# Getting Started in Topcoder

Yesterday, I gave my first SRM (Single Round Match) in Topcoder. It was a nice experience. Topcoder platform differs from the rest platforms available. While the other platforms contests rate as per the number of successful submissions, Topcoder rates not only your successful submissions, but also your ability to find mistakes in the code of fellow coders. So i would like to share the information about getting started in topcoder in this article.

To participate in SRM, first you have to get started in topcoder. Then you can view the Calender for the information about the upcoming SRMs. To solve problems in topcoder, you have to download TopCoder arena. Along with it, you can download many plugins for it but most important plugin is KawigiEdit. Download it from here. Save the arena and this plugin in a common directory. Once you open the arena, it may look like this.

On this, click Options->Editor. In the opened window, click add.
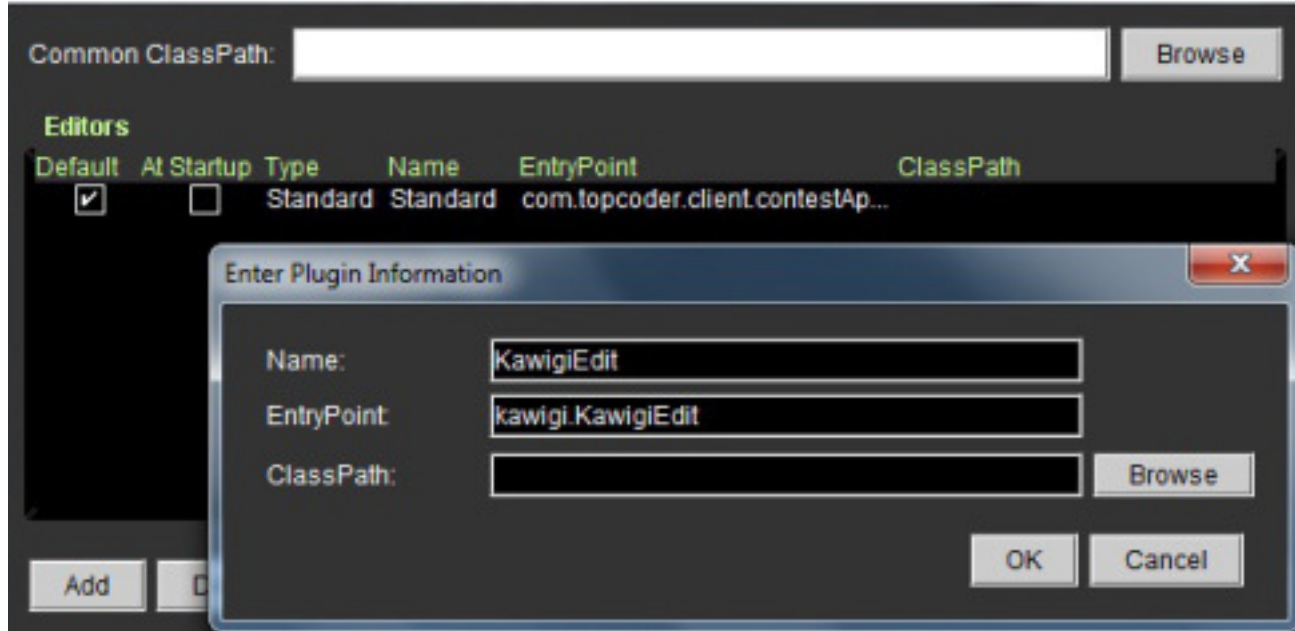
Fill the details of Name and Entrypoint as mentioned above. In the ClassPath, browse to the kawigiedit jar file and click ok. Then choose it as the default editor and click save. It should say "Local Plugins were saved Successfully". Congrats. Now you are ready for solving problems in it. Click practice rooms -> SRMs and choose a room. If you are well versed with programming, then you can go with division one but if you are a newbie, you should go to Div 2 rooms. Unlike other platforms, topcoder expects you to write the program inside a public function of a class which returns the correct answer. Try one Div2 250 pointer problem.

If you finish coding for the problem, you should compile the code by clicking the compile button. Then you can do testing on the code and at last you should click submit. If you submit your correct code fast, you should get something close to 250. else, it will be far far less than that.

Now, for SRMs, you have to individually register for each contests. Registration opens 3 hours before the contest and closes 5 minutes before the contest. You may register and not solve any of the problem but if you open any problem and you skip the contest then rating will take a toll. First phase is coding phase where you code. After it, you have 5 minutes intermission and then comes the challenge phase. In this phase, you check the codes of people assigned in your room and if you spot any error in their code, you can reveal it by trying a random testcase in it. If the challenge succeeds, you receive 50 points else you will lose 25 points. Then comes the system testing phase.

If your code to a problem fail this phase, you will lose all your points you gained for that problem. After system phase, you will be asked to logoff and log in again to see your new rating in the arena. After this, Rejoice! You are now a rated member! Practice hard for next SRM and make sure you improve time by time.

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