**Early history (1972–1989)**  
  
Attendees of the 1981 Space Invaders Championship attempt to set the highest score.  
The earliest known video game competition took place on October 19, 1972, at Stanford University for the game Spacewar, where students were invited to an "Intergalactic spacewar olympics" whose grand prize was a year's subscription for Rolling Stone. The Space Invaders Championship held by Atari in 1980 was the earliest large scale video game competition, attracting more than 10,000 participants across the United States, establishing competitive gaming as a mainstream hobby.  
  
In the summer of 1981, Walter Day founded a high score record keeping organization called Twin Galaxies. The organization went on to help promote video games and publicize its records through publications such as the Guinness Book of World Records, and in 1983 it created the U.S. National Video Game Team. The team was involved in competitions, such as running the Video Game Masters Tournament for Guinness World Records and sponsoring the North American Video Game Challenge tournament.  
  
During the 1970s and 1980s, electronic sports players and tournaments begun being featured in popular newspapers and magazines including Life and Time. One of the most well known classic arcade game players is Billy Mitchell, for his listing as holding the records for high scores in six games including Pac-Man and Donkey Kong in the 1985 issue of the Guinness Book of World Records. Televised eSports events aired during this period included the American show Starcade which ran between 1982 and 1984 airing a total of 133 episodes, on which contestants would attempt to beat each other's high scores on an arcade game. A video game tournament was included as part of TV show That's Incredible!, and tournaments were also featured as part of the plot of various films, including 1982's Tron.  
  
**Esports goes online (1990–1999)**  
In the 1990s, many games benefited from increasing internet connectivity, especially PC games. For example, the 1988 game Netrek was an Internet game for up to 16 players, written almost entirely in cross-platform open source software. Netrek was the third Internet game, the first Internet team game, the first Internet game to use metaservers to locate open game servers, and the first to have persistent user information. In 1993 it was credited by Wired Magazine as "the first online sports game".  
  
Large eSports tournaments in the 1990s include the 1990 Nintendo World Championships, which toured across the United States, and held its finals at Universal Studios Hollywood in California. Nintendo held a 2nd World Championships in 1994 for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System called the Nintendo PowerFest '94. There were 132 finalists that played in the finals in San Diego, CA. Mike Iarossi took home 1st prize. Blockbuster Video also ran their own World Game Championships in the early 1990s, co-hosted by GamePro magazine. Citizens from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Chile were eligible to compete. Games from the 1994 championships included NBA Jam and Virtua Racing.  
  
Television shows featuring eSports during this period included the British shows GamesMaster and Bad Influence! the Australian gameshow A\*mazing, which would show two children competing in various Nintendo games in order to win points.  
  
**Rise of global tournaments (2000 onwards)**  
  
Esports tournament prize amounts, 1998–2014.  
Recently, eSports has gone through tremendous growth, incurring a large increase in both viewership and prize money. Although large tournaments were founded before the 21st century, the number and scope of tournaments has increased significantly, going from about 10 tournaments in 2000 to about 260 in 2010. Many successful tournaments were founded during this period, including the World Cyber Games, the Intel Extreme Masters, and Major League Gaming. The proliferation of tournaments included experimentation with competitions outside traditional eSports genres. For example, the September 2006 FUN Technologies Worldwide Webgames Championship featured 71 contestants competing in casual games for a $1 million grand prize.  
  
This period was also the peak of televised esports. Television coverage was best established in South Korea, with competitions featuring StarCraft and Warcraft III regularly televised by dedicated 24-hour cable TV game channels Ongamenet and MBCGame. Elsewhere, eSports television coverage was sporadic. The German GIGA Television covered eSports until its shutdown in 2009. The UK satellite television channel XLEAGUE.TV broadcast eSports competitions from 2007 to 2009. The online esports only channel ESL TV briefly attempted a paid television model re-branded GIGA II from June 2006 to autumn 2007. The French channel Game One broadcast e-sport matches in a show called "Arena Online" for the Xfire Trophy. The United States channel ESPN hosted Madden NFL competitions in a show called Madden Nation from 2005 to 2008. DirecTV broadcast the Championship Gaming Series tournament for 2 seasons in 2007 and 2008.CBS aired prerecorded footage of the 2007 World Series of Video Games tournament that was held in Louisville, Kentucky. The G4 television channel originally covered video games exclusively, but broadened its scope to cover technology and men's lifestyle, though has now shutdown.  
  
The popularity and emergence of online streaming services have helped the growth of eSports in this period, and are the most common method of watching tournaments. Twitch, an online streaming platform launched in 2011, routinely streams popular eSports competitions. In 2013, viewers of the platform watched 12 billion minutes of video on the service, with the two most popular Twitch broadcasters being League of Legends and Dota 2. During one day of The International, Twitch recorded 4.5 million unique views, with each view watching for an average of 2 hours.  
  
The modern eSports boom has also seen a rise in video games companies embracing the eSports potential of their products. After many years of ignoring the eSports scene, in 2014 Nintendo hosted an invitational Super Smash Bros. for Wii U competitive tournament at the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) press conference. It was additionally streamed online. Halo developers 343 Industries announced in 2014 plans to turn Halo into an esport with the creation of their own dedicated Halo league and a prize pool of 50,000$ USD. Both Blizzard Entertainment and Riot Games have their own collegiate outreach programs, aimed at cultivating new eSports talent at the university and college level.[44][45] Recently, universities and colleges in the United States such as Robert Morris University Illinois and the University of Pikeville have recognized electronic sports players as varsity level athletes and offer scholarships.  
  
Physical viewership of eSports competitions and the scope of events have increased in tandem with the growth of online viewership. The Season 3 League of Legends World Championship, held in 2013, was held in a sold-out Staples Center. Its successor, the 2014 League of Legends World Championship in Seoul, South Korea had over 40,000 fans in attendance and featured musical talent, and opening and closing ceremonies in addition to the competition.

**Esports** (also known as **electronic sports**, **e-sports**, **eSports**, or **competitive**/**professional** [**video**] **gaming**) is a form of competition using [video games](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Video_game).[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-whatisesports-1) Most commonly, esports takes the form of organized, [multiplayer video game](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multiplayer_video_game) competitions, particularly between [professional](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Professional_sports) players. Although organized online and offline competitions have long been a part of [video game culture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Video_game_culture), these were largely between amateurs until the late 2000s, when participation by professional gamers and spectatorship in these events through [live streaming](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Streaming_media) saw a large surge in popularity.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-2012Forbes-2)[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-FieldOfStreams-3) By the 2010s, esports was a significant factor in the video game industry, with many game developers actively designing toward a professional esports subculture.

The most common [video game genres](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Video_game_genre) associated with esports are [real-time strategy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Real-time_strategy) (RTS), [first-person shooter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First-person_shooter) (FPS), [fighting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fighting_game) and [multiplayer online battle arena](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multiplayer_online_battle_arena) (MOBA). Popular games for esports include [*League of Legends*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/League_of_Legends), *[Dota 2](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dota_2" \o "Dota 2)*, [*Counter-Strike: Global Offensive*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Counter-Strike:_Global_Offensive), [*Call of Duty*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Call_of_Duty), [*Hearthstone*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hearthstone), [*Overwatch*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Overwatch_(video_game)), [*Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Siege*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Clancy%27s_Rainbow_Six_Siege), *[PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PlayerUnknown%27s_Battlegrounds" \o "PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds)*, *[Fortnite Battle Royale](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fortnite_Battle_Royale" \o "Fortnite Battle Royale)*, and [*StarCraft II*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/StarCraft_II). Tournaments such as the [*League of Legends* World Championship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/League_of_Legends_World_Championship), *Dota 2*'s [The International](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_International_(Dota_2)), the fighting games-specific [Evolution Championship Series](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evolution_Championship_Series), and the [Intel Extreme Masters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intel_Extreme_Masters) provide live broadcasts of the competition and prize money to competitors. Many competitions use a series of [promotion and relegation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Promotion_and_relegation) play with sponsored teams, such as the *League of Legends* World Championship, but more recently, competitions structured similar to American professional sports, with salaried players and regular season and play-off series, have emerged, such as the [Overwatch League](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Overwatch_League). The legitimacy of esports as a sports competition remains in question; however, esports has been featured alongside traditional sports in multinational events, and the [International Olympic Committee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Olympic_Committee) has explored incorporating them into future Olympic events.

By 2019, it is estimated that 427 million people worldwide will be watching some form of esports.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-4) The increasing availability of online [streaming media](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Streaming_media) platforms, particularly Panda.tv, [YouTube](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/YouTube) and [Twitch.tv](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twitch.tv), has become central to the growth and promotion of esports competitions.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-FieldOfStreams-3) Demographically, [Major League Gaming](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Major_League_Gaming) has reported viewership that is approximately 85% male and 15% female, with a majority of viewers between the ages of 18 and 34.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-5) Despite this, several female personalities within esports are hopeful about the increasing presence of female gamers.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-6)[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-7) South Korea has several established esports organizations, which have licensed pro gamers since the year 2000. Recognition of esports competitions outside of South Korea has come somewhat slower. Along with South Korea, most competitions take place in Europe, North America and China. Despite its large video game market, esports in Japan is relatively underdeveloped, and this has been attributed largely to its broad anti-gambling laws which prohibit paid professional gaming tournaments.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-8)[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-bloomberg_olympics_2024-9)

The global esports market generated US$325 million of revenue in 2015 and was expected to make $493 million in 2016. The global esports audience in 2015 was 226 million people.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-10) According to a Newzoo report in April 2017, 42% of the gaming market belongs to the mobile industry, and mobile is projected to claim more than 50% the market by 2020.[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-11)[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-12) The esports industry is expanding beyond PC and console, as developer [Super Evil Megacorp](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Super_Evil_Megacorp) created [Vainglory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vainglory_(video_game)), the first mobile multiplayer online battle arena game,[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-13) and companies like [Skillz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skillz_(company)" \o "Skillz (company)) bring esports tournaments to [mobile games](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mobile_game).[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-14)

**Early history (1972–1989)**

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Space_Invaders_Championship.jpg)

Attendees of the 1981 [*Space Invaders*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Space_Invaders) Championships attempt to set the highest score

The earliest known video game competition took place on 19 October 1972 at [Stanford University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stanford_University) for the game *[Spacewar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spacewar_(video_game)" \o "Spacewar (video game))*.[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-15) Stanford students were invited to an "Intergalactic spacewar olympics" whose grand prize was a year's subscription for [*Rolling Stone*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rolling_Stone), with Bruce Baumgart winning the five-man-free-for-all tournament and Tovar and Robert E. Maas winning the Team Competition.[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-16) The [Space Invaders Championship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Space_Invaders#In_popular_culture) held by [Atari](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atari) in 1980 was the earliest large scale video game competition, attracting more than 10,000 participants across the United States, establishing competitive gaming as a mainstream hobby.[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-eg_2_36-17)

In the summer of 1980, [Walter Day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walter_Day) founded a [high score](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High_score) record keeping organization called [Twin Galaxies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twin_Galaxies).[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-18) The organization went on to help promote video games and publicize its records through publications such as the Guinness Book of World Records, and in 1983 it created the [U.S. National Video Game Team](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._National_Video_Game_Team). The team was involved in competitions, such as running the [Video Game Masters Tournament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Video_Game_Masters_Tournament) for [Guinness World Records](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guinness_World_Records)[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-19)[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-20) and sponsoring the North American Video Game Challenge tournament.[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-21)

During the 1970s and 1980s, video game players and tournaments began being featured in well-circulated newspapers and popular magazines including [*Life*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life_(magazine)) and [*Time*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Time_(magazine)).[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-22) One of the most well known [classic arcade game](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classic_arcade_game) players is [Billy Mitchell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Billy_Mitchell_(electronic_sports_player)), who was credited with the records for high scores in six games including [*Pac-Man*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pac-Man) and [*Donkey Kong*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donkey_Kong_(video_game)) in the 1985 issue of the [Guinness Book of World Records](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guinness_Book_of_World_Records).[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-23). Some of those records would be removed in 2018 amid allegations of [fraud](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fraud).[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-auto1-24)

Televised esports events aired during this period included the American show *[Starcade](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Starcade" \o "Starcade)* which ran between 1982 and 1984 airing a total of 133 episodes, on which contestants would attempt to beat each other's high scores on an arcade game.[[25]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-25) A video game tournament was included as part of TV show [*That's Incredible!*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/That%27s_Incredible!),[[26]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-26) and tournaments were also featured as part of the plot of various films, including 1982's [*Tron*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tron).[[27]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-27) In the UK, the [BBC](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BBC) game show [First Class](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Class_(TV_series)) included competitive video game rounds featuring the contemporary arcade games [Hyper Sports](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hyper_Sports), [720°](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/720%C2%B0) and [Paperboy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paperboy_(video_game)).[[28]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-28)[[29]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-29)

### Global tournaments (2000–present)

The growth of esports in South Korea is thought to have been influenced by the mass building of [broadband internet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broadband_internet)networks following the [1997 Asian financial crisis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1997_Asian_financial_crisis).[[32]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-32) It is also thought that the high [unemployment rate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unemployment_rate) at the time caused many people to look for things to do while out of work.[[33]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-33) Instrumental to this growth of esports in South Korea was the prevalence of the Komany-style [internet café](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_caf%C3%A9)/[LAN gaming center](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LAN_gaming_center), known as a [PC bang](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PC_bang). The [Korean e-Sports Association](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_e-Sports_Association), an arm of the [Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ministry_of_Culture,_Sports_and_Tourism), was founded in 2000 to promote and regulate esports in the country.[[34]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-34)

During the 2010s, esports grew tremendously, incurring a large increase in both viewership and prize money.[[35]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-35)[[36]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-36)Although large tournaments were founded before the 21st century, the number and scope of tournaments has increased significantly, going from about 10 tournaments in 2000 to about 260 in 2010.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-FieldOfStreams-3) Many successful tournaments were founded during this period, including the [World Cyber Games](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Cyber_Games), the [Intel Extreme Masters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intel_Extreme_Masters), and [Major League Gaming](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Major_League_Gaming). The proliferation of tournaments included experimentation with competitions outside traditional esports genres. For example, the September 2006 [FUN Technologies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FUN_Technologies) Worldwide Webgames Championship featured 71 contestants competing in [casual games](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casual_games) for a $1 million grand prize.[[37]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-37)

In April 2006 the [G7 teams](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G7_teams) federation were formed by seven prominent [*Counter-Strike*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Counter-Strike) teams. The goal of the organization was to increase stability in the esports world, particularly in standardizing player transfers and working with leagues and organizations. The founding members were [4Kings](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4Kings), [Fnatic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fnatic" \o "Fnatic), [Made in Brazil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Made_in_Brazil_(eSports)), [Mousesports](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mousesports" \o "Mousesports), [NiP](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NiP" \o "NiP), [SK-Gaming](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SK-Gaming), [Team 3D](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Team_3D_(eSports)).[[38]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-38) The organization only lasted until 2009 before dissolving.[[39]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-raising-39)

The 2000s was a popular time for televised esports. Television coverage was best established in South Korea, with [*StarCraft*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/StarCraft) and [*Warcraft III*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warcraft_III) competitions regularly televised by dedicated 24-hour cable TV game channels [Ongamenet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ongamenet" \o "Ongamenet)and [MBCGame](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MBCGame" \o "MBCGame).[[40]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-autogenerated3-40) Elsewhere, esports television coverage was sporadic. The [German](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Television_in_Germany) [GIGA Television](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GIGA_Television) covered esports until its shutdown in 2009. The United Kingdom [satellite television](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satellite_television) channel [XLEAGUE.TV](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/XLEAGUE.TV) broadcast esports competitions from 2007 to 2009. The online esports only channel ESL TV[[41]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-41) briefly attempted a paid television model renamed GIGA II from June 2006 to autumn 2007. The [French](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Television_in_France) channel [Game One](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Game_One) broadcast esports matches in a show called *Arena Online* for the [Xfire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xfire" \o "Xfire) Trophy.[[42]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-42) The United States channel [ESPN](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ESPN) hosted [*Madden NFL*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madden_NFL) competitions in a show called [*Madden Nation*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madden_Nation) from 2005 to 2008.[[43]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-43) [DirecTV](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DirecTV) broadcast the [Championship Gaming Series](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Championship_Gaming_Series) tournament for two seasons in 2007 and 2008.[[40]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-autogenerated3-40) [CBS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CBS) aired prerecorded footage of the 2007 [World Series of Video Games](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Series_of_Video_Games) tournament that was held in [Louisville, Kentucky](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louisville,_Kentucky).[[44]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-44) The [G4 television channel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G4_(U.S._TV_channel)) originally covered video games exclusively, but broadened its scope to cover technology and men's lifestyle, though has now shutdown.[[40]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-autogenerated3-40)

The popularity and emergence of [online streaming services](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Streaming_media) have helped the growth of esports in this period, and are the most common method of watching tournaments. [Twitch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twitch_(website)), an online streaming platform launched in 2011, routinely streams popular esports competitions. In 2013, viewers of the platform watched 12 billion minutes of video on the service, with the two most popular Twitch broadcasters being [*League of Legends*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/League_of_Legends) and *[Dota 2](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dota_2" \o "Dota 2)*.[[45]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-45) During one day of The International, Twitch recorded 4.5 million unique views, with each viewer watching for an average of two hours.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-FieldOfStreams-3)

The modern esports boom has also seen a rise in video games companies embracing the esports potential of their products. After many years of ignoring and at times suppressing the esports scene, [Nintendo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nintendo) hosted [Wii Games Summer 2010](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wii_Games_Summer_2010&action=edit&redlink=1). Spanning over a month, the tournament had over 400,000 participants, making it the largest and most expansive tournament in the company's history. In 2014 Nintendo hosted an invitational [*Super Smash Bros. for Wii U*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Super_Smash_Bros._for_Wii_U)competitive tournament at the [2014](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E3_2014) [Electronic Entertainment Expo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electronic_Entertainment_Expo) (E3) press conference that was streamed online on Twitch.[[46]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-46) [Halo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halo_(series)) developers [343 Industries](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/343_Industries) announced in 2014 plans to revive Halo as an eSport with the creation of the [Halo Championship Series](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halo_Championship_Series) and a prize pool of $50,000 USD.[[47]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-47) Both [Blizzard Entertainment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blizzard_Entertainment) and [Riot Games](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Riot_Games) have their own [collegiate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/College_sports) outreach programs with their North American Collegiate Championship.[[48]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-48)[[49]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-49) Since 2013 universities and colleges in the United States such as [Robert Morris University Illinois](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Morris_University_Illinois) and the [University of Pikeville](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Pikeville) have recognized esports players as [varsity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varsity_team) level athletes and offer [athletic scholarships](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Athletic_scholarship).[[50]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-50) In 2017, [Tespa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tespa" \o "Tespa), Blizzard Entertainment's collegiate esports division, unveiled its new initiative to provide scholarships and prizes for collegiate esports clubs competing in its tournaments worth US$1 million.[[51]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-51) Colleges have began granting scholarships to students who qualify to play esports professionally for the school. Colleges such as [Columbia College](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbia_College_(Missouri)), [Robert Morris University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Morris_University_Illinois), and [Indiana Institute of Technology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indiana_Institute_of_Technology) have taken part in this.[[52]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-52) In 2018, [Harrisburg University of Science and Technology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harrisburg_University_of_Science_and_Technology) began a tuition scholarship program for esports players.[[53]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-53)

In 2014, the largest independent esports league, [Electronic Sports League](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electronic_Sports_League), partnered with the local brand Japan Competitive Gaming to try and grow esports in the country.[[54]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-54)

Physical viewership of esports competitions and the scope of events have increased in tandem with the growth of online viewership.[[55]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-55) In 2013, the [Season 3 League of Legends World Championship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Season_3_League_of_Legends_World_Championship) was held in a sold-out [Staples Center](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Staples_Center).[[56]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-56)The [2014 League of Legends World Championship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2014_League_of_Legends_World_Championship) in [Seoul](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seoul), South Korea, had over 40,000 fans in attendance and featured the band [*Imagine Dragons*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imagine_Dragons), and opening and closing ceremonies in addition to the competition.[[57]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-57)

In 2015, the first Esports Arena was launched in [Santa Ana, California](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Ana,_California), as the United States' first dedicated esports facility.[[58]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-58) In 2018, the [Luxor Las Vegas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luxor_Las_Vegas) will open the first esports Arena on the [Las Vegas Strip](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Las_Vegas_Strip) and additional locations are planned to open in the coming decade.

#### Professional leagues

In most esports, organized play is centered around the use of [promotion and relegation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Promotion_and_relegation) to move sponsored teams between leagues within the competition's organization based on how the team fared in matches; this follows patterns of professional sports in European and Asian countries. However, with rising interest in viewership of esports, some companies sought to create leagues that followed the approach used in North American professional sports, in which all teams participate in a regular season of matches to vie for top standing as to participate in the post-season games. This approach is more attractive for larger investors, who would be more willing to back a team that remains playing in the eSport's premiere league and not threatened to be relegated to a lower standing.[[59]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-59)

[Blizzard Entertainment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blizzard_Entertainment) announced the [Overwatch League](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Overwatch_League), based on its [*Overwatch*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Overwatch_(video_game)) game, in 2016, with its inaugural regular season featuring twelve teams starting in January 2018. Players that get contracts to play on teams are guaranteed an annual salary and benefits, as well as sharing of the team's revenue and prize winnings; the first season had a total prize pool of US$3.5 million available, with US$1 million to the team winning in post-season.[[60]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-wired-60)

[Take-Two Interactive](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Take-Two_Interactive) partnered with the [National Basketball Association](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Basketball_Association) (NBA) to create the [NBA 2K League](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NBA_2K_League), using the [*NBA 2K*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NBA_2K) game series. It is the first esports league to be operated by a professional sports league, and the NBA sought to have a League team partially sponsored by each of the 30 professional NBA teams. Its inaugural season is set to start May 2018 with 17 teams.[[61]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-61) Similarly, [EA Sports](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EA_Sports) and [Major League Soccer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Major_League_Soccer) (MLS) established the [eMLS](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=EMLS&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "EMLS (page does not exist)), an eSport league using EA's [*FIFA 18*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FIFA_18); in its inaugural season, 19 of the 23 MLS teams will manage teams for the eMLS.[[62]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-62)

### Spectator mode

### Online

### Local area network

## Although competitions involving video games have long existed, esports underwent a significant transition in the late 1990s. Beginning with the [Cyberathlete Professional League](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyberathlete_Professional_League) in 1997, tournaments became much larger, and [corporate sponsorship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sponsor_(commercial)) became more common.

## Training

The training that the players must undergo to prepare for tournaments is different but still takes a tremendous amount of time. Athletes from traditional sports' training is almost entirely based on honing their physical prowess in performing that sport, such as muscle memory, exercising, and dieting. Esports athletes' training is much more based on training the mind, such as studying strategies and new updates for the game. Team Liquid, a professional League of Legends team, practice for a minimum of 50 hours per week and most play the game far more.[[126]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-126) This training schedule for players has resulted in many of them retiring a very early age. Few careers burn as intensely -- and as briefly -- as that of an esports professional. Players are generally in competition by their mid- to late teens, and most are retired by their mid-20s.[[127]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esports#cite_note-127) Because of this people in the industry are discussing the possibility of implementing physical workouts in addition to the mental training they already go through.