

# The world of Esports

Your comprehensive guide to a  
successful esports program



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**Before  
the games  
begin...**

# 1 What is esports?

Esports describes the world of competitive, team-based playing of popular video games. Most often, competitors from different leagues face off using mainstream gaming consoles to play popular titles, such as League of Legends, Rocket League and Valorant.

The esports industry has had a tremendous impact on K–12 education. Not only do esports teams provide opportunities for students to participate in extracurriculars who wouldn't normally engage, students can also receive scholarships to play esports in college.





## 2 The esports audience

As with any traditional, professional sports league (such as the NFL or MLB), gamers are watched and followed by millions of fans all over the world who attend live events, tune in on TV or stream online. Streaming services like Twitch allow viewers to watch as their favorite gamers play in real time, and this is typically where popular games build their fandoms.

In a 2025 Global Esports Market research report by Statista, it was projected that the number of users in the worldwide Esports market is set to reach 896 million by 2029.

Statista also found that the User penetration is forecasted to be 12.5% in 2025 and is expected to increase to 14.2% by 2029.

The 2024 League of Legends World Championship, also known as Worlds, was the most watched esports event in history. The finals broke the record for esports event viewership with over 6.94 million concurrent viewer.



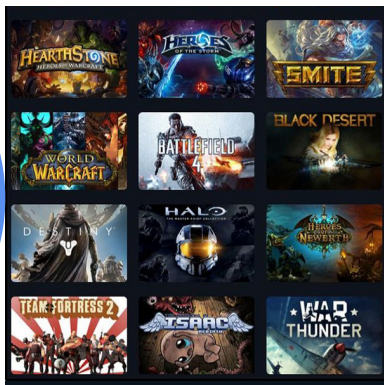
### 3 Commercial and consumer investment

The esports appeal has garnered the attention of major sports investors.

Owners of traditional teams – including the Patriots, 76ers, Bucks and Mavericks – have invested in professional esports teams. And, corporations such as Kraft, Mark Cuban Companies, FIFA, NBA and Twitch have made significant financial investments in esports.

- The NBA has started an independent league for their game NBA 2K.
- FIFA featured a gamer version of the World Cup, where each franchise had their own esports team.
- The Twitch platform livestreams games to the general public. Players, known as streamers, are funded by donations from viewers and sponsors, where they can make upwards of hundreds of thousands of dollars a month.





CONTROLLERS  
AT THE READY?  
**LET'S  
DIVE IN.**

## 4 Game genres and popular titles

As with traditional sports, there are different types of esports games. In this ebook, we'll look at the most popular, competitive titles.

Following each game summary, you'll find its rating given by the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) so your district can make informed decisions about which games students can play.

## LEAGUE OF LEGENDS

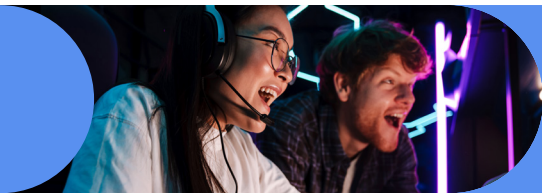
*Highly strategic in nature, the objective is to destroy the opposing team's main structure with the assistance of periodically spawned, computer-controlled units that march forward along set paths. Players typically choose characters that have various abilities and advantages that improve over the course of a game and contribute to a team's overall strategy. In League of Legends two teams of five players fight for control of a square battlefield. The game is won when one team destroys its opponent's base, which usually takes 30 to 40 minutes.*

### **Rated: T for Teen**

*This title's popularity is fueled by appealing to schools due to low PC requirements. With it being an older game, it is not as popular with younger students until they find out about the 6-figure average salaries of professional players.<sup>3</sup>*







## ROCKET LEAGUE

*Described as “soccer, but with rocket-powered cars,” Rocket League has one to four players assigned to two teams using rocket-powered vehicles to hit a ball into their opponent’s goal and score points over the course of a match. The game includes single-player and multi-player modes, which can be played both locally and online, including cross-platform play between all versions.*

**Rated: E for Everyone**



*Rocket League is popular since it’s an easy game to understand but difficult to master. That means students can begin v it in early grades, while it’s still competitive enough to support many professional esports teams. The total prize pool for professional play is \$6M.<sup>2</sup>*



## VALORANT

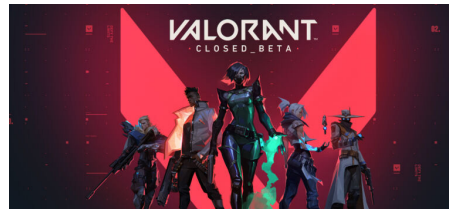
*Valorant is an online multi-player computer game, produced by Riot Games. It's a first-person shooter game, consisting of two teams of five, where one team attacks and the other defends. Players control*

*characters known as 'agents' who all have different abilities to use during gameplay. The game's matchmaking system automatically groups players of similar skill together.*

*The game is played in a series of rounds until a team wins a total of 13 rounds in a game. For the attacking team to win a round, they must eliminate all the defenders with their weapons and abilities, or plant a bomb known as a 'spike' in a designated site. For the defending team to win a round, they must eliminate all the attackers with their weapons and abilities or defuse the 'spike' in time.*

### **Rated T for Teen**

*This is a popular shooting game due to animation and ability turn off any reality to eliminations in the game. This and Overwatch are the games schools tend to stay away from, along with other mature titles like Call of Duty and Rainbow 6.<sup>4</sup>*



## 5 Esports in K-12 education

An esports program offers new methods for educators to challenge their students, ultimately improving social interaction and community-building skills inside the traditional classroom.



When implementing an esports program in K-12 schools, there's an emphasis on soft skill development. Those who invest in the program learn new communication skills, teamwork abilities and social emotional learning.

Educators can also create an authentic assessment, evaluating students on how to correctly set up a livestream or administer a social media account for their esports team.

To justify the benefits of an esports program in K-12 further, having a space of extracurricular activity can be multi-use, benefiting multiple extracurriculars or classes. Having the necessary equipment to operate an esports program allows for implementation of additional disciplines such as graphic design, computer science and CTE-STEM courses.

”

*Proponents say that high school esports programs transform what is often an isolating activity into a social experience, leading to many of the same rewards as traditional athletics.* ”

**Steve Jaworski**

*High School Esports League*



## Soft-skills development

As with traditional team sports in K-12, students in esports must build a number of soft skills to be a successful team member, including:



- Attitude
- Communication
- Creative thinking
- Work ethic
- Teamwork
- Decision-making
- Social Emotional Learning
- Time management
- Motivation
- Flexibility
- Critical thinking
- Conflict resolution



## Scholarships Recruitment

Esports has made a significant push into the collegiate athletics environment. Through the National Association of Collegiate Esports (NACE), 200 colleges and universities across the United States are providing esports scholarships as of February 2025.

The Big 10 Conference has an agreement with Riot Games that enables schools to offer \$50,000 in scholarships per spot in the League of Legends season.

## 6

## 5 Steps for creating an esports team

### Find a teacher sponsor.

The sponsor's role is to determine the structure of the club (best done with input from students), what games the program will play and what leagues they'll be involved in. They also represent the club when funding needs to be secured.

\*This staff member just needs a passion for helping students – many successful programs have a sponsoring teacher who knows little beyond general console gaming.

### Generate student interest.

Typically, esports clubs are wildly popular out of the gate. Providing a survey at the first meeting can help sponsors and student leaders identify a vision that will meet student interests and support recruitment.

### Set roles and responsibilities.

A strong sense of team spirit will keep students engaged. Many clubs go with a traditional club model of varsity, JV and freshman teams with periodical try-outs to boost engagement. Getting students involved with research, social media and competition announcements helps build community.

### Set meetings and practices.

Establish expectations for the structure of team meetings and practices, with time for purposeful gaming, club conversations and breaks. You'll also want to monitor gameplay and ensure students are respecting the rules of the school and conducting themselves as good digital citizens.

### Hold competitions.

If possible, try to hold competitions in central locations. Partitions can help competitors eliminate distractions and stay focused. Having peers in attendance creates a fun, exciting environment, and hosting a Twitch stream allows those who are unable to attend the event in-person to watch matches.

# READY TO PRESS PLAY?

Talk with an Insight expert to start  
building your esports program.

# About Insight Esports

Insight Enterprises, Inc. is a Fortune 500 solutions integrator helping organizations accelerate their digital journey to modernize their business and maximize the value of technology. Insight's technical expertise spans cloud and edge-based transformation solutions, with global scale and optimization built on 35 years of deep partnerships with the world's leading and emerging technology providers.



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<sup>1</sup> Statista (2024, August) Esports - Worldwide Market Report 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Collins, D. (2023, Jan. 26). How Much Money do Pro League of Legends Players Make? SVG.

<sup>3</sup> Nowakowski, I. (2022, Sept. 16). RLCS 2022-23 Season Information and Sign-Ups. Rocket League Esports.

<sup>4</sup> eSafety Commissioner. (2023). Valorant.