

# Dean's Medalist excels at problem-solving and competitive programming

By Rhonda Olson, ASU News  
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**Editor's note:** This story is part of a series of profiles of notable [spring 2026 graduates](#).

What brings Phoenix native Benjamin Jeter joy is the experience of working hard at something in order to get really good at it. In high school, he excelled in math competitions, earning Top Winner and Silver Medalist in the USA Junior Mathematical Olympiad.

At Arizona State University, his interest and intensity shifted toward competitive programming, specifically with the International Collegiate Programming Contest (ICPC) — the oldest, largest and most prestigious programming contest in the world. He and his inexperienced teammates quickly rose through the ranks, earning a spot at the world finals.

This summer, his focus will shift again as he pursues an internship in quantitative trading, which he hopes will convert to full-time employment at Jane Street in New York.

“One thing that stands out about Benjamin is that he strives for perfection. He is always trying to refine details and improve, even at an already extremely high level,” said Assistant Professor [Zilin Jiang](#).

As an outstanding student, Jeter is graduating this May as the [School of Mathematical and Statistical Sciences](#) Dean's Medalist with a Bachelor of Science in mathematics.

Jeter was homeschooled and attributes his success to being “naturally talented at math” and having supportive parents. But he also puts in the work.

“Benjamin is naturally gifted, but I also think people sometimes underestimate how hard he works because he genuinely enjoys problem-solving. Some people gain energy from doing the things they love, and for them, the work itself does not feel draining. I think that is part of why Benjamin describes things as feeling natural or effortless. From the outside, though, the amount of work and consistency required to reach his level is remarkable. For example, he once maintained a 53-day Codeforces streak, solving problems on the platform every day for nearly two months straight,”

Jiang said.

Jeter's favorite experience at ASU came while [participating in the ICPC World Finals in Baku last fall](#), competing against the top universities across the world.

"Not only were the problems fun, but I built great relationships with my teammates while training and competing with them. It was thrilling to do as well as we did at the 2025 ICPC World Finals. Probably my favorite memory was our comeback from a pretty slow start at the world finals into solving problem B in the last two minutes to become the 17th highest ranking university in the world, despite all of us having very little experience only a year prior," Jeter said.

"The final moments at ICPC World Finals were incredibly high stakes. In the last two minutes, the team decided to commit to a difficult problem rather than switch directions. Benjamin was the one coding the solution, which added another layer of pressure because the execution itself was technically demanding. The problem required several deep mathematical observations, and the team collectively found all the right ideas under intense time pressure. Making that comeback in the final moments is something I think the team will remember for the rest of their lives," Jiang said.

"I still smile every time I [rewatch this](#), the relief we felt with that last-minute solution was unreal," Jeter said.

We asked Jeter to share more about his Sun Devil journey.

*Note: Answers have been edited for length and clarity.*

**Question: Why did you choose to attend Arizona State University?**

**Answer:** I considered a bunch of places, but mostly it made sense for me to stay in state for financial reasons. ASU was close, and my older brother and dad went here, so it made sense.

**Q: What awards or other accolades have you earned while at ASU?**

**A:** 2024 William Lowell Putnam Mathematical Competition  
Honorable Mention (ranked 58th out of 4,000 competitors)

2025 ICPC World Finals  
Rank 17th (Highest Honors)

2026 ICPC North America Championship  
[Rank 4th](#) (Bronze medalist, Central Division Champion)  
Qualifies for world finals this fall

**Q: Which student clubs are you involved in at ASU?**

**A:** Basically just mt+1 (Mathematics Tomorrow Seminar). The Mathematics Tomorrow Seminar is a student club where every Friday at noon, we meet to discuss and solve challenging mathematical problems that often require novel or creative approaches. It's lots of fun getting to meet other like-minded people to work on the kinds of problems we are passionate about.

**Q: What was your "aha" moment, when you realized you wanted to study mathematics?**

**A:** When I was starting prealgebra, my mom got me "The Art of Problem Solving" textbooks, and I was really fascinated by the approach they took to math. The emphasis was always on solving interesting and hard problems, and using these problems as creative inspiration to develop tools to solve them. This is the inverse of the way most math curricula do it, and you are always left with the feeling that you could have invented the tools yourself. I found the problems really interesting and ended up going through the entire catalog very quickly, developing a passion for math that persists to this day.

**Q: What do you like to do in your spare time?**

**A:** In terms of non-math related things: I have spent a lot of my time doing competitive programming, but I also enjoy reading and learning about new things. I enjoy playing strategy games and have sunk a lot of hours into playing "Slay the Spire" (and the newly released sequel).

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## Main image



Benjamin Jeter is the School of Mathematical and Statistical Sciences Dean's Medalist, graduating in May with a Bachelor of Science in mathematics. Courtesy photo