

Robot martial arts fighters to face off in S.Korea

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This file photo shows South Korean robot (right) fighting with Japanese robot during a 'humanoid robot fight competition' in Seoul, in 2004. S.Korea is planning to stage robot taekwondo bouts, blending the country's ancient martial art with cutting edge technology, according to officials.

South Korea is planning to stage robot taekwondo bouts, blending the country's ancient martial art with cutting edge technology, officials said Tuesday.

The Taekwon Robots will face off at an international [robot](#) contest being staged by the Knowledge Economy Ministry and Gyeonggi province in October.

In bouts guaranteed to be bloodless, the robots will detect their

opponents' movements with sensors and respond according to the data.

They will fight under the same rules as human contestants -- three rounds each of three minutes, with three judges.

Taekwondo, a traditional Korean martial art, has gained worldwide popularity in recent years. It became an official Olympic event at the 2000 games.

"One of the main purposes of the contest is to promote taekwondo by displaying its movements with high-technology robots," a knowledge economy ministry official told AFP.

The robots will be less proficient than human fighters but "will improve as time goes by", Roh Sung-Su, a researcher at the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, was quoted by the Korea Times as saying.

The institute will supply the robots, which will be programmed by university students.

October's International Robot Contest will also include a variety of other competitions. More than 200 prizes worth 180 million won (147,000 dollars) will be up for grabs -- by the humans.

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