

Torrey Pines 9th grader passes Computer Science AP Exam, skips high school class

By Vic Wintriss

When Sean Kemper tried to enroll in the Torrey Pines Computer Science Advanced Placement class, he was informed that, as a freshman, he was not eligible to take the course. Torrey Pines High School policy does not permit freshmen to take advanced placement courses. The Computer Science AP exam is given each year in Java, a popular, Object-Oriented computer programming language that Sean had been learning at Wintriss Technical Schools, in Carmel Valley. He felt confident that since he had been studying the language for two years, he was prepared to take the exam without taking the formal high school class. Sean signed up for the May exam and recently learned that he had passed with a score of 4 out of 5, sufficient to qualify for college credit. "It was easy," Sean said.

Sean, along with his brother Ryan and friend Matt Allen, have been attending WTS learning to write fun game programs such as Tic-Tac-Toe, Pong and Asteroids and controlling robots from teacher Stanley Kurdziel, who works as a Java programmer

for Leap Wireless in San Diego and is a volunteer teacher at WTS. "I knew he would pass the test," Stanley said.

The trio, calling themselves Team Squirrel, recently won second place in the International Autonomous Robot Contest, held at the Del Mar Fair. They put to use all their classroom learning to program, in Java, a Sun Microsystems SPOT controller to autonomously guide a Roomba vacuum cleaner through a maze and race against other robots through an obstacle course. Sean's brother Ryan is planning on taking the Computer Science AP exam this year, in the seventh grade.

Wintriss Technical Schools offers after school and weekend classes in Java to kids starting in the fifth grade teaching Java in a unique, kid-appropriate, fun-filled way.

