-sniping counterattack. This latter bot wound up accidentally deadlocking with another bot, Noah Hoffmann-Smith's Kilgore Trout, when the latter would shut off its firing routines in order to try to fade away and wait for a probe snipe of its own, when DHSTD would chase 'Trout all over the screen with each of them waiting indefinitely for the other to make the first move.

Nearly unnoticed due to the fact that he won by default, Christian Thalmann's Lancebot took the titan round.

The lack of participation was not the only disturbing trend of this tournament. The other was the fact that every single entry to the tournament used a 50-speed processor. There was, perhaps, no better

indication of the stranglehold dashers continue to have on the RoboWar Tournaments than this. Although not a single dasher had ever managed to win a tournament round in which there was an effective anti-dasher present, the grim fact remained that dashers were still a special case that required special-case hardware to deal with, and without it the rest of a robot's design was largely a moot point. This finally stirred Lucas Dixon and Eric Foley to take steps to modify the RoboWar engine to make dashers a bit less strangling on the hardware requirements that would be needed to kill them, by making it impossible for a robot to execute a teleport-like "move" instruction in the same chronon as it fires a weapon. This has met with mixed predictions by the RoboWar public, but it would be tested by fire in Tournament 16.

## Tournament XVI

The Sixteenth Tournament was originally scheduled to be deadlined in the middle of December of 1998, but was delayed due to several considerations. Mainly, the initial contribution of entries to the tournament was dismal. In a desperate bid to keep tournament participation from continuing its downward spiral, Eric Foley waived the tournament fees for this tournament and made functional distinctiveness the only limit upon multiple entries. With the entry fee waived, more entries streamed in from around the world and made a real competition out of it.

Alex Landraitis became the only person since Jean-Francis Lechat to repeat as the mortal champion, bringing his Half-CensoredUpgrageBot *(sic)* to repeat the first place title that his predecessor, ItWasLate&IWasTiredBot, won in the Fifteenth Tournament and demonstrate that perhaps it wasn't so much of a fluke against weak competition. In deference to Foley's observation that Arachnee, unmodified from T11, would have come within a stone's throw of actually winning the Fifteenth Tournament, many more stun-streamers appeared at this tournament than had been at previous ones, with Adam Locke-Norton using the paradigm and taking two second place prizes, bumping Nightshade and Arachnee out of their sole hold on the list of stun streamers who had won titles. John Abbott Jr., spending about as much hack time on his bot as its name indicated, managed to put a neo-dasher called 30 Minutes into third place, winning his first all-out competitive solo title after a long absence from the Hall of Fame since Tournament IX.

Eric Foley, rather than risk tarnishing the glorious name of his prized B-ko by entering it into one too many tournaments, retired the original name of his most successful creation and re-tooled the robot under the name Mar to obey the new physics (or neo-physics) of the game in the titan round. He found himself pleasantly surprised when Mar joined B-ko as the only robots to win all four scoring columns in an official solo tournament. In a distant second place, Mr. Melon, a stun-streamer by Adam Locke-Norton, joined his mortal brother Anarchy in the Hall of Fame, putting together a

three-prize tournament together with the victory of the Dave team in the team rounds.

The Sixteenth Tournament was a good shakedown of the new physics agreed upon by Lucas and Eric, successfully keeping the game innovative and opening the field to new competition. To wit, of the six titlists in the competitive categories, five completely distinct paradigms (missile-firing hesitator, stun-streamer, dasher, machine gunner, bait-and-hitter) could be recognized, with only Anarchy and his "heavy mortal" brother Mr. Melon being similar to one another. Contrary to many critics' predictions that glommers would make a dominant resurgence under a physics scheme where enemies could not move off and shoot them in the same chronon, the glommers were soundly defeated in both the mortal and titan rounds. Several new ideas appeared, a few attempts at neodashers met with modest success, but in the end the old and sound tactics of solid defense, attrition warfare, and effective crowd control in the group rounds won the day in both solo categories.

So the official tournament history stands at the time of this writing.

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