Competition Strategies

Martin (Veg) Tran
Pre-contest
Pre-contest (before Saturday)

● Make sure you’re signed up!
  ○ Double check your EventBrite tickets and make sure the teams are also correct

● Make/find yourself a code book of common algorithms & math formulas
  ○ Wen’s very detailed codebook can be found on our website

● Have an easily accessible copy of any editor configs you might have
Pre-contest (day of CCPC)

- Use the lunch hour before the start to setup your dev environment
- Print all your resources so everything is ready when the clock hits 1:00pm
  - Remember: NO ELECTRONIC RESOURCES ALLOWED!
  - Printing is unlimited so print as much as you need
- Coordinate how your team will split up problems
  - Know the strengths & weaknesses of each member
The First Few Minutes

- Write down the expected difficulty & algorithm / type of question for each problem
  - Use this to quickly decide how to split the problems among yourselves
- Solve the easy problems ASAP to reduce your time penalties
- It is usually better to work on separate problems at first rather than trying to collaborate
Solving a Problem

- Psuedocode your solutions on paper before typing it up
- Make your own test cases before submitting
  - The sample inputs almost *never* show the hidden edge cases!
- If you get it wrong, print out your code and let another teammate use the computer
  - Don’t try to debug on the computer - just step back and manually run through your algorithm
After the First Few Problems

- Harder problems typically need more specialized algorithms
- This is when it might be a better idea to brainstorm with the whole team
- Check the leaderboards to see what else people have solved
  - There’s no shame in doing this - it is often very useful for catching up
As the End Nears...

- If you’re stuck in a problem and there’s only a few minutes left, just submit!
  
  - There’s no penalty if you don’t get a problem
  
  - It’s *always* better to solve a problem with 100 wrong answers than to not solve it at all

- Don’t give up!
  
  - Some problems might be *very* quick to code when you see the trick
Good Luck, Have Fun!
Today's Practice Contest

http://psc.cpsc.ucalgary.ca/practice/2018-03-14/

Username: CalgaryX

Password: teamX

Pick \(-1 < x < 11\)

Tell me if you want a cooler name