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Racing to Build Solutions to Slow Sea Level Rise

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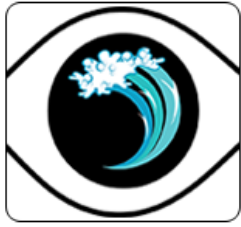


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Eyes on the Rise

Racing to Build Solutions to Slow Sea Level Rise

FEBRUARY 14, 2015 / TED GUTSCHE / 0 COMMENTS



High school students from MAST @ FIU assemble a F24/F24+ electric car that they will race at the FIA Formula E Miami ePrix School Series in downtown Miami on March 14. A dozen MAST students and journalism students from Florida International University worked on the car Saturday, Feb. 14. (All photos by Tosha Aguirre)

By Daniela Rios and Wilnette Ortega

Paul Lahoud, 14, helps his classmates carry 10 boxes full of equipment into the classroom. The boxes hold an accelerator, brakes, a steering wheel – and everything they would need to build a race car.

“Finally, we will be able to build something really big,” Lahoud said, “and we might be able to drive it before the race.”

On Saturday morning, Lahoud, along with nine other [MAST @ FIU](#) students began their assembly of an electronic race car inside a classroom in the [School of Journalism and Mass Communication](#) at Florida International University as part of an initiative to examine ways technology and innovation can slow the effects of climate change and [sea level rise in South Florida](#).



A student driver will ride on four 20-inch aluminum wheels similar to what are used on recumbent bikes. The electric cars will be able to race between 30 and 35 mph on asphalt.

As part of MAST teacher John Zoeller’s technology class, and cosponsored at FIU by eyesontherise.org – a project focused on creating journalism about sea level rise – the students will race their 7-foot-long car in the [FIA Formula E Miami ePRIX School Series](#) race in downtown Miami on March 14. Robert Zoeller, 15, – yes, he’s related to the teacher – will drive.

“I expect to win,” Robert Zoeller said. “I want to experience the atmosphere of all these electric cars being driven in the downtown area because I think it will be a very fun event.”



High School students lift the aluminum frame of their electronic race car onto a table in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Florida International University. The frame measures almost 7 feet in length and is 1.5 feet wide at the driver's seat.

Gathered around a metal table on Saturday, with their safety goggles on and drills and tools in-hand, students talked about how a race car is related to climate change: Eco-friendly cars, they said, could be ways of the future to reduce negative impacts on the environment.



The cars use five 12-volt batteries and will work together during the FIA Formula E Miami ePrix School Series in downtown Miami in March.

Students also were introduced to ways that they themselves can build solutions to environmental problems.

March's race which will have cars zooming past the American Airlines Arena and other Miami landmarks.

As part of a larger series of races — including both high school and professional racers — other cities, such as Buenos Aires, have already experienced the race while other world cities, such as Berlin and London, which have their own races later this year.



High School students from MAST @ FIU work together to begin piecing together an electronic car for the FIA Formula E Miami ePrix School Series, while journalism students as part of eyesontherise.org, a project focused on building storytelling about sea level rise, report on the progress.

COMING SOON: [A web series on sea level rise in South Florida on WPBT2](#)



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