

# Career Tech Matters

by Dennis Franks • Feb. 14, 2020

**E**ngineering instructor Mark Johnston will tell you that Engineering is a matter of re-evaluating a process and trying to improve it.



It's apt, then, that he oversees the twice-yearly Physics 250 derby, which has gone through its own revisions in its 19-year history.

The event was created in 2001 as the Physics 500 and cars — made by students — couldn't weigh more than 500 grams. In 2016 the weight limit was reduced to 250 grams to require entrants to be smarter about how they built their cars.

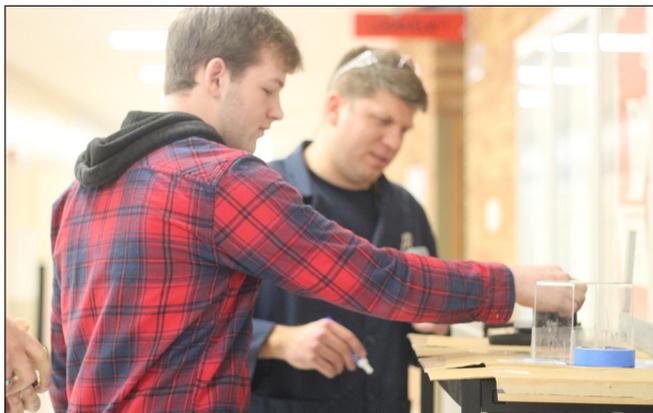
When Mark was asked to play a bigger role in the event, he thought it was a perfect fit for his program.

"I saw it as a great opportunity to tie in our Engineering design (with computer-aided design) and they would draw the body of the car on our CAD program after they sketched their initial design on paper. Then they would take that design and develop the plans so they could manufacture it.

"It makes for a great month-long project."

In addition to working with his students, he also visits other labs to encourage students in Machining, Welding and the automotive programs to enter the double-elimination contest.

At the Jan. 24 event, Blake Haislop won first, Landon Brown, second, and Casey Bethel third.



Mark Johnston weighs junior Blake Detty's car before his first heat in the derby. Blake is in the Machining program.



**TOP:** Maddy Byrum is all smiles as her car takes the win. **ABOVE, FROM LEFT:** Blake Haislop, Landon Brown, Casey Bethel and Cory Picklesimer

Cory Picklesimer's car won Best of Show. Casey is a junior in Machining and the other winners are all in Mark's program.

While Engineering students often take the trophies, Mark said that likely reflects the number of his students who enter.

He hopes that more students from other labs will take part in the March 6 race.

Commercial Food Careers instructor Kevin Krebs brought his seniors to the commons to cheer on the drivers.

The race "is an opportunity our kids get that allows kids from different labs to get together for a friendly competition," Kevin said. "And I like that the kids see teachers out there supporting them."



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