Abstract—This paper introduces our first efforts of developing a new team for RoboCup Middle Size Competition. In our robots we have applied omni directional based mobile system with omni-directional vision system and fuzzy control algorithm to navigate robots. The control architecture of MRL middle-size robots is a three layered architecture, Planning, Sequencing, and Executing. It also uses Blackboard system to achieve coordination among agents. Moreover, the architecture should have minimum dependency on low level structure and have a uniform protocol to interact with real robot.

Keywords—Robocup, Soccer robots, Fuzzy controller, Multi agent.

I. INTRODUCTION

MRL is a research center at the Islamic Azad University of Qazvin which is mainly established based on the research activities of our RoboCup team members from 2002. MRL is also a good support for new established MSc Mechatronics Course in 2003. There are so many active research programs based on the RoboCup competition, final MSc thesis and industrial projects.

The MRL Middle size team has been started its work from Aug 2003 at this laboratory. Since last year, a few robot models are designed and built which are presented in this paper. Our team has been working for robotic competitions about two years and has gained so many valuable experiences in the field of robotics and Artificial Intelligent. Our goal is to make our robot well equipped by optimized algorithm of control, vision, path planning and playing strategies, according to the advanced mechatronics expertise.

II. MECHANICAL DESIGN

In a RoboCup competition, a robot must be prepared to accelerate in an appropriate direction, to recognize the ball and the other robots swiftly, to kick the ball with sufficient velocity, and with proper accuracy. It is evident that low weight, high acceleration, high velocity and appropriate safety factor are main parameters in designing of a RoboCup mobile robot. For achieving this purpose, optimization in selection of material is highly required for each part. [1],[2] We have designed two types of robot; 3-wheel triangle robot and 4-wheel Cartesian robot which are shown in Fig. 1.

Second type presents a new kind of mobile robot which consists of four omni wheels and a rotational kicker part. As can be seen from Fig. 3, each direction(x or y) is supported with one DC servo motor which forces the robot to move. Two omni wheels obtain their acceleration from comparative generating motors, thus each pair of wheels force robot to move in one principle direction. Result is a relevant acceleration vector that causes displacement for mobile robot. Moreover, kicking system on top of the robot can turn 360 degrees which enables the robot to optimize the path reaching the ball with required orientation for proper kick. This saves
the robot rotation time and also simplifies the control algorithm which is a significant advantage of this robot. Fig. 3. Left: Robot Navigation System; Each coupled omni wheels provide required acceleration. Relevant vector produces overall acceleration. Right: suspension system for reaching stability.

To design a robot with the mentioned abilities there are several problems which should be solved. As can be seen in Fig. 3, complicated design and instability are two main problems which are discussed in the following sections.

It is obvious that any rigid body standing on a surface with more than three contact points is unstable. To obtain stability, each wheel of the mobile robot must be supported with a suspension system which is designed and implemented for this purpose. In 4-Wheels robot the kick system is designed and implemented by Pneumatic cylinders which compress a spring mechanism. The energy stored in the spring could be released to kick the ball when is required. To provide estimated angle for shooting, all parts of the kicker part can revolve about center of the mobile robot. In Table I, some parameters for these two types of mobile robots are presented. [2],[3],[4]

<table>
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<tr>
<th>TABLE I</th>
<th>3-WHEELS AND 4-WHEELS PARAMETERS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Platform</td>
<td>Omni-Directional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum speed</td>
<td>2 m/s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Acceleration</td>
<td>4 m/s²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kicker</td>
<td>Pneumatic, with rotation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight</td>
<td>18 Kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheels &amp; Kicker Motors</td>
<td>3 Faulhaber DC 200 Watts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All items listed in Table II are used in both 3-Wheel and 4-wheeled robots.

III. HARDWARE FEATURES

A multi-layered hardware system is implemented to control our soccer player robots which are shown in Fig. 3. This control system is composed of motor drivers which are connected to a master board via a bus mechanism. ATmega128 and ATmega8535 microcontrollers are used for master and drivers accordingly. A PID controller is designed and implemented to control the motor speeds. PID's parameters are predicted by an adaptive fuzzy algorithm.[5] Our vision system is based on two cameras; camera-1 is used as an omni-vision system and camera-2 is used to recognize the vicinity of the ball to the robot, whereas an IR sensor validates the presence of the ball in the vicinity of the kicker. The motor speeds are measured and controlled by using shaft encoders, and the robot position; and speed is sensed by a special shaft encoder mechanism attached to the robot base[6]. An IBM_T41 laptop is also used for higher layer processing system such as : image processing, artificial intelligence algorithms and playing strategies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE II</th>
<th>APPARATUS IN BOTH ROBOTS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laptop</td>
<td>IBM T41 Processor 1.7GHz Centrino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camera 1</td>
<td>Levev 320x640 Pixel - 30 FPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camera 2</td>
<td>Web Cam 240 * 320 (used in kicker part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image processing</td>
<td>Omni directional vision system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sensor</td>
<td>Dummy omni directional Encoder and infra-red sensors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controller</td>
<td>Fuzzy Logic and PID controller</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV. FUZZY CONTROLLER

The fuzzy control algorithm (Fig. 4) calculates required velocities and positions of individual wheels to achieve the target by defining three parameters of the target (Xm, Ym, Øm). The fuzzy controller implementation and solving inverse kinematics of the robot are allocated to the ATmega-128 microcontroller in order to reduce the load of the main PC. [7][8].
V. COMMUNICATION

RS-232 protocol is used as an internal communication to connect Laptop to the Master board in order to pass the required data for robot movement. The communication between robots is based on wireless LAN with IEEE 802.11g protocol, as requested.

VI. SOFTWARE CONTROL ARCHITECTURE

The control architecture of MRL middle-size robots is a three layered architecture where the top layer contains techniques for autonomously creating a plan of robot tasks, the middle layer is a sequencing capability to accomplish tasks and the bottom.

Functional layer provides standard robot skills that interface to the system hardware.

The Planner creates concrete plans according to some high-level, abstract plans, where each plan includes goals to be accomplished and chronological constraints between goals. Interpreter then decomposes the goals in to subtasks, and sends commands to Skill Manager. Skill Manager executes the commands, sending data back to the interpreter so that it can observe task execution. Status information is sent back to the planner; especially when strategy of the team is changed and planner have to create plans according to the new policy.

Debugging of this system is extremely difficult because of its distributed and real time nature. It needs to have a tool that can display sensor data, world-model data and action choices. The Monitoring unit logs the run-time data produced by agent's internal processes. Supervisor collects every agent's data, then tags and stores them for visualizing and analyzing. Log Player is a tool that reads the log-files and helps developers to explore them and find individual and teamwork problems of robots.

Log Player has a variety of display tools including task-view for viewing the hierarchical decomposition of tasks and plan-view for displaying and analyzing plan execution information.

Communication is necessary to create cooperative behaviors among teammates. MRL soccer agents use a memory called the Blackboard to share information with teammates [8],[9]. Blackboard is used to share World Model memory and also issue desirable information in order to carry out relational behaviors.

VII. VISION SYSTEM

The main task of the vision system is to observe the environment around the player robot to determine direction and distance of all objects in the field (e.g. field, ball, goals ..).

Communication is necessary to create cooperative behaviors among teammates. MRL soccer agents use a memory called the Blackboard to share information with teammates [8],[9]. Blackboard is used to share World Model memory and also issue desirable information in order to carry out relational behaviors.
The shape of robot will not be shown in the mirror, because the angle of the sharp cone of mirror is designed in that way the robot can see only its environment. To process the gathered images, at first a median filter is applied in order to reduce image noises, and then the eight standard color marks will be assigned to each pixel by the Color Lookup Table. The Color Lookup Table (CLT) is filled in another program, which classifies the YUV Color Space into eight standard colors. This program takes some supervised samples from user and then learned how to recognize the standard colors and save them in CLT.

Whenever the main Image processing program loads, CLT will be loaded from a file. After color mark assigning, image segmentation algorithm will be used to distinguish all of the objects in the field and find their position with the help of their special characteristics. For example this program searches image for red color marks, to find the ball. Then the bulk of red pixels will be found. The segmentation algorithm was learned to find the center of ball from its bulk shape in image. This is done by an artificial neural network. Hence the results will be obtained straight forward and in the minimum time [9].

Obstacle detection is quite simple in this vision system; every object which its color is not neither green nor white is an obstacle and should be avoided. In order to obtain a fast position estimation algorithm, a triangulation-based algorithm was designed for Self Localization of Robot. This algorithm needs only three angles to known points (for example center point of field or corner flags) as input. As the angles in an omni-directional vision system can be estimated with very high precision using only the angles and not the distances gives a good accuracy in this algorithm. Then this estimation results will be composed by the odometric results from encoders and the exact position of robot will be found [10][11].

VIII. CONCLUSION

The modularity of the control architecture provides several benefits. The bottom-up development allows one to add functionality incrementally to the robot. Having achieved this framework we have begun to investigate of other AI disciplines. Machine learning techniques can be investigated from case-based reasoning in the planning layer to reinforcement learning in the skill layer [12]. We are going to develop a software tool by using SPADES framework [13] to simulate opponent's soccer robots.

So it will be possible to execute competitions between our real robots and the virtual opponent. Consequently it could help to improve the coordination system of the real robots.

REFERENCES