Thank you for joining us at the 2007 TopCoder® Open, Sponsored by AOL. We're very excited to bring this tournament back to Las Vegas. This is our second tournament in this city and we're looking forward to another great year, with more fun, more excitement, and our biggest—and most diverse—competition to date.

How diverse is it? We've got members attending this year’s competition from 25 countries, on six continents. From Indonesia to Brazil, from Norway to South Africa, this year’s competitors have risen to the top in what is truly a global pursuit.

The 2007 TCO also represents the widest range of competitions we've ever featured. With long-form Marathon Matches and creative Studio Design Competitions added to the mix, we're giving our members new avenues to ... Based on the speed and skill with which people have embraced these new competitions, I'm anxious to see them play out.

I'd like to thank our sponsors and event patrons for helping to make this great event happen. This is the second major tournament we've done with AOL as a title sponsor, and it's been a great partnership. I'd also like to thank the NSA, UBS, DRW Trading, and VeriSign for their support. Their energy and enthusiasm adds a lot to this event.

Finally, I'd like to thank all of the TopCoder staff, as well as the members who help support our competitions. None of this would be possible without the help of dozens of talented and hard-working people, all over the world. I consider myself lucky to be able to work with them.

Welcome to the 2007 TopCoder Open finals. Please enjoy the competition, and all that this great city has to offer. Good luck!

Jack Hughes
Founder, TopCoder, Inc.
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Schedule

Tuesday, June 26, 2007
7:00pm - 9:00pm Welcome Reception

Wednesday, June 27, 2007
9:00am - 11:00am Algorithm Semifinal Room 1
9:00am - 6:00pm Marathon Match Finals
10:00am - 11:00am Developer Forum
11:00am - 12:00pm UBS Presentation
12:00pm - 1:00pm Lunch
1:00pm - 2:00pm VeriSign Presentation
2:00pm - 3:00pm Developer Forum
1:00pm - 2:30pm Component Design & Development 1
3:00pm - 4:00pm NSA Presentation
4:00pm - 6:00pm Algorithm Semifinal Room 2
6:30pm - 10:00pm TopCoder Evening Event

Thursday, June 28, 2007
9:00am - 11:00am Algorithm Semifinal Room 3
9:00am - 6:00pm Studio Graphic Design Finals
11:00am - Noon DRW Presentation
Noon - 1:00pm Lunch
1:00pm - 2:30pm Component Design & Development 2
4:00pm - 6:00pm Algorithm Wildcard Round
6:30pm - 10:00pm AOL Evening Event

Friday, June 29, 2007
9:00am - 10:30am Component Design & Development Appeals Final
11:00am - Noon AOL Presentation
Noon - 1:00pm Lunch
1:30pm - 3:30pm Algorithm Championship Round
3:30pm - 4:30pm Champion Announcements and Awards Ceremony
7:00pm - 9:00pm Closing Reception
Component Design

TopCoder Design Competitions require participants to design a software component. Starting from a requirements specification, they produce a full set of design documentation: UML class, sequence, and use case diagrams, and a component specification document which contains algorithm descriptions, exception handling, and documentation.

What are We Watching?

Component Competition

Each competitor’s submission goes through a review process that includes an initial screening and, if the submission passes screening, a full review by a three person Review Board. The competitors have a chance to appeal their review scores and, once all appeals are answered, the winner of the competition is announced. After the winner fixes any remaining problems with their submission, the competition ends and the design is prepared to become the basis for a future development competition.

All design and review work of the TopCoder Open Design Finals took place online. At the onsite event, the competitors will first see their review scorecards and the appeals phase will take place.

Component Development

TopCoder Development Competitions require participants to implement a previously designed software component. Their starting point is the winning design submission, which includes UML class, sequence, and use case diagrams, and a component specification document, which contains algorithm descriptions, exception handling, and documentation. They are required to provide a full implementation of the design, as well as a full suite of unit tests for their implementation and documentation.

Each competitor’s submission goes through a review process that includes an initial screening and, if the submission passes screening, a full review by a three person Review Board. The competitors have a chance to appeal their review scores and, once all appeals are answered, the winner of the competition is announced. After the winner fixes any remaining problems with their submission, the competition ends and the implementation becomes a part of the TopCoder software catalog.

All implementation and review work of the TopCoder Open Development Finals took place online. At the onsite event, the competitors will first see their review scorecards and the appeals phase will take place.

The Scoreboard during the Appeals Phase: Each column represents the score from that reviewer, with the last column being the average. If the score is yellow, there is a pending appeal. If it is green, the last appeal was successful. If it is red, the last appeal was unsuccessful. Below each score is a line with “P: x S: x F: x”, indicating the number of pending, successful, and failed appeals.

The Scoreboard showing Final Component Results: Each pair of columns is the final score for the component and the coder’s wager on that component. Underneath the score for each component is the place that they got within that component. The last column is the total wagered points earned.

During the onsite design and development finals, the competitors will be asked to perform appeals on three components they worked on during the three online final rounds. Before each of the three appeal rounds, they will wager points on the component for the round. The number of points they will receive for that round will equal the points wagered, divided by their placement in the component. The Design and Development competitors with the most points after all three projects have finished appeals will be the winners of the 2007 TopCoder Open Component Competitions.
Piotr Paweska

Hometown: I currently live in Toronto, Canada but I have lived in many countries: Poland, Iraq, Jordan, Austria, Cyprus. I am to a great extent from all those cities.

Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Well you must try it all! But the hot dog vendors are a good quick fix with sausages in a variety that beats Toronto.

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: I never aspired to be a programmer and always thought that I will be a professional musician. My dad introduced me to computers when I was in my early teens and I liked it. Ultimately it was easier to get a job doing computer stuff than music so I gave computers a serious try. The best thing that I learned when I was about 14 was how to code some time slicing algorithms (via interrupts) so that a single processor with no thread support (hey it was like Sinclair QL with a Motorola 68008 chip) could show me the current time in a quasi-window while I was doing other stuff... Wow, I was amazed, and yet now it’s nothing times change eh?

Ben Lund

Hometown: Cincinnati, Ohio

Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: The local dish is Cincinnati style chili, which is spaghetti with spiced ground beef, and optionally beans and onions.

Favorite Hometown Season: April and May, 60-80°F on average.

Best Thing About My Hometown: My favorite thing about Cincinnati is that there are several large parks in the city. It’s way to get to a good sized forest from the city center.

Keren Dong

Hometown: Beijing, China

Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Beijing Roast Duck

Famous Hometown Person: Beijing has been the capital of China for a long long time; so many emperors were born and lived here.

Favorite Hometown Season: The autumn and the average temperature is about 20 degrees centigrade.

Best Thing About My Hometown: As the capital of China for about one thousand years, Beijing has precious culture treasures.

Michael Paweska

Hometown: Toronto, Ontario but born in Wroclaw, Poland.

Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Toronto has a rich variety of international food. I would say to try them all. That’s what I have been doing for a while, and my list is still long. All the food is good.

Famous Hometown Person: I could not really name anyone in particular.

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: I got my bachelor degree from the Computer Science department of Tsinghua University which is one of the best universities in China, so I just feel good when learning knowledge of programming, and there are many aspiring talents in my classroom, here should be the best place to grow up to be a programmer in China.
Rostyslav Slipetskyy

Hometown: I am from Uzhgorod, which is a town in Western Ukraine. However, now I study and live in Kyiv.

Famous Hometown Person: Many famous people were born in Kyiv: Yuri Dolgoruki, the founder of Moscow; Igor Sikorsky, inventor of helicopter; Mike Javorsky, actress; Vladimir Horowitz, pianist; Mikhail Bulgakov, writer; Golda Meir, former prime minister of Israel; Oleg Blokhin, famous striker and the soccer coach who lead the Ukrainian national team to world cup’s quarterfinals in 2006.

Favorite Hometown Season: It’s June-July-August, when it is already not so cold to go hiking with tents and swim in the mountain rivers. Average temperature is +23-27 Celsius.

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: I had no programming experience at home. I started with programming when I went to Kyiv to college.

Sergey Kalinichenko

Hometown: Kyiv (AKA Kiev), the capital city of Ukraine

Famous Hometown Person: Many famous people were born in Kiev: Yuri Dolgoruki, the founder of Moscow; Igor Sikorsky, inventor of helicopter; Mike Javorsky, actress; Vladimir Horowitz, pianist; Mikhail Bulgakov, writer; Golda Meir, former prime minister of Israel; Oleg Blokhin, famous striker and the soccer coach who lead the Ukrainian national team to world cup’s quarterfinals in 2006.

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Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: I had no programming experience at home. I started with programming when I went to Kyiv to college.

Tim Roberts

Hometown: Cary, NC

Favorite Hometown Season: Spring. About 72 degrees Fahrenheit

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: When I grew up Altair, TRS80s and later Apples were just being created. My dad was a professor at Purdue so I had exposure growing up through my dad and what he brought home (mainly a paper terminal access to a DEC).

Patrick Coleman

Hometown: Adelaide, South Australia

Favorite Hometown Season: Autumn. When most trees go brown / red. Average temperature is about 20 Celsius (70 for those still using Fahrenheit)

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: Programming isn’t taught at high school - the only coders are those who teach themselves above the usual workload. At university, there are some courses though general IT is more popular, the number of people who do algorithm contests for fun is unfortunately quite small. But we’re working on it...
Nanda Firdausi Muhammad

Hometown: Bandung, Indonesia
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Lalapan, it’s mixed vegetables just like a salad but without any delicacy.
Famous Hometown Person: None... I guess nobody.
Favorite Hometown Season: Jan or Feb, the Spring Festival. About twenty degrees.
Best Thing About My Hometown: It is a quite peaceful town.
Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: Just as magicpig said: make everything perfect. It is impossible in some way, but I have tried.

Feng He

Hometown: Qinghai Hainan, China
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Seafood
Famous Hometown Person: None so far as I know. One day may be me if I win and am champion.
Favorite Hometown Season: Chinese New Year holiday, it’s usually in February. It’s the most southern place in China, so the weather is always warm, more than 24 degrees.
Best Thing About My Hometown: Nice landscape and weather, living there is very comfortable.
Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: I’m the lucky one who came into contact with computer and internet at the year of 1996, which is quite early comparing with other Chinese youths with the same age like me. Before most of my friends knew what the computer was like, I had aimed to be a good programmer. I learned everything myself from the beginning to now and never had any programming course.

Carl Nettelblad

Hometown: Uppsala, 70 or so km north of Stockholm
Famous Hometown Person: Uppsala is the oldest Swedish university, which means that there are quite a lot of historical figures and scientists who have lived here, like Carl Linnaeus, Anders Celsius (you know, the temperature unit...), Anders Noström (giving rise to the unit “Å” = 10^-10 meters). The second secretary-general of the UN, Dag Hammarskjöld, also spent most of his youth and adolescence here.
Best Thing About My Hometown: Everything is within the range of biking... at least if you’re somewhat generous in the definition of biking distance.
Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: I’ve never really learned about programming through courses. Of course, they’ve sometimes honed my skills (mostly in university), but my development as a developer and a coder was a quite solitary task. I met no one at my own level before high school, and as an anecdote I was the teacher, rather than a student, in the elective offered in C++ programming there...
Thirukumara Shunmuganathan

**Hometown:** I am from Tirunelveli, TamilNadu, India.

**Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try:** South Indian dishes must be tried. They are really delicious and mouth watering. Especially, the dish Halwa must be tried.

**Famous Hometown Person:** APJ Abdul Kalam, the President of India. Vishwanathan Anand, the Grand Master of Chess.

**Favorite Hometown Season:** November to January would be the favorite time. The average temperature would be around 20 degrees.

**Best Thing About My Hometown:** Education is given more importance; the city is also called as Southern Oxford of India.

Wolfgang Ebner

**Hometown:** Perg, Austria, a small town in upper Austria with approximately 7000 residents.

**Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try:** Of course a “Viennese Schnitzel”.

**Famous Hometown Person:** AKJ Abdul Kalam, the President of India. Vishwanathan Anand, the Grand Master of Chess.

**Favorite Hometown Season:** Winter, 5 degrees Celsius.

**Best Thing About My Hometown:** It’s very quiet here. I like the silence.

**Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown:** I’m an autodidact. I started programming with my brother on a Commodore 64. There were no other programmers in town and so we learned all by ourselves.

**Review Board**

**Design Reviewers**
Highly rated and experienced TopCoder members fill the ranks of the Architecture Design Review Board. These members screen and review all design submissions to ensure the components meet the functional requirements, are documented properly and contain the appropriate sequence, use and case diagrams. Additionally, the Architecture Design Review Board recommends design enhancements and verifies that the design is flexible enough to be reused and customizable in the future.

**Development Reviewers**
TopCoder utilizes past component development winners and accomplished TopCoder competitors to staff the Development Review Board. These reviewers verify that each submission meets the required functionality, coding style, adheres to the component design and contains a suitable test suite. Furthermore, to certify that the component belongs in the TopCoder catalog, the Development Review Board adds a suite of test cases including stress, accuracy and failure cases to the component.
DEVELOPER FORUMS
All finalists and spectators are welcome to participate in the interactive discussions. Learn about TopCoder’s real world experience in the following areas:

Wednesday, June 27  10:00 AM
Security in Group Developed Software
One critical challenge IT management faces as it adapts to an increasingly global workforce is how to protect its company’s proprietary information from being copied or exploited. As system information is distributed across a global workforce, it becomes much more difficult to manage and secure this proprietary intellectual property.

The apparent risk this poses to a company’s most sensitive systems has created a perception of risk, causing many traditional IT organizations to avoid a strategy using a distributed global workforce for anything beyond run rate development. This hesitation prevents IT organizations from fully benefiting from the proven advantages of globalization.

This discussion will explore how the TopCoder Software Development Methodology protects sensitive client information at each phase of its unique software engineering process.

Wednesday, June 27  2:00 PM
The Power of Communities—And Its Future!
Communities can hold enormous power and exert significant influence — far more so than any one individual — if, managed and channeled correctly. We will examine the concept, and reality, of Community Power - looking at the sources and structures that influence the creation and growth of communities, strengths and weaknesses of communities, how to manage/channel this community power towards producing value, and the future of communities. And wrap this around, of course, how companies will, and currently do, benefit from the every expanding power and influence of the TopCoder community.

Where Intelligence Goes to Work
It’s about solving the toughest challenges. Taking the path never traveled. Using your intelligence and imagination to impact the world.

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**What are We Watching?**

**Algorithm Competition**

TopCoder Algorithm Competitions are fast-paced contests designed to find and reward the fastest and most accurate coder. Each round is broken into three main parts: the Coding Phase, the Challenge Phase, and the System Testing Phase.

The Coding Phase tasks competitors with solving 3 problems of increasing difficulty in 85 minutes. Their knowledge of algorithms, programming language proficiency, and problem solving skills are tested in a high pressure environment where each second spent coding results in a lower score. Problems this year have included parsing equations in polish notation, calculating optimal voting strategies for political parties, avoiding defects in chip placement, determining the failure point of containers under pressure. After finishing the Coding Phase, the coders have an opportunity to compete head-to-head in the Challenge Phase.

During the Challenge Phase coders can submit inputs that attempt to “break” another coder’s submission. Coders analyze the code for each submission looking for potential bugs. Once they believe they’ve found a mistake they must craft a set of inputs that will cause the submission to fail. If the challenged program returns a wrong result, the challenger gets 50 points and the defendant’s score for that submission becomes zero. If the returned result is correct, the challenger loses 25 points.

Once the Challenge Phase is over coders wait in suspense while a series of System Tests run on each program. The System Tests determine if a solution is correct or not. If a solution fails on of the system test cases, it is re-scored to zero. Once the System Tests are finished the results are displayed on the Arena scoreboard and the winners are declared.

The 48 semi-finalists represent the best of the best in a record setting field of participants. More than 1800 coders qualified for the 2007 TopCoder Open. Each semi-finalist had to compete for a spot in the finals: 100 minutes of competition that determine who will be the champion of the 2007 TCO Algorithm Competition.

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Alexandr Bikbaev

Hometown: Ekaterinburg (before 1990 named Sverdlovsk)
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Stewed aubergines with cheese
Famous Hometown Person: Yuri Prilukov, Pavel Datsyuk, Boris Yeltsin.
Favorite Hometown Season: Autumn; average temperature about 15 centigrade degrees.
Best Thing About My Hometown: All other cities seem to be clean.
Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: If you want to be programmer, you must to study almost everything by yourself, because here are not many cool people or good courses in university or somewhere else.

TianCheng Lou

Hometown: Beijing, China.
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Jiaozi and zhongzi, which is the most popular Chinese food.
Famous Hometown Person: None.
Favorite Hometown Season: Summer; average temperature about 10 centigrade degrees.
Best Thing About My Hometown: Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: In this city, if you want to be programmer, you must to study almost everything yourself, because here are not many cool people or good courses in university or somewhere else.

Andrey Lazarev

Hometown: Saratov
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Russian food: red-beet soup, pelmeni (Russian ravioli), lapjacks.
Famous Hometown Person: Yuri Gagarin, Nikolai Chernyshevsky, Roman Abramovich.
Favorite Hometown Season: Summer; +25 degrees.
Best Thing About My Hometown: Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: When I was starting Saratov didn’t even have computer science faculty in the University. Nowadays, things are much better. The University has very good computer science courses. Two IT companies with world-known names have branches in Saratov. And more and more often people from Saratov take prizes on programming competitions like TopCoder, ICPC, TTB.

Andrey Stankevich

Hometown: St Petersburg, Russia
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: I would recommend traditional Russian food, like “bliny” - pancakes, various soups, and meat-based dishes.
Famous Hometown Person: None.
Favorite Hometown Season: I prefer summer. Average temperature... well, about 20 degrees Celsius, but “volatility” is very high.
Best Thing About My Hometown: Our city is big on one side, but it is smaller and much less crowded than Moscow. I like such big but not busy towns.
Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: St Petersburg is a big city, on there are a lot of clubs, additional education centers, etc. However in schools in Russia computer science still has unattainable program, and those who would like learn programming and computer science need to look for some alternative ways to do it.

Andrewzta

Hometown: Ekaterinburg (before 1990 named Sverdlovsk)
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Stewed aubergines with cheese
Famous Hometown Person: Yuri Prilukov, Pavel Datsyuk, Boris Yeltsin.
Favorite Hometown Season: Summer; average temperature about 10 centigrade degrees.
Best Thing About My Hometown: The most important thing about my hometown is that it is always clean, and you can breathe fresh air.
Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: If you want to be a programmer, you must study everything by yourself, because there are not many cool people or good courses in university or somewhere else.

Andrey Stankevich
Jin Ho Kim

Hometown: Seoul, Korea
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Bulgogi, Kimchi, and also... Noodles.
Famous Hometown Person: Andriy Shevchenko (one of the best soccer players), Milla Jovovich (actress) and Mikhail Bulgakov (writer) are from Kiev.
Favorite Hometown Season: I like summer, despite temperatures of above 30 degrees at that time.
Best Thing About My Hometown: I don't know... It's a boring hometown. :(
Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: Many people in my hometown have negative idea about programming. Especially, there are only 2 subjects about algorithm in my university. I think if there are more subjects about algorithm, programmers will increase.

Oleksandr Grushetskyy

Hometown: Kiev, Ukraine
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Borsh, vareniki, salo
Famous Hometown Person: Andriy Shevchenko (one of the best soccer players), Milla Jovovich (actress) and Mikhail Bulgakov (writer) are from Kiev.
Favorite Hometown Season: May - when everything is green. Kiev is especially beautiful when chestnut trees and lilac are blooming. The average temperature then is about 22 degrees C.
Best Thing About My Hometown: That you can always be proud of the beauty of your home city, and be happy to invite friends from the other countries to visit it knowing that they will like it.
Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: When I was studying, Computer Science only started to be popular in Ukraine, and Internet only started to appear there, so it was not that easy to get advanced knowledge and prepare for programming competitions. But now there are plenty of resources and places to study.

Bruce Merry

Hometown: Cape Town, South Africa
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Everything.
Famous Hometown Person: Yes.
Favorite Hometown Season: Early summer, when the temperature is about 27C.
Best Thing About My Hometown: The beautiful environment.
Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: I was always interested in programming from a young age, and was encouraged at school and university. It wasn’t until I started participating in Olympiads that I met other programmers with the same passion, though.

Marcin Michalski

Hometown: Gdynia - the city in northern Poland.
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Some of the best Polish food, and the best pizza I’ve ever eaten in one of the restaurants.
Famous Hometown Person: My town is quite young (it has only 80 years), so I don’t know anyone “world” famous from there.
Favorite Hometown Season: Of course summer. My town is by the sea, so when the weather is fine you can go swimming or lie on the sandy beach.
Best Thing About My Hometown: My town was perfect to grow up in. It is not that huge, but thanks to the nearby sea the climate is perfect.
Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: I was lucky as one of the best secondary schools in Poland is in Gdynia. Thanks to that I was able to attend many computer science classes and that gave me a great start.
Mikhail Dvorkin

Hometown: St. Petersburg, Russia
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Borsch, pancakes
Famous Hometown Person: Nikolay Pirogov
Best Thing About My Hometown: It’s neither in eastern nor in western Ukraine. It’s neither hot nor cold. Living is neither cheap nor expensive. Vinnytsia is a well-balanced city.

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: At 7, I entered elementary school. There was a subject named "Informatics" where we mostly played some car racing game and another one where a young mom had to chase her mischievous children around the house. Eventually I learned different algorithms, languages, design patterns, networks, multithreading, databases, etc.

Dmytro Korzhyk

Hometown: I am from the city of Vinnytsia, which is situated in central Ukraine on the river Southern Bug.
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: They must try my mom’s borscht and holubtsi. Of course, both with Smetana.
Favorite Hometown Season: Autumn; about 10°C
Best Thing About My Hometown: It’s the “cultural capital” of Russia and the most beautiful city in the world!

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: At 7, I entered elementary school. There was a subject named “Informatics” where we mostly played some car racing game and another one where a young mom had to chase her mischievous children around the house. Eventually I learned different algorithms, languages, design patterns, networks, multithreading, databases, etc.

Eryk Kopczyński

Hometown: Warsaw
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Borsch, pancakes
Famous Hometown Person: Warsaw is a big city and lots of famous persons are from or work/worked here. One of the most famous in the world is Maria Skłodowska (Marie Curie).
Best Thing About My Hometown: Easy access to everything shops, education, transport, nature... For example, you don’t have to move to study at Warsaw University.

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: At our university one can learn mathematics and computer science at a high level. We also have very good high schools and very good extra courses for gifted Polish high school and primary school students. Anyways, learning programming as a child is different now than then.

Roman Satyukov

Hometown: I am from Saint-Petersburg, Russia.
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: I think they must try Blintz. Also they must try Russian Pelmeni.
Favorite Hometown Season: My favorite time of year is summer, and the average temperature is about 20°C.
Best Thing About My Hometown: There are a lot of interesting things in Saint-Petersburg: museums, palaces and some other buildings.

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: Programming is now growing up in Saint-Petersburg. Some big companies, such as Google, already have opened their offices in Saint-Petersburg. And there are a lot of good programming courses now, but when I was in school it wasn’t so good with programming. However there were some good programming courses in my school and I didn’t have any serious obstacles that time.

Dmytro Korzhyk

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Favorite Hometown Season: My favorite time of year is summer, and the average temperature is about 20°C.
Best Thing About My Hometown: There are a lot of interesting things in Saint-Petersburg: museums, palaces and some other buildings.

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: Programming is now growing up in Saint-Petersburg. Some big companies, such as Google, already have opened their offices in Saint-Petersburg. And there are a lot of good programming courses now, but when I was in school it wasn’t so good with programming. However there were some good programming courses in my school and I didn’t have any serious obstacles that time.

Dmytro Korzhyk

Hometown: I am from the city of Vinnytsia, which is situated in central Ukraine on the river Southern Bug.
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: They must try my mom’s borscht and holubtsi. Of course, both with Smetana.
Favorite Hometown Season: Autumn; about 10°C
Best Thing About My Hometown: It’s the “cultural capital” of Russia and the most beautiful city in the world!

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: At 7, I entered elementary school. There was a subject named “Informatics” where we mostly played some car racing game and another one where a young mom had to chase her mischievous children around the house. Eventually I learned different algorithms, languages, design patterns, networks, multithreading, databases, etc.

Eryk Kopczyński

Hometown: Warsaw
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Borsch, pancakes
Famous Hometown Person: Warsaw is a big city and lots of famous persons are from or work/worked here. One of the most famous in the world is Maria Skłodowska (Marie Curie).
Best Thing About My Hometown: Easy access to everything shops, education, transport, nature... For example, you don’t have to move to study at Warsaw University.

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: At our university one can learn mathematics and computer science at a high level. We also have very good high schools and very good extra courses for gifted Polish high school and primary school students. Anyways, learning programming as a child is different now than then.

Roman Satyukov

Hometown: I am from Saint-Petersburg, Russia.
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: I think they must try Blintz. Also they must try Russian Pelmeni.
Favorite Hometown Season: My favorite time of year is summer, and the average temperature is about 20°C.
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Pawel Gawrychowski

Hometown: Wroclaw
Favorite Hometown Season: Warm autumn is my favorite time of the year (here it’s usually 10-15°C then)
Best Thing About My Hometown: Some say that Wroclaw is “the meeting place” (though some also add that most of those meetings are in traffic jams).
Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: I’m not even sure if I’m a programmer (or if I have finally grown up. In fact I’m quite sure I haven’t). Or if I’d like to.

Alexey Zhevak

Hometown: Ufa
Favorite Hometown Season: Summer. About 20°C.
Best Thing About My Hometown: Ufa is not the worst place to born, because there are a lot of worse places in the world. Definitely :)
Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: Most of the talented programmers usually leave Ufa to study in Moscow or SPb universities. Those who stay, obtain an excellent chance to advance to ACM finals and to make other achievements (in software development, computer science and so on).

Gluk

Hometown: Kyiv
Favorite Hometown Season: Spring, temperature is about 10°C.
Best Thing About My Hometown: That you can see all this beauty every day.
Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: I think it is nothing special to become a programmer here. There are many other programmers here and programming is quite popular education here.

Gunnar Kreitz

Hometown: Stockholm, Sweden
Favorite Hometown Season: Late spring/early summer (May-June). Average temperature is rising due to global warming, currently 15-20 (59-68°F).
Best Thing About My Hometown: It’s close to home, obviously.
Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: In Sweden in general is a nice country for aspiring programmers, I think. Most secondary schools offer some programming courses, and KTH is a great university.

Andrii Grynenko

Hometown: Kyiv
Favorite Hometown Season: As Kyiv is about 1500 years old it would be impossible to list all famous people who were born here.
Best Thing About My Hometown: That you can see all this beauty every day.
Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: I think it is nothing special to become a programmer here. There are many other programmers here and programming is quite popular education here.

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Hilton Lange

Hometown: Johannesburg
Home brew: A visitor should try Boerewors, which literally mean's 'farmers sausage' - it's the highlight of any South African braai (barbecue).

Famous Hometown Person: Nelson Mandela

Favorite Hometown Season: The best time of the year is mid-summer. If you're lucky, temperatures are around 25 (perhaps even 30) degrees centigrade and it's not raining.

Best Thing About My Hometown: Diversity. It's a cliché in this country, but it really is a privilege to live in such a melting pot of different cultures, especially when they're still learning to understand one another and work together.

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: I started programming in high school, in a computer science and mathematics class. I was very grateful of my great informatics teacher and classmates (I. Uzymics), who showed me many aspects of programming, some algorithms and introduced to problem archives on the internet.

Jakub Radoszewski

Hometown: Poznań (Poznan) in Poland
Home brew: A visitor should try Saint Martin’s sweet croissant, which is famous throughout Poland. Some time ago it was baked only on the 11th of November (Martin’s name-day). Now you can buy it everyday (and also in other Polish cities), but still the finest croissants are baked on 11.11.

Famous Hometown Person: Ban Ki-moon, the current UN Secretary. Strictly he’s not born in Seoul; however he lived in Seoul for a long period of time.

Favorite Hometown Season: I especially like early autumn ('golden Polish autumn', due to sunny weather and colorful leaves). It is about 15-20°C then.

Best Thing About My Hometown: It's a large and crowded city packed with lots of entertainment.

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: I started programming in high school, in a computer science and mathematics class. I was very grateful of my great informatics teacher and classmates (I. Uzymics), who showed me many aspects of programming, some algorithms and introduced to problem archives on the internet.

Jan Kuipers

Hometown: I'm from Utrecht, right in the centre of the Netherlands. Utrecht is cozy medium sized city, with a large student population and a nice downtown area.

Famous Hometown Person: Pope Adrian VI (1459-1523)

Favorite Hometown Season: The best time of the year is mid-summer. If you’re lucky, temperatures are around 25 (perhaps even 30) degrees centigrade and it’s not raining.

Best Thing About My Hometown: Well it’s not too big and not too small... Downtown you can walk from A to B, and the rest of the town can be covered by bike. There’s plenty of stuff to do, so that you never get bored.

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: My programming career began at age 18, when my father followed a computer programming course. From there, I started coding on a commodore 64. My first encounter with algorithms wasn't until the age of 18 in the Dutch Informatics Olympiad, and that's when I began participating in competitions.

JongMan Koo

Hometown: Seoul, capital of South Korea.
Home brew: A visitor should try Kimchi and Bulgogi are famous Alsi. Bosam - steamed pork wrapped with Kimchi. They're one of my favorite Korean foods.

Famous Hometown Person: Ban Ri-moon, the current UN Secretary. Strictly he’s not born in Seoul, however he lived in Seoul for a long period of time.

Favorite Hometown Season: Around September, the weather's cool, with gentle breezes and blue sky. My school hosts a sports competition with Korea University - which is regarded as the best & greatest collegiate festival.

Best Thing About My Hometown: It's a large and crowded city packed with lots of entertainment.

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: In my high school days, my programming contest career was, kind of, pathetic. So my parents kept telling me to give it up and go medical school or something - however, I resisted and insisted on doing CS. So here I am.
Lars Hellsten

Hometown: Toronto, Canada.
Favorite Hometown Session: Spring, 10-20°C normally.
Best Thing About My Hometown: Everything being within walking distance or connected by public transportation, thus not having to drive at all. Not that it seems to matter to most people, as traffic is still a nightmare.

Famous Hometown Person: Mike Myers is probably the most famous. Me! Uh, but I guess people are more likely to have heard of, say, Janica Kostelic.

Favorite Hometown Season: I think it’s spring. About 20°C.

Best Thing About My Hometown: I think many many things in Shanghai are the best. e.g. the education, the food, the climate and the people.

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: I started to learn programming from middle school. From Teacher Gui, Teacher Yao, Teacher Yu and Teacher Wang (time order). I learned a lot from them. There was a number of very good students with me and 1 year younger than me and a little more powerful than me. We represented the Shanghai Team at the NOI’99

Lovro Puzar

Hometown: Zagreb, the capital of Croatia.
Favorite Hometown Session: Summer. Although my town isn’t on the coast, it’s a short ride to get there and have fun. It gets hot through, with temperatures in the 90s.

Famous Hometown Person: Mil Ut, but I guess people are more likely to have heard of, say, Janica Kostelic.

Favorite Hometown Season: Summer. Although my town isn’t on the coast, it’s a short ride to get there and have fun. It gets hot through, with temperatures in the 90s.

Best Thing About My Hometown: Everything being within walking distance or connected by public transportation, thus not having to drive at all. Not that it seems to matter to most people, as traffic is still a nightmare.

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: The food. Especially, when you have A BUNCH OF dishes. Once you experience traditional Korean food, you can never forget. Trust me. Many of my foreign friends really love Korean food and I am proud. :-)

Yiming Li

Hometown: Shanghai.
Favorite Hometown Season: I think it’s spring. About 20°C.

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: I started to learn programming from middle school. From Teacher Gui, Teacher Yao, Teacher Yu and Teacher Wang (time order). I learned a lot from them. There are no courses during the secondary school. All these I learned out of school. Fwennje is in the same high school with me and 1 year younger than me and a little more powerful than me. We represented the Shanghai Team at the NOI’99

Hooyeon Lee

Hometown: Seoul, Korea
Favorite Hometown Season: Between May and October, but visit Korea during the summer. It will be amazing.

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: Most middle/high schools in Korea do not provide a technical course like programming, so I utilized websites of various OI, in order to improve my programming skills and knowledge in algorithms.
Marian Dvorsky

Hometown: Kosice, Slovakia
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Bryndzove pirohy
Famous Hometown Person: Martina Hingis, Swiss tennis player, was born in Kosice.
Favorite Hometown Season: Spring, around 20C.

Best Thing About My Hometown: That I can be proud of what the city looks like. There are strong rowing clubs in Bydgoszcz. Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: My father was a programmer when I was a kid. I used to observe him while he was working, and wanted to do the same. I went to a high school class focused on math, physics, and computer science, where I met friends with similar hobbies like I had.

Mark Gordon

Hometown: Livonia, MI
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Bates is our signature restaurant although I haven’t been there much myself.
Famous Hometown Person: No one really, just Sara Combest.
Favorite Hometown Season: Anytime but winter. It’s usually around the 60s and 70s in the spring/fall and 80s and 90s in the summer. (In Fahrenheit)

Best Thing About My Hometown: The best thing about the town Poprad where I grew up was pretty small, and I was one of just a few future programmers my age. The school wasn’t much help, I learned most of the basics by myself, but later I learned many new things thanks to our Slovak programming competitions and the related camps.

Marek Cygan

Hometown: Bydgoszcz.
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: A cake made by my fiancé.
Famous Hometown Person: Marian Rejewski, mathematician and cryptologist, member of the Polish mathematicians group, which broke the Enigma cipher.
Favorite Hometown Season: Late summer, the average temperature is around 20 Celsius degrees.

Best Thing About My Hometown: There are strong rowing clubs in Bydgoszcz. Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: I had good mathematics and computer science teachers in the high school I graduated from. I had the possibility to attend faculties, which made me interested in computer science.

Michal Forisek

Hometown: Born in Ruzomberok, grown up in Poprad, and now living in the Slovak capitol Bratislava. This covers almost the entire Slovakia. I like them all.
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: The Slovak national food is potato dumplings with "bryndza" sheep cheese.
Famous Hometown Person: No one really, just Sara Combest.
Favorite Hometown Season: Late summer, the average temperature is around 20 Celsius degrees.

Best Thing About My Hometown: The best thing about the town Poprad where I grew up was pretty small, and I was one of just a few future programmers my age. The school wasn’t much help, I learned most of the basics by myself, but later I learned many new things thanks to our Slovak programming competitions and the related camps.
Nikolay Archak

Hometown:
I am from Saint Petersburg, the second largest city in Russia and its former capital. 

Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try:
I would recommend Georgian cuisine, for example, braised lamb and chakhokhbili.

Famous Hometown Person:

Favorite Hometown Season:
Saint Petersburg is one of the northern-most cities, so weather is usually cold and nasty. My favorite is summer when the average temperature is about 70 F.

Best Thing About My Hometown:
"White Nights" when even after midnight the sun does not descend below the horizon enough for the sky to grow dark.

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown:
CS only recently emerged as an independent discipline in Russia. Traditionally it was dominated by math. For example, in the high school I had many math subjects but no CS ones. It was the same way in the University until the 3rd year even though I was in the CS department.

Po-Ru Loh

Hometown:
Madison, Wisconsin (USA).

Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try:
Cheeselake! Speedy Davies! Cheese! Ice cream!

Famous Hometown Person:
Olympic champion Alexei Nemov hails from Togliatti. And a huge number of famous people hail from St.Petersburg.

Favorite Hometown Season:
I like both spring and fall -- it’s pretty outdoors and a comfortable 70 degrees or so. Uh, 70 degrees Fahrenheit, that is, for you foreigners.

Best Thing About My Hometown:
It’s hard to describe. You must visit a town to feel its spirit.

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown:
My mother and father were programmers; my older brother is a programmer. There was no way to me to become not a programmer. :)

Per Austrin

Hometown:

Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try:
Sunstroming (fermented herring). The fact that you’re not allowed to bring it on a plane, even in the checked baggage, is in itself a great experience. For less courageous stomachs, the traditional Swedish smorgasbord is perhaps a better (and not as smelly) option.

Favorite Hometown Season:
Whenever life is looking good. It can be any time – nobody knows in advance!

Best Thing About My Hometown:
It’s a nice place to grow up: safe, quiet but not overly so, friendly, etc.

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown:
Well, I didn’t exactly grow up a programmer and I wouldn’t say I qualify as one now. =) My focus has always been math. Anyway, my hometown offered me plenty of opportunities; the public schools are quite good, and I was also able to take courses at the University of Wisconsin.

Pavel Mavrin

Hometown:
I grew in Togliatti, a town on river Volga (about 7*10^5 citizens). Last 5 years I live in St.Petersburg. Here I have found profession, friends and wife. So now I think that I am from St.Petersburg.

Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try:
Try traditional Russian pancakes, ravioli and vodka. But don’t go too far!

Famous Hometown Person:
Olympic champion Alexei Nemov hails from Togliatti. And a huge number of famous people hail from St.Petersburg.

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Po-Loh

Hometown:
The computer-related courses I had during high school were mostly fairly pointless. I did learn programming at an early age, but I knew next to nothing about algorithms until I started at KTH, my university. There, I did learn a lot.

Favorite Hometown Season:
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Denis Nazarov

Hometown: Ufa, Russia

I am from Ufa. It is located between Europe and Asia near Ural Mountains. So, Ufa’s nature is very beautiful.

Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: They should try “Chack-chack”! It is very famous delicacy in my city.

Famous Hometown Person: There are many famous people from my hometown. For example, Yuri Shevchuk (a famous Russian artist) was born in Ufa.

Favorite Hometown Season: Summer is my favorite time of year. The average temperature is 22°C in summer.

Best Thing About My Hometown: Hmm... it is not very large and like it. Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: It helps you appreciate the weather everywhere else.

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: I played with QBASIC in grade four, then hardly touched programming again until about thirteen. I started caring about programming around the age of fifteen. (This quickly stopped when I started taking Waterloo’s terrible CS courses as to satisfy degree requirements.)

Toronto, ON.

Derek Kisman

Hometown: Calgary, Alberta, Canada

I live in Calgary. Alberta, Canada. Our steak and ribs are fantastic.

Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Pierogi

Tomasz Czajka

Hometown: Stalowa Wola, Poland

I am from Stalowa Wola. Poland. Myself

Favorite Hometown Season: Summer, 30°C

Best Thing About My Hometown: It’s exotic.

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: I never learned to program at school at all. My coder education was first at home, then at high school Olympiads and Polish Children’s Fund scientific camps for kids. Mostly I learned by myself by playing with my computers and reading books.

Whistler, BC.
**Tomasz Kulczynski**

**Hometown:** Bydgoszcz, Poland  
**Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try:** We don't have any special food in here. Just let them try some typical Polish food, like “bigos.”

**Favorite Hometown Season:** Winter, about 0°C.  
**Best Thing About My Hometown:** I just like it. The best thing is that you can do everything you like here. It’s one of bigger cities in Poland.

**Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown:** My school helped me a lot. When I was 13 or so, I started to learn programming there, and it was then it all started. We've had a good informatics teacher at school. There are some other people in here who learned it like me, but not many.

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**Vasyl Biletskyy**

**Hometown:** Lviv  
**Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try:** Vareniks

**Famous Hometown Person:** Ivan Franko

**Favorite Hometown Season:** Spring, about 20°C

**Best Thing About My Hometown:** Being from my hometown is the best thing. Here in western Ukraine Lviv is the best place for young programmers to grow up.

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**Tomas Lloret Llinares**

**Hometown:** La Vila Joiosa, in the SE of Spain, by the Mediterranean Sea  
**Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try:** Some kind of rice with fish. There are several different such dishes, like seafood paella or black rice (it gets its color from calamari ink).

**Favorite Hometown Season:** With only 30 cloudy days a year and temperatures ranging from 10°C to 30°C, it’s nice to go back home any time in the year.

**Best Thing About My Hometown:** It’s not too big so you can walk anywhere but there's still pretty much everything you may need.

**Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown:** I had participated in a couple secondary Mathematical Olympiads and knew about the Spanish Olympiad in Informatics. I could code simple programs back then and I practiced with some sample problems. I’ve been (self) learning since then and I think I studied CS because I liked that kind of problem.

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**Kyrylo Vedenskyi**

**Hometown:** Kiev, Ukraine  
**Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try:** Borsch, varenyky

**Famous Hometown Person:** I didn't know... All famous people I know about from Ukraine are not from Kiev...

**Favorite Hometown Season:** Every time is my favorite. For now it is spring and 10–20°C

**Best Thing About My Hometown:** For me the main thing was competition - in school and in university there were people to compete with - it is interesting to do things not just good, but better.

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**Vasyl(alphac)om**

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**Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try:** Vareniks

**Favorite Hometown Season:** Spring, about 20°C

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Vitaly Valtman

Hometown: St. Petersburg
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Borsh, Kuroshka
Famous Hometown Person: It is winter. The average temperature is about -15 degrees.

Hometown: Krakow (the English name is Cracow).
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: “Zurek” and “pierogi”
Famous Hometown Person: Jan Matejko, a famous Polish painter; great mathematicians Stefan Banach and Salomon Bochner; talented actors Helena Modrzejewska and Jerzy Stole (visiting Donkey in the Polish dub of Shrek); Robert Kubica, the first Polish F1 driver.

Best Thing About My Hometown:
Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown:
Rating History
Success % Rate From 18 Problems
Correct Submissions
Challenges Made
Challenges Defended
OVERALL ACCURACY
AVERAGE POINTS: 552.50
Tournament Stats

Vitaly Goldshteyn

Hometown: Saratov, Russia
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: First of all he (or she) must try national Russian food: borshch, Russian ravioli (pelmeni), pancake with red and black caviar. Saratov famous for “Saratov kalatch” and fish soup.
Famous Hometown Person: Vitaliy Goldstein
TopCoder members from Saratov usually say “Ogon’!” (Fire!), when everything is successfully, and “Palevo” (difficult to translate) otherwise.
Favorite Hometown Season: Summmer, about 25 degrees centigrade.
Favorite Hometown Person: Vitaly Goldstein
Favorite Hometown Season: There are a lot of people want to be a programmer in Saratov. They start to study programming in secondary school. Saratov State University help pupils and students to become programmers. Saratov has great success in algorithm competition in TopCoder, ACM and IC (school international Olympiad).
TopCoder members from Saratov usually say “Ogon’!” (Fire!), when everything is successfully, and “Palevo” (difficult to translate) otherwise.
Favorite Hometown Season: Winter, about 20C (68F).

Wladimir Luiz Caldas Leite

Hometown: Sao Paulo/Brazil
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Sao Paulo has the best restaurants in Brazil. My suggestion is a steakhouse or good pizzeria.
Famous Hometown Person: For those who like car racing, like me, I will take three great pilots born in Sao Paulo: Ayrton Senna, Emerson Fittipaldi and Felipe Massa.
Favorite Hometown Season: I prefer the winter, when we have an age: 1000 year long academic, architectural, and cultural heritage, the city does not “live in the past” and is open to modern ideas, science, and technology.
Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown:
Rating History
Success % Rate From 18 Problems
Correct Submissions
Challenges Made
Challenges Defended
OVERALL ACCURACY
AVERAGE POINTS: 471.00
Tournament Stats

Hometown: Russian Federation
Hometown: Brazil
Hometown: Poland
Hometown: Brazil
Favorite Hometown Season: Late summer/early fall (August-October).
Favorite Hometown Season: I prefer the winter, when we have an average temperature of 20C (68F).
Favorite Hometown Season: Winter, about 20C (68F).
Favorite Hometown Season: Late summer/early fall (August-October).
Hiroshige Hayashizaki

Hometown:
Kawasaki City, a million-person city near Tokyo. It is known as an industrial city and as a ‘bed town.’

Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try:
My favorite Teriyaki shop named ‘Amabo,’ though it is outside the city. (Teriyaki is a Japanese fish-shaped cake)

Famous Hometown Person:
Taro Okamoto, an artist, who made ‘Tower of the Sun,’ the symbol of Expo 1970 held in Osaka, Japan.

Favorite Hometown Season:
Spring. It’s a calm and warm season. In spring, fragrant breeze blows and flowers bloom. Japanese plums, cherry blossoms and dogwoods.

Becoming A Programmer in My Hometown:
I was first interested in computers when playing Nintendo. During my early high school years, I learned programming from senior students and made some game programs in a computer club. Since then, there have been many brilliant programmers around me. I’ve learned a lot from them; directly and indirectly.

Yuriy Znovyak

Hometown:
Kiev

Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: None

Famous Hometown Person: None

Favorite Hometown Season: Late spring, early summer 22-27C (~65F)

Best Thing About My Hometown:
It’s the capital

Becoming A Programmer in My Hometown:
It was the same as to grow up as advocate.

Vladimir Yakovlev

Hometown:
Yekaterinburg

Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try:
Of course, sushi! There are a lot of sushi bars here, more than any other national restaurant

Famous Hometown Person:
Boris Yeltsin, first president of Russian Federation; Pavel Datsyuk, ice hockey player; Kostya Tszyu, boxer, ex-world champion; Ernst Neizvestny, sculptor

Best Thing About My Hometown:
It’s one of the biggest cities in Russia but it is not treated as federal city like Moscow and St. Petersburg. This is a very good feature we have all advantages of big city but have no disadvantages of capital megapolis

Becoming A Programmer in My Hometown:
Programming contests was not popular there and I did not know much about programming at that time. I learned most of my skills from the ACM teams after I went to college in Guangzhou.

Ying Wang

Hometown:
Shenzhen

Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try:
Pot soup and seafood

Famous Hometown Person:
Yundi Li, a young Chinese pianist

Favorite Hometown Season:
July and August, because those are holidays. Average temperature in summer is about 80F.

Best Thing About My Hometown:
It’s one of the most developed city in China, so life is good there.

Becoming A Programmer in My Hometown:
Programming contests was not popular there and I did not know much about programming at that time. I learned most of my skills from the ACM teams after I went to college in Guangzhou.
What are We Watching?

Marathon Match Competition

Marathon Matches are tests of endurance as competitors are tasked with submitting and refining solutions to problems with no optimal answer. These competitions last weeks, during which people are constantly submitting new solutions for scoring.

During the finals, competitors have 9 hours to come up with the best solution to a problem. They are given a few example test cases for local testing and a description of the problem to solve. Competitors may submit their solutions against the example cases for debugging and analysis. Once they are happy with a submission, they may submit it against a series of unknown test cases. Their solution is scored against these cases, and is added to the leaderboard. Competitors will know where they stand on the leaderboard, but not how they did on individual test cases.

Once the submission phase is over, the competitor solutions are run against a new set of cases tests, often numbering into the thousands. The scores are then calculated, and a winner is declared. It is not uncommon for a competitor to move up or down the leaderboard on the more exhaustive system tests so the final results can be very exciting as competitors finally learn how they did.

Past problems used in this tournament include being asked to determine the density of a mountain using basic scanning equipment, playing poker against a series of AI strategies, helping a lumberjack find his way through a forest, and programming thousands of delivery robots to efficiently deliver products in a warehouse.

These problems showcase the creativity and ingenuity of the competitors, which has made them a popular addition to TopCoder's offerings. This is the first tournament with a Marathon Match competition but it has already shown that these events will continue to be a successful part of TopCoder tournaments going forward.

Marathon Match Finalists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Hometown</th>
<th>Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try</th>
<th>Favorite Hometown Season</th>
<th>Best Thing About My Hometown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pascal Pons</td>
<td>Narbonne, France</td>
<td>A “Cassoulet” (pork, goose or duck confit with white beans) and don’t forget to taste local wines (Corbire, Fitou).</td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Be near the sea in summer and near the mountains in winter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirichev Maxim</td>
<td>Monchegorsk, Russian Federation</td>
<td>Home-made jam of bilberry and morelka (may be also caption is slough berry).</td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>25 C, sun 25 C, summer, its name is “town in beautiful tundra”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Øyvind Grotmol</td>
<td>Oslo, Norway</td>
<td>According to the New York Times, the very best sushi restaurant outside Japan is right here in Oslo, called Aki.</td>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>It was like any other child. I got my first computer at 14 and I didn’t have any computer science course before college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joshua Metzler</td>
<td>Ann Arbor, Michigan</td>
<td>A sandwich from Zingerman’s Deli.</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>The best thing about my hometown. I grew up programming on my own, at home. My high school offered one programming class that was very basic. I didn’t take any computer science classes in college, either.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Invader -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Invader</th>
<th>Russian Federation</th>
<th>AveragePlace</th>
<th>BestPlace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>47.25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

- doudouille -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>doudouille</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>AveragePlace</th>
<th>BestPlace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

- jdmetz -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>jdmetz</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>AveragePlace</th>
<th>BestPlace</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

- grotmol -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>grotmol</th>
<th>Norway</th>
<th>AveragePlace</th>
<th>BestPlace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>110.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Marcus Isaksson

Hometown: Bedaryd

Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Since it is a small town you won't find much more than a few standard pizza or Thai food restaurants. I can highly recommend my mother's Rhabarber Pie though. Being in Sweden you would also have to try Swedish specialties like pickled herring.

Favorite Hometown Season: Mid summer when temperatures ranges from 15 to 25 degrees Celsius. I usually spend one or two weeks with my parents each summer and when the sun shines and the temperature is right I can’t think of many places I would rather be.

Best Thing About My Hometown: It was a great place to grow up Peaceful and close to the nature.

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: It was lucky to have a friend’s brother to introduce me to programming at the age of nine, when my father bought our first computer. After that I developed my talents pretty much on my own, constantly challenging myself with new games or other programs to implement.

For this year’s TopCoder Open we wanted two bloggers to join us onsite and give a member’s perspective on the competition, the atmosphere and the city of Las Vegas. Those members interested in attending, participated in our TCO Blog It Contest where they submitted an essay explaining why they should be selected as a blogger for the TCO. Our two winners are enthusiastic about TopCoder, possess impressive creative writing skills, and most importantly, will give a detailed account of the entire event. Excerpts from our winners’ essays are below, and you can also read their live tournament blogs online at www.topcoder.com/tco07

Marcus Isaksson

Since it is a small town you won’t find much more than a few standard pizza or Thai food restaurants. I can highly recommend my mother’s Rhabarber Pie though. Being in Sweden you would also have to try Swedish specialties like pickled herring.

Hometown: Warsaw

Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Sauerkraut Stew, Pork Chop

Famous Hometown Person: Maria Sklodowska-Curie - Nobel prize winner; Stanislaw Staszic - one of the authors of The Constitution of 3rd May (the world’s second constitution).

Average Place: 50.5

Best Place: 1

Taylor: TopCoder Open.

Shanyu Zhao

Hometown: Wuhan

Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: There are two dishes you must try: Hong Shan Cai Tai, an indigenous vegetable that has a unique taste and tender texture, and Steamed Wu Chang Fish--appreciated by many famous historical figures.

Famous Hometown Person: Yu Boya, a legendary musician from Wuhan 2000 years ago. Yu Boya played for the last time over the grave of his friend Zhong Ziqi, and then smashed his flute because the only person able to appreciate his music was dead. This story exemplifies the Chinese ideal of friendship. I hope everybody finds their Zhong Ziqi in their lives.

Favorite Hometown Season: October, the golden weather of Wuhan, averaging 15-24C/59-75F.

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: I was not a programmer during my secondary education in Wuhan 12 years ago, though my school provides BASIC programming courses. But I truly enjoyed my childhood climbing hills, fishing by the lake, boating, picking up mushrooms in the woods...

Mateusz Zotkiewicz

Hometown: Warsaw

Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: For this year's TopCoder Open we wanted two bloggers to join us onsite and give a member’s perspective on the competition, the atmosphere and the city of Las Vegas. Those members interested in attending, participated in our TCO Blog It Contest where they submitted an essay explaining why they should be selected as a blogger for the TCO. Our two winners are enthusiastic about TopCoder, possess impressive creative writing skills, and most importantly, will give a detailed account of the entire event. Excerpts from our winners’ essays are below, and you can also read their live tournament blogs online at www.topcoder.com/tco07

Mateusz Zotkiewicz

Hometown: Warsaw

Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: I suppose I should say something in here about why I became a programmer when I was 22.

Famous Hometown Person: Maris Mojito1

Poland

Average Place: 3.75

Best Place: 1

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: The only problem is that I did not grow up to be a programmer. I became a programmer when I was 22.

Best Thing About My Hometown: Being in Sweden you would also have to try Swedish specialties like pickled herring.

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown: The main problem was that computers and especially Internet connections became affordable in my town too late in comparison with other advanced cities worldwide. Thus I was unable to communicate with other programmers all the time except last 5 years.

For a start, I promise not to mix up challenge phase and...
What are We Watching?

Studio Design Competition

TopCoder Studio design competitions require competitors to design graphics for software applications, the Web, apparel, and print mediums. Rounding out the entire creative development process, Studio members also build wireframes (basic visual guides suggesting layout and placement of web design elements) and prototypes for applications and Web sites.

During a competition, competitors receive specification requirements that explain the scope of the project and describe any elements that must be incorporated in their design. Once competitors have completed a design, they upload their work to the Studio website where their submissions are screened against the project specs. Passing submissions are then either delivered to the client for winner selection or presented to the community for a vote.

The online portion of the 2007 TopCoder Open Studio Tournament consisted of 17 individual design competitions covering a wide range of web and graphic design challenges. Points were awarded to the top four places of each competition and tallied after the completion of the online portion. Those competitors with the highest scores were then invited to attend the onsite finals in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Finalists competing onsite will be presented with their final design challenge during the welcome reception of the tournament. They will receive a packet of information describing the challenge in detail and will have 36 hours to define their approach before the 8 hour challenge on Thursday.

On the morning of the competition finals, the finalists are given the appropriate tools they need to complete their designs, but they are not allowed to bring sketches or any preparatory materials. They will prepare rough concepts during the first few hours of the competition while the Studio panel oversees their progress and scores their designs. At the end of the morning session, the finalists will break for a public feedback session with the Studio panel. This is their opportunity to get opinions and constructive direction so they can refine their work during the afternoon and deliver their final designs at the end of the day.

Once the competition ends, the final designs will be presented to the onsite and online community for a 24 hour vote. The community will determine the winner of this year’s 2007 TopCoder Open Studio tournament.

Best Thing About My Hometown:

It’s a small and quiet place, with very friendly people. You can find here a Jesuit Estancia, and the “Che” Guevara Museum. You can find also a lot of soccer fans and world rally fans.

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown:

I’ve started programming on a computer numerical control turning lathe at my high school, Renault Institute, at the same time I bought a book, Learning VB in 24hs, and programmed harmless Trojan horses, then I self learned until I enter to college.

Best Thing About My Hometown:

It’s the only city in Poland which has subway (metro).

Becoming A Programmer In My Hometown:

When I was in junior high school at villages; the temperature is warm, so we could play in the farm, yard and everywhere else.

Studio Design Competition

Studio Design Finalists

Studio Design Competition
DIGITAL RUN COMPETITION

This past year marked the introduction of a new form of competition: the Digital Run. In this contest, competitors earn points for every component they pass review in. The year was split into four stages of equal length, and the top five point earners in each stage received cash prizes and a free trip to the TCO. Additionally, the top third point earners (top half in the fourth stage) received cash prizes proportional to the number of points they had earned.

Stage 1 Winners

- **aubergineanode**
  - Completed Contest Points: 7,060.00
  - Total Prizes Won: $29,504.50

- **AleaActaEst**
  - Completed Contest Points: 5,255.00
  - Total Prizes Won: $13,352.85

- **Pops**
  - Completed Contest Points: 5,200.00
  - Total Prizes Won: $9,667.63

- **Ghostar**
  - Completed Contest Points: 5,200.00
  - Total Prizes Won: $9,667.63

- **real_vg**
  - Completed Contest Points: 5,000.00
  - Total Prizes Won: $10,317.76

Stage 2 Winners

- **argolite**
  - Completed Contest Points: 10,570.00
  - Total Prizes Won: $51,040.98

- **AleaActaEst**
  - Completed Contest Points: 8,260.00
  - Total Prizes Won: $51,040.98

- **Standlove**
  - Completed Contest Points: 4,610.00
  - Total Prizes Won: $12,856.13

- **dplass**
  - Completed Contest Points: 3,385.00
  - Total Prizes Won: $3,693.26

Stage 3 Winners

- **argolite**
  - Completed Contest Points: 11,015.00
  - Total Prizes Won: $51,040.98

- **AleaActaEst**
  - Completed Contest Points: 8,260.00
  - Total Prizes Won: $51,040.98

- **humblefool**
  - Completed Contest Points: 7,535.00
  - Total Prizes Won: $19,552.77

- **Standlove**
  - Completed Contest Points: 6,840.00
  - Total Prizes Won: $12,856.13

- **bendlund**
  - Completed Contest Points: 4,630.00
  - Total Prizes Won: $8,640.92

Stage 4 Winners

- **argolite**
  - Completed Contest Points: 9,015.00
  - Total Prizes Won: $48,313.26

- **ShindouHikaru**
  - Completed Contest Points: 6,595.00
  - Total Prizes Won: $26,081.64

- **AleaActaEst**
  - Completed Contest Points: 6,150.00
  - Total Prizes Won: $17,671.28

- **bendlund**
  - Completed Contest Points: 5,830.00
  - Total Prizes Won: $11,376.19

- **woodyjhon**
  - Completed Contest Points: 4,025.00
  - Total Prizes Won: $7,711.69

**Italy**

- **Michele Damian**
  - Hometown: Longarone, Italy
  - Home Food A Visitor Should Try: Italian lasagna

**Indonesia**

- **Tricia Tjia**
  - Hometown: Jakarta, Indonesia
  - Famous Hometown Person: No one. But my family and friends probably do.
  - Favorite Hometown Season: Time during long holiday season, eg. Christmas. Approximately, the temperature is around 23-29 degree Celsius. No winter here.

**China**

- **Yiming Liao**
  - Hometown: Shaoquan, Guangdong Province, China
  - Famous Hometown Person: Jiuling Zhang, who is a famous prime minister and poet in Tang Dynasty (618AD - 907AD)
I love Buenos Aires vibe. There are a lot of No, nothing at all really. There are so many it would be silly There's a lot of pandas. The TPC golf tournament or GHO It is near Hong Kong, so you can buy a lot Growing up on the Atlantic Ocean Great culture and respect for good food One of the best aspects about Radford is Sichuan Opera, where people dok lives in my town. Does he Home of the Tango The climate - the summer is long and ADMINS: WHERE DO YOU HAIL FROM?

jmlpd40
Hometown: Bristol, Connecticut
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Pizza House: pizza and sandwiches. They are the best!
Best Thing About My Hometown: It's a great place to grow up. There are many things for kids and families to do.
Famous Hometown Person or Landmark: "Bristol is the home of sports ESPN and the oldest theme park in the United States, Lake Compounce."

mess
Hometown: Beverly, Massachusetts
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Nick's Famous Original Beef
Best Thing About My Hometown: Growing up on the Atlantic Ocean
Famous Hometown Person or Landmark: Birthplace of the American Navy

bolastyile
Hometown: Garland, Texas, a suburb of Dallas
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Pretty much any barbecue place in the area; right now my new favorite is Big Daddy's B-B-Q in Lewisville, Texas.
Best thing about my North of Garland. Garland is quite nice and is easy to get around, where you need to be.
Famous Hometown Person or Landmark: Mike R. Tyson - half of "Iron Man," Dallas Spacecadets (the other half was filming in Austin), and lake Wilson which is from Dallas and still live there, and Erkah Badu is from Dallas as is North Jones.

dok
Hometown: Fairfield, Connecticut
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: I always make sure to go to Auss Deli for a sandwich and La F鞑la for some Arabic Chicken Shawarma.
Best Thing About My Hometown: The opportunity to live in such a beautiful place where else?"
Famous Hometown Person or Landmark: To me, Fairfield isn't the only home of the famous home of Linda Kasabian of Crocodile Dundee but. But. I also went to school with John Mayer and James Blake

mbn96
Hometown: North Haven, Maine
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Any of the fresh baked goods from "The Kitchen."
Best Thing About My Hometown: The "town" consists of two buildings, five lightings, and two small general stores.
Famous Hometown Person or Landmark: dok lives in my town. Does he count as famous?"

assistant
Hometown: Laihui, Shandong Province, China
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Sea Food, Apple Crab, Pork. Beats
Best Thing About My Hometown: It only takes 10 minutes to walk from my home to the sea, I love the sea, she is like a mother.
Famous Hometown Person or Landmark: Luomei Zhang, the CEO of Haver Group. He has been on Business Week Cover Story 5 times and was give a lecture to Harvard Business School.

visualange
Hometown: Guangzhou, China
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: The food from southern Chinese already famous even for Chinese people. So try to eat as many as you can.
Best Thing About My Hometown: It is near Hong Kong, which is the city of cheap things. Hong Kong has no import tax.
Famous Hometown Person or Landmark: "Military air staff used to be there (more than 50 years ago). Many famous Chinese generals were graduated from there."

aisacovich
Hometown: Buenos Aires, Argentina
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: The common favorite would be the grilled or asado also recommend a very Argentinean dish called "Milanesa Napolitana." It's a breaded and fried thin slice of meat with tomatoes and cheese over it. Very tasty! Some homemade empanadas, since it means it's a meal from Milan, but done the Napoleon way. Two real cities of Italy.
Best Thing About My Hometown: I guess it's corruption, Argentines are very weird people, half of contradictions but very kind, except Buenos Aires is a very big city and it has endless options of places to be. You can go sagging on a Saturday morning, spend the afternoon watching world class soccer attend a wonderful play at night. Buenos Aires never slumbers.
Famous Hometown Person or Landmark: You mean other than my self? The obvious most famous guys from Buenos Aires are Carlos Gardel and Diego Armando Maradona. There's a few world famous Argentinean guys like Chui Guerra and Manu Ginobili, but they're not from Buenos Aires.

mktong
Hometown: Radford, Virginia
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: If people visit my hometown they can visit Macado's – this restaurant features an eclectic array of sandwiches and salads.
Best Thing About My Hometown: One of the best aspects about Radford is that it's a college town, home to Radford University and 15 minutes away from Virginia Tech.
Famous Hometown Person or Landmark: A military academy used to be in Granby, Connecticut. It's called"TheFaxman"

tlaisi
Hometown: Aberham, New Hampshire
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: A charcuterie out from the translucent during the July 4th parade or maybe some maple syrup or maple sugar candy.
Best Thing About My Hometown: The village in the center of the town, has the oldest and most beautiful buildings, in town and, of course, the quintessential New England, complete with white church spire. At Christ- mas time, there's an ordinance that anyone who lives within a mile of the center has to put white lights in all their windows.
Famous Hometown Person or Landmark: Horace Greeley, an influential journalist and politician was born here. His son Franklin Park Greeley was born in another NH town, but lived in the Aberham village when his president was in the same house where George Washington had stayed. The current famous person from around here is actually a few towns over comedian Adam Sandler is from Manchester, NH.

pulky
Hometown: Mendoza, Argentina "The land of fi ne and good wine"
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: The food is really not important while they try the famous Mendoza wine! (and after a couple glasses, nothing else is important)
Best Thing About My Hometown: The "vines" People like me are between 1.5 and 15 hrs, they leave, work here, and ship from here, buy as local and go back to work. Primitive.
Famous Hometown Person or Landmark: "The city is near the Andes mountain range, and at an altitude of you can be astonished with the highest peak of the Americas, the Aconcagua mountain (22,441 feet)

thx1138
Hometown: Lafayette, Indiana
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Grilled corn on the cob dipped in butter.
Best Thing About My Hometown: Friendly people
Famous Hometown Person or Landmark: Charley Finley, former owner of the Oakland Athletics.

ADMINS: WHERE DO YOU HAIL FROM?
cucu
Hometown: Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: They must try our beef steaks. The meal is really good here! Also, the Italian influence gives excellent pastas and pizzas. Another thing is the "mate" we put some herbs (yerba mate) in a recipient, throw some hot water and drink it.
Best Thing About My Hometown: I have Buenos Aires City. There are a lot of things to do here shows, cultural activities, places to go, nice neighbors and parks to walk.
Famous Hometown Person or Landmark: Some of the most famous people from here are Maradona, Gardel and Borges. Something famous about Buenos Aires is the Tango music and dance.
mural
Hometown: Buenos Aires, Argentina
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: I would recommend if we don't have a special kind of barbecue, it has different cuts of meat, and some cuts that you should try.
Best Thing About My Hometown: You really have all of entertainment places to go.
Famous Hometown Person or Landmark: I guess the most famous one is Diego Maradona.
mike
Hometown: Granby, Connecticut
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Chowder, Gruyere Grilled Cheese
Best Thing About My Hometown: It's very very quiet.
Famous Hometown Person or Landmark: No, nothing at all really.

backstrom
Hometown: Fairfield, Iowa
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Pinapple and sausauge and potato
Best Thing About My Hometown: People think I'm a redneck. Famous Hometown Person or Landmark: Home of transcendental meditation.

olexyo
Hometown: Kherson, Ukraine
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Kherson is famous for its fruits and vegetables, which are incredibly good because of the climate.
Best Thing About My Hometown: The climate - the summer is long and warm, and it is too hot you have Black sea nearby.
Famous Hometown Person or Landmark: Kherson was an important fortress during wars between Russia and Turkey, so plenty of famous generals and admirals have been fighting nearby."

jwims
Hometown: Kalispell, Montana
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: During the July 4th parade. or maybe some maple syrup or maple sugar candy.
Best Thing About My Hometown: A Military air staff used to be there (more than 50 years ago). Many famous Chinese generals were graduated from there.

wyw
Hometown: Chengdu, China
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Hot pot <Something terribly spicy.>
Best Thing About My Hometown: There's a lot of things to do here shows, cultural activities, places to go, nice neighbors and parks to walk.
Famous Hometown Person or Landmark: "Sichuan Opera, where people change their faces really fast."

adminbrett
Hometown: Brooklyn, New York
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Peter Luger's, one of the best steakhouses in the city, in Brooklyn. In addition, we have top-notch pizza (Fara Pizza) and one of the best Italian delis (d'Antonio's) in Red Hook (if you are going to John's, call ahead to see if it's Red Hook day or Turkey day. You will live in a treat.
Best Thing About My Hometown: Tons of diversity. You see people of all ethnicities from all walks of life. Gives you an interesting perspective.
Famous Hometown Person or Landmark: There is so many it would be silly to name one.

TheFaxman
Hometown: Norwalk, Iowa
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Norwalk is where gas stations go to die. I think we maybe 2 restaurants in the entire town and I wouldn't recommend either.
Best Thing About My Hometown: The small town atmosphere, it's hard not to know most people your age in a town of around 5,000 people.
Famous Hometown Person or Landmark: "People called"

ntrefz
Hometown: Rocky Hill, Connecticut
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: The Anh Paug
Best Thing About My Hometown: It's close to Tupper

mylizac
Hometown: Cromwell, Connecticut
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Westover Street Claus
Best Thing About My Hometown: The farm and the CT river
Famous Hometown Person or Landmark: "The CPC golf tournament or GT" I'm not familiar with."

Ivern
Hometown: Fairfield, Connecticut
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: During the July 4th parade. or maybe some maple syrup or maple sugar candy.
Best Thing About My Hometown: A Military air staff used to be there (more than 50 years ago). Many famous Chinese generals were graduated from there.

bettylee74
Hometown: Portage, Michigan
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: A chicken chile hand roll and a tall and glass of rootbeer at the A&W drive-in restaurant.
Best Thing About My Hometown: It's close to nature, and has a nice downtown. Famous Hometown Person or Landmark: "No one from Portage, but Derek Jeter of the Yankees grew up in the adjacent town, Kalamazoo."

mylizac
Hometown: Cromwell, Connecticut
Hometown Food A Visitor Should Try: Westover Street Claus
Best Thing About My Hometown: The farm and the CT river
Famous Hometown Person or Landmark: "The CPC golf tournament or GT" I'm not familiar with."
My notes from the TCO07

My photos from the TCO07
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