

JC students make \$1m from stocks

... but it's only virtual money they're earning in trading contest



By Liew Hanqing

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THE 17-year-old's heart sank when he checked his stocks and found he had lost more than \$6,000.

Bernard Seah wasn't worried about losing so much from his investment portfolio of more than \$100,000.

He was worried it would cost his school, Temasek Junior College, the title in a competition.

You see, the \$6,000 wasn't real money — it was virtual money given to him to participate in a stock-trading contest.

He was one of more than 2,500 participants in the I-Cube-OCBC Securities Online Stock Challenge 2006 for students.

FANTASY FOLIO

Each participant was given \$100,000 in virtual money to start a fantasy investment portfolio, trade virtual stocks for two weeks, and pit their trading skills against one another.

The contestants with the highest-valued portfolios at the end were named winners.

All the buying and selling was make-believe, but the stocks and their prices were based on real-time information from the Singapore Exchange.

Despite his minor setback, Bernard and his schoolmates did well enough as a group to clinch the Top Junior College prize.

His schoolmate, Shaun Chia, 17 said at the contest's closing ceremony on Saturday that he had tailored his investment strategy to fit the time constraints of the stock challenge.

"Because the contest was only on for 15 days, I tracked the stock prices closely

and had to keep a target price — the price I wanted to achieve for each stock — in mind at all times," he said.

All that hard work paid off for the Temasek students, who made up the biggest group of contestants from 13 participating JCs.

Out of 404 competitors in the JC category, 105 were from Temasek.

The individual winners of the stock challenge's JC category, however, came from different schools.

Wang Cheng Wee from Anderson Junior College came out tops, followed by Yuen Pak Man from Hwa Chong Institute and John Lim from Victoria Junior College.

The top seven student investors each raked in more than \$1 million in virtual cash.

This is not likely in the real market and was possible only because the game's trading platform allowed participants to sell stock even if there were no buyers for it at the selling price.

For the winner, trading low-priced, volatile stocks was the route to success.

Said Ms Wang, 19: "I thought a good



◆ Hwa Chong's Yuen Pak Man (top) was second and VIC's John Lim (above) came in third.



Although luck was a factor, I believe my strategy worked well for this particular contest.

—AJC's Wang Cheng Wee (above), who won 1st prize in the individual category

◆ Temasek Junior College students (left) emerge victorious as the top-performing junior college.

Pictures: NG XINYAO

strategy would be to trade penny stocks. Although luck was a factor, I believe my strategy worked well for this particular contest."

Tan Boon Long, an accountancy student from Nanyang Technological University, emerged as champion in the open category, followed by Ryan Chew and Ng Jin Hao, both from the National University of Singapore.

FINANCIAL LITERACY

One of the main goals of the stock challenge, its organisers say, is to promote financial literacy.

Jacky Xu, co-chairman of I-Cube — a

joint initiative by the investment clubs NTU, NUS and the Singapore Management University — said the organisers decided to open the contest to JC students this time to encourage interest in investing from a younger age.

Added Mr Hui Yew Ping, managing director of OCBC Securities: "Through this contest, we hope these young people have learnt more about the importance of responsible investing.

"Games and interaction are a good way for these students to learn important investment skills, and about the way financial institutions work."

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