

Computer team wins regional qualifier

Intrepid will face off with teams from 71 separate countries

BILL LONG
STAFF WRITER

UCF Computer Team, Intrepid, won the Southeast regional qualifier sending them to the World Computer Championships taking place this spring in Hawaii on Oct. 6.

This victory over schools from Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama and Mississippi marked the continuation of a 20 year long reign in which at least one UCF Programming team has finished in the top three at the regional level. While other schools may do well on any given year, no other school has come close to a winning streak as dominating as this 20 year record. Other UCF teams — Excelsior, Constitution, Stargazer and Pickup — also placed at the competition.

At the World Finals, Intrepid will face off against 60 top finishers from around the world. The championships are the culmination of a contest that draws 3000 teams from 71 separate countries. At the world championships, Intrepid will face teams from MIT and

Stanford as well as top finishers from Russia and Germany. UCF has finished as high as second in the world, and considering the fact that this is out of several thousand teams, that puts UCF in the top 1 percent of the world.

In this year's regional competition, UCF entered five teams into the 77-team competition. Three of these teams finished in the top ten, and all five finished better than the University of Florida's highest placing team.

The top finishing team Intrepid was made up of three individuals; Ambrose Feinstein, Phillip Dexheimer and Richard Russo. While they are all veterans to the competition, they had never been on the same team.

The contest is judged on the speed and accuracy with which each the three-man team can answer a series of eight to ten questions over a five-hour period. The problems consist of mathematical challenges and practical applications that must be applied to given situations through a computer program.

Dr. Ali Orooji, Associate Professor in the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, has been the advisor for the UCF Programming teams since 1989 and feels that this year's team is one of the best UCF has offered.

To give an idea of the amount of time required to reach this level of suc-

cess, he gave a detailed account of their practice regiment. "It takes a lot of time. We practice 20 Saturdays a year, and each Saturday is seven hours. So we start with one hour of lecture, every week covering different topics, and then a five hour contest simulation and a one hour follow up discussion." He added, "I know that the students enjoy it

because they come back year after year"

According to Orooji, the main reason for the teams success "...is really because of good students, that's the main factor, and it has given a lot of publicity and recognition to UCF in our region and worldwide. Other universities know about us."