

# What is eSports? – A comprehensive case study into the rapidly growing industry

## “What is eSports?”

eSports is a form of competition based around video games in which typically professional players compete in organised multiplayer tournaments as a team.

eSports broadcasts to around 450 million viewers annually, a number expected to grow even further to 646 million by 2023.

In fact, eSports is growing so popular that in 2016, [more people watched the League of Legends World Championship finals than the NBA's finals](#) (43 million vs 31 million).

Furthermore, in just three years – 2019 – this number jumped to [100 million](#).

In the past, eSports were between amateurs who self-organised tournaments. This continued until around the late 2000's, where professional play and spectatorship of these events through live-streaming saw a massive surge in popularity.



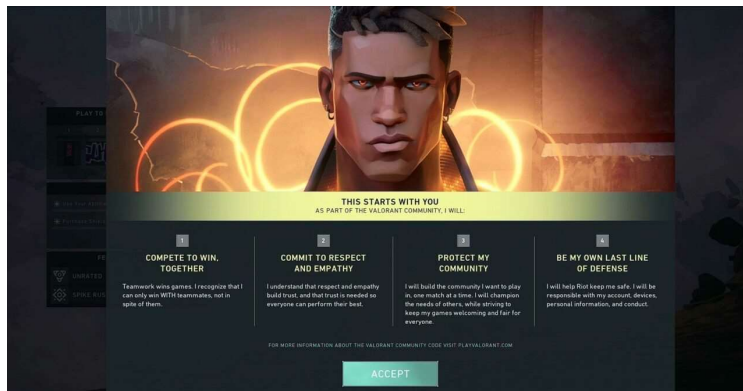
There are many discussions online over whether eSports should be considered a sport or a game. Some argue that eSports doesn't have the level of physical exertion to be considered a sport, while others argue that eSports shows the same level of competitiveness between teams as traditional sports. However, despite the name and all evidence pointing towards its sport nature, [eSports is classified as a game under UK law](#) – similar to Chess or Bridge – and not a sport, unlike snooker

or golf, which are both considered sports.

Some, however, prefer not to think about it too hard. For example, the UK's own British Esports Association stated this: [“Esports is not a sport, but a credible activity in its own right”](#). What they mean by this is that whether eSports is a sport or not is irrelevant – it does not change the fact that it has enormous potential as a growing medium.

## “What are the implications of this classification?”

The fact that, in the UK, eSports is considered a game rather than sport has left an issue of regulation in the UK about betting/match-fixing, which is currently regulated by the developers of the games played in these tournaments.



Due to eSports not being considered a sport, the government does not recognise match fixing as a violation of the law. Therefore, developers cannot threaten it with law violations as they have no government backing – they are only able to restrict them within their own limits (i.e. account bans, suspension from tournaments etc.).

One way developers have to work around this is by using codes of conduct. Most teams and players are required to sign [codes of conduct](#) in order to compete, agreeing to consequences under contract. This is most openly demonstrated by Riot Games, who are able to fine players for match fixing, misconduct and even account sharing.

However, this is slowly changing. Some countries have classified eSports as a sport. One example of this is in Poland.

In Poland, their law states that [any form of “competition based on intellectual activity, which aims to achieve a sports result” should be treated as a sport under Polish law](#). Therefore, eSports fits in this category.

This means that the Polish government enforces fair play in eSports and have put in place fines and federal action for non-compliance. For example, breaching the act on [Electronically Supplied Services](#) in regards to eSports could set you back up to 5000 PLN! (around 1157 EUR or £982)

### **“Have the UK government ever been that involved in eSports?”**

Well, beyond the classification, not very much. The DCMS (Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport) formed a committee in 2018 to discuss and research into video games and their potential and issues as an industry. This report discussed the predatory nature of loot boxes and the health issues surrounding the industry, however also spoke lightly of its potential to unite and reach people.

In 2020, the UK government began to interact with the eSports industry and have been trying to find ways to aid it. The government has gone on record stating that it has the potential to develop as an area of [‘real national strength’](#) in the UK. One benefit they state is that these [‘immersive applications’](#) can help build communities and strengthen social relationships between people.

The UK government has since pledged [to aid in problems with Visas](#) - which have been a problem in the esports industry since its conception – and that they will aim to tackle and research into the issue of loot boxes in multiplayer games and whether it needs to be more strictly managed.

However, as it stands right now, they are nothing more than statements which haven’t really been acted on.

## **Structure and Organisation of the eSports Industry in the UK**

### British eSports Association

The British Esports Association (BEA) is a not-for-profit organisation established in 2016 focused on the **grassroots** level of esports. Their aim is to promote esports in the UK, increase its level of awareness and inspire future talent.

All profits from streams and donations go back into running the organisation, and into funding grassroots esports – for example, their British eSports Championships, ran as a way for schools and colleges to enter the scene.



### Association for UK Interactive Entertainment (UKIE)



Founded in 1989 as the European Leisure Software Publishers Association, the UKIE is a not-for-profit trade association in support of the video game industry in the UK. UKIE's primary goal is to represent the UK video game industry, and as of 2017, has represented over 395 video game companies worldwide.

The association provides strategy and advice for developers and publishers, collects and publishes retail data for UK video game sales, and meets with government to establish policies for video games.

### National University eSports League (NUEL)

The NUEL is an eSports League founded in 2010 by Loughborough candidates to provide all university students – regardless of ability – the opportunity to participate in eSports.

The NUEL offers prize money of around £30,000 in tournament prizing, spread out over many games including League of Legends and Clash Royale. They also boast a 15,000+ student headcount over 110 universities.

In 2020, the NUEL partnered with Spanish company GGTech and retailer Amazon to produce Amazon University eSports, a league for universities throughout the UK, Italy and Spain.

This partnership with Amazon means that the NUEL also have partnerships with Twitch, the dominant streaming service for eSports and eSports tournaments.





### **National Student eSports (NSE)**

The NSE is the official body of university eSports in the UK. Working with BUCS – the British Universities & Colleges Sport – and Benchmark Sport, the NSE exists to provide organised inter-university eSports

competitions that provide social value as a platform for the development of soft skills.

Over each year, they host a point-based league where, at the end of the year, the university with the most points earned earn the title of “eSports University of the Year”, along with a package of 40 society hoodies from Raven with exclusive BUEC branding.

### **Insomnia Gaming Festival**

Insomnia is a festival made for gamers, held at the NEC in Birmingham. There, you can browse Retro Gaming stalls, get sneak peeks at new games releasing soon and VR stands.

They also host massive LAN parties, known as BYOC (or Bring Your Own Computer) where participants compete in anything from eSports tournaments to casual multiplayer games in person. Insomnia will also lend you a PC if you do not have one on you.



They have also ran the European legs of the Call of Duty World League multiple times, as well as a professional and amateur League of Legends tournament ran on behalf of Riot Games.

One negative to Insomnia is that they are a for-profit organisation – entry is costly and you will need to pay money to rent a PC for BYOC. This means that the event can sometimes socially feel more corporate than cooperative with the eSports community. However, this allows for a continually growing experience with new companies showing up every year to give sneak peeks to their next big game.

### **“What is the difference between not-for-profit and for-profit organisations?”**

A not-for-profit organisation aims to improve society’s needs, rather than make money for themselves. They ask for donations from individuals, foundations and corporations and all money raised is never put into the pockets of the owners – rather, all the money is recycled.

A for-profit organisation aims to generate revenue through means such as advertisements and private investors. This money is then forwarded to the company’s owners and shareholders.

One downside to for-profit organisations is that people can feel disconnected with them as they are created entirely for corporate gain. Therefore, many prefer not-for-profit organisations as they feel in-touch with the needs of the attendees. One example of a not-for-profit organisation is the British Esports Association.

**“Given the clear passion for eSports in the UK, how do other countries fare in comparison?”**

### **South Korea**

South Korea is regarded by many as ground zero for eSports. [In the 1990s](#), places known as PC Bangs were introduced which are gaming hubs, open 24 hours a day, where people can enter and play games at a low cost of around [1000 KRW \(or 62p\) per hour](#).

Even when PC ownership in South Korea is among the highest in the world, PC bangs still remain extremely popular, especially among young school-aged children who want to hang out with friends.

PC bangs, over time, would begin to host informal tournaments, and by 2000, Korean cable channels were the first in the world to broadcast online gaming competitions.

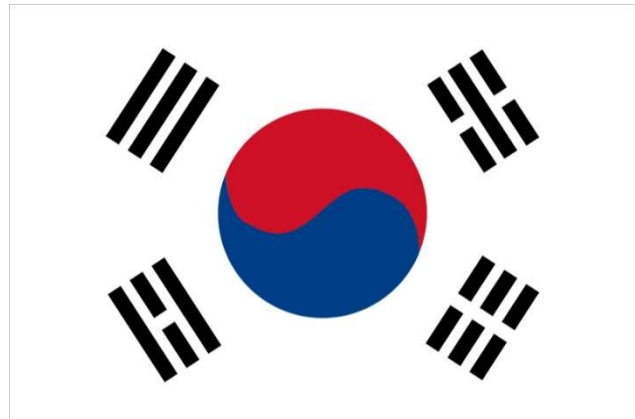
eSports in South Korea is now [the fifth-most popular future job among students](#), among athletes, doctors, teachers and content creators. It’s no wonder – [around 90% of adolescents spend their pastime gaming](#).

It’s not surprising, then, that South Korea recognises eSports as a sport, unlike the UK.

South Korea’s players are often considered some of the best in the world, rivalled only by China. In League of Legends, Korea held the world championship title for 5 years straight – stopped only by China in 2018.

However, eSports are taken deadly seriously in South Korea, to the point where players will drop out of school or mandatory military service in order to attempt to pursue a career in gaming. When a person asks to be exempt from military service, [officials will investigate whether they play video games and meet this issue with “guns and violence”](#).

One team from South Korea are Hanwha Life Esports and one player from South Korea is Faker from League of Legends, one of the most popular eSports players on the planet with three skins in-game dedicated to him.







## China

China is another of the big name countries when it comes to eSports. Chinese esports fans are expected to number around 400 million, while the market was worth around **£11.87 per person** or **£16.7 billion in total** (converted from Yuan – 147 billion yuan) in 2020.

To put that into perspective, the market in the UK in 2019 – only one year before – was

only worth around **£1.65 per person**, or **£111.5 million** total (based on a report from the UKIE).

China has even developed an eSports **town** in Hangzhou to develop the next generation of talent. Cities like Shanghai and Wuhan followed suit and established their own.

However, recently, China has been enforcing heavy restrictions on video gaming – children are only allowed to play video games for 3 hours every week, and only at certain times.

Despite these restrictions, however, [China has recognised eSports as a genuine sport since 2003](#).

One team from China is Royal Never Give Up, and one player is Uzi from League of Legends.

## Poland

In Poland, eSports is classified as a sport.

Poland is home to Katowice, regarded by many as the “world’s eSports capital”.

Katowice houses Intel Extreme Masters (IEM) Katowice, one of the most prestigious Counter Strike tournaments in the world. Every year, players from all around the world compete for fame and a \$1 million prize pool.



In 2019, IEM Katowice attracted [174,000 visitors to Katowice](#) and generated [\\$24.5 million in advertising value](#).

This shows just how profitable eSports can be when given a chance. The predecessor of the mayor of Katowice had never even played video games before, but took the risk and ended up creating an ‘esports mecca’.

One team from Poland is Virtus.pro, and one player is pashaBiceps from Counter Strike.



## Singapore

The initiative for Singapore's esports team is directly regulated by the Government of the Republic of Singapore.

eSports in Singapore is not considered a sport, despite its market growing by [15% between 2019 and 2020](#).

Singapore also houses the Singapore Cybersports and Online Gaming association. Their main initiatives are an eSports

academy supported by the National Youth Council and a full time diploma in partnership with Informatics Academy.

Therefore, you could say that as of right now, Singapore is at around the same stage as the UK is when it comes to eSports. They even have their own Singapore Esports Association.

One team from Singapore is Scythe Gaming, and one player is iceiceice from DOTA 2.

## Sweden

You'd expect that a country that houses Stockholm - one of the technological bastions of the world - would recognise eSports as a sport, however unfortunately you'd be mistaken.

Sweden says that eSports is not a real sport – not like darts, or mini golf, or pool.



This classification meant that in 2021, Valve's DOTA 2 world championship tournament, the International, could not be held in Sweden as Valve could not gain sporting event status and the athletes competing could not be granted visas to travel and compete.

The International is the largest eSports tournament by prize pool - \$40m in 2021 – and pulled in 1.97 million concurrent viewers in 2019.

One Swedish team is Fnatic's Counter Strike division, and one Swedish player is Leffen from the fighting game community, however mostly known for Super Smash Bros Melee.

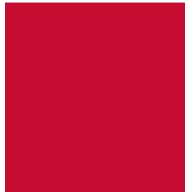


### Denmark

On the contrary to its neighbour Sweden, Denmark recognises eSports as a sport.

In addition, Denmark is the first country in the world to have developed a comprehensive strategy for eSports and how to aid the industry in growing and succeeding.

Their plans include building a sustainable, top-to-bottom structure for Danish eSports and attempting to attract more women and girls to eSports.



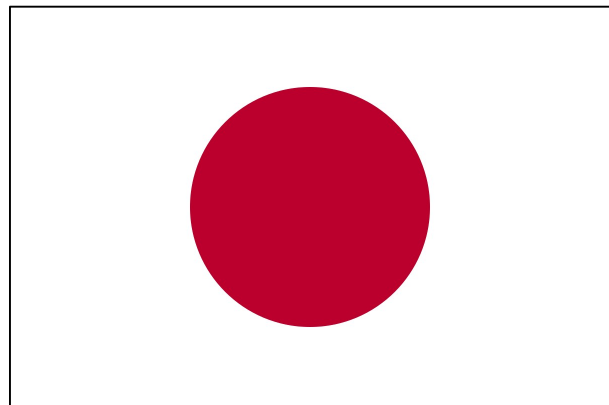
One team from Denmark is Astralis, and one player from Denmark is Caps from League of Legends.

### Japan

eSports has had a very stunted growth in Japan – this is due to things such as sports betting only being allowed for four things (esports isn't one) and also due to the tiny PC market in Japan that gets overpowered entirely by the console market.

In addition, due to certain regulations in place to avoid publishers gaining unreasonable premiums off of tournament venues, it is extremely unprofitable to host tournaments in Japan.

Therefore, tournaments are not often held in Japan outside of domestic arcade tournaments. eSports is classified as a sport by the Government of Japan.



However, Japan are passionate about eSports. Arcade culture is massive in Japan and so Japan are one of the leaders in fighting games and retro games. Anywhere you go, you can generally find an arcade that hosts fighting game tournaments every so often.

This means that Japan is one of the most powerful regions for these fighting games, being extremely dominant in each, typically only challenged by the USA. Most notably in series such as Street Fighter or Guilty Gear – the latter of which has been dominated by Japan for 4 years straight in the annual EVO fighting game tournament.

In addition, there is a stadium in development in the Tokyo Tower, that will open in Winter 2021.

One team from Japan is Detonation FocusMe, and one player from Japan is GO1 from multiple fighting games, most notably Dragon Ball FighterZ and Melty Blood.

**“How does eSports compare to traditional sports?”**

### Organisation of traditional sports in the UK



The structure of traditional sports is typically represented as a pyramid in the UK. On the bottom of the pyramid is the foundation layer. This includes basic understanding and fundamentals and includes those who are taught PE at school and are beginners.

At the layer above that is the participation layer. This is where you participate in one or two activities on a regular basis for enjoyment. For example, those who play football or basketball for fun in their pastime. Another example is a school sports club.

Above that is the performance layer. This is where people who are interested in competing at a high level attempt to improve and compete at a high level. This is where they concentrate on sport specific skills such as defence or striking in football, for example. This is also where they will begin competing in intermediate tier tournaments and start dieting to improve.

The top tier is the excellence tier. This represents the best of the best – including the Olympics, Commonwealth Games, etc. The pyramid is more narrow at this point as very few actually reach this point. They are the people who show the country's talent.

This pyramid creates one argument as to why eSports should be considered a sport. This is because the organisation of sports in the UK is extremely similar to eSports and is not exclusive to traditional sports.

## **Structure of sports in the UK**

In the UK, sport covers public, private, voluntary, tertiary, public and private partnerships.

We also have national sports councils and government departments, where eSports currently does not. These include:

- Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)
- Sport England
- UK Sport
- British Olympic Committee
- Football Association
- UK Snooker Association

Each sport in the UK has national and local governing bodies/federations, local sports clubs and more funded by the government. However, eSports does not have any of these. Esports has the British eSports Association which is a non-government national body rather than a governing body. They aim to improve standards especially around giving young people the chances to practice and compete, however they do not govern esports in the UK.

Sports are also typically in the school curriculum from a young age and children are encouraged to learn a sport such as football or athletics as part of their “foundation”. We do also not have this in eSports.

One reason why it could be tricky to treat eSports in the same way, however, is that the game publishers hold all the rights to the games and have free reign to change the competitive rules of their games and their competitive structure.

One example of this in action is with Slippi. Slippi was a tool created for Super Smash Bros. Melee, which provided a clean online experience for the 20-year-old game which originally could not be played online using an emulator and rollback net code.



During the COVID-19 outbreak, a tournament organisation known as The Big House tried to start a tournament using Slippi as the primary way of connecting to the other players. However, Nintendo filed a cease and desist, as even though Slippi was positively affecting the experience of their game, they didn't like the possibility of people using the emulator that Slippi used to pirate the game regardless of the tournament's requirement to show a legal copy of the game before competing.

Nintendo still had full control over the competitive structure of their game. This shows that game developers could, at any moment, decide to stop their game from being used in an eSports scenario, creating a difficult legal situation for governments and grassroots organisers. So, this could make eSports tricky to deal with when creating governing bodies to oversee eSports.

This is a contrast to sports, where the governing body oversees each sport and enforces regulations. Each sport has also governed international events like the Olympic Games and Commonwealth Games.

Esports are not currently part of international events such as the Olympic Games, however recently it has been announced that they will form part of the 2022 Asian games, which will be a big step forward for eSports.

Globally, traditional sports are each governed by their own Sports Federations (SFs), which are non-governmental governing bodies for a given sport. For example,

Most traditional sports are governed by the Association of the IOC Recognised Sports Federations (ARISF). They are a non-profit, non-governmental organisation constituted through and recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The ARISF is an association whose members are international sports federations that have been recognised by the IOC that currently do not compete in either the summer or winter Olympics. Their reach extends from Chess to Karate to even Life Saving (which is apparently an emerging sport in some countries).

This is different than in eSports, as most games are governed by their own developers rather than individual federations.

**“What kinds of organisations manage eSports globally?”**

### **Global organisations and bodies involved in eSports**

## **Riot Games**

Riot Games are a game development company that developed eSports games such as League of Legends and Valorant.

League of Legends is the most played eSport in the world, with 80 million monthly players. It is also the 2<sup>nd</sup> most profitable game to play competitively in eSports history with nearly \$20 million in prize money awarded since its release.

Riot are heavily involved in their own game's eSports scene. For example, in every major region they manage an eSports League for that region – these regions include Europe, Korea, China, the USA, Japan, even Taiwan and Turkey and the list doesn't even stop there. Owners of teams pay Riot Games for spots in these tournaments.

Every year they also host a Worlds Championship, where the winners of each league play to win the world title and a massive prize pool.

They also host tournaments for Valorant, ran every season.

Riot Games is a perfect example of a company that runs nearly their entire eSports ring by themselves.



## **Blizzard Entertainment**

Blizzard are a game development company that develops games such as Overwatch, Diablo, Heroes of the Storm and so on.

Overwatch is a very popular shooter game, launching in 2016 and amassing 35 million players in around a year's time.

Blizzard ask community organisers to pay for licenses to host tournaments for their games, and set limits based on how much you pay. Meanwhile, they run the Overwatch League, where 12 global franchises represent major cities such as the Dallas Fuel or the Chengdu Hunters. For example, the Florida Mayhem is owned by Ben Spoont, chief executive and co-founder of Misfits Gaming, who are backed by the Miami Heat NBA team.

Players are bought on contract, typically from their Overwatch Contenders tournaments, where academy teams of existing Overwatch League teams compete.

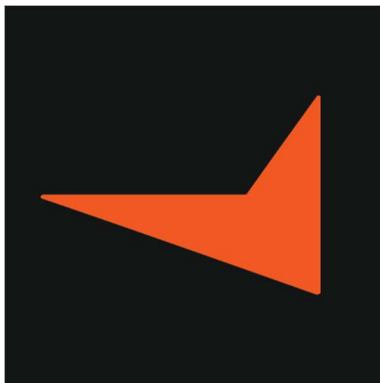
Blizzard represents a much more corporate business model where tournaments are constricted and mainly aimed at pulling in revenue with advertisements and sponsorships.

## Twitch

Twitch are the primary service for live streaming eSports currently. Twitch offer a free to use platform aimed at both casual users and eSports organisers where users can connect and stream using software such as OBS and StreamLabs.

Twitch also offer their own eSports tournaments occasionally – one such tournament is Twitch Rivals, where popular streamers are put together and form a team together to play against other teams.

Twitch runs off of advertisements, donations and a subscription service, where users can pay per month to support their favourite streamers. Part of this money is taken by Twitch to run the website.



## FACEIT

FACEIT is a third party software created with the intention of offering accessible competitive league play, primarily in games such as Counter Strike: Global Offensive and Rainbow Six Siege.

While being third party, FACEIT have hosted many tournaments for Counter Strike, one of which being the Esports Championship League. They have even worked with the developers of Counter Strike to host the thirteenth Counter Strike major tournament, **FACEIT Major: London 2018.**

In Counter Strike, FACEIT is offered as a popular alternative third party option for playing online and at the highest level can even be a gateway into professional careers as many players are picked up on contract from their performance on FACEIT and their regional leagues.

## World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)

WADA is an agency initiated by the International Olympic Committee to promote, coordinate and monitor the fight against drug use in traditional sports.

They have also extended their reach to eSports – one example of this is their partnership with ESL to create an anti-PED esports policy.



Many drugs can provide an edge in eSports. Adderall, for example, can help with focus and reaction times in game. Another example is marijuana, which can help people relax in situations where being tense is a disadvantage.

The International eSports Federation have accepted and adopted WADA's code of conduct.



### Global eSports Federation (GEF)

The Global eSports Federation is a non-government organisation created to promote the credibility, legitimacy and prestige of eSports. They prioritise the development of an ["inclusive, safe, healthy and sustainable eSports ecosystem with a particular focus on responsible gaming, holistic wellness, fair play, education and career pathways for players and athletes."](#)

It is a relatively new organisation, founded in December 2019 in Singapore, with core objectives including athlete career support and wellness, governance structures and guidelines and encouraging the establishment of esports federations.

They also host a tournament called the Global Esports Games every December. This year, Valve's *DOTA 2* and Capcom's *Street Fighter V* will be on show at the event.

### "What kind of teams compete in eSports?"

#### Esports teams in the UK

##### FNATIC

An international team headquartered and founded in the United Kingdom.

Fnatic compete in Counter Strike and League of Legends, but are most commonly known for their Counter Strike performance in all three games in the series. In fact, they were the first region ever to win three Counter Strike majors. They play in S-Tier leagues for both games.

They are also the only European team to have ever won the League of Legends world championship, back in 2009.

Notable players from Fnatic include Caps in League of Legends, and olofmeister in Counter Strike.



##### London Spitfire

An Overwatch team coming from Blizzard's Overwatch League.

The London Spitfire ended up coming 1<sup>st</sup> in the Overwatch League's inaugural season playoffs, winning \$1,000,000 in prize money. They took this win and continued to win, taking 1<sup>st</sup> in the Overwatch League's inaugural 1<sup>st</sup> title match.

However, though the team originates in London with venues in Wembley Arena and the National Exhibition Centre, the team is owned by American team Cloud9 and the team is largely from countries such as Germany and Denmark rather than the UK.

Notable players from the London Spitfire include Profit, a renowned DPS player.

## Esports teams around the world

### Gambit Esports

Gambit is a Counter Strike and Valorant team originating in Russia.

Empowered by their captain Zeus, known as Counter Strike's "brain dead mastermind" for his low mechanical skill but incredible strategy, Gambit went from a bunch of no-name players who had never been seen in competitive play before to winning their first ever major.

Gambit continued to compete and have gone on to become a driving force in both Counter Strike and Valorant, winning first place in 6 different S-Tier major tournaments since 2016.

Notable players from Gambit include Dosia.



### San Francisco Shock

A dominant force in the Overwatch League, the San Francisco Shock are a team originating in the USA owned by the co-owner of NRG Esports.

They hold many titles, but most notably being the only team ever to complete **a golden stage** (not losing a single game during an entire tournament), being the only team ever to have swept every other team and being the first back-to-back champions in the Overwatch

League's history (2019 and 2020).

Notable players from the San Francisco Shock include Viol2t and ChoiHyoBin.

**"What kind of tournaments can I tune into to learn more?"**

## Esports tournaments in the UK



### The British eSports Association's Student Championships

A tournament held by the British eSports Association for students aged 12-18 that are in school or college. Teams are formed to represent that school or college and the top teams from their student league play in a stadium at Confetti's stadium in Nottingham.

Over 100 different colleges have signed up for Valorant's winter cup alone, including Exeter College.



### Esports tournaments globally



#### League of Legends World Championships

Every year, the strongest teams from Riot Games' regional tournaments fight against each other in the annual World Championships.

Attendees include teams such as Fnatic, Team Liquid and Cloud9.

The tournament is largely dominated by South Korea, holding 6 titles over every other region's combined 4.

In 2020, the prize pool for worlds was \$2.34 million.

#### IEM Katowice

A major tournament for Counter Strike held annually in the urban Polish town of Katowice.

In 2021, the prize pool for IEM Katowice was \$1,000,000, with the prize money going to Polish team Gambit Esports. The tournament also attracted 596,585 viewers at its peak. In 2019, however, Katowice peaked at 1,205,103 viewers.



**"How can I find a game that's right for me? What kinds of games are there?"**

#### Overwatch

Overwatch is a game developed by Blizzard entertainment, where the goal is to play for objectives defended by the opposing team, who are each using different heroes. These different heroes all have different abilities.

Overwatch falls into the **Shooter** subgenre of the action genre.

Shooter games are common in eSports as they take high mechanical skill and their mastery can be incredibly satisfying. Some games, like Overwatch, are more chaotic whereas games like Counter Strike are more tactical and precise. They are typically played with mouse and keyboard, however controllers are possible – but are suboptimal in most cases.

Overwatch is very popular in China and South Korea, however became a craze everywhere, amassing millions of players in its launch year. The average Overwatch player is reportedly [around 22 years old](#).

### **Rocket League**

Rocket League is a game developed by Psyonix inspired by football, where you use rocket-powered cars to shoot a giant ball into the opponent's goal.

Rocket League is a difficult game to categorise, however most cleanly fits into the sports subgenre of the action genre.

Sports are common in eSports as they take familiar concepts learned at a young age through physical education and turn them into highly strategic and mechanical games. However, sports games in eSports do not necessarily have to have a fast-paced spin – other sports games played competitively include FIFA and Madden, based on real sports and real people.

### **League of Legends**

League of Legends is a game developed by Riot Games, where you command champions each with different abilities and utility to destroy the enemy's defences and eventually reach and destroy their Nexus.

League of Legends falls into the **MOBA** subgenre of the action genre.

MOBAs are relatively common in eSports as they take high strategy and, in terms of user online experience, are very difficult to cheat in, causing an equal experience and a guarantee that you were just outplayed through each match so you can always learn something from each death.

However, they are uncommon in the UK. Most League of Legends players reside in Asia, specifically in China or South Korea.

The common age for League of Legends players is around 25-34 years old, making up 40% of the United States' player base.

They also take acute time management and the ability to calculate risk vs reward. Other MOBAs played competitively include DOTA 2 and Pokémon Unite.

The most common esports demographic are millennials, as 21-35 year olds make up 32% of the market. They also tend to be male – women represent 31% over all ages and are also most likely to be 21-35 years old.

Compared to traditional sports, the average esports fan is 24 years younger than the average sports fan (26 vs 50).

## Conclusion

In conclusion, different things will appeal to different people – that's just the nature of it. For example, someone who used to be a football player may be more interested in FIFA or Rocket League as they are more familiar with the concepts in the game.

Players who prefer a mental challenge may choose MOBAs, or those introduced to shooters back when Call of Duty and Halo were huge crazes back on the Xbox 360/PS3 era may prefer the mechanical tactics of shooter games.

Games also target certain demographics – for example, Overwatch was created as a way to unite MMO and FPS players with characters that require high aim skill like the revolver bandit McCree, but also more strategic characters that require less mechanics like the tesla cannon-wielding Winston or the hammer-swinging Reinhardt.

Valorant, as another example, was a game created as an alternative to Counter Strike, with more flashy abilities and debatably more interesting strategy, and a greater focus on precision.

Fortnite was originally a zombie tower-defence game, with a battle royal mode created at the last minute as a competitor to Player Unknown's Battle Grounds. It ended up breaking free from that comparison with its intuitive building, which can sometimes go so fast it's hard for viewers to even keep up.

Esports teams can also attract certain demographics too.

Teams like Fnatic have been around for a long time, so their prestige can attract viewers new and old to support them. Players going to world championships attract support from those who are a part of the same region or the same country.

Teams like the Overwatch League can intrigue people as teams represent cities, so those who are from those major cities can feel a connection to them. For example, those from London may support the London Spitfire or those from Dallas may support the Dallas Fuel.

In fighting games, however, due to how close-knit the niche community is, people can get caught up in the personalities of individual players a lot easier and so can relate with or wish to support them. People who play fighting games love the storylines that come from their eSports scenes. For example, the stories of [Smash Melee's 5 gods and the god-slayer](#), or the rivalry between [America's SonicFox and Japan's GO1](#) in Dragon Ball FighterZ – and who could forget [Evo Moment #37](#)?

Additionally, in games like League of Legends where Asia dominates, it's always fun to cheer on the underdogs – you never know, EU might win this year..

As eSports continues to grow, there will continue to be new games created and over time more genres will be encompassed by its competitive nature. With growth like this, it is important that international and national bodies can work together with games publishers to ensure the safety of young people as gaming becomes more and more popular among younger people as a pastime and even as a possible job opportunity for the future.

Therefore, I believe that eSports will only continue to grow and I can only wonder what it will look like in multiple years' time. Hopefully, it will look like a safe place for young people to sink their teeth into, where regulations make it a safe and fair place for players to play in, as well.