

20 Trend 24 Debrief

What you need to know about eSports

eSports (that is, electronic sports) refers to organized and competitive video gaming, structured similarly to traditional competitive sports where individuals and teams go head-to-head in leagues, have sponsors and dedicated fans, and are often globally live streamed by large-scale broadcasters.

At a Glance

5 Top eSports Games

By active teams playing, 2024

Counter-Strike

Rocket League

League of Legends

Valorant

Dota 2

Top Prize Money Earned **\$51 670 606**

Total Prize Money of Team Liquid, Europe. Alienware, Monster Energy, SAP +10

237h 15m

broadcast airtime
for most watched tournament, 2024

Biggest Esports Sponsors 2024

1. Mercedes-Benz
2. Samsung
3. Red Bull

From our Global Kids Sports Report, we know...

Tweens are invested

59% of tweens globally were aware of eSports; this was heightened in Spain where over 70% of Tweens were aware.

Live streams are your ticket

31% of tweens say they watch eSports this way, with 11% saying they participate already

Supporters are young

less parents than tweens think eSports classify as a sport

Target older Tweens

as 10-12YO make up the bulk of aware tweens

Boys fit the fan profile

68% of boys are aware of eSports, compared to 51% of girls

eSports isn't really a sport

only 39% of tweens think it should be considered a sport

Engaging Young Fans with eSports

Invest in an eSports team, highlighting the association to your brand in order to capture younger audiences as potential fans. The popularity of eSports among young people acts as an entry point to otherwise unaware viewers and their families, allowing for greater fan engagement across your core brand.

Utilise the digital content made in association with eSports teams as assets for repurposing across social media. Young viewers are most likely to engage with their favourite teams and players on YouTube and social media platforms that allow them to share and comment on content.

Create merchandise in association with your associated eSports team to allow young fans to badge themselves in the community. Young fans like using emblems to obviously showcase their passions, and will use branded merchandise to do so if they identify as a fan.

eSports: Areas of Excellence

Expansion

eSport has become increasingly legitimized in the traditional sporting community. Many big players have invested in the transition from the physical playing fields to the digital landscape.

- Manchester City eSports
- PSG eSports
- Red Bull Racing eSports Team
- Aston Martin eSports
- Wolves Esports
- 76ers Gaming Club

They're playing FIFA, League of Legends and F1 Esports Series among other games.

Innovation

eSports is leading the way for innovative fan engagement strategies:

1. Platforms like Toornament and Challenge allow fans to create and manage their own grassroots esports tournaments.
2. Fan engagement is adapting as many tournaments now allow fans to engage in real-time with their favourite players through online polls, chats, or in-game features during live streams.

Inclusivity

eSport tournaments are actively uplifting traditionally marginalised groups in sports: tournaments like GirlGamer Festival are designed to promote female participation in professional gaming.

eSports is looking forward to the future of it's players: Teams like Fnatic, Cloud9, and G2 Esports have built academies to foster young talent, helping to build the next generation of players by giving them access to top-tier coaching and facilities.

The number one criticism of strategic and non-traditional sports – such as video gaming, chess and drone racing – is that they're not actually sports: the overemphasis on technology, lack of historical roots and perception of inadequate fitness requirements firmly place eSports into the 'not sports' box of entertainment.

Critics mainly cite its sedentary nature as the antithesis of what sports is, but professional eSports players reportedly have high cardiorespiratory fitness and reaction time due to the required skill specialization and competitive setting.

So, look out for eSports in the 2028 Olympics because there is growing demand for eSports in the current global zeitgeist, and Los Angeles would be the perfect stage to launch eSports into the larger sporting industry.