

Camp Talent

Spend the summer building your skills

Compiled by Elizabeth Hannum and Michelle Ertl

What do geeks do all summer? What about aspiring actors and actresses? Or Olympic wannabes? Well, if they're smart and want to be the best geek, actor, or athlete they can be, they should check out our summer camp round-up. These aren't your basic s'mores-and-mosquitoes type camps—we'll get you up close and personal with robots, shadowing engineers, emoting on stage, or buffing up your athletic performance. Come fall, you'll be able to show off a summer well spent.

Florida International University

What: Some people never get the chance to meet an Olympic medalist during their lifetime. However, if students attend FIU's Nike Swimming and Diving Camp, they'll get the opportunity to do just that. Run by two-time swimming Olympian Noemi Zaharia, FIU's head diving coach, and members of the FIU swim team, this camp is open to boys and girls who have basic swimming or diving skills. A typical day consists of two water sessions, one in the morning that teaches new swimming and diving techniques and one in the afternoon to review the new skills and combine swim sets with fun sessions. Other important aspects of the camp include stretching exercises and learning about an athlete's diet. Students also learn what to do before a meet and the best mental preparation exercises for swimmers.

Why: With a NIKE sponsorship and Zaharia's expertise, students have the opportunity to learn new techniques and see immediate improvement in their strokes. "The goal of the camp is to improve all of the participants' strokes and to bring out their hidden talents," Zaharia says. "We also hope to inspire them to be better athletes, students, and leaders in anything they put their minds to. We keep a flexible schedule and an open mind in order to give the kids a wonderfully educational experience." —EH

When: Day campers participate from 8:30 a.m. until 4 p.m., and overnight campers stay from Monday at 8 a.m. until Friday at 4 p.m.

Cost: The overnight camp costs \$475, and the day camp is \$350.

Who: Visit www.fiusports.com/camps/index.htm for more information.

Florida Institute of Technology

What: Young students often wonder if their high goals for the future are possibly too high. But at FIT's Dream Builders Camp, any high-school-age student interested in civil engineering, architecture, or the construction industry is encouraged to follow his goal. Through a week-long program of a variety of projects, this camp helps students attain their professional dreams by building them from the ground up. Campers begin by researching a project, designing it with a group, building it, and then actually using it. One of the most talked-about projects is catapult design, where the group is given wood, a bungee cord, and some hardware. The upside is that if the project works, the students get to shoot things with their contraption. The downside for FIT is that if the project works, there are high school students armed with catapults loose on campus. Another popular project is building a boat out of cardboard and duct tape to see how many people it can hold and still float.

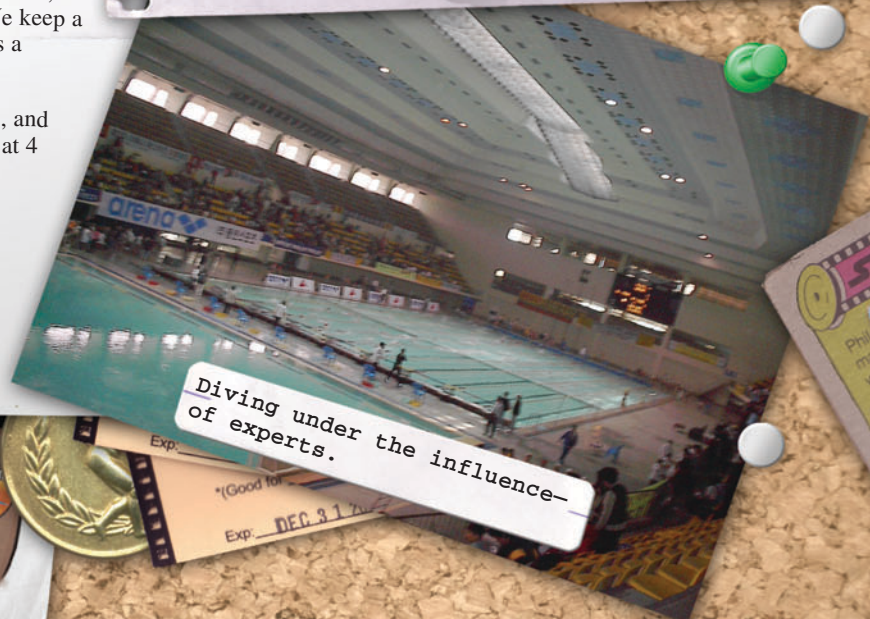
Why: "Our mission is to expose students to the field of construction, engineering, and architecture through design-building activities and projects. We want them to start thinking of it as an actual career opportunity," says Dr. Heck, associate professor in the civil engineering program. It isn't hard to think about career opportunities after building catapults, boats that float, and virtual bridges using high-tech software. —EH

When: July 18 through July 23

Cost: Day camp, which includes lunch and snacks, is \$200. Overnight camp is \$400 and includes three meals a day.

Who: Visit <http://civil.FIT.edu> or contact K.B. van Oene at 321-674-8040.

Diving under the influence of experts.



Stetson University

What: Whether students are looking to have fun and learn basic softball skills or want to take their game to the next level, Stetson's Pitching and Catching Camp for girls is right for them. Run by Stetson coaches and top-level Division I softball players, students complete drills designed to improve all their skills. Coaches show campers the hard work it takes to become a good pitcher or catcher. Each position is broken down step by step and analyzed, and players are divided by ability level and coached to meet the students' specific needs and goals. The camp consists of on-field sessions, strength and conditioning workouts, pool workouts, and an opportunity to tour Stetson's campus. The only things students need to bring are their gloves and good attitudes.

Why: Not only are the campers able to learn from the best, but they get to practice on the new state-of-the-art softball field that won the National Fastpitch Coaches Association's Best Regional Field Award last year. Along with age-appropriate attention and instruction, Stetson provides a certified athletic trainer in case of injury and an indoor facility available during rainy Florida summer afternoons. "We strive to run a safe, fun, and educational camp. We want every camper to leave a healthier, happier, and better softball player," says Tracy Riepenhoff, assistant coach. —EH

When: The camp is held during the first two weeks of June. A usual day at camp runs from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. for day campers and starts at 9 a.m. for overnight campers.

Who: Contact Riepenhoff at 386-822-7337 or triepenh@stetson.edu.



Staring Down the Batter 101:
Pitching Intangibles



University of Central Florida

What: UCF's BattleBotsIQ Robot Camp, led by BattleBots competitor and TV announcer Brett "Buzz" Dawson, teaches the fundamentals of a mechanically sound robot to help further the strategy of students who hope to one day build their own robot to compete in BattleBotsIQ. Students learn how to wire electrical systems, use 3-D design, and apply the physics principles involved in building a robot. Activities include visits from actual BattleBots and their builders, demonstrations of local high school robots, and even an arcade night. By the last day of class, students have built a 12-pound robot from scratch.

Why: The camp hopes to build interest in science, technology, engineering, and math through an exciting experience with applied robotics. While there are three other camps in the U.S. certified by BattleBots to teach robotics, this camp focuses on the actual building of a robot using state-of-the-art robot design and construction systems. On the last day of camp, the robots that have been created get to compete in task-based games. "We hope that the students gain a thirst for knowledge and understanding about the world around them," says Dawson, chief robot educator for the camp. "The things learned from applied robotics can be applied to so many different aspects of life." —EH

When: The camp is held from the middle of June through July. Classes are one week long and held from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m., running Monday through Friday. Overnight camp includes nightly activities from 5 p.m. until lights out, and students can stay in dorm rooms on campus.

Who: Visit www.robotics.engr.ucf.edu or send an e-mail to roboinfo@mail.ucf.edu.



First step, robots. Next
step, world domination!



