**ARE ESPORTS A REPLACEMENT FOR PHYSICAL SPORTS?**

Ever since the boom in popularity of online multiplayer first-person shooter games, there has been a rise in the number of online e-sporting events being held. Thanks to the coronavirus pandemic we are facing, physical sports are much more affected in terms of income than e-sports, since the latter does not demand the physical presence of the teams, rather their online presence. This begs the question – will esports eventually replace physical sporting events?

**The future of all sports is esports.** For such a bold statement to be made, there must be enough evidence to back it up and make sure it does not fall flat – and there is a load of evidence in favor of it. Spectators of this new generation do not wish to be deaf and mute witnesses of sporting events anymore; they want to be included in the interactions, and feel as if they are heard and their opinion is acknowledged by those involved with the actual game. And the most effective way of transforming such events into interactive games themselves is by delivering events digitally and gamifying them, thereby drawing upon more audience.

Make no mistake, the world of physical sports is still king by a huge leap ahead, but esports events are closing the gap slowly by showcasing their supporters a new kind of future where they do not feel unheard anymore. This new future takes into account the audience’s need to feel included and interacted with while they are spending their leisure time trying to experience something new. “Today’s consumer does not just want to watch or listen; they also want to participate – and esports integrates these principles into people’s leisure time”, quotes an article about the future of esports from The Conversation.

There are rumors surrounding the International Olympics Committee about their consideration for the inclusion of esports within their prestigious once-in-four-years' event. Speculations from within the field state that instead of being virtual experiences for the common man, games like HADO may emerge as officially recognized sporting events, with services like affordable VR and stream gaming helping capture a larger part of the gaming demographic to be involved.

For example, tomorrow’s tennis stars could be playing on VR courts where they are able to move in three dimensions, rather than two. This could be made possible with three dimensional, [full-body virtual reality systems](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jk-3kZ7ytZs) where you can feel and truly experience the world around you by wearing an exoskeleton suit to simulate the virtual environment and stimulate artificial stimuli and reactivities as well.

Esports is nowhere near as big as the physical sporting community. But, will it grow to overtake or co-exist with them? Only time will tell.