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German “Robot System Integration” Championship

The intensive preparation has paid off: Philipp Raab and Marvin Schuster secure victory and the title for MAPAL.

Philipp Raab and Marvin Schuster, both working as mechatronics technicians at MAPAL in Aalen, have accomplished a remarkable feat. The 19-year-olds were the youngest participants in the German “Robot Systems Integration” Championship. The organiser was the robot manufacturer Fanuc. The two MAPAL employees not only came out on top in the national vocational competition, they won it by a clear margin of 15 points over the runners-up in second and third place.

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MAPAL employee and robotics trainer Martin Ernsperger with the newly crowned German champions Philipp Raab and Marvin Schuster (from left). The competition took place at the Fanuc company in Neuhausen auf den Fildern. ©MAPAL

Challenging task – strong competition

Six teams, including students from the universities of Reutlingen, Heilbronn, Bochum and Aachen, competed for the first time for the title of the German “Robot Systems Integration” Championship. The task set out for the

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competition was demanding and geared to the level of international vocational competitions. The task was to set up a robot system in such a way that it independently assembles a pneumatic cylinder from four individual parts – cylinder, piston, spring and cover. This not only required a lot of specialist knowledge and precise programming skills. The participants also had to demonstrate teamwork and mental prowess because there was a tight time limit and there were a few hurdles to overcome. In addition, the teams had to plan and visualise the complete system both analogue and virtually.

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Well prepared

MAPAL had actively supported and promoted the two mechatronics technicians in the run-up to the competition. Martin Ernsperger, who works in the company's manufacturing technology and automation department, supervised the young colleagues. "We practised the technical sequences over and over again until Philipp and Marvin had it mastered", he reveals and is delighted about the "phenomenal success" of his protégés. The two seem very mature and balanced. What went through their minds when they heard about the victory? "At first we were very relieved," Philipp answers. Marvin nods and says: "It was confirmation for us that we were well prepared."

Advantages of dual training

Uwe Heßler, Head of Training and Further Education at MAPAL, is also proud of the two competitors. It shows that "dual training offers enormous advantages when it comes to acquiring craft skills". The MAPAL training team attaches great importance to providing the future specialists with the

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necessary tools. Team spirit is also important and another focus that is being pushed in training.

"We are a good team"

There were a few difficult points during the one-and-a-half-day competition, Philipp and Marvin report. "It really helped that we are a well-coordinated team and get along well." That was their greatest asset in the competition, say the two, who have known each other since their school days and have always been determined and ambitious. They were the first graduates that the company trained as mechatronics technicians, as part of a joint training programme with the Aalen-based company Alfing Kessler Sondermaschinen. The young mechatronics technicians completed their exams in the summer and were delighted to achieve distinctions. They had previously worked on a new 6-arm robot for several months. MAPAL had purchased the training cell for the training centre. Together with Martin Ernsperger and in good contact with the Aalen Technical School, the two converted the cell and adapted it to the internal production processes at MAPAL.

Ticket for Shanghai

For Philipp and Marvin, the focus is now back on everyday work after the vocational competition. They work at MAPAL in the area of production technology and are involved in an interesting automation project for machining production. This is great fun for them, explain the newly crowned German champions. With this title under their belts, Philipp and Marvin have also secured their place in the Robotics Luxskills in Luxembourg and the 2022 World Championships in Shanghai. There, the team will compete as representatives for Germany.

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