Computer teams boot up for success

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Golden Knights football may be having a tough go at it, but there's one UCF team that always finishes on top: Computer Programming. This year is no exception.

Four UCF teams blasted the competition at the 1996 Southeast Regional Programming Contest last Saturday, placing four teams in the top ten out of 56 teams competing, keeping alive a 14-year winning streak.

Competition lasted five hours and took place in the Education Building gymnasium. There were 56 separate tables in neatly spaced rows of seven, each table with a computer, a book of programming programs, and three computer programming students focused on one thing: getting a balloon.

Each team's table was adorned by a balloon for each programming problem correctly solved. Problems ranged from "Cops and Robbers" to "Halting Factor Replacement Systems." Teams scored points by not only finishing correctly, but also by finishing first.

"Each team was challenged by the same programming problems, which generally require knowledge of a junior or senior level," said Neils Lobo, associate professor of computer science.

The problem that UCF's teams finished fastest was "18,000 Seconds Remaining," in which contestants were required to write a program that would estimate the amount of time remaining in a file transfer. First-place winners were Michael Kujawa, Bryan Kline and Eric Heimburg. It took the team 22 minutes to complete the project.

The team's success at making such problems seem easy is largely due to practice, according to Dr. Ali Orooji, team faculty advisor and associate professor of computer science.

"There was commitment on everybody's part," said Orooji.

Commitments that include six to seven hours of practice each week for 10 weeks. Team members from previous years also helped out, acting as coaches during practice sessions.