

Student a participant in 'TopCoder'

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Computer Science major Ambrose Feinstein could win \$100,000

About four years ago, Ambrose Feinstein began competing casually in computer programming contests to help sharpen his skills. Now, the senior computer science major is taking his competing to another level, competing aggressively for a large grand prize.

If Feinstein, 20, wins this grand prize at the TopCoder Invitational Tournament, he could win a possible \$100,000 from a possible \$250,000 purse. "It is possible but unlikely that I will win overall," Feinstein said. "Some of the competitors

are faster or more experienced than me, or have a broader knowledge of computer science.

"I tend to be very thorough checking my solutions but in the format TopCoder uses, time is just as significant as total problems solved, and my paranoia hurts me. Also, I program in Java for TopCoder events, which I have barely used elsewhere."

Feinstein is not new when it comes to the pressures of competing. Recently with a

team of other computer science engineers, Feinstein placed first in the 2001 Association of Computing Machinery's Southeast USA Programming Contest.

UCF sends teams to the ACM contest after students have competed locally to make the team. This year UCF brought 5 teams each composed of three students. Feinstein, along with teammates Phillip Dexheimer and Richard Russo, placed first in the competition on Oct. 20. Feinstein's team has

about 10 years experience between its members.

Following the ACM win, Feinstein will go on to show his individual computer programming skills at the TopCoder competition Nov. 2 - 3 at the Foxwood Resort Casino in Machatucket, Conn.

Feinstein said: "Being on the ACM team has been one of my most rewarding experiences at UCF. We owe this dedication and preparedness primarily to the efforts of our coaches and faculty advisor, Dr. Ali Orooji. It takes a lot of work and experience on their part to train us as well as they do."

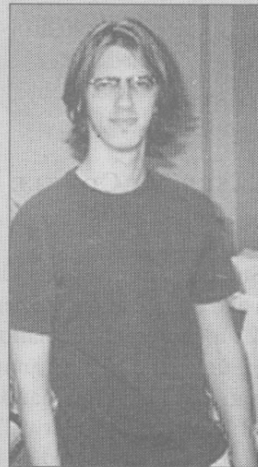
PLEASE SEE *Feinstein* ON A-5

Feinstein also a member of the winning ACM team

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While he hopes to follow a career in researching applied computer science, Feinstein says the contests do not have much affect on his future career. Instead he participates to improve skills and interact with students who have similar career goals.

Feinstein is an Orlando native and has been competing in these types of competitions since high school. In order for him to compete at TopCoders against institutions like Stanford, California Institute of Technology, Cornell, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and University of California at Berkeley, Feinstein qualified based on on-line competitions.



Feinstein