Students fall in love
on reality TV show

He ‘takes advantage’
when she loses
team-mates

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THE world may know celeb-reality couple Rob and Amber Mariano, but Singapore may have found its own celeb-reality couple. Unlike the famous Survivor and Amazing Race alumni, Olivia Chiu and Tay Kang Xun fell in love amidst techie challenges. They were contestants on the infocomm reality TV game show iWhiz.

The couple made it to the final three, and Olivia, 18, emerged the winner in the final episode which was aired yesterday. Kang Xun, 21, admitted that Olivia was a worthy winner. He said: “The judges said they were looking for someone vibrant and dynamic, who would best represent the infocomm industry, and Olivia best embodies that.”

BUMFY START

Olivia had a poor start and limited technical knowledge to speak of. Worse still, she lost all three of her team-mates within the first four of the 10-episode show as her team kept losing. They had to vote off one member every time they lost. Losing her team-mates spurred Olivia on, and she impressed the judges – and Kang Xun – by stepping up her game. Both Olivia and Kang Xun are first-year students at Singapore Management University’s School of Information Systems. They remained fierce competitors throughout the competition.

Olivia said: “We talked about the other contestants but not about the work. We wanted to avoid any conflicts of interest.” The couple enjoy pitting their skills against each other. Said Olivia: “We are each others’ biggest competitors. We compete like crazy because (being in the same course) we always vie for the same positions. Sometimes he wins and sometimes I win.”

The show’s 12 contestants competed against each other in challenges from different infocomm genres like security and networking, digital media and games, and software programming.

She added: “I didn’t expect to win at all. My goal was just to get past the next challenge. After a while, I realised I was getting past a lot of the challenges.”

The hardest part for her was losing her team-mates. But that’s where Kang Xun stepped in. In episode three, he was shown consoling a teary Olivia. Olivia said jokingly: “He took advantage of the situation. He was very supportive.”

To which Kang Xun said: “She caught my eye with her bubbly personality, and she struck me as a very capable person.”

They became an item during the filming of episode six, which was in December.

The longest challenge was a three-day stay at Ngee Ann Polytechnic, shown in episode nine, which pit the guys against the girls.

Both teams of two had to create a 3D character and produce a 30-second animation based on the character. Olivia said that was the harshest challenge for her.

As Singapore’s first iWhiz, Olivia will visit Microsoft’s headquarters in Redmond, US, to meet key executives and researchers for a week in June.

For someone who didn’t know how to write computer programs, she is now working on a book auction system for her school group project.

And she managed to find love along the way as well.