

Robotics team continues “HOT” streak with emphatic district win

by Tyler Brederntz
Managing Editor

On March 1-2, the Huron Valley Schools “HOT” (Heroes of Tomorrow) robotics team competed in the Milford District Competition and took first place out of 37 teams from around the state. Their victory secured a return to the State championship in early April and provided the team with an overwhelming boost of confidence as the competition season unfolds.

Heading into Districts, the robotics team had been working for the past two months to design and perfect their bot. In order to succeed in competition, the robot must be able to hang from chains and pick up and distribute rings into certain spots around the arena, which in turn generate musical notes. It must play notes in three separate field elements, amplify the team’s speaker, climb a chain to get onto the stage platform, and harmonize with its allied robots before the timer runs out. Three teams work together to form an “alliance” throughout the competition, and the points they earn as a group go toward their overall score.

The first day of competition started out well, as the HOT team won 15 of its 18 preliminary matches, placing them in second in the qualifiers. However, the team was experiencing some mechanical issues. “We did questionably in the first few matches,” said Milford High School senior and programmer Nathan

Forman. “Fortunately, we were able to recover.”

As the final event began, the team noticed that their helper intake mechanism was malfunctioning, and it caused them to lose the first match in a best-of-three championship. Nevertheless, with the help of their alliance members, they solved the problem quickly and drew level in the second match.

“The second win meant a lot to us as a team,” stated electrician and fellow MHS senior Evan Usitalo. “Despite the difficulties, we knew that we had a very competitive robot.”

The third match was nothing short of spectacular, as the alliance scored the most points the competition has ever seen and took home the District championship title. “[The win] was cool to me because we are starting to win a lot,” Forman remarked.

The HOT team’s success unofficially guarantees qualification for States, which take place on the first weekend of April. Until then, the members can celebrate their hard-earned victory with the comfort of knowing that their spot in the State competition championship is secured. For seniors like Usitalo, a win at States and potential success at the World Championship would be a fantastic way to cap off their time with the robotics program.

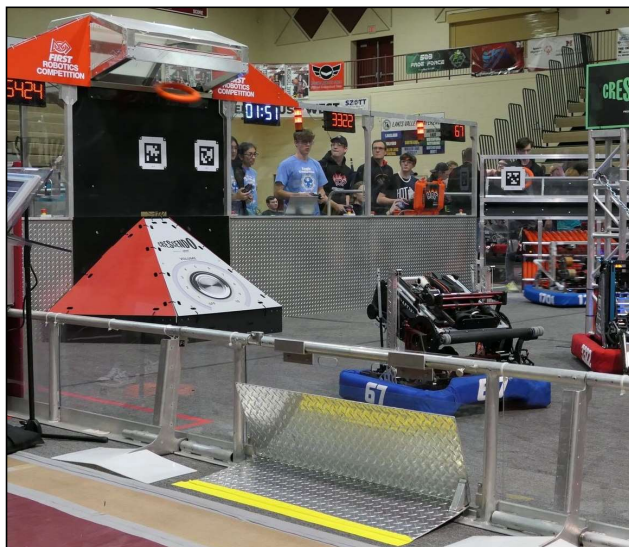
“I believe that we can go further than States,” he noted. “We have the potential to be very successful this season!” As competition progresses, the robotics team will look to keep their “HOT” streak alive.

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— Evan Usitalo, senior



Teammates from the three-team alliance (HOT, Frog Force, and the Byting Irish) pose with their robots and their first-place banners (Photos courtesy of the HOT robotics website).



The robots compete in a gated, metal arena in which they must complete tasks to earn points for their team or alliance.



The full HOT team celebrates the victory with their banner and robot.

Students prepare for new digital SAT exam

by Cate Wittman
Staff Writer

As the school year comes to an end, the looming threat of standardized testing nears—including the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).

Unlike past years, the SAT will be fully online for the class of 2025. For decades, juniors have been taking the test with paper and pencil. Now, students will only need their school-issued Chromebook.

The reason behind the decision comes down to progression and efficiency. Assistant Principal Elizabeth Suminski said, “[The] College Board was looking for a modern testing experience that is individualized to the students taking the test.” With this new format, test takers will now experi-

ence completely different tests for their level. A multitude of benefits could be seen with the new online SAT. For many, an online test could be preferred because of its seamlessly more efficient nature. Suminski continued to state, “the timing is more manageable for the average student; it is not as overwhelming.” Not to mention, the test is shorter which Suminski suspects will get positive feedback.

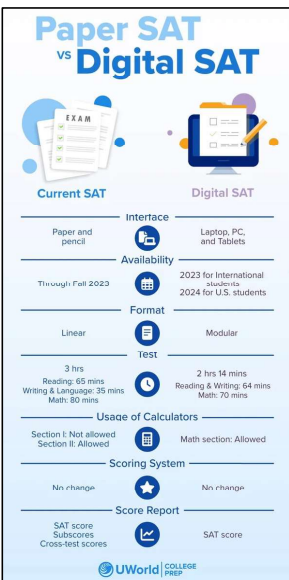
While the change has its advantages, some students have shown a distaste for the switch. Claire Zavada, a current junior who will be taking the March SAT, said she sometimes prefers taking paper tests. “Sometimes, it is harder to focus on a test when it is on a computer.”

Seniors have concerns as well. For the class of 2024, the SAT was not online, but some had the option to take other standardized, national tests on a computer; however, a portion of test takers had trouble. Victoria Adams, a senior who took the AP Language and Composition test online last year, was one of them. “I chose to take it online since it is much faster for me to type rather than write.”

After the exam, her test would not submit and was later deleted by The College Board due to a technological error. Adams had to retake the entire test on Nov. 17, more than six months after her first attempt. Furthermore, Adams wasn’t the only one. According to an article by Inside Higher Ed, around 60,000 digital exams experienced issues with AP English Literature and Composition digital exam alone.

Now that the SAT will also be online, she wonders if the testing app’s issues are fixed. “I would not be surprised if a lot of people have difficulties where tests are lost just like last year with the AP test,” she added. “I still think they are working out a bunch of issues that aren’t accounted for yet.” Hopefully, the same mistakes by The College Board will not occur after the initial test run.

Even with the potential problems, the digital SAT will be a positive for most. With online features like the highlight tool, an individualized order of questions, and a shorter test, there will be advantages. So for preparation, remember to study, charge your Chromebooks, and hope the website doesn’t crash.



SAT graph that shows the differences in the new digital SAT and the past paper-and-pencil SAT (Photo courtesy of UWorld College Prep).

How can you pass your AP exam? Follow these tips!

by Kendall Kopp
Staff Writer

With AP exams around the corner, many students are overwhelmed by the amount of information they need to study and remember. Students are paying \$100 in November with the hope of a passing score, which would potentially save them thousands of dollars in college credits in the near future. Since the stakes are so high and there is so much information needed to get a good score on the exam, many high schoolers will spend weeks studying and practicing skills. So what is the best way to ensure one remembers all the information? Well, Milford High School AP teachers have come to the rescue.

There are a variety of AP classes offered at MHS. From sciences like biology and psychology, to ELA classes like composition and literature, to social studies like geography and U.S. history, to math courses like calculus and pre-calculus, the strategies to excel on each exam may differ depending on the material.

So how should a student go about studying for the different courses? AP Pre-Calculus and AP Calculus are known to be one of the most challenging MHS has to offer. Kelly Hemmerling teaches both and is a College Board AP consultant/reader. She provided great tips for students struggling to come up with how to prepare for these exams. Hemmerling mentioned that to prepare she would recommend, “Make flashcards for important facts that are memorizable, start reviewing and studying a little bit each day right after we get back from spring break, and to utilize AP classroom to prep and enhance your review.”

Hemmerling is familiar with how the AP Calculus exams are structured, and emphasized that using prior years’ AP exams and other resources in the AP classroom would be very beneficial for students to use.

Any Prescott currently teaches AP Literature and Composition at Milford. This course is mainly focused on reading a variety of different books, poems, and novels. Prescott commented, “With my AP Lit students, I always recommend that they review our book discussion notes. These notes help prepare them

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— Emma Flynn, AP Psychology teacher

for FRQ 3 (a question where they’re asked to write about any book they want) and the notes also help students review close-reading skills, an important part of our exam.” She continued, “Like any other AP teacher, I also want my students to start preparing early instead of cramming, and, probably more than anything, I want them to get a good night of sleep the night before testing.” Prescott highlights that although tips for the specific class are important, there are also things students can do on any test to perform better like getting at least eight hours of sleep.

Marice Rogers is the AP Human Geography teacher, and started off her tips for the class with another piece of advice that could relate to any class. Rogers explained, “the first ‘Golden Rule’ of AP Human Geography is ‘be here.’ As in, attend class. That goes a long way in helping students connect to and understand the material that will be on an exam, whether it’s a unit exam or the AP exam in May.” She elaborated on the methods students can use to study for her specific class. “In a more specific sense, I supply my students with online resources (practice questions, content review videos) and access to AP prep books after spring break. The earlier they begin to practice with these materials, the better prepared they’ll be for the exam.” Since AP Human Geography is mainly taken by freshmen, Rogers gives them a bit more of a guided approach to helping them study than AP teachers with classes taken by mostly upperclassmen.

Milford’s AP Psychology teacher, Emma Flynn gave some helpful advice on how to study for her AP test in a unique way. She based most of her tips on results on psychological phenomena. In her first piece of advice, Flynn commented, “Have a growth mindset! Cognitive psychology studies show that our thoughts are incredibly powerful in not only our mental wellness and ability to handle stress, but our performance (self-fulfilling prophecies). Hefty projects, papers, and finals are not a threat, but rather a challenge that you can work to overcome.” This is from one perspective of psychology she teaches in her class.

Her next tip includes advice from a different perspective of psychology: “Quiz yourself and make connections to content as opposed to only rereading notes. The testing effect and the self-reference effect demonstrate that these strategies help you form lasting memories and a deeper understanding of the material,” she continued. “Space out your studying and make a schedule. According to the spacing effect, breaking up your studying is significantly better for your memory than cramming the night before.” You don’t necessarily need to spend more time studying to take advantage of this, instead, try to proactively schedule spread out review sessions and breaks so you can tackle the content in short bits at a time.

These can be used universally among all AP classes since they are mainly tips based on how the human brain works, but also help students remember terms specific to her AP class.

Overall, there are a variety of subjects offered in the world of AP that are difficult and time consuming to perfect before the exams. Senior Katie Shatney who has taken nine AP classes and is in the top-10 in the class ranking stated, “May can be a very stressful time for AP students, especially those who are going to take multiple exams, but if you study hard and listen to what the teachers suggest for your specific exam, it will make your life ten times easier.” All in all, with the help of Milford teachers, there are many methods and helpful bits of information to take the stressful time of prepping for the exams a little easier.