

The International



Sport	Dota 2
Founded	2011; 13 years ago
Administrator	Valve
No. of teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 16 teams (2011–2016, 2024–present)• 18 teams (2017–2021)• 20 teams (2022–2023)
Most recent champion(s)	Team Spirit , 2023
Most titles	OG and Team Spirit (2)
Tournament format	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group stage• Round robin• Main event• Double elimination
Official website	dota2.com/esports

The International (TI) is an annual [esports world championship](#) for the five-on-five video game [Dota 2](#). Produced by the game's developer [Valve](#), the International is the final event of the [Dota Pro Circuit](#) (DPC) and consists of 20 teams: 12 based on final results from the DPC; six from [North America](#), [South America](#), [Southeast Asia](#), [China](#), [Eastern Europe](#), and [Western Europe](#) regional leagues; and two from last-chance qualifiers. The International was first held in [Germany](#) at the 2011 [Gamescom](#) to promote the game's release. It was then held in [Seattle](#), where Valve is headquartered, until it began to be hosted internationally again starting with [The International 2018](#) in [Vancouver](#).

The tournament's prize pool has been [crowdfunded](#) via a [battle pass](#) system within the game since 2013, with a quarter of all revenue from it directly going towards it. Internationals have the largest single-tournament prize pool of any esports event, with largest reaching US\$40 million. The most recent champion is [Team Spirit](#), who won the 2023 iteration. [OG](#) and Team Spirit are the only repeat winners in the tournament's history, winning two each.

History^{[\[edit\]](#)}

Early years^{[\[edit\]](#)}



The first International was held at [Gamescom](#) in 2011

[Valve](#) announced the first edition of The International on August 1, 2011. 16 teams were invited to compete in the tournament, which would also serve as the first public viewing of [Dota 2](#).^{[\[1\]](#)} The tournament was funded by Valve, including the US\$1 million grand prize, with [Nvidia](#) supplying the hardware.^{[\[2\]](#)[\[3\]](#)} It took place at [Gamescom](#) in [Cologne](#) from August 17–21 the same year.^{[\[4\]](#)} The tournament started with a [group stage](#) in which the winners of each of the four groups were entered into a winner's bracket, and the other teams entered the loser's bracket. The rest of the tournament was then played as a [double-elimination tournament](#).^{[\[5\]](#)} The final of this inaugural tournament was between Ukrainian-based [Natus Vincere](#) and Chinese-based [EHOME](#), with Natus Vincere winning the series 3–1.^{[\[6\]](#)} EHOME won US\$250,000, with the rest of the 14 teams splitting the remaining \$350,000.^{[\[7\]](#)}

The International as an recurring annual event was confirmed in May 2012.^{[\[8\]](#)[\[9\]](#)} The International 2012 was held at the 2,500 seat [Benaroya Hall](#) in [Seattle](#) from August 31 to September 2, with teams situated in glass booths on the main stage.^{[\[10\]](#)} The total prize pool remained at \$1.6 million, with \$1 million for the winning team.^{[\[11\]](#)[\[12\]](#)} The previous winners, Natus Vincere, were beaten 3-1 by Chinese team [Invictus Gaming](#) in the grand finals.^{[\[13\]](#)} In November 2012, Valve released a free documentary on the event that featured interviews with the teams, and following them from the preliminary stages through to the finale.^{[\[14\]](#)}

Introduction of crowdfunding^[edit]



[The International 2014](#) at the [KeyArena](#) in Seattle

The International 2013 was hosted again at the Benaroya Hall in Seattle from August 7–11. Sixteen teams participated, thirteen of which received direct invitations, and the final three being decided in two qualifying tournaments and a match at the start of the tournament.^[15] In May 2013, it was announced that an in-game [battle pass](#), known as the Compendium, would be available for purchase that allowed for the tournament's prize pool to be [crowdfunded](#). A quarter of the total revenue from the Compendium was added to the base \$1.6 million prize pool.^[16] The prize pool eventually reached over \$2.8 million, making it the largest prize pool in esports history at the time.^[17] [KCPQ](#) news anchor Kaci Aitchison acted as a host at the event, providing behind-the-scenes commentary and player interviews.^[18] The International 2013 was viewed by over a million concurrent viewers at its peak, via live streaming websites such as [Twitch](#).^[19]

[The International 2014](#) took place from July 18–21 at the [KeyArena](#) in Seattle.^[20] For the event, eleven teams would receive direct invites, with an additional four spots determined by regional qualifiers taking place between May 12–25. The sixteenth spot would be determined by a wild card qualifier between the runners-up from the regional competitions.^[21] The tickets for the event were sold out within an hour of going on sale that April.^[22] The tournament's crowdfunded prize pool again broke esports records for being the largest in history, with it totalling over \$10.9 million.^[23] As a result, eight *Dota 2* players became the highest earning players in esports, surpassing the top earning player at the time, [Lee "Jaedong" Jae-dong](#) of [StarCraft](#).^[24] The event was also broadcast on [ESPN](#) networks for the first time.^[25]

Expansion^[edit]

The tournament was expanded to 18 teams for [The International 2017](#) onwards, an increase from the previous 16.^[26] The event in 2017 was also the last time it was held in Seattle, with every International since being hosted in a new country. The International 2020 was the first International to skip a year, as it was postponed due to the [COVID-19 pandemic](#).^{[27][28]} Ahead of the event, originally scheduled to be held in [Stockholm, Sweden](#), the Swedish Sports Federation voted to deny recognition of esports as a sporting event, making it difficult for Valve to help international players to secure travel visas for participating there.^[29] Valve later rescheduled the event and rebranded it as [The International 2021](#), which was held at the [Arena Națională](#) in [Bucharest, Romania](#), in October 2021.^[30] It set a record for the largest prize pool of any single esports event at \$40 million.^[31]

[The International 2022](#) increased to 20 teams and was held in [Singapore](#) in October 2022, where it was won by Tundra Esports.^[32] It was the first International to not surpass the previous one's prize pool at \$18.9 million, the lowest since [The International 2015](#).^[33] [The International 2023](#) was hosted at [Climate Pledge Arena](#) in Seattle, which was built at the same site as KeyArena, and ran from October 27 to 29.^{[34][35]}

List of Internationals^[edit]

Year	Date	Teams	Venue	Winners	Finals	Runner's-up	Prize pool	Ref.
2011	August 17–21		Koelnmesse (Cologne)	Natus Vincere	3–1	EHOM E	\$1,600,000	^{[36][4]}
2012	August 31 – September 2		Benaroya Hall (Seattle)	Invictus Gaming	3–1	Natus Vincere	\$1,600,000	^[37]
2013	August 7–11			Alliance	3–2	Natus Vincere	\$2,874,380	^[38]
		16						
2014	July 18–21			Newbee	3–1	Vici Gaming	\$10,923,977	^[39]
2015	August 3–6		KeyArena (Seattle)	Evil Geniuses	3–1	CDEC Gaming	\$18,429,613	^[40]
2016	August 3–13			Wings Gaming	3–1	Digital Chaos	\$20,770,460	^[41]

2017	August 7–12		Team Liquid	3–0	Newbe e	\$24,787,916	[42]	
2018	August 20–25		Rogers Arena (Vancouver)	OG	3–2	PSG.LGD	\$25,532,177	[43]
2019	August 20–25	18	Mercedes-Benz Arena (Shanghai)	OG	3–1	Team Liquid	\$34,330,068	[44]
2020	August 18–23		Avicii Arena (Stockholm)	Cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic				
2021	October 7–17		Arena Națională (Bucharest)	Team Spirit	3–2	PSG.LGD	\$40,018,195	[45]
2022	October 15–30	20	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Suntec SingaporeSingapore Indoor Stadium (Singapore)</div>	Tundra Esports	3–0	Team Secret	\$18,930,775	[32]
2023	October 14–29		Climate Pledge Arena (Seattle)	Team Spirit	3–0	Gaimin Gladiators	\$3,143,063	[46]
2024	September 4–15	16	Royal Arena (Copenhagen)	<i>[to be determined]</i>				

Format^[edit]

Invitations^[edit]

The International features a series of tournaments before the event, known as the [Dota Pro Circuit](#) (DPC), with the top 12 ranking teams receiving direct invitations based on their final standings.^{[47][48][49]} Besides the directly invited DPC teams, an additional team from the [Commonwealth of Independent States](#) (CIS), [China](#), [Europe](#), [North America](#), [South America](#), and [Southeast Asia](#) regions each earn an invite by winning regional playoffs, bringing the total number of participating teams up to 18.^{[50][51]} At the International, two separate best-of-two [round robin](#) groups consisting of nine teams each are played, with lowest placed team from both at the end of the stage being eliminated.^{[52][53][26]} The remaining 16 teams then move on to the [double elimination](#) main event at the hosted venue, with the top four finishing teams from both groups advancing to the upper bracket, and the bottom four advancing to the lower bracket.^{[53][52]} The first round of the lower bracket is treated as [single-elimination](#), with the loser of each match being immediately eliminated from the tournament.^{[52][26]} Every other round of both brackets is played in a [best-of-three](#) series, with the exception being the Grand Finals, which is played between the winners of the upper and lower brackets in a [best-of-five](#) series.^[52]

Prize pool^[edit]

Since The International 2013, the tournament's prize pool is primarily [crowdfunded](#) through a type of in-game [battle pass](#) called the "Compendium", which raises money from players buying them to get exclusive in-game virtual goods and other bonuses.^{[54][55]} 25% of all the revenue made from yearly Compendiums go directly to the prize pool.^{[56][57]} The contribution of players from the [game community](#) is the main source of prize pool for the International.^[58] Until 2022, each iteration of The International has surpassed the previous one's prize pool. [The International 2021](#) had the largest prize pool, awarding \$40 million (£29 million) in total to participating teams.^{[59][60]}

Trophy^[edit]



The Aegis of Champions trophy

The Aegis of Champions is a trophy that is awarded to the champions of an International. The reverse side of it is permanently engraved with the names of each player on the winning team.^{[61][59]} The Aegis is a shield inspired by Norse and Chinese

designs, with it molded in bronze and silver by the prop studio, [Weta Workshop](#).^[61] Miniature replicas of it are also sometimes awarded to compendium owners for having a high enough level in it.^[62]

Media coverage^[edit]



As with traditional sporting events, The International feature pre- and post-game discussion by a panel of analysts (*left*), with in-match casting being done by [play-by-play](#) and [color commentators](#) (*right*).

The primary [medium](#) for International coverage is through the [video game live streaming](#) platform [Twitch](#), which is done by a selection of dedicated esports organizations and personnel who provide on-site [commentary](#), analysis, match predictions, and player interviews surrounding the event in progress, similar to traditional sporting events.^{[19][63]} Multiple streams are provided in a variety of languages, mainly in English, Russian, and Chinese. The International also sometimes provides a "newcomer stream" that is dedicated to presenting games for viewers unfamiliar with the game.^[64]

Documentaries^[edit]

In 2014, [Valve](#) released a free [documentary](#), *[Free to Play](#)*, which followed three players during their time at the first International in 2011.^{[65][66]} In 2016, Valve began producing an episodic-based documentary series titled *True Sight*, considered a [spiritual successor](#) to *Free to Play*.^[67] Several more episodes of it have been filmed, showcasing the 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2021 tournaments.^{[68][69][70][71]}