

Running on tempo

March 11 2013

Some runners take it slow while others tear up the pavement. Either way, music gives runners their mojo, and can be the key to creating a productive, enjoyable run, according to a team of Michigan State University seniors whose fitness app, TempoRun, took first place at the national Student Startup Madness Tournament March 9.

The students won \$5,000 from Google Cloud Platform, which they'll use to bring TempoRun to the iTunes market in mid-April, selling for \$1.99.

In simple terms, TempoRun allows users to run at the perfect pace by categorizing their music into different levels, one to 10, based on tempo. So, a user can match a running pace with a particular beat to create a more enjoyable and fluid run. And the app will provide music for the runners if they don't have a library.

Student Startup Madness is a competition for college students' digital media startups and an official event of South by Southwest Interactive – a set of film, interactive and [music festivals](#) that takes place in Austin, Texas. The judging panel for the student tournament included executives from [Turner Broadcasting System](#), [Google](#) and Square, a mobile [payment platform](#).

"I was running one day last year, listening to my music, and a song came on that was just the perfect beat for me," said Josh Leider, a senior marketing major. "Everything was perfect, and my run felt amazing. Then the song ended very abruptly, a new song came on that was very slow, and I couldn't adjust back into that song. I thought, 'Why can't I

always run to the tempo of my music?' Hence, the idea, TempoRun."

Leider joined forces with fellow runner Benny Ebert-Zavos, a hospitality business senior, and computer science seniors Phil Getzen and Adam Proschek. Within a few months, the [iPhone](#) app was born.

TempoRun is unlike anything in the market, since other apps adjust song tempos as a runner's pace changes, Leider said. While TempoRun could expand into social and gaming realms, the judges liked the app because it's a simple tool to help runners improve.

Leider and his team are testing the product now. To promote the app, the team, with support from the Associated Students of MSU, will hold a 5K charity run on April 21, with funds going to the Susan G. Komen Foundation.

TempoRun received support from Spartan Innovations, which provided \$5,000 in funding from two MSU endowments, Gerstacker and Forest Akers, said Paul Jaques, director of student and community engagement for Spartan Innovations. Spartan Innovations provides startup resources to companies created within MSU. Jeff Smith from the Lansing Economic Area Partnership also provided support. And the students did much of their brainstorming at The Hatch, a student business incubator in East Lansing.

"We look forward to having several other MSU teams compete at Student Startup Madness at SXSW, along with many other events around the country, as the entrepreneurial spirit is growing in Michigan," Jaques said.

The Student [Startup](#) Madness began in November with 64 teams from around the nation, including five from MSU. The field was narrowed in December to 32; and in January, TempoRun was selected to go on to the

Entrepreneurial Eight. In December, TempoRun won first place at the Broad Business Pitch Competition.

The other seven finalists to compete were Stanford University, Emory University, University of Texas at Austin, University of Illinois at Chicago, St. Louis University, University of California at Berkeley and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

"It's nice to know there are other entrepreneurs in the community, and we've learned that through Spartan Innovations and The Hatch," Leider said. "We're around them every day, which makes us well-rounded entrepreneurs and business people."

Provided by Michigan State University

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