

Sunday 6 July 2003

After a bad night of fighting mosquitoes, I dragged myself out of bed to attend yet another string of talks. I had forgotten the Italian half hour, which means that no one was there at 9 AM. This gave me time for another cappuccino to try to wake up some more. The talks were interesting but partly a repetition of the day before. I enjoyed the talk on omni-directional robot vision; the robots resemble lamp shades, with a conical mirror at the top and a camera beneath so that the robot can see all 360 degrees. The talk on crisis response in Japan was also quite interesting. I asked the speaker whether the cultural problems between the emergency services that we witness in the Netherlands would in any way resemble the situation in Japan. He started laughing and looked at one of his fellow country men for confirmation and said; "They fight each other".

I walked over to the main stage to look at the Junior Dance Competition. High school kids from all over the world showed their robots dancing to a song while a jury in the front row rated their performance. A team from the USA conveyed the atmosphere in their country with a military performance. A robot from alien origin repeatedly declared "All your base are belong to us". I wondered whether the grammar of the slogan was due to the alien origin of the robot, or the US educational system. Two Japanese girls put three banners at the back of the stage, two rotating puppets in the front, and one big waving and dancing doll in the middle. They were watching nervously standing next to the banners and smiled with relief when the performance came to an end. I enjoyed the creativity and enthusiasm of the kids a lot, but unfortunately missed the Junior Award session later that afternoon.

Every once in a while I would stop by the Rescue Simulation area to check on the progress of the Dutch teams. I have to admit, they were not doing so well. The average score is around 60, but they continually scored in the low 30s. The UvA Rescue C2003 team was proud to be a little better than the BanzAI team. Over in the next area I watched a few Soccer Simulation games. It is a regular 11 to 11 soccer game, but all simulated in a virtual world. I witnessed Jelle Kok from the University of Amsterdam beat the crap out of his opponent: 25-0. At least we have one Dutch team to keep up our good name.

Arnoud arrived in the evening with the zeppelins and all our equipment. We installed ourselves in one of the big booths that we share with two Iranian teams, a Japanese team, and an American team. After a good dinner with Maurits and Stef we started setting up. Because we did not have the helium yet, to fill our zeppelins with, we limited ourselves to testing the video connection. There is a small camera mounted on our zeppelin and we set up the receiver next to the rescue arena that we have to play in tomorrow. We discovered that there is quite a lot of metal in the arena which disturbed our video signal. We experimented with different cameras and settings and eventually called it a day at 2 AM. Tomorrow is the big event. We hope the helium will be delivered in time.