

The Real Winner of EWC 2025? Saudi Arabia's Long-Term Play for Esports Supremacy

Not Just Hosting, Saudi Arabia's Grabbing the Steering Wheel

Hosting the Esports World Cup 2025 (EWC 2025) in Riyadh tourism did not come as a coincidence in Saudi Arabia. No, this is all concerning a larger picture. EWC 2025, which is being more than funded by the Esports World Cup Foundation (EWCF), itself funded by Saudi Public Investment Fund (PIF), is being hosted with a prize pool over \$70 million, the largest in the history of esports. It is no longer a championship. It is a statement.

They intend to build Riyadh as a competitive gaming destination stop. And, according to what happened in EWC 2024, this move is already paying off.



EWC 2024 Was Just the Start, and Saudi Stole the Show

Last year, the numbers went through the roof. In excess of 500 million viewers tuned in online, with over 2.6 million fans showing up in person in Riyadh. These statistics made EWC 2024 the most-watched esports event of the year.

And Saudi Arabia's presence? Team Falcons, based in Riyadh, ended up as the top-scoring team of the whole tournament. They even won the \$7 million Club Championship, handed over by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman himself. This wasn't just about a trophy. This was about showing the world: We're here to lead.



Saudi Arabia's Bigger Goal, Vision 2030 Through Esports

This is not a hype-generated investment. It's all part of the kingdom's larger Vision 2030 strategy. Saudi Arabia, by its Savvy Games Group (also PIF-owned), invested close to USD 38 billion into gaming and esports.

Here's what the Vision entails:

- Development of 250 game development firms within Saudi Arabia
- 39,000+ new gaming industry jobs
- Adding 50 billion SAR to Saudi GDP through gaming
- Transforming the nation into an "international hub" of video game production and esports



The Support Behind It All

Saudi Arabia did not simply do the big things in terms of fancy events and consider that as done. They even doing things more cleverly behind the scene. Such as, actual system-level investments. A good example is Club Support Program.

And the thing is that this is not just the matter of getting some headlines. Although even the CEO of EWCF wanted it clear: it is all about long term. Not hype in a few weeks and finished. They are seeking to develop something that is lasting.



What's So Different About Saudi Arabia's Esports Game Plan?

Entertaining Party Fun as never before

The Esports World Cup (EWC) 2025 is an honest-to-goodness thing right there in Saudi Arabia. Check out the million plus prize pool. It is not all about doling out money though.

The Numbers? Insane

The precedent was 2024 when the EWC brought in online viewers of more than 500 million. And two point six million individuals did go there like physically.

Big Bucks, Big Time

The Public Investment Fund and Savvy Games Group of Saudi Arabia have already injected in like \$38 billion into the video gaming market. That is not a small amount, really!

Assisting the Clubs As Well

It is not only all about the players. There is this \$ 20 million club support program that makes sure that groups of teams are becoming big and staying powerful rather than individuals.

The publishers are all in.

Saudi Arabia does not take a safe bet with one or two partners in mind. They made deals in progress with such giants as Activision, Riot, Capcom, and so on.

So, Who Wins EWC 2025?



Sure, maybe a Saudi team doesn't end up lifting the biggest trophy. But truth is, Saudi Arabia's already won in a much bigger way. They've somehow, pretty quickly, turned Riyadh into the place for esports. Like, it actually happened faster than most people thought possible. According to what the Crown Prince had said, the goal behind all this was to turn the passion of the younger generation into something real, something industry-grade. And yeah, that vision is kinda happening right in front of us.

They won't win every match, sure. But if we're talking about the larger competition, about who's creating the most momentum in esports, then Saudi Arabia is already out front, and they're not slowing down.