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Shawnee middle school student a semi-finalist for Sports Authority challenge

By Stephen Montemayor

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Westridge Middle School student Mitchell Haverfield, 12, of Shawnee is among 15 semi-finalists in a national competition where kids are asked to invent backyard games, fitness tracking devices and sports training equipment.

Mitchell presented his idea, the Receiver Maker, to a panel of judges Friday in Englewood, Colo. in the semi-final round of The Sports Authority Move-It Challenge.

"It was a blast," Mitchell said.

Mitchell, a seventh grader, said Receiver Maker is intended to help wide receivers improve their muscle memory and ability to catch a football. His invention is made from an index finger and thumb cut out from a wide receiver's glove. Each part slips over the top of the left or right fingers and a small slide switch is at the top of each slip. A LED light then flashes and a beep sounds when the fingers and thumbs touch together.

Mitchell and his father, Doyle Haverfield, first learned about Sports Authority's contest on Edison Nation, a website where inventors can have their ideas reviewed and presented to would-be consumers. The Haverfields were previously shopping an invention, the Quarterback Maker, on the site. The Quarterback Maker is a wristband that vibrates and plays music whenever a quarterback's thumb is pointed down during a throw, something Mitchell said is key for quarterbacks.

Mitchell is a quarterback for the Shawnee Mission West Vikings youth football team. He said his dad helped solder the materials to the wristband and gloves but "wouldn't let me use the soldering gun."

As a semi-finalist, Mitchell also received a \$500 gift card to the sporting good retailer.

After judges narrow the field down to 5 finalists, the kids will return to Colorado in May to pitch their ideas a new panel of judges. Voting will be open to the public online and the winner will be announced May 14 during a live press conference and will throw out the first pitch at a Colorado Rockies game.

The Haverfields will wait to hear from the contest's judges, who are expected to have a decision within two weeks.

"I'd be very surprised if he's not one of the four selected," Doyle Haverfield said.

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