



**Bayes**  
ESPORTS



sp@rtradar

# HOW TO MAXIMIZE YOUR ESPORTS TOURNAMENT EXPERIENCE

The Bayes Esports data report 2020



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# 1 Introduction

Dear esports enthusiasts,

My team and I are happy to present you the second whitepaper from Bayes Esports, in cooperation with Sportradar. With our informative and useful content about “How to maximize your esports tournament experience,” we address tournament organizers and everyone who is interested in the growing esports industry.

We have tried to put together a great deal of useful information about tournament formats, teams, engagement, data, technical needs, legal concerns, and integrity. The experts from Bayes Esports were not only supported in this effort by Sportradar but also by our partners at Lubberger & Lehment, Oddin, and WIN. We want to thank them very much for their great support through extremely interesting deep dives, interviews, and op-eds. Our common goal is to help you optimize and monetize your tournament.

Partnerships and customer relationships are the keys to our success, and they have become even more important in 2020, a year with so many ups and downs for the esports industry. However, we have also seen tremendous growth; for instance, esports betting has risen by up to 300%.

We will continue our successful journey together with you. The Bayes Esports team and management hope that we can meet you in person again soon. Feel free to reach out to us!

Yours sincerely,  
Martin Dachsel



**Martin Dachsel**  
**CEO Bayes Esports**  
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## 2

# Step by step: How to organize a tournament

### 1: Make sure to plan ahead

If you're going to outsource the technical work, finding the right production company takes time. Whether you're hosting a multi-week league with sophisticated brackets and match play, or a one-off single elimination competition, it is crucial to have all the technical aspects in place and up and running. This will ensure a hassle-free integration of your potential data and media partners, as well as the participating teams.

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### 2: Clarify data rights ownership

Make sure each party — organizers as well as producers — clearly understand its rights and limitations when it comes to data ownership. Serious data buyers will insist on purchasing a data feed only from the actual rightsholder, who will be able to offer a zero-delay data feed. As a legal rightsowner of your tournament data, you can derive economic value from the data, both directly — by selling your data — and indirectly — by using your data to boost your audience engagement by powering up visualizations or esports widgets with team and player statistics.

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### 3: Secure the prize pool

You can do this by getting an advertising partner or co-organizer, paying out of your own pocket, or working directly with game developers that offer Community Prizing for tournaments meeting certain eligibility requirements.



**4:** Reach out early to the teams you wish to invite

It is impossible to represent global statistics, as there is no central source for trustworthy, reliable and quality data. A simple, representative example would be establishing a CS: GO world player ranking. Right now, a simple thing like that is nearly impossible to do, as most sources only offer a partial amount of data, or incomplete data. A central source does not exist yet.

**5:** Collect and store the tournament's metadata in a standardized format

Before you can monetize your tournament's data, you must take some steps to prepare it. Ensure that all fixtures (teams, players' names and IDs, timetables) are accurate, organized, and prepared in a format suitable to the needs of your commercial and advertising partners. Clarify an appropriate format for the tournament's fixtures with all your partners well ahead of time.

**6:** Provide a communication channel for all participating parties.

The most popular options are Discord or Skype. Establish hierarchical permission systems among teams, commercial partners, and advertisers. Decide who can talk on or who can join certain subchannels to avoid any miscommunication. When working with data buyers, provide them with access credentials to the server ahead of time to prevent delays.

**7:** Assign admins and moderators

It is exceptionally important to have at least one technical person on your team who will communicate with data partners, as well as having administrators who will take care of the server access and communications with players.





# 3

## Getting your data in order

### Team names can be a pain.

Just ask Dota2 Caster Austin “Capitalist” Walsh about team Nigma . . .

The most common issue with teams’ names, however, isn’t a difficult pronunciation or the occasional Freudian slip. It isn’t even something, like spelling, that we may notice.

Since the human brain is a marvel of fault compensation, it allows us to simply brush over a different capitalization or a typo without our even realizing the mistake. Computers, however, are completely different beasts: To a computer, “Esports” is different from “esports” or “Esport.”

Since we humans tend to want to do things simply, it comes as little surprise that the League of Legends team FC Schalke 04 Evolution has been spelled seven different ways over the past year in different contexts.

This 20-character behemoth of a name is

regularly abbreviated to the slightly less uncomfortable “Schalke Evolution.” The most common synonym for the team playing in Riot’s Premier Tour, however, is simply “Schalke 04.”

Taken by itself or in the context of the Premier Tour, this is not an issue. It’s rather simple to tell a computer that “Schalke 04” means the same thing as “FC Schalke 04 Evolution.” The problems start when the Evolution team’s big brother enters the picture. FC Schalke 04 Esports is the official name of the club’s LEC team — playing League of Legends in the highest European league — which is traditionally abbreviated to the club’s own name “FC Schalke 04” or even “Schalke 04.” Without the context of the leagues they play in or the roster of the players themselves, it is not possible to tell a computer which “Schalke 04” refers to which exact team.

*Data is the basis of creating value in esports.*





## This is in no way an isolated case..

Organizations that have several teams playing under similar names are especially affected: Giants and Giants Red, Invictus Gaming and Invictus International . . . The list goes on, even when looking at players. The issue is most pronounced for CS:GO players, where different matchmaking systems require different logins that may even affect the onscreen name. So, while we're talking about team names in this context, the same also implicitly applies to players.

To compensate for the different names needed by websites, data companies involved with esports invest significant resources just to solve this abbreviation issue. With over 2,000 esports matches per month in the big three esports alone, mapping and aggregating data manually becomes a daunting task that doesn't scale well — and esports is on the rise. Nevertheless, it is an effort that is necessary to provide audiences with homogeneous content, as is standard in other sports.

To illustrate the issue, let's assume we are fans of the Giants Red team — the all-female team of team Giants — and we want to find out if they are playing during the upcoming weekend. Ideally, we just want to go to our esports site of choice, search for "Giants Red," and get all the matches they are going to be playing in or have previously played in.

However, if a tournament organizer decided to call the team just Giants — and the website doesn't map the data — we'd also have to look for the schedule of the team Giants. Doing so,

however, will also show all the matches of the main CS:GO team, and thus it will be extremely difficult and frustrating to actually find the answer to our original question: When and where is our favorite team playing?

Solving this dilemma on the website on which we want to receive all the information about a particular team is a very inefficient solution. Mapping the data requires specific knowledge about which abbreviation refers to which team or player, and as we have already seen, this requires additional context that may not be readily available — especially not in a way that computers can easily understand.

Therefore, additional research is needed to cope with this issue, which translates to either more complex backend software or more human effort. In addition, each website will have to do the same work. This means that especially smaller projects that don't have the technical means or the staffing are at a significant disadvantage. Thus, corners are cut, causing errors to happen and the audience's initial experience to suffer.

In traditional sports, this issue is not as pronounced. Most sports have governing bodies that declare standards — for example, about the names of teams — and they are the single source of information. This is, of course, helped by teams usually playing in only one league. In other sports, whose contestants participate in many competitions by different organizers — tennis or luge, for example — real names are used, which significantly reduces the chance for confusion. In addition, esports teams have a tendency to disband, reform, and rename regularly, which only complicates matters.



*To help make information more accessible to audiences and thus improve the relevance of the esports ecosphere as a whole, a few steps can help eliminate confusion:*

## 1. Consider the team name as a brand.

It starts with naming a team . . . and this doesn't refer to the standard best practices about brand names that can be found by the bucketload on Medium. When forming a team, it would be efficient to agree on an official full name and then on how it may be abbreviated and in what context. This doesn't mean to define how fans may refer to the team but rather to set how it's written and spelled in official communications, as on a server or in a stream.

For example, let's look at a club from traditional sports: Paris Saint-Germain. Officially, the club's first men's football team may be called "Paris Saint-Germain," "Paris SG," or "PSG." The women's team, however, may also be referred to as "Paris." In contrast, nobody would call the club's Dota 2 team anything other than "PSG.LGD."

However, the fans also call their club Les Rouge et Bleu (The Red and Blue), which is also picked up in articles and even in press releases by the club. This broadly adapted nickname would not be referred to in a telecast, fixture, or league table.

So, to keep things manageable, every team should have three names that are communicated clearly:

- The official full name
- The official abbreviation
- The official server name

While the first two are intended for human communication, such as in streams, the third name should be viewed as a unique identifier, and special attention is needed to keep the server name consistent. This is the name that is used by data partners and websites to identify and refer to the team. This should be the name that the team is known by in any context that is handled and distributed through computers, such as in live data or fixture information.

Organizers in turn can help significantly by distinguishing among these names in their application forms and also in their communications to partners. This point ties in with the next topic.





## 2. Clearly communicate the team names.

While this may seem like an obvious and easily achievable solution, the reality in esports tells a different story. If data from game servers is to be monetized, it is of vital importance that the data be used easily and without much additional effort, and that means it must be consistent.

While it's one thing to have the teams register with their names, it requires a bit of extra discipline and effort to actually use the official names as provided. As already mentioned, in a context in which only all-female teams play, Giants Red had been named simply "Giants" because it was more convenient for the operator running the server. On the other hand, this convenience meant that any company working with the live data needed to translate "Giants" to "Giants Red" — but only in this one specific instance.

The most common reason for a team to change its name — and thus create issues for anyone using the data — is a change in sponsorship.

While regular sports clubs don't usually put sponsor names in their official names, the lack of screen time for a club jersey in esports makes conventional advertising spots rather unattractive. Instead, teams and players have become accustomed to adding a sponsor to their screen names.

When the sponsor changes, computer systems struggle because, as already cited, it looks like a completely different name to the computer. The best solution to this dilemma might be to find a combination of characters that differentiate between a sponsor and a team or player name and on which every team can agree. Establishing such a norm would allow data consumers to define a standard for handling names that will keep the team information consistent but that still allows teams and players to include their sponsors.





### 3. Watch out for hidden traps.

Another potential for disaster — in terms of data — can lie in the devices used to make life easier: bots.

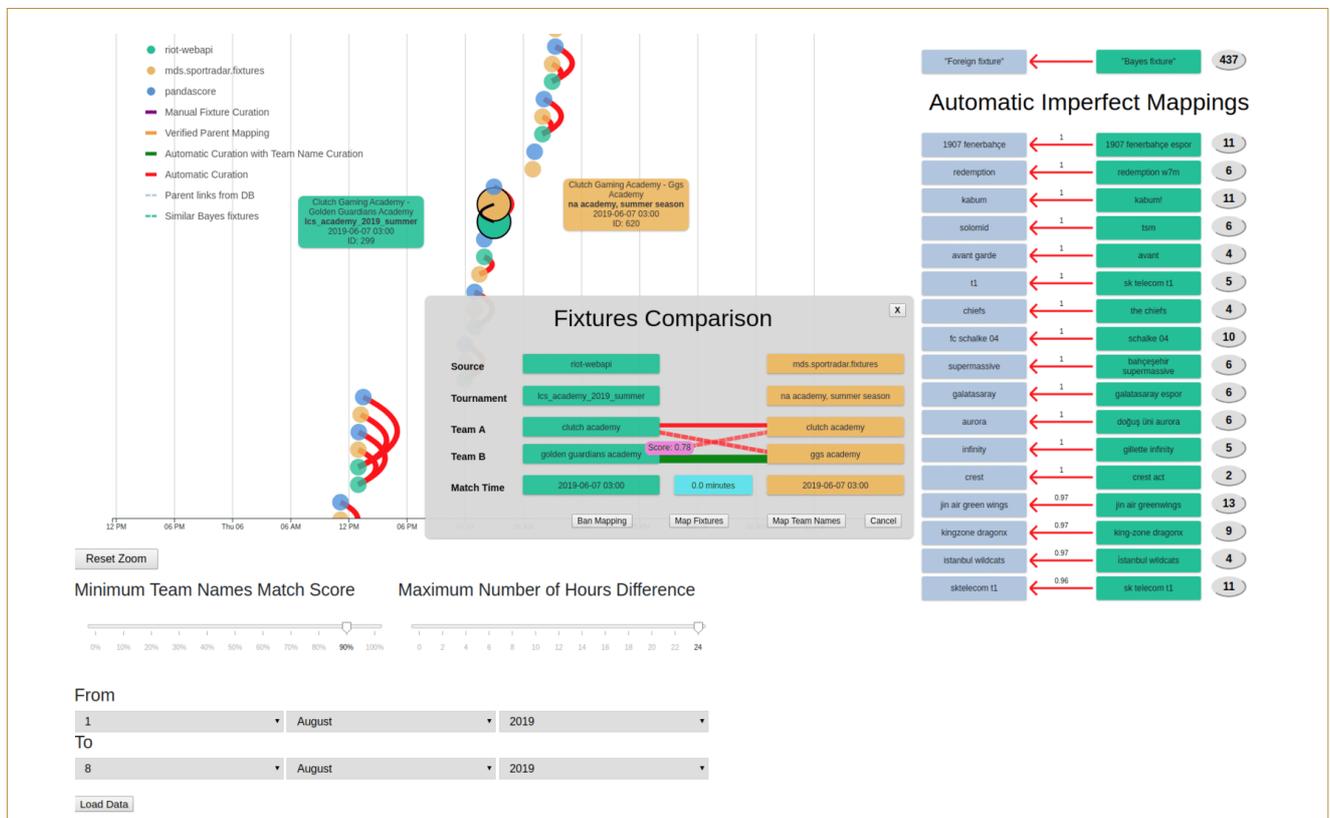
Admin bots are a great help for getting the right people onto the correct servers, managing a competitive match, and facilitating communications between players and admins. Particularly in online tournaments, bots are a true blessing. However, they have their downsides.

Some bots — specifically for CS:GO — use team and player names to communicate states. These states become part of the names that are not only shown on screen but that also make it into the data streams. All of a sudden, the team Giants Red, to reuse our earlier example, becomes team [Not Ready] Giants Red and later on [Ready] Giants Red. As mentioned previously,

computers will consider these two names to be different teams, unless there is some preemptive mapping in place.

Of course, this may seem like a simple thing to fix — and indeed it is — but as the saying goes, “A single drop of water won’t drown you, but an ocean will.”

When a lot of these little changes to names occur — maybe even in combination with one another — preparing for them and changing the software that’s running the data pipelines, aggregating stats, and providing fans with insights takes considerable effort, effort that could otherwise be spent on improving reach or meaning for the data, and effort that could be invested in nothing less than making esports more accessible to a wider audience.



A part of easing the manual work is the simple visualization of the process



# 4

## Monetize your data optimally

You might be wondering why something that is available for free on YouTube or Twitch can still be worth money to the media and betting industries. There are two reasons for this: First, you cannot directly translate data from video streams into the numbers that many media partners will want to display as statistics or on live tickers. Second, remember that video data is usually delayed by anything from 45 seconds to five minutes. For the betting industry, having access to undelayed data is crucial to minimizing risk. As a result, your event data can be valuable if it is marketed correctly. The value of your data is directly related to the number of spectators: The more people who watch your event, the more interesting it becomes for the media and betting industries. So your planning should start with considering the kind of spectators you want to attract. Who will want to watch the event? Are you targeting regional or global viewers? When will your viewership be able to watch? This is important

because your potential spectators go to school or have jobs. They might also be living in different time zones. You probably won't want to compete with a large established event, like The International in Dota2, so choosing an empty time slot on the calendar is important. Announce your tournament as soon as possible. Key information, such as when and where the event takes place, which teams are participating, and what a rough timeline looks like, are crucial for both your viewers and partners. For the viewers, especially the older ones, it might mean keeping an evening free from social obligations. Betting and media partners will need to allocate resources like traders and editors. Without sufficient lead time, some bookmakers may not be able to cover your tournament at all! Once the key data of your event are known, you need to decide which kind of partnerships and contracts you want to make. These can be exclusive or nonexclusive.





## IN GENERAL, THERE ARE THREE TYPES OF PAYMENT MODELS:



### **Revenue share:**

*The marketer shares a certain percentage of the revenue with the provider, usually from around 25% to 50%.*



### **Fixed price:**

*The marketer pays a fixed price for the tournament or per match.*



### **Revenue share with minimum guarantee:**

*This is a mix of the two.*

The parties agree on a certain minimum amount that the provider will receive per match. If the revenue exceeds this guarantee, the revenue share model takes effect.

If you want a guaranteed fixed sum for your data, you will typically enter into an exclusive contract with a marketer.

Since most models depend on the revenue generated by the data marketer, it is important to be on the lookout not just for the best terms but for the greatest distribution power. For instance, Bayes Esports integrates with more than 200 customers who can obtain data through the platform.

As already mentioned, delaying your public-facing data is standard practice, and your data partners will expect it. Keep in mind

that a leak of real-time data might make your entire tournament worthless. Data security is paramount. Consider the many possibilities for leaks: server access to the match, broadcasting partners (who use the data beyond their contractual rights), or tournament staff. Esports arena personnel who can access the undelayed video of the event and monetize it can also be a danger.

To prevent this, reduce server access rights to those who really need them, and take technical precautions like firewalls. Make sure your contracts with all suppliers and broadcasting partners are airtight and include audit rights and contract penalties. In this way, you can make sure that your data will remain exclusive and be optimally monetized.



# 5

## Op-Ed Oddin: Why esports bettors need engagement

Mainly composed of millennials and Gen-Zers, esports bettors behave differently than standard sports bettors. Adapting to the new generations' needs is something even old brands have been doing successfully for years. For example, Nike understood the importance of personalization and gave people the opportunity to build their own sneakers with limitless options. As the company listens to younger generations, it has gathered more than 120 million followers on Instagram.



**Marek Suchar**  
Head of Partnerships  
Oddin.gg

In the betting industry, we have seen over the last few years how bookmakers are slowly integrating esports into their main offering. However, at Oddin, we have noticed this is not being done the right way. The industry lacks a

greater focus on engagement. When you analyze young people's behavior and how they're entertained, you notice that freedom underlies every particular aspect. They're no longer turning on the TV and watching what is on the mainstream channels; they click on Netflix and choose for themselves. They do not listen to the radio; they choose among endless possibilities on Spotify or in their podcast apps. Many even prefer watching an esports tournament on Twitch at home rather than going to a football stadium to support their local team. All these entertainment companies have a clear vision: giving customers the freedom to choose. However, betting, as part of the entertainment industry, is lagging behind. New generations want to have a choice in everything they do, and they want to be heard all the time. And that's the only way to engage them. Bookmakers have been focusing for decades on older generations, not following the new trends and consequently missing out on the opportunity to bring new generations onboard.



## More than 80% of esports betting volume happens in-game, or while the game is being played.

Esports bettors are often watching a live Twitch stream and feeling at some point that they want to be part of it. They want to express their opinion about what will happen in the game by placing a wager. That adds an extra layer of excitement and encourages them to engage more with the game. However, the industry lacks this new approach and offers esports bettors very limited options on which to bet.

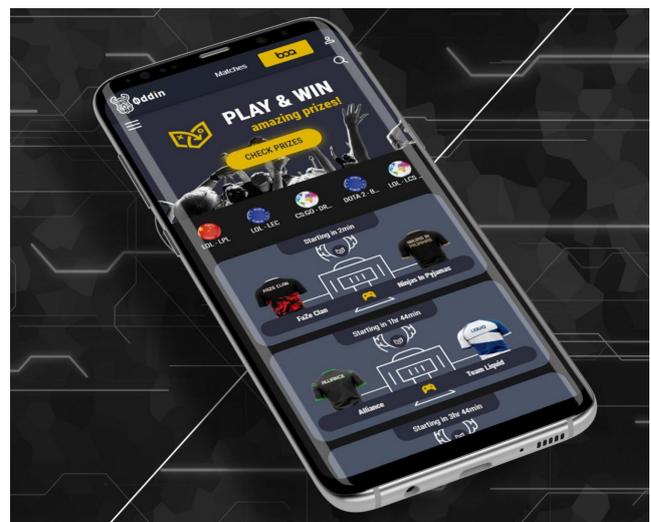
Most of the bookmakers don't have access to an official data stream, and that means the lines are available only from time to time in order to minimize risks. Moreover, without the right set of technologies and expertise to calculate live odds in esports games, they are offering very few betting opportunities. Having been used to other entertainment products that give them the chance to do what they want every time they want to do it, millennials and Gen-Z users no longer tolerate this user experience. They like to use products that are a reflection of their personality; otherwise, they lose interest very quickly.

***Oddin has built an esports odds feed that has a clear focus on engagement, giving esports bettors exactly what they are looking to bet on.***

First, we support our feed with a live stream, so bettors can watch every game simultaneously. We offer industry-leading availability in the range of more than 80%, so the bettor who is watching a live stream is presented with the opportunity to place bets throughout the game almost all the time.



Esports bettors behave differently than standard sports bettor



Esports bettors need engagement



But it's not just that — we offer up to 16 different groups of live betting opportunities, in which the bettor doesn't just bet on who is going to win but also on the length of the game, the number of kills, and many other opportunities. This is especially useful in boosting volume when there are one-sided games from the very beginning.

***But how can we do what other providers just can't? It all comes to data, technology, and expertise. Thanks to partners like Bayes, we have access to official data from the esports games and their organizers, data that is undelayed and highly granular.***

This enables us to calculate precise odds without any delay, thus avoiding losses generated by delayed odds, which is quite common in this industry. Starting from data, our lines are built by a combination of esports-centric infrastructure, an

understanding of the esports ecosystem, and our team's expertise, which comes from more than 30 years in the betting industry, the last four exclusively in esports betting. We believe esports betting will become one of the cornerstones for all bookmakers, but only if you know how to engage them. The esports industry is still young, with many changes happening every year. A game that was popular last year may no longer be as popular next year. New games will come and go, and the industry will have to be flexible and ready to adapt to demand. That's another reason esports betting needs a special approach: Bookmakers can't take it on as simply another sport. Given the nature of the games, it is possible to offer more than 20,000 live games per year, a number that will keep increasing as the industry evolves.

Members of the younger generations will come if they feel constantly engaged and if they are given the freedom of choice. Now it's time for bookmakers to decide if they will ignore the trend or if they want to embrace the path of engagement.



## 6 Interview WIN: “Keep your word”



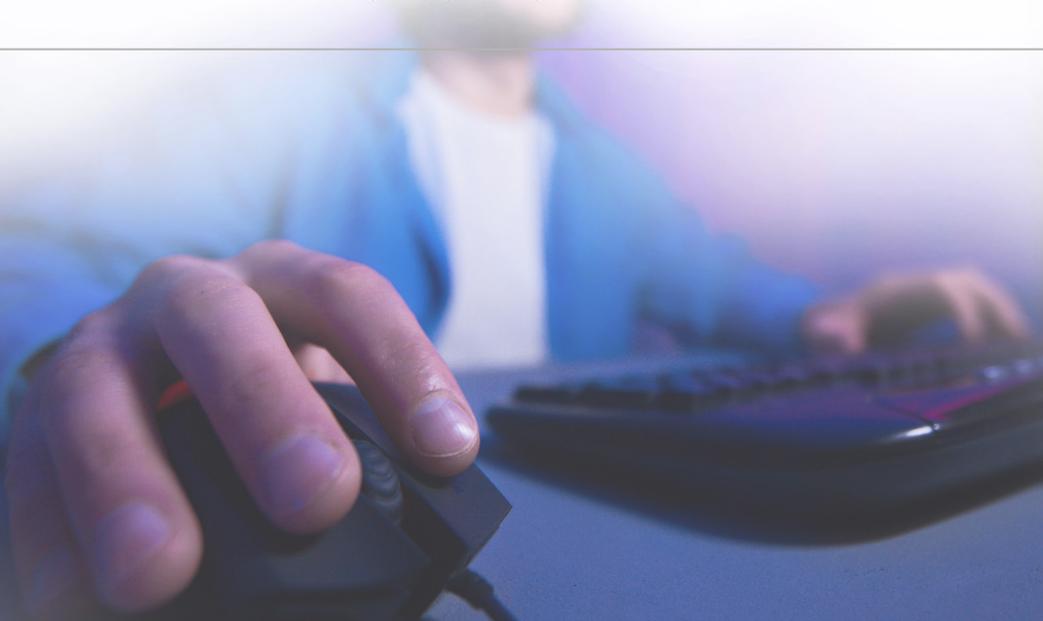
*Serge Vardanyan  
Founder and CEO WIN*



Could you start by introducing yourself, Serge?

I am the founder and CEO of WIN, a company that owns and operates several esports products. These include WINNERS League, a premier Counter-Strike: Global Offensive esports competition; WIN.gg, a leading esports news and analysis platform; and Winners.net, an all-inclusive place in which to learn about the best bookmakers featuring esports markets.

Before starting WIN, I led the Americas offices for BetConstruct. After a successful career developing new products and helping my clients in creating prosperous gaming businesses, I decided to pursue my dream of building a start-up aimed at better serving the gaming community.





**What was the idea behind the creation of the WINNERS League?**

The idea was to support amateur and semi-professional esports communities by creating opportunities to compete against the top pro teams in the world. WINNERS League is a place where the best pro players and teams meet the best up-and-coming talent and rising stars. It's similar to what FacelT's FPL circuit does for players. That synergy is likely why WINNERS League was selected as a regional partner for FacelT for FPL's regional qualifier circuit



**There are so many tournaments out there. esports? What is particularly innovative about your company?**

Our tier structure really sets us apart. It allows us to capture all the esports demographics, from casual gamers to the top teams in the world. Below is the visualization of how WINNERS League operates. Those casual players who show their talent in the WINNERS League FPL circuit get a chance to advance to the Main division, and the winner of the Main division can progress to the Invite division and compete against the top teams in the world. The skill level in the Invite division is diversified as well. Some teams that previously had the opportunity only to compete in Tier 2 events are getting a chance to show their skills against top teams in the world. The top global teams see their participation as an investment in the community and in the future of Counter-Strike of North America.





**Will there ever be another game to join the ranks of CS:GO, Dota 2, and League?**

Developers are always looking to create the next big esports game, because they all see the same potential that we do in esports, as it continues to grow and develop. A great example of that growth today is Valorant. It's a tactical shooter similar to CS:GO, and it was developed by Riot Games, which also created League of Legends. Riot is a company that knows and understands competitive gaming, and it has put that understanding to great use in creating Valorant. As we strive to keep ourselves at the cutting edge of our industry, we've already begun working with and around Valorant, and we plan to further integrate the game into our products in the future



**What more needs to be done to support the growth of esports?**

Stability is important. That stability will come in part through the passage of time, as people continue to see and understand the viability of esports. It's also important that the industry be led by people and companies who truly understand it and have the industry's best interest in mind. We hope to take such a position, as we are natives of the esports space, and we want the industry as a whole to grow and succeed and for our success to be a part of that overall growth.





**Why is data so important in esports?**

Esports lends themselves very well to data collection: The games are all digital, and drawing data from them is relatively simple. There's no need to track statistics by hand, as many of the numbers we're interested in are automatically tabulated by the game. Because the esports industry is so new, data is also important in communicating numbers around audience and growth. Even if some potential partners unfamiliar with the space have a hard time understanding exactly what esports are all about, they can still understand the huge audience numbers behind the games.



**How do you choose your partners, and what are the most important criteria?**

We want to work with partners who share our values, partners who work honestly and earnestly toward their goals, and partners who are interested in furthering the esports marketplace as a whole, not just their position within it.



**In which direction are esports tournaments trending?**

Esports are trending further up every day. Each new generation is going to be that much more involved in competitive gaming and esports. This is the sport and pastime of the future, and by supporting it now, we plan to be a part of that future.





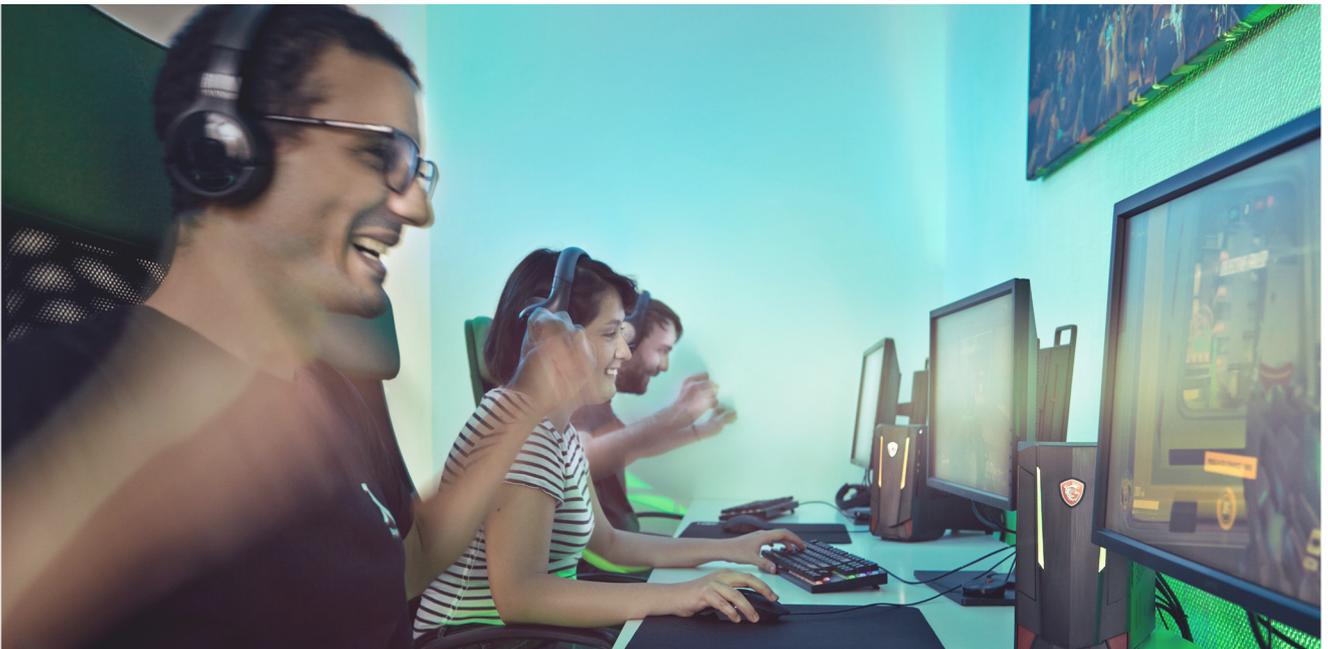
**What is the hardest part of your job?**

There are always difficulties involved in navigating a new space and a new business. The entire esports industry is still so young, so there are very few established processes and norms. These must often be created from scratch. But while that can make the process challenging, it's also that very challenge that makes our work in the space so rewarding.



**Would you please share three tips for smaller tournament organizers?**

Work with good people who have your shared best interest in mind. Promise only what you can actually deliver. And keep your word; if partners know your word has no value, that's something that is very hard to recover.





# 7 Excursus: Tournament Organization in China

## 1. The gaming license policy in China

From March 2018 to December 2018, the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film, and Television (SAPPRFT) — the main regulator of the Chinese gaming market — started to reform the rules and regulations in the Chinese gaming market, and it stopped issuing gaming licenses to all games. The gaming license is a prerequisite for a game developer or distributor to commercialize a game and earn revenue legally, which means that games without gaming licenses are not allowed to be esportized in China. The nine-month gaming license freeze was like an earthquake in the Chinese gaming market. Some small game developers did not survive the nine-month freeze; the stock value of Chinese gaming giants Tencent and Netease shrank suddenly when the freeze started. After the freeze ended in December 2018, regulators

—including SAPPRFT, the Ministry of Education, and the Online Games Ethics Committee — implemented stricter regulations on the Chinese gaming market. For example, game content cannot contain “too much violence”; the number of gaming licenses are limited each year; compulsory anti-addiction systems must be included in mobile games; and so on. Before planning an esports tournament in China, all tournament organizers should visit the official website of the National Press and Publication Administration (NPPA) to check if the game title that is being planned has been issued a gaming license in China. Here is a list from Newzoo of the “Top 25 Games by Live Esports Hours Watched on Twitch, YouTube, and Mixer.” Not all the games on the list below have been issued a gaming license in China.





Game title	Main device	Gaming License in China
League of Legends	PC	Yes
Counter-Strike: Global Offensive	PC	Yes
Dota 2	PC	Yes
Overwatch	PC	Yes
Hearthstone	PC	Yes
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Siege	PC	No
Arena of Valor	Mobile	No
*PUBG Mobile	Mobile	Y&N
Fortnite	PC	No
PLAYERUNKNOWN'S BATTLEGROUNDS	PC	No
Starcraft II	PC	Yes
Rocket League	PC	Yes
Super Smash Bros. Ultimate	*Console	No
Garena Free Fire	Mobile	No
Call of Duty: Black Ops 4	*Console	No
<i>* Games will be explained in more details</i>		

Game title	Main device	Gaming License in China
Magic: The Gathering	PC	No
World of Warcraft	PC	Yes
*FIFA 19	*Console	Y&N
Street Fighter V	*Console	No
Super Smash Bros. Melee	*Console	No
Mobile Legends: Bang Bang	Mobile	Yes
Tekken 7	*Console	No
Clash Royale	Mobile	Yes
*Teamfight Tactics	PC	Y&N
*FIFA 20	*Console	Y&N
<i>* Games will be explained in more details</i>		

The gaming licenses of the top 25 esports games in 2019

## a) Teamfight Tactics

Teamfight Tactics has not been issued a gaming license, but Teamfight Tactics and League of Legends are using the same game engine. So in China, Teamfight Tactics is in the League of Legends PC client as a new game mode, rather than as a separate game title with an independent PC client. In China, mobile devices have replaced PCs and have become the most popular gaming devices among Chinese gamers.

In 2020, hundreds of gaming licenses were issued by SAPPRFT, and most went to mobile games. The official League of Legends on mobile devices — League of Legends Wildrift — is being developed right now, and the video teaser has already been released by Riot. However, it is still uncertain if the mobile version of Teamfight Tactics will be a separate mobile app from League of Legends Wildrift.



## **b) PUBG**

Shortly after its launch in 2017, PUBG became one of the most popular games in the Chinese market. At that time, the industry even predicted that PUBG would replace League of Legends and become the number-one game title in China. Unfortunately, without a gaming license, PUBG was only distributed on Steam and did not offer a China server for the mass gamers in China. PUBG gamers in China had to use a VPN or a game accelerator to connect to the PUBG South East Asia server. The inconvenience of playing PUBG in China,

along with no gaming license with which to earn revenue legally and Bluehole's inability to enforce anti-cheating rules totally corroded the PUBG esports brand in China. In two years, PUBG's user base in China declined rapidly, and Chinese PUBG esports teams dropped out, one by one, because of financial issues. The viewership of PUBG Championship League (the top-tier PUBG esports league in China, authorized by Bluehole) evaporated, and many PUBG viewers moved their focus to PUBG Mobile.

## **c) PUBG Mobile**

PUBG Mobile was launched in March 2018, and within months it became one of the hottest mobile games. PUBG Mobile was distributed in China by gaming giant Tencent. However, Tencent failed to secure a gaming license to commercialize the game. In May 2019, Tencent officially shut down PUBG Mobile in China but transferred all PUBG Mobile users to Peacekeeper Elite (Heping Jingyi in Chinese pinyin), the Chinese

version of PUBG Mobile. With a patriotic title and less violent in-game images, Peacekeeper Elite was issued a gaming license for monetization by SAPPRFT. Compared to PUBG, the Peacekeeper Elite esports ecosystem is much more sustainable: It has a gaming license through which to earn revenue, offers users the convenience of playing and watching anywhere on cell phones, and maintains a massive fan base and top esports teams.

## **d) Console games**

Consoles have never been a popular gaming device for Chinese gamers. Before China became the world's second largest economy, a normal Chinese family was not financially able to buy a game console. When hearing the term "game console," many Chinese gamers are likely to first think of the big coin-operated gaming machines in an arcade rather than a portable PlayStation or an X-Box at home. Another obstacle that blocks console games from entering the Chinese market is the flood of pirated games. Before China opened its gaming market to the rest of the world in the 2010s,

downloading pirated games and buying pirated game discs were almost the only channel that connected Chinese gamers and popular games. Even after the 2010s, the consumption habits of Chinese gamers were not suited to the business model of console games. Rather than spending a few hundred yuan for an authenticated game disc, most Chinese gamers would prefer playing a game for free but paying for in-game items, like the skins in League of Legends. In general, China is not a console-friendly market. In 2019, only 23 console games were issued a gaming license. However, EA FIFA is an exception.



## e) EA FIFA

EA FIFA is distributed in China via Tencent, but as a PC game called FIFA Online rather than as a console game. FIFA Online, developed by Electronic Arts and Neowiz, is using a different game engine than that of the EA FIFA series. For example, FIFA Online 4, launched in 2019, is using the Next field game engine, not the game engine of the EA FIFA series. From many gamers' point of view, FIFA Online is not the same game as EA FIFA; some gamers even

complain that FIFA Online is always a few patch lags behind the EA FIFA series. In China, Tencent operates an esports league for FIFA Online — the FIFA Online 4 Star League. Even though some top Chinese football clubs from the Chinese Super League (China's top-tier football league) and some famous Chinese esports clubs play in the league, there are few Chinese gamers playing on the stage of FIFA eWorld Cup.





## 2. Esports-friendly policies

Early in 2003, the General Administration of Sports (GAOS), the sports industry’s governing body, authorized esports as the 99th sports title in China. Unfortunately, mainstream culture in the early 2000s labeled esports a “hard drug” that destroys teenagers’ future development. At that time, the environment in China did not support the growth of the esports industry at all: Regulators blocked almost all gaming content in the mainstream media, except for news that criticized the gaming industry. The media exaggerated video games’ harm to teenagers, and parents and educators complained about students spending too much time on gaming. When millennials, who grew up with gaming, started to enter the labor force and become the cornerstones of China’s economy, the esports

freeze gradually melted, and Chinese esports teams won many titles on the international stage. In the 2010s, esports gradually became a part of the Chinese mainstream culture, a part to which the young generation is emotionally attached. Many Chinese cities started to implement esports-friendly policies — such as, for example, forming an esports team to represent a city — to attract young people to settle down and start their careers there. League of Legends and Honor of Kings are two of the most popular esports titles in China. In 2018 and 2019, League of Legends Pro League (LPL) and Honor of Kings Pro League (KPL) started home-and-away operations, with each team in the two leagues choosing a home city and a home venue (see the Tables 2 & 3 below).

LPL team	Home city
Bilibili Gaming (BLG), Edward Gaming (EDG), eStar Gaming (eStar), FunPlus Phoenix (FPX), Invictus Gaming (IG), Royal Never Give Up (RNG), Rogue Warriors (RW), Suning Gaming (SNG), TOP Esports (TES), Vici Gaming (VG),	Shanghai
Jingdong Gaming (JDG)	Beijing
Oh My God (OMG)	Chengdu
Team WE (WE)	Xi’an
LGD Gaming (LGD)	Hangzhou
Lining Gaming (LNG)	Suzhou
Victory Five (VF)	Shenzhen
TT Gaming (TT, former Dominus Gaming)	Guangzhou

Table 1. LPL teams’ home cities list

KPL team	Home city
Dynamic Gaming (DYG), Welbo Turnso Gaming (Welbo.TS), Kuaishou YTG Gaming (KS YTG), Rogue Warriors (RW), Royal Never Give Up (RNG.M), Edward Gaming (EDG.M), TOP esports (TES), Vici Gaming (VG),	Shanghai
eStar Pro (ES)	Wuhan
AG Super Play (AG.SP)	Chengdu
Team WE (WE)	Xi’an
LGD Gaming (LGD)	Hangzhou
QG Happy (QG)	Chongqing
Gank Gaming (GK)	Foshan
Talent Gaming (TTG)	Guangzhou
Hero Jilijing (Hero)	Nanjing

Table 2. KPL list



*In addition to hosting esports teams, some Chinese cities support esports events in different ways. The best example is the 2020 LOL Worlds in Shanghai. At the beginning of 2020, the global esports community believed that it would be cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to industry sources, the Shanghai government offered extraordinary support that enabled the event to go on as planned:*



### **Transportation:**

Partnering with China Eastern Airlines and offering charter flights to bring all the foreign teams to Shanghai: all LEC teams traveled from Berlin, all LCS teams traveled from Los Angeles, and all LCK teams traveled from Seoul.



### **COVID-19 quarantine:**

After taking the COVID-19 test, players could stay at the hotel and train if their test results were negative, rather than remain in hotel rooms for 14 days with nothing to do.



### **Group-stage venue:**

All group-stage matches were played in a studio. However, to prevent crowds from gathering, TJ Sports did not reveal the address of the studio.



### **Grand Final venue:**

The 2020 LOL Worlds Grand Final was played in Shanghai Pudong Football Stadium, a brand-new football stadium with around 35,000 seats. TJ Sports allowed 6,312 lucky fans to watch the Grand Final at the venue, but all participants had to follow stringent rules. For example, they had to keep a strict distance between seats, they had to show their health codes and pass temperature checks when entering the stadium, and so on.



### 3. Player service on-site

When esports teams travel to another continent to play a tournament, they need support for activities like booking flights and hotels, giving interviews in different languages, updating daily schedules, and even for small things like ordering food and buying transportation tickets. When an international esports event takes place in China, three player services might present the greatest problems: visa applications, language support, and medical care.

#### a) Visa application services

A prerequisite for producing a LAN esports event is to get all the participants into the host city legally. Visa problems typically plague Chinese esports teams when they travel abroad. The European Union has a no-border policy for EU citizens, which means that EU teams can easily enter a host city within the EU. However, when a Chinese esports player applies for a visa to enter an EU country, the whole process could take up to three weeks. In 2016, a Chinese League of Legends team, Edward Gaming, dropped out of the 2016 IEM KATOWICE because of a visa issue. Whenever a tournament organizer is planning an international event in China, the organizer

must learn the latest policies and rules governing foreigners' entry into the country, because the policy may change from year to year. Sadly, politics can influence esports events in an unexpected way. Back in 2016, it was pretty easy for a North American esports team to get a Chinese visa — it would take as little as two working days. Unfortunately, political tensions between China and the USA since 2019 might present a challenge to American esports players traveling to China for an event, or vice versa. According to industry sources, Team Liquid had to quit the 2019 IEM Beijing because of a visa issue.





## b) Language services

Chinese might be one of the most difficult languages in the world. If there is an international esports event in China, then the tournament organizer should offer language services to players inside and outside the studio. In the studio, players may need help with translation of the match rules and interpretation for interviews,

which are mostly done by referees who are fluent in English. Outside the studio, players also need help with daily chores like ordering food, paying for transportation tickets, getting their laundry done, and so on. To take care of players' needs outside the studio, tournament organizers might assign a team butler to each team.

## c) Medical services

At most LAN esports events in the past, tournament organizers would have an ambulance on-site to react to urgent medical requests. However, the COVID-19 pandemic pushes on-site medical services to another level. To prevent the disease from spreading, most crowd events in 2020 were cancelled, including most esports LAN events. Though ESL tried its best to keep the 2020 IEM KATOWICE alive by assigning a medical patrol at the venue, offering sanitizers at each entrance, and cleaning the stage before each match, this global esports festival had to be conducted without any on-site audience, following the guidance of the local health department. In China, all crowd events in 2020 are managed by the local Municipal Health Commission — the events must either follow the guidance of the local Municipal Health Commission or risk being cancelled. The 2020 LOL Worlds Grand Final in Shanghai allowed 6,312 people to watch the match. However, all on-site spectators had to follow the rules set up by the local Municipal Health Commission — having their temperatures taken, showing health codes

at the gate, wearing masks inside the venue, keeping a strict distance between seats, and so on. The global esports industry survived the COVID-19 lockdown by conducting all events online. However, to prepare for LAN events when everything goes back to normal, all tournament organizers should learn a lesson from the COVID-19 pandemic: It is time to upgrade the disease control measures for LAN events. Though regulators may have already implemented rules to regulate disease control at events like music concerts and football matches, esports events are still unique in some ways, which means that regulators might have to revise some of the above-mentioned rules to fit esports matches. For example, after esports players have used microphones and computer screens for hours, those devices should be cleaned carefully between matches, because millions of respiratory droplets have landed on those devices. Hopefully, tournament organizers all around the world will work with local health departments to draft standardized rules and regulations to manage disease-control measures at LAN esports events.





# 8

## Decide your tournament format

The tournament format should be one of the first decisions you make when planning your event. The format you choose will determine how many participants you can invite, how many matches will need to be played, and over what period of time they can be conducted.

In this chapter, Dr. Darina Goldin, Director Data Science at Bayes Esports, gives you a quick overview of the most commonly encountered esports tournament formats. We can roughly divide the types of tournaments into the knockout, group, and ladder formats, with additional formats created specifically for free-for-all types of games. In a knockout (also known as elimination) tournament, the loser of a match is eliminated, and only the winner moves on to the next stage. Conversely, in a group tournament, each participant is guaranteed

to have several matches. Hybrid forms, usually consisting of a group stage and an elimination stage, are common in esports. Ladders are based around a series of challenges and most commonly found in amateur play.

The perfect tournament format for esports events doesn't exist. The system you choose should satisfy your personal criteria regarding the desired number of participants and time constraints. You will want a quicker format if the event is held in one day on LAN, and something more predictable when running a several-months-long league. In an invitational tournament, it's easy to fit the number of participants so that your brackets are full. If people are free to sign up, you might need a format that can tolerate having 37 teams enter instead of 32 or 64.

### 1. Knockout Formats: Single and double elimination, GSL

Good for: play-offs, short events, large number of participants

#### Single elimination

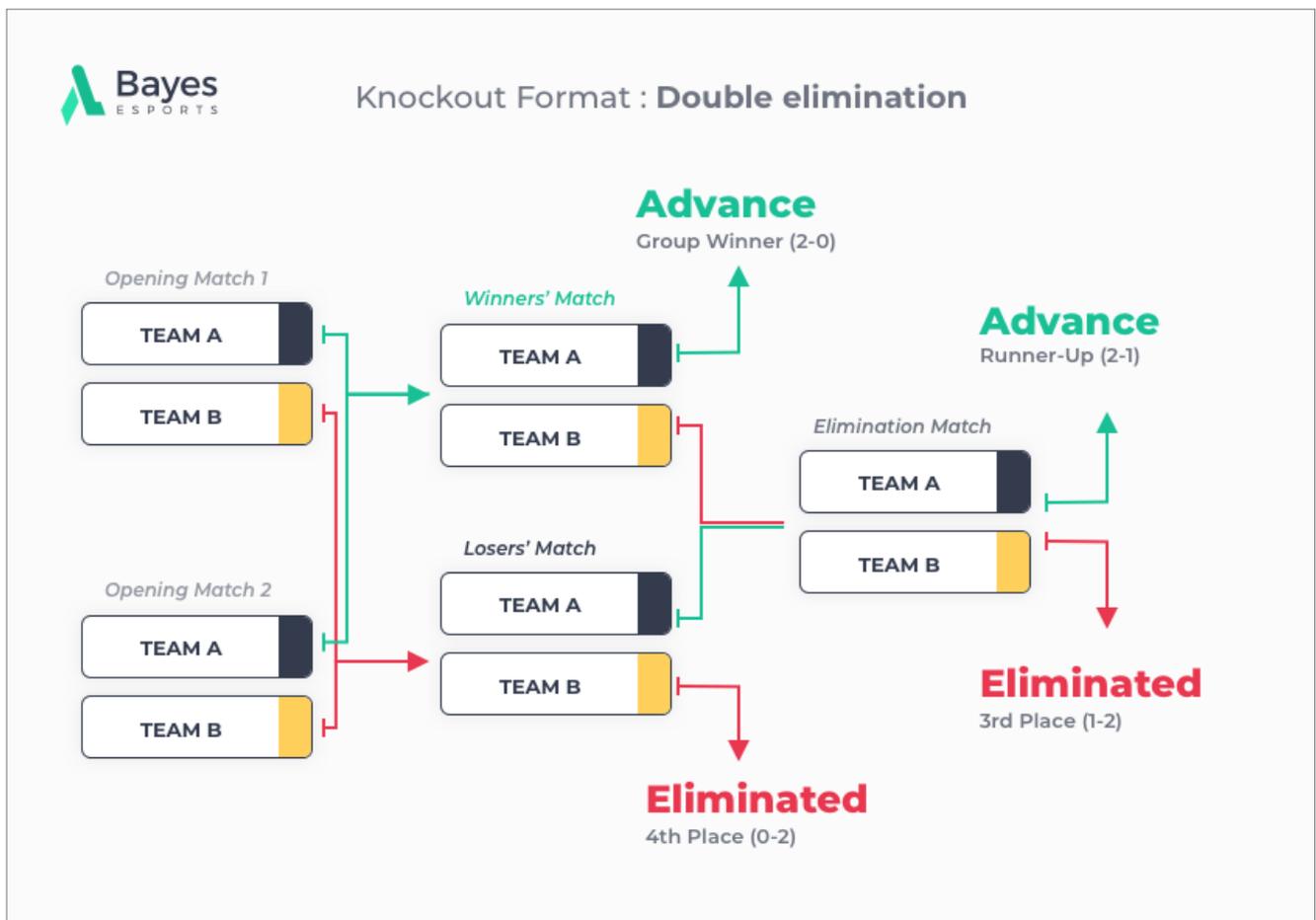
The single elimination is the most straightforward tournament type. After each match, the losers are eliminated, and the winners move on to the next stage. This format requires the least number of matches to be played. With many participants, this will save time. But it can be frustrating, especially to the teams losing in the first round and especially if they are unlucky enough to face a favorite. Half of the tournament participants will only get to play one match, and one-quarter will only get to play two. Another drawback is that after the semi-finals, two teams will be left to compete for third place, so an additional decider match is necessary. Finally, the next round of the tournament can only take place after the last one is finished, which might lead to long delays if a match runs long or if the scheduling is not done well.



## Double elimination

The double elimination aims to offset this, by ensuring that you must lose twice in order to be out of the tournament. This means that each participant will get at least two matches, and it will still be possible to win the tournament after losing in the first round. This format can be confusing at first glance, but it's one of the most commonly found in esports.

Everybody starts in the winner (W) bracket. After its first loss, the losing team goes to the loser's (L) bracket. This means that the finals of the W bracket are the overall tournament semi-finals — the winner of this match will go on to the grand finals, and the loser will be the last to join the L bracket. The loser of the lower bracket finals automatically takes third place, while the winner goes on to the grand finals. There are two variations in how the final match can happen: If the winner of the W bracket wins the finals, then it is clear that they are the absolute winner. But if they lose, this will be their first loss in the tournament. Because everybody needs to lose twice to be eliminated, another finals match between the two teams needs to take place. However, some tournaments will choose to forgo this part, one notable example being The International in Dota 2.





## GSL

The GSL format takes its name from the Global Starcraft League and was developed specifically for esports. It is closely related, however, to how double elimination is played in traditional sports like judo. In this format, you cannot become the overall winner if you have lost a match, so the loser of the upper bracket final plays the winner of the lower bracket final for second place. In esports, you will most commonly find this in the group stage, with each group consisting of four participants and with two out of four advancing out of the group. In this case, the GSL rule can be summarized as requiring „two wins to advance.” Alternatively, when used for seeding, these results can separate participants in winner and loser brackets.



Single elimination	Double elimination	GSL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ simple</li> <li>+ fastest tournament form</li> <li>+ few matches</li> <li>+ increases chances of underdog victories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ 3rd place automatically determined</li> <li>+ a good team that played one bad game can still win</li> <li>+ everyone plays at least two matches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ clear winning condition</li> <li>+ fewer matches than double elimination</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 50% of the competitors only play one match, and 75% play at most two</li> <li>- requires extra play-off match to determine 3rd place</li> <li>- cannot have draws</li> <li>- requires really good seedings</li> <li>- byes are inevitable if the number of participants isn't even</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- twice as many matches as in single elimination</li> <li>- unclear how many matches will be played in the finals</li> <li>- cannot handle draws</li> <li>- hard to understand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- cannot handle draws</li> <li>- hard to understand</li> </ul>



## 2. Group formats: Round robin and Swiss

### Round robin

A round robin tournament is what you will usually find in a league. Here, every team plays every team, and each win or draw awards a certain amount of points. At the end of the round robin, the winner can be decided either by choosing the one team with the most points or by holding play-offs, in which the top X-number of teams play in a single elimination tournament. One clear benefit is that round robin-type events can be scheduled completely in advance — unlike in elimination brackets, it is clear at the start who will play whom and when.

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### Double round robin

A double round robin means that all teams play each other twice. This makes most sense in traditional sports, in which home and away matches are necessary. In esports, Blizzard is pushing Overwatch into this traditional model by having different teams host match days in their cities of origin. Some leagues choose to play a double round robin format even though all matches are being held online, League of Legends LEC being a notable example.

One downside of round robin tournaments is the large number of matches that are required. For example, if 32 teams compete, you will need to conduct 496 matches. Usually, smaller formats (such as playing only one or two maps) are chosen in order to limit the amount of time the matches take. Another downside is that, in a large pool, there will be matches that showcase large skill differences and that are boring to both the competitors and the spectators

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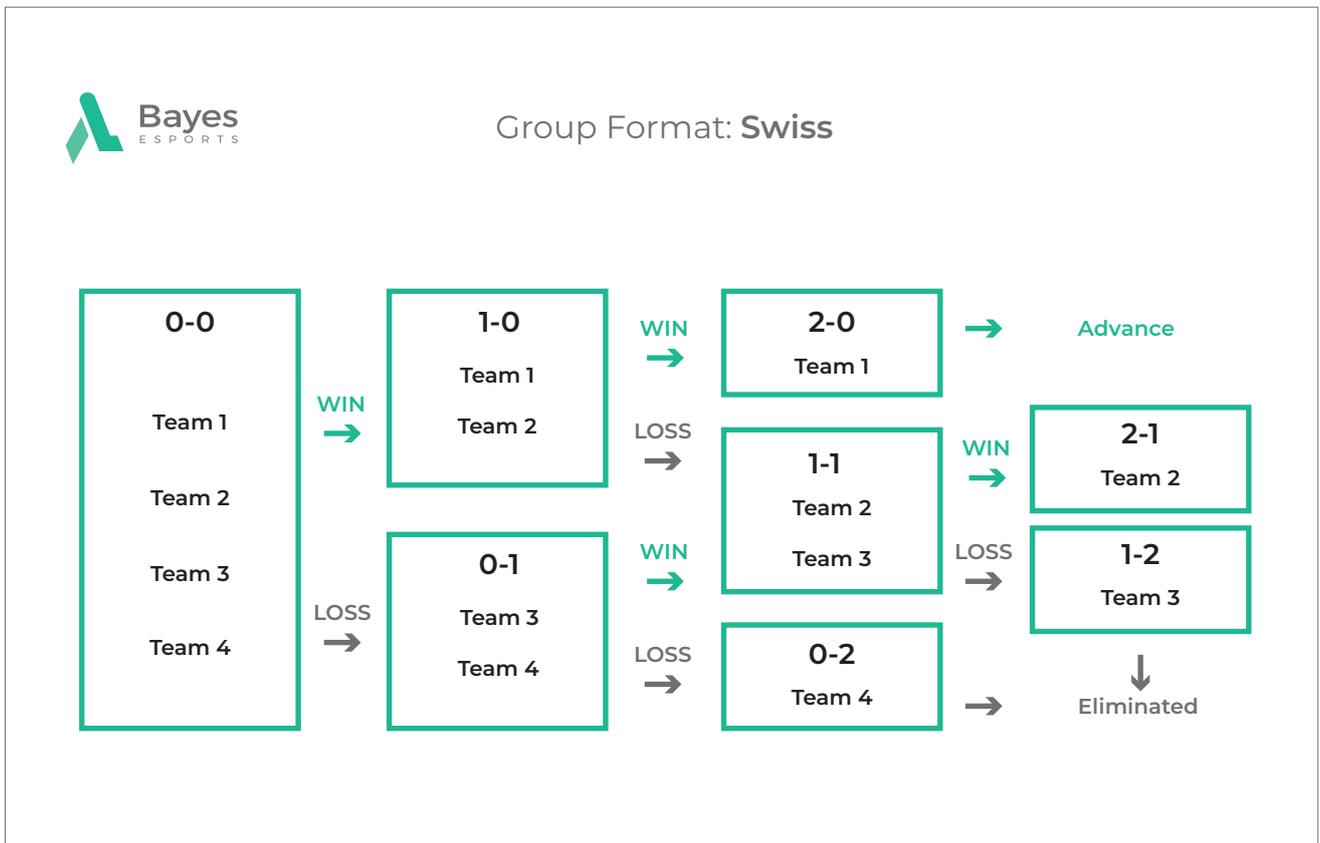
### Round robin split

A round robin split can be mitigated by splitting the round robin into several smaller ones, usually called divisions. For instance, instead of having 36 teams compete in one league, each having to play 35 matches, you could have four groups of eight teams. In order to determine the overall winner, you would then have the play-offs between the groups, usually taking the top two finishing positions. Here, proper seeding is critical. If the top three seeds end up in the same division, the third one will not be participating in the play-offs, painting an inaccurate picture of the participants



## Swiss

Another way of limiting the number of matches per team is by using the Swiss tournament format. It is similar to a round robin, but instead of teams playing each competitor in their division, only a set number of matches per team is played. Usually, you will randomly draw the first round, then use the results of that to set up the matches that appear closest in skill in the second round, and so on. A side rule is that no teams can play each other twice. After the last round, participants are ranked by their score. This might be followed by a play-off. This system is most often found in chess. In esports, a variation of this system is used for all CS:GO Major Championships, as well as many other events.





Round robin	Round robin split	Swiss
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ guaranteed amount of games per participant</li> <li>+ can be scheduled far in advance</li> <li>+ doesn't require seeding</li> <li>+ can handle draws</li> <li>+ produces ranking</li> <li>+ easy to understand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ fewer matches than round robin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ fewer matches than round robin</li> <li>+ fewer mismatched games than in round robin</li> <li>+ produces ranking</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- largest amount of matches</li> <li>- usually not possible in one day</li> <li>- matches with large skill discrepancy can be frustrating</li> <li>- winner might be clear before season end due to point lead</li> <li>- odd number of participants means a bye for one competitor in each round</li> <li>- needs a way to handle tiebreaks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- requires seeding</li> <li>- uneven number of participants per division can seem unfair</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- can be "gamed" by participants (playing badly at the start, winner decides who gets second place...)</li> <li>- winner might be clear before season end</li> <li>- ranking is fuzzy in the middle ranks</li> <li>- hard to understand</li> </ul>

### 3. Ladder/pyramid

Good for: long-running events, self-organized events

The ladder is made up of players who are ranked based on their wins and losses. Each rung is populated by competitors of similar skill, who can challenge those positioned above them. If the lower ranked competitor wins, the two will switch places. Usually it is not possible for the higher ranked competitor to refuse a challenge. In a large ladder, there should be a limit on how many rungs above them players may challenge.

Unlike the other formats discussed so far, a ladder tournament can go on indefinitely. In theory, it is not necessary to seed, because the ladder will sort itself very quickly. It is good practice, however, to put the most skilled players at the bottom of the ladder at the start, so they can work their way up.



- + does not need a time limit
- + can be organized by players themselves
- not all players are challenged equally often
- ranking may not reflect actual skill if player is not challenged often enough

## Free for all

While strictly a game rather than a tournament format, the free for all (FFA) is worth its own mention. Specific to esports, this format is encountered in titles in which a lot of players enter into a battle arena. It can be a „last man standing” type of game, like PUBG or Super Smash Brothers. The format also works for racing games like Mario Kart. After each game, the participants are awarded a number of points based on their performance (eliminations, final placement, objectives achieved, and so on). The overall winner is determined by the tally of points at the end of the event.

## Two-stage tournament

A format that you will encounter most often in esports is a mixed tournament consisting of two stages. Usually there will first be a group stage, with several divisions playing either round robin or GSL. The top X-number (most often two) of teams in each division then move on to the elimination stage, which is single or double elimination. The result of the group stage can be directly used for seeding by placing the first finisher of each group against the second finisher of another group, and by putting competitors from the same group on opposite sides of the bracket. This setup offers a lot of benefits from the mix, and all competitors get a minimum number of games. It's relatively easy to seed, since you only want to make sure that your favorites are evenly distributed in the divisions. It also lends itself well to having an online/offline mix, with group stages conducted over a longer period offline and a LAN final.

### ***A note on tiebreaks***

***In almost all the formats we have considered, it is possible for two teams to accumulate the same amount of points. It is extremely important to define a procedure for this situation before the event. How will you decide who advances? It could be based on secondary statistics, such as whoever won the most rounds. Or you might require an additional match. The participants will often base their strategy partly on this. In order to avoid complaints, this should be communicated clearly, along with all the other rules.***



## Don't forget these details

*There are so many different aspects you need to take care of when you're organizing a tournament that it's easy to forget important details. To have a better time estimate and rulebook, you should immediately decide how many games should be played in each match and how the map and/or hero selection will be handled.*

### How many maps should the teams play?

- **Best of 1** — A single game is played by two teams. This is usually only fitting in group stages, though it could work well for one-day fun tournaments, in which keeping the matches brief is more important than having the most deserving winner.
- **Best of 2** — Two games are played, making draws possible. This format is suitable only for round robin-type and traditional Swiss events, in which draws are possible.
- **Best of 3** — This is the most common format in knockout stages of tournaments, though it can also be useful for group stages.
- **Best of 5** — This format is usually reserved for the grand finals of a tournament. In the worst case (when the winner wins 3:2), a full five maps are played. This might take up to five hours and is extremely taxing on both the competitors and the viewers.

*Some events have gone further, hosting Best of 7 matches, but these are rare.*



## 4. The virtual coin flip

In traditional sports, all you need to usually decide is who picks which side of the arena and who gets to serve first. In esports, there are a lot more minutiae to organize and decide, and not planning for this might make the matches less fair than they should be.

### Picking heroes

In titles in which different heroes can be selected, like LOL and Dota 2, a tournament will usually have an approved hero pool at the start or a list of heroes that are banned (due to being unbalanced, for example). This pool will be much larger than the number required to play the match. At the start of each map, the teams will ban heroes from the map pool (so their opponents cannot use them) and pick their own heroes. For large MOBA titles, there are established procedures for this that are already built into the game software. For smaller esports, the tournament organizer might have to manually enable the selection process.

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### Picking maps

In titles like Overwatch, CS:GO, or Team Fortress 2, different maps can be played. It is customary for a tournament to define the map pool before the event — usually selecting from a commonly accepted, standard active pool of maps. Beware, though, that for newer and smaller titles, such a consensus may not yet exist; it might be necessary to get some additional information as to which maps are currently a good choice for a competition.

Based on the rules of the event, teams will participate in a predetermined series of rounds of bans and picks that will ultimately determine the map(s) and the order in which they will be played. This is important, as some teams specialize in certain maps. Since almost all formats (except Bo2) require an uneven number of maps to be played, it is not trivial to pick the decider.

For Bo1, the common procedure is to let teams ban maps until only one is left. That one is then played.



For higher numbered BoX, teams will ban one map and pick one map, possibly several times, with the decider being randomly selected from the remaining pool or eliminated by banning further maps, as in Bo1.

Of course, there are many variations of this process suitable to particular titles. In a league format, it might be interesting to have all teams play on all maps. For example, the European Team Fortress 2 League runs in a round robin Bo2 format over seven weeks and has a map pool of seven maps. Each week, two maps from the map pool are assigned, with each map appearing twice during the season.

## Picking sides

Which side you play on can lead to a significant advantage in esports. Even in capture points maps such as those in Overwatch that appear completely symmetrical, the symmetry is not perfect. In MOBA games like LOL or Dota 2, one side might have an advantage that is as high as 7%. This advantage can be statistically shown, just as it can be demonstrated in games like CS:GO, in which terrorists are more or less likely to win, depending on the map that is being played. Finally, for attack/defense formats, it might simply be the personal preference of the teams. In any case, your tournament rules should define how the team's sides are picked. A good idea, for instance, is to have the team that picks heroes (or maps) then pick the side it plays on in the first map.



## 5. A primer on seeding

Of all the great reasons to host a tournament — creating entertainment, promoting the sport, and making money — one is the most primal: A tournament should show you which competitor (among the entrants) has the highest skill. As the organizer, it is your duty to eliminate luck as much as possible. Who wins your tournament should depend on how well they perform, not on which bracket they were in or how many byes they got.

This is not just for the sake of fairness. Remember, you also want to deliver exciting matches to your audience. This can only happen if the strongest teams meet each other in the later stages of your event. Of course, upsets might happen — but it is your job to make them as rare as possible.

*A tournament should show you which competitor (among the entrants) has the highest skill.*

### a) Why seeding is important

Let's imagine we have eight teams playing in a single elimination-type tournament: two professional and six amateur teams. Naturally, we would want the two professional teams to make it to the finals.

When the time comes to fill the brackets, we want to be fair to everyone. So we throw all the team names into a hat and randomly draw the first-round competitors. And, lo and behold, our two pro teams end up playing each other in the first round!

This is a recipe for disaster. One of the two will necessarily be knocked out and won't place at

all. The second place will be taken by an amateur team. The results of our „fair” tournament will not be representative of team skill. Furthermore, the pro team will tear through the tournament without much opposition, resulting in boring and frustrating matches. Will anyone even watch the finals?

The obvious way to prevent this is by putting the two strongest teams on opposite sides of the bracket. In more general terms this is called seeding — determining the position of a team in a tournament based on some preconceived idea of their skill.



## b) How do you seed?

### i. Evaluate winning chances

To be able to seed, you should have a good idea of who the stronger and weaker participants in your competition are. If there is an official ranking, you can use that. Unfortunately, there are very few unified ranking systems in esports. On top of that, teams tend to evolve and change skill tiers rapidly, even more so in amateur leagues.

So what can you do to gain information?

- use rankings from different stats sources, like datdota for Dota 2
- check recent results of teams playing each other
- ask experts
- for new teams: check participating players
- have a round robin group stage that automatically produces rankings

It's not always necessary to seed all participants. Sometimes it might be enough to separate them into strong/medium/weak groups, or even just to identify the top four competitors.

### ii. Write your brackets accordingly

In knockout brackets, you want the top four to be spread as far apart as possible. So 1 and 2 should be on opposite sides of the bracket and meet in the finals. In the semi-finals, 1 should be facing 4, and 2 should be facing 3 — again, to ensure the better team arrives at the finals. This is also true in the double elimination format.

In the Swiss system, you'll want to start with your seeded teams at the top. In a round robin format with several divisions, the top seeds should be spread equally among the groups, to make sure they all make it to the play-off round.

When making brackets for a play-off round, you can use the results of the group stages to maximize fairness. First, by putting the first and second finisher of the same group on opposite sides of the bracket, you minimize the chance of a rematch. Second, assuming that the top finisher in each group is more likely to win the entire event, that competitor should be facing the second finisher from another group first.

### iii. Skip seeding altogether

There are formats that allow you to avoid seeding; most notably, in a round robin tournament, everyone will play everyone. Double elimination and GSL also require less rigorous seeding, since a team has a chance to come back from a loss. Finally, it might be justified to have a random seeding, as is often the case with newbie/fun tournaments, where no team is a clear favorite.



**Dr. Darina Goldin**  
Director Data Science  
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## Glossary

- Seeding - ranking competitors before a tournament to create good matchups.
- Draw - the process of putting competitors into brackets, like drawing names from a hat.
- Bracket - tree diagram that represents the series of games in a knockout tournament.
- Rating - estimation of the true skill of a competitor.
- Ranking - ordering of competitors based on their estimated skill.
- Stage - round of the tournament, like finals, semi-finals, quarterfinals, round of 16, round of 32, and so on. Can also mean the separation into group and elimination stage in a mixed form tournament.
- Upper/lower bracket - brackets of a tournament, usually defined by how they are drawn on paper.
- Winner/loser bracket - brackets of a double elimination tournament.
- Grand final - usually refers to the final of a double elimination tournament, which is between the winners of the winner and the loser brackets.
- Fixture - synonym for match.
- Bye - if a participant does not have a match at certain stage of a tournament, they are said to have a “bye” in that round.
- Default win - a participant has a match, but the opponent drops out without playing.



# 9

## What is important for teams?

Tournament organizers are incentivized to create and maintain a healthy yet professional relationship with the professional players and teams that participate in their events. Part of this is accomplished by sticking to general tournament principles, maintaining competitive integrity, and resolving disputes fairly, but the most crucial aspect is good communication.

### 1. Communication and rules

Contestants need to know all the important information about a tournament, conveyed in a clear and concise manner. Examples include tournament schedules, general rules on format and scoring, media contact information, and social media hashtags. Using a tool like Google Documents allows updates to be made and ensures maximum transparency for all contestants. The rules need to cover expected use-cases, but they also outline common problems and how the rules aim to remedy them. Examples of this include how to handle situations in which a player disconnects during a game, or if there are technical issues for a player. This document also needs to specify media obligations, interview requirements, fan signings, and anything other than what's required in terms of competitive games.

In the buildup to a tournament, having a tournament representative available beyond

normal business hours also allows for speedier communication and for tackling issues rapidly. Most top teams have a manager or coach who speaks on behalf of their team for the duration of the competition and acts as the point of contact for them. This is especially useful for the logistics department of a tournament organizer, which can manage the transportation and possibly assist in visa applications for contestants.

A communication platform like Discord really helps in this regard, allowing managers and tournament officials to communicate privately and publicly, depending on their specific circumstances. It also lets teams help each other troubleshoot common questions, reducing some of the load on tournament officials. Some Chinese teams are not able to use Discord, however, so Skype or WeChat is commonly used as an alternative platform for them.





## 2. Tournament guidelines

Professional players want to primarily focus on the gameplay of the event. For both online and offline events, there is significant overlap in how to achieve this as optimally as possible, although offline events naturally have extra challenges because of the associated logistics in managing all the contestants and their support staff.

Contestants shouldn't be expected to play an unreasonable amount each day, but this is highly title-specific. For example, in Dota 2 a general guideline is 2x best-of-three games in a day, or 3x two-game series.

### *The primary metrics in this regard are:*

- Total expected game-time per game day
- Maximum possible game-time per day (if all series play the maximum number of games)
- Concurrent days of playing without allocated break days
- Time from the start of the first game until the end of the final game for each team

Teams also expect to at least play a few other teams in an event before being potentially eliminated. This is even more true for offline events; teams can spend more than a day travelling to an event, so they don't want to be eliminated on the first day. The format dictates a minimum number of games a team could play.

These rules can be slightly more flexible, especially when players are playing online and don't have to travel as much, and especially before and after their games each day. In Counter-Strike, the CSPPA (Counter-Strike Professional Players Association) mandates what is and isn't acceptable.



Bayes Esports CEO Martin Dachsel hosting Invictus Gaming, Royal Never Give Up, Fun-Plus Phoenix and CTBC J Team in Berlin office

Basic food and drink should be available at both the practice and competition venues, and in most team-based sports, there is either catered food provided or a stipend offered for teams to make their own catering decisions. This is especially important for teams with specific dietary requirements. Although it's not always possible, accommodations for an event should not be too far from the practice area (at many events it's inside the hotel itself or at a nearby hall), and transportation should be offered.



## 10 Technical needs of a tournament

In any competitive event, large or small, the integrity of the event itself is paramount to its success. From a technical perspective, this presents multiple challenges, particularly when the competition itself is on LAN, because — due to the higher prestige and prize money associated with these events — this is where the highest level of integrity is required.

Provided player hardware needs to be of a sufficiently high standard to get excellent in-game performance. This varies from title to title, but mostly this means high-end consumer gear — top of the line processors, RAM and graphics cards — including high refresh rate monitors. Players normally have identical setups in their practice areas and on the competition stage, allowing them to warm up when not playing their official matches. Tournament organizers also keep identical specification machines on standby in case of a hardware fault.

Some tournament organizers play official competitive matches directly from the practice rooms (normally group stage games of larger events), whereas other tournaments fully isolate practice from official setups. To keep competitive areas completely sterile and avoid configuration issues between different contestants, PC-based competitions often allocate an SSD (Solid State Drive) per contestant. That keeps all software, games, and configurations exactly as the participants wish and allows for fast turnaround times when contestants who are playing on a stage or in a competitive area change. Once again, different tournament organizers handle these in different ways, either allowing normal access to this drive or keeping a sterile one for competitive use.

Players bring their own peripherals to events and are normally responsible for managing them. At especially prestigious LAN events — for example, The International — teams are required to bring two sets of hardware: one is inspected and kept by the tournament organizer, and the other is kept by the player for personal use and practice when not in a competitive match. Teams often supply additional backup hardware in case of a malfunction, or at least have it on hand, should the need arise.

When entering competitive environments such as the stage, contestants routinely go through metal detectors to block cellphones, USB drives, or anything that could provide an advantage to players during their official matches. This is normally done each time players rejoin the competition area, between the games of a match or even after a bathroom break.

Tournament officials ensure that competitive machines are firewalled from the internet (with hardware or software that controls what computers on a network can access), which prevents unauthorized software from being installed or unauthorized communication from occurring. Extra firewall rules are required to allow the players access to core services such as Steam, Dota Servers, and Riot Servers.



Tournament organizers either permit a voice application (such as Discord, Mumble, or Teamspeak), or more commonly install a closed-circuit analogue communication system (with noise-cancelling headsets) for the players. This means that there are no latency issues or chances of external interference or assistance.

In addition to the use of noise-cancelling headsets, some tournaments are played in sealed booths. These booths act as a primary sound barrier and are climate controlled. This prevents the audience from giving crucial information to the fan favorites that otherwise would be hidden from the players. These booths are expensive, and in some regions, it is difficult to obtain fire and safety accreditation for them.

Larger LAN events often have an entire IT department managing the technical needs of all players and staff at an event, which can add up to a few hundred people. In addition to the numerous requests they might field, the IT team also must prevent targeted digital assaults such as DDoS attacks, in which groups or individuals attempt to disrupt the internet connection for an event by means of large-scale attacks. These can degrade or terminate external communications, causing the entire event to grind to a halt, so managing network security is crucial.

The IT staff, in conjunction with league operations officials and referees, will manage any custom servers required for the event.

For example, in CS:GO, the event itself will run a game server. This requires technical skills to configure and administer correctly, and naturally it should not run any superfluous or unknown applications that could breach tournament integrity. These systems also generally allow for rollbacks due to technical problems, such as Chronobreak in League of Legends, or during disconnects.

League operations also collect as much meaningful information as possible on any decisions made, game files stored (such as replays), notable actions, and any unusual occurrences. This allows for post-game reviews and analysis for potential cheating or inappropriate behavior. The recent CS:GO coach bug issue was exposed by analysis of thousands of game replays that league operations had collected over thousands of matches; more than 30 coaches were caught cheating, sometimes years after the fact.

Up to 50 people, sometimes spread out over multiple locations, are normally in the production areas. In the larger production groups, highly specialized individuals focus on specific components of the event, and they have particular gear requirements; some bring their own equipment, while others use what is provided by the tournament organizer. This collective is responsible for the entertainment aspect of the event: broadcasting the competition for viewers to watch.



## 11 Op-Ed Lubberger Lehment: Legal concerns

The tournament organizer is the intermediary between the publisher and the teams, players, spectators, and all other participants in the value chain. This means that the organizer not only takes on the main organizational responsibility but also the key role in legal matters. Organizers have to secure and draw up all necessary rights and contracts for the implementation of the tournament, and they are responsible to the authorities for compliance with regulations and provisions governed by public law.

Dr. David Weller, Senior Associate at Lubberger Lehment, provides an overview of the relevant legal issues from a European perspective, focusing on legal regulations in Germany:

### 1. Organizing esports events

#### a) Rights clearing

Comprehensive rights clearance is the fundamental requirement for the staging and monetization of a tournament. The publisher, teams and players, sponsors and advertising partners all hold protected legal positions (especially in regard to copyright, trademark, and personal rights). In addition, the generated data, although not specifically protected in Europe, is typically licensed for use.

The organizer must contractually secure all the rights needed for the implementation of the tournament and its marketing. The starting point is the license agreement with the publisher. Depending on the planned exploitation activities, the license must cover the reproduction of the game, the presentation or performance (online and/or offline), the broadcasting rights (for livestreams) and, for on-demand offers, the right to make the game publicly available. The

right to in-game advertising should also be clarified with the publisher.

For teams, players, and advertising partners, the name rights, trademark rights, and personal rights are of primary importance. If the organizer wants to use protected content, this must be contractually determined.

#### b) Onboarding sponsors, advertising partners

The legal framework for sponsors and other advertising partners is broadly the same as it is for other sporting events. The cooperation is based on contracts that define the scope and conditions. If different partners are involved, exclusivity clauses may need to be reviewed. Furthermore, the mutual use of logos and names should be regulated.



### c) Marketing

Several different laws regulate advertising activities, but two areas can be distinguished: The external circumstances of advertising — how, when, and where advertising is displayed (see below, 2. b.) — and the content of the advertisement; that is, the advertising message and the graphic design.

With regard to content, advertising must not be misleading; that is, it must not contain false and/or deceptive information about, for example, the cooperation partners, the size and market significance of the tournament or organizer, or the prizes. Using third-party brands or logos in advertising might also be problematic: The use of logos and/or names of sponsors and teams for marketing purposes is usually regulated in the respective contracts.

These regulations apply in principle to all advertising formats, including in-game advertising. While the external circumstances of advertising are mainly monitored by public authorities, infringements of content are primarily enforced by private competitors, consumer associations, or the concerned brand owners.

### d) Conditions of participation/tournament rules

There is no competition without clear rules: With the Terms and Conditions of Participation, the organizer defines the contractual frameworks for the conduct of the tournament. These consist primarily of the Conditions of Participation, the tournament format and procedure, and the prizes. In the Terms and Conditions of Participation, the organizer should also regulate his or her liability for any kind of disruption in performance — cancellations, disruptions to the technical infrastructure, cheating, and so on. Any rights of use required for marketing the tournament — rights to the players' names, team logos, any pictures, or other content — are also regulated in the Conditions of Participation. However, contractual freedom of design is limited by law. For example, rights of use cannot be transferred without restriction, liability must not be limited too much, and if a fee is paid for participation, additional rules apply, especially if the participants are consumers.

For locally organized tournaments, the Terms and Conditions must be provided in the national language. In all cases, the Conditions of Participation must be transparent, clearly understandable, and communicated before registration.



### e) Data protection

The issue of data protection — that is, the protection of personal data — has become significantly more important, particularly for European stakeholders, with the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the introduction of the enormous framework of fines for data protection infringements.

This also affects tournament organizers. Personal data is processed throughout all stages of the tournament: the registration of participants, the onboarding of sponsors and advertising partners, the streaming of the games, the transfer of data to betting providers (players' names also constitute personal data), and the photo and film recordings of offline tournaments. According to the GDPR, each individual data processing activity requires a legal basis (depending on the situation, this could be a contract or consent, for example). In addition, there are in many cases extensive information obligations. The minimum requirement for European organizers is the provision of an easily accessible data protection declaration. If personal data is to be transferred to a third country outside the EU — such as the USA or countries in the Asian region — additional requirements need to be fulfilled.

Compliance with data protection law requires that the organizer identify the data processing operations concerned, develop a comprehensive data protection concept, and actually follow this concept.

### f) Offline tournaments: venues, ticketing, regulatory approvals

Organizers of public offline tournaments must take several additional aspects into account. On the contractual side, this concerns the rental of the event location and its furnishing with technical equipment and personnel, including catering. For larger events, local organizers are typically commissioned to carry out the organizational side of the event. The ticketing is usually handled by ticketing service providers. The administrative requirements are at least as complex, and they vary from country to country. There is a broad consensus on the question of whether an esports tournament with the possibility of prize winning requires a gambling hall license: This is not the case if the event is primarily not about playing but about watching others play. Many questions regarding the protection of minors remain unresolved. The age restrictions of the USK (German Entertainment Software Self-Regulation Body) only apply to the distribution of games on data media and do not directly regulate the access of young viewers to esports tournaments. However, the authorities have a general power of intervention in events that are liable to be harmful to young people. In order to avoid official intervention, there should be agreement with the local authorities before the event as to which measures must be taken to protect minors.

For larger commercial tournaments, official licenses may be required, and safety, fire protection, and traffic concepts must be drawn up.



## 2. Value chain

### a) Data and data licensing

Licensing is not a one-way street. The organizer is not only a buyer but also a supplier of rights. This applies in particular to data generated during the tournament. Organizers can commercialize the data themselves or via distribution partners.

Data is, first of all, the basis for the online broadcasting of the event. In addition, the data is, in particular, the basis for further utilization of the event in the area of media coverage and the betting business. The problem here is that, in Europe, there are (so far) no rights of ownership for data. The monetization of data and the control of data flows have so far mainly been based on data licensing agreements. The correct contractual arrangements are crucial here for the success of utilization and the greatest

possible protection of data owners. Licensing the data exclusively to distributors is an effective means for data owners to control the handling and forwarding of the data and to ensure a high-quality standard of the data within the further utilization chain.

Once the data are published, the data controllers have little control over their dissemination and economic exploitation by third parties. In practice, data controllers mainly use technical measures to restrict access. In principle, the more professional the processing of the data stock and the more complex the technical protective measures, the more legal possibilities data owners possess to prevent the unauthorized use of their data.





## b) Production and broadcast/stream

### i. Utilization models and licensing

One of the pillars of the utilization of esports events is their online or TV broadcasting, live or on-demand. In this regard, a distinction must be made in particular between the production of the content and second-level broadcasting. The commercial utilization is primarily secured by contracts.

Organizers of esports events may produce the video content themselves and broadcast it on their own channel, or license it to third parties for broadcasting on their channels. As a further option, organizers can have the content produced. To then be able to use the content themselves and license it to third parties, organizers must have the rights granted to them by the producers. The most important points of a license include agreements on the material and on the territorial and temporal scope. In terms of territory, it is possible to grant territorially limited rights to utilize the content in a targeted and country-specific manner. At the same time, the licenses can be the basis for prohibiting unauthorized third parties from publishing or otherwise exploiting the content.

### ii. Regulatory

In the regulatory field, the requirements differ, depending on whether the broadcast is on TV or on the internet. The laws pursue similar objectives, although the requirements in the TV sector may be stricter.

While on-demand offers are license-free, live streams may be subject to approval. In Germany,

a broadcasting license is always required if editorially prepared live formats are broadcast regularly at fixed times and can potentially reach more than 500 viewers.

Whether online, on TV, in print, or in-game, advertising and product placements must be recognizable as such or respectively marked as „advertising.“ If advertising is not recognizable or labeled as such, it is considered “surreptitious advertising.“ An infringement of the surreptitious advertising prohibition can lead to a warning from competitors. However, infringements can also be punished by state authorities, and fines can be imposed.

The subject of the protection of minors extends from the offline sector to the TV and online sector. Broadcasters and online streaming services are generally responsible for ensuring that no content that is harmful to minors is distributed or made publicly accessible.

Providers are obliged to ensure that children and young people do not normally perceive offers that could be damaging to their development.

Whether a transmission is harmful to minors does not depend solely on the game, which may only be released for a certain age group; all accompanying circumstances of the transmitted events must also be taken into account. If contents are harmful to minors, broadcasters and online streaming services may have to provide for age ratings, broadcast at certain times, or take other technical protective measures.



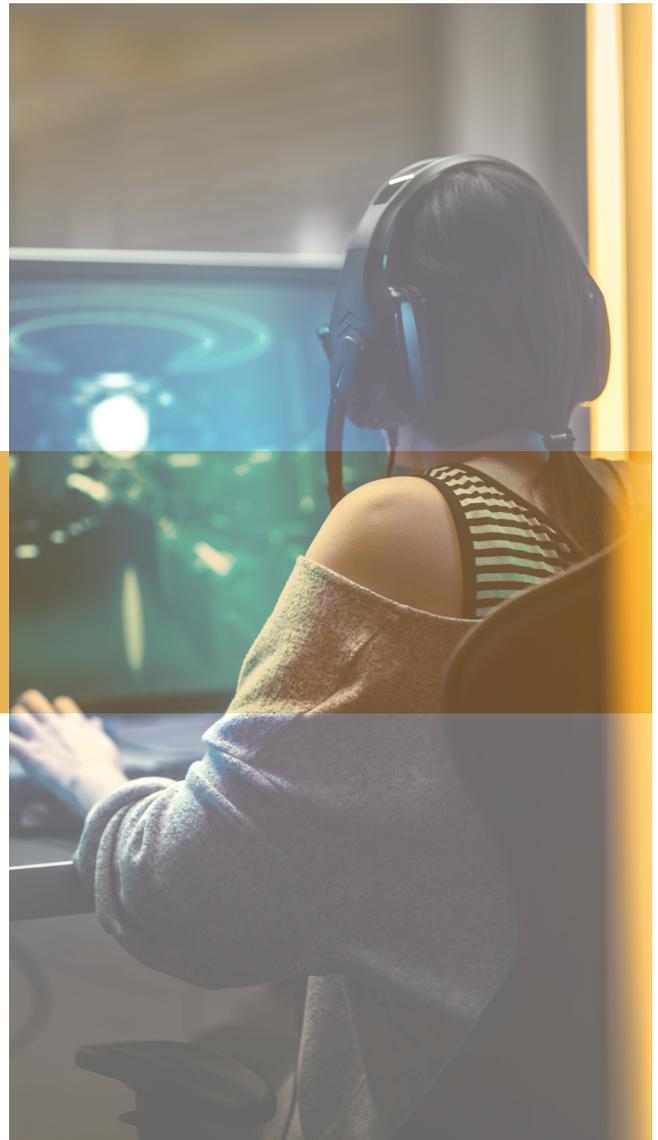
### c) Betting

For betting providers, one thing in particular counts: reliable and complete data that is provided without delay. This is because data forms the basis of betting odds, which determine the success of a betting transaction. To this end, betting providers conclude license agreements with data suppliers. The source of the information determines the quality of the data. Obtaining data from unreliable sources reduces the attractiveness of the betting offer and carries the risk of manipulation. Finally, betting operators have to deal with a



**Dr. David Weller**  
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regulatory patchwork in Europe and sometimes even within individual member states. The offering of wagers (and also their advertising) regularly requires official authorizations, which are only granted under strict conditions. In order to limit potential consumer addiction, gambling in Europe has traditionally been strictly regulated. It is the betting operators — not the organizers of esports events — who are responsible for obtaining the relevant licenses and ensuring compliance with the regulations.





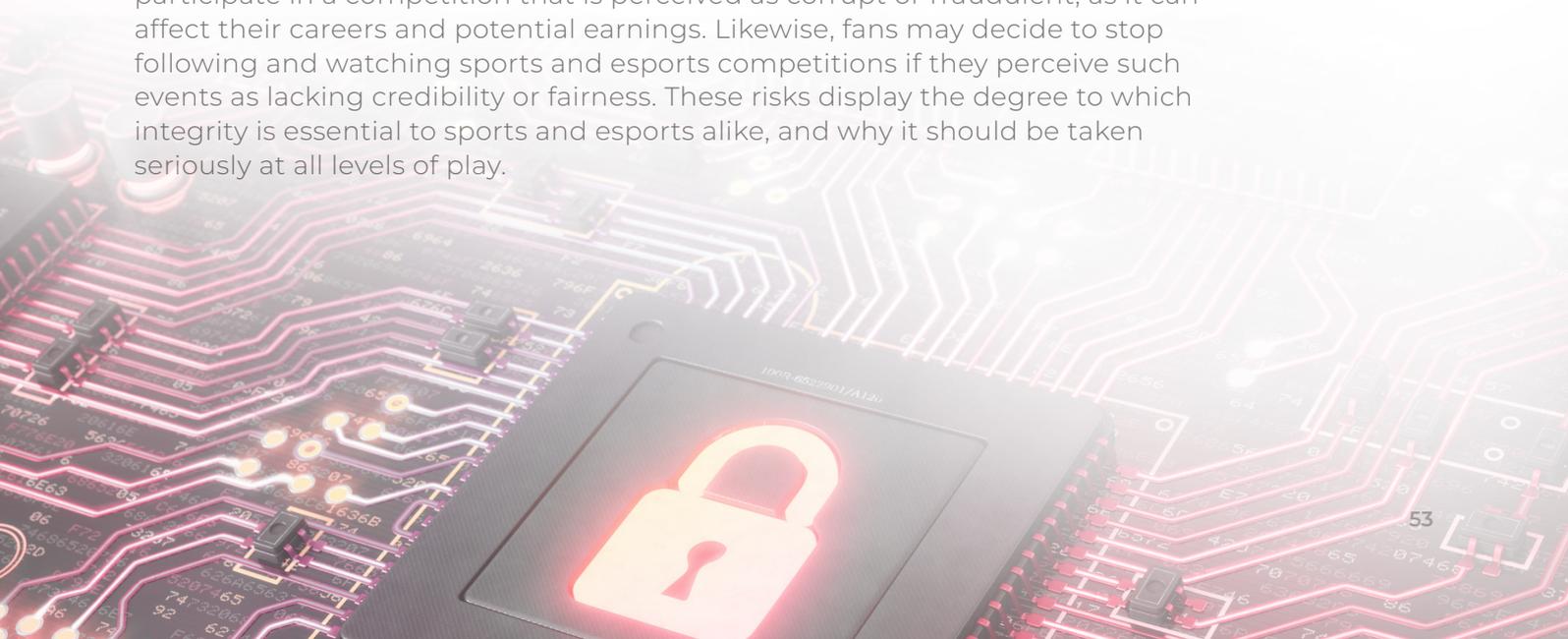
# 12 Op-Ed Sportradar: Integrity

## 1. What is “integrity”?

At its most basic level, integrity in the context of sports involves ensuring that games and competitions are played without any influence from or manipulation by internal or external stakeholders. From bettors looking for an inside edge to players taking performance-enhancing drugs to get a leg up on the competition, all forms of competition manipulation or related corruption put sports bodies at risk. Unfortunately, esports are no exception. As the esports landscape continues to develop globally, there is a growing need to maintain a high level of integrity within competitions. Due to the worldwide popularity of esports and the wide range of organized events, an extensive betting infrastructure is in place, which helps engage fans but also leads to heightened integrity concerns.

## 2. Why is integrity important?

Not taking integrity seriously carries major implications. On the commercial side, there is potential for great financial loss if a sport or an esports event is found to have suffered integrity breaches. Leagues or event organizers may lose revenue, as sponsors choose to distance themselves from any type of scandal; gaming regulators may employ enhanced scrutiny or disallow bookmakers from offering the events altogether. In turn, these outcomes can devalue sports and esports properties. There are similar reputational risks. Players may not want to participate in a competition that is perceived as corrupt or fraudulent, as it can affect their careers and potential earnings. Likewise, fans may decide to stop following and watching sports and esports competitions if they perceive such events as lacking credibility or fairness. These risks display the degree to which integrity is essential to sports and esports alike, and why it should be taken seriously at all levels of play.





### 3. What are the integrity risks facing esports?

There are many integrity risks specific to esports that game publishers and tournament organizers need to be aware of when coordinating their events. Several of the most prominent risk factors are listed here:

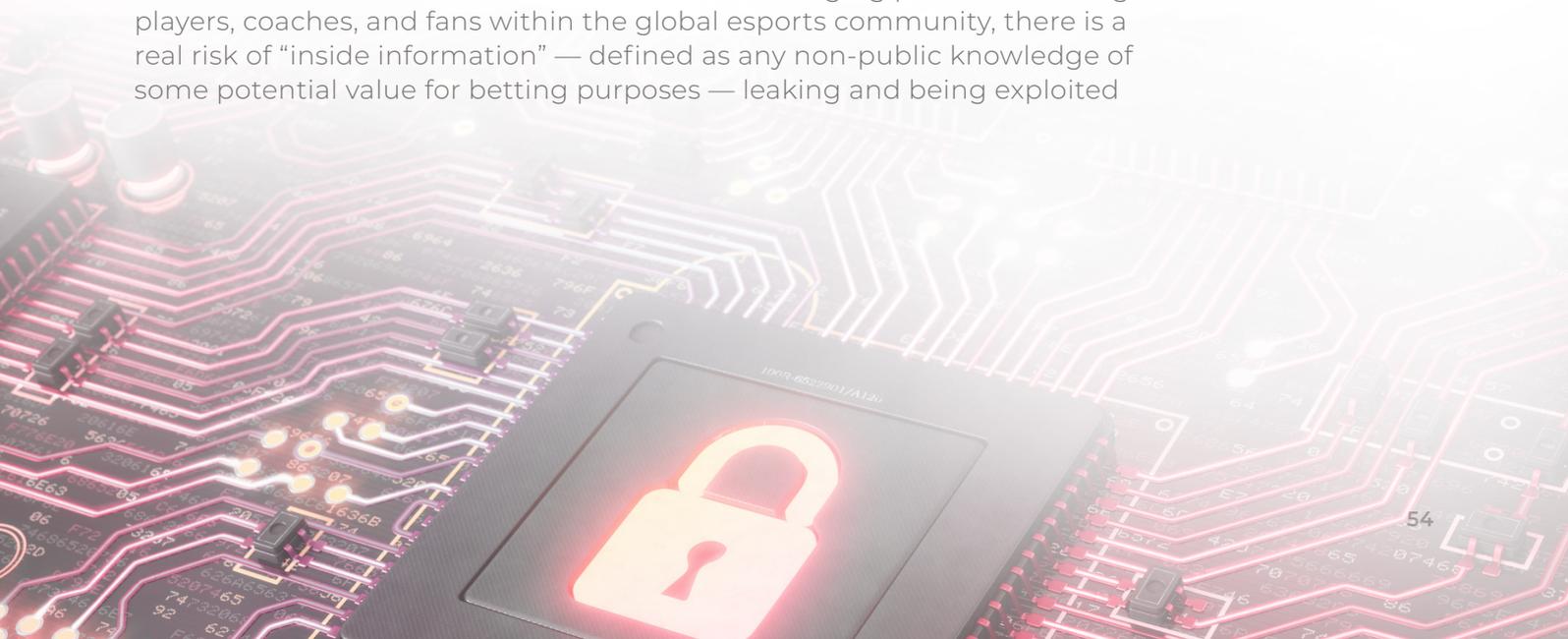
The extensive global betting exposure and bookmaker coverage for many esports events have only expanded as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The shutdown of most traditional sports in the spring and summer of 2020 prompted many betting operators to prioritize and offer esports odds for the first time, or, in other cases, prompted bookmakers familiar with esports to expand their offerings to lower tiers of competition. Although traditional live sports have since returned, esports' increased betting exposure has thus far endured, as bookmaker coverage has yet to return to pre-pandemic levels.

The wide variety of bet types available include so-called “side” or “prop” bets — which allow bettors to wager on certain elements of a match rather than on the final outcome — as well as live betting markets, which let bettors place wagers while a match is being played. Additionally, many esports events are offered for betting via online virtual skins platforms, which allow bettors to quasi-anonymously wager digital “skins” (in place of standard currency) on a host of match outcomes. These virtual skins websites are poorly regulated and function as common targets of both match-fixers and, potentially, money launderers.

Many esports — especially those that feature one-on-one matches or small teams — potentially have the infrastructure to allow for easily manipulated performance.

Esports competitions tend to attract young competitors who may be less financially secure and thus more susceptible to match-fixing approaches. Compensation may be quite limited in most esports competitions, both in terms of salaries and potential winnings, providing participants with greater incentive to engage in corruption if they believe they can accrue substantial profits. There is a wide pay gap within esports — top performers earn wages comparable to those in other professional sports, but other players earn much less.

Given the abundant use of social media and messaging platforms among players, coaches, and fans within the global esports community, there is a real risk of “inside information” — defined as any non-public knowledge of some potential value for betting purposes — leaking and being exploited





before such news is announced publicly. Inside information misuse in this context is akin to “insider trading” in financial markets.

Many esports titles suffer from a lack of clear governing bodies that effectively develop integrity policies, educate stakeholders about the relevant rules, and hold participants accountable to all codes of conduct. Based on numerous reports from current and former esports competitors, performance-enhancing drugs are widely known to be abused with frequency in certain esports titles and at certain levels of play. Unlike traditional sports in which human growth hormone or anabolic steroids are the main drugs of choice, amphetamines are more commonly abused in esports. Specifically, Adderall may illicitly help players stay focused throughout long competitions and improve reaction times.

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#### 4. Do esports have a match-fixing problem?

Examples of match fixing within esports have included players accepting bribes to lose games or specific maps within a best-of-three or best-of-five match-up, placing bets against themselves, and employing “cheats” or “hacks” to ensure specific match outcomes. A wide range of esports titles — ranging from the most popular to the more niche variety — have encountered match-fixing problems in recent years, and the increased betting interest in esports has only heightened integrity risks. Sportradar Integrity Services has identified more than 50 suspicious esports matches across several different game titles in 2020 alone — more than it has in all prior years combined.

In one example, Sportradar Integrity Services supported the September 2017 match-fixing case that led to two players being banned from Dota 2 competition (“Sonic” Kuzmenkov and Dmitri “Ax.Mo” Morozov), and we are currently providing support to several ongoing esports match-fixing cases.



## 5. What are the requirements for a robust integrity program?

When it comes to running an effective integrity program, the combination of advanced technology and human expertise is essential. The first step in operating an effective program is advanced and technological bet monitoring to help identify unusual activity. This includes monitoring betting markets across the globe, as well as a variety of different bet types, at both regulated and unregulated bookmakers. Esports leagues and governing bodies must also have comprehensive integrity policies and procedures in place — from clear betting rules to detailed whistleblowing and investigative procedures.

Integrity education is also critical and includes informing players, staff, coaches, and other stakeholders about the potential consequences of match fixing and how to spot integrity threats before or as they appear. Proper education sessions should also inform stakeholders about the correct procedures for reporting any integrity concerns that may arise. Finally, an effective integrity program depends on the ability to investigate and enforce any breaches. Not only does this help identify the source of an integrity breach but it also prevents future breaches by removing the “bad actor” from the competition and creating a deterrent against similar future behavior. Enforcement by the league or governing body reassures fans, bettors, and bookmakers that the league takes integrity seriously.



## 6. How does Sportradar combat corruption in esports?

Sportradar maintains the integrity of esports by ensuring that all the above program requirements are addressed through a combination of advanced technology and human expertise.

### a) Bet monitoring

Operated by a team of 50-plus expert integrity analysts based in six global locations, Sportradar's Fraud Detection System (FDS) monitors regulated and unregulated betting markets around the world. The FDS tracks odds from over 600 betting operators, including those specializing in esports, and it monitors account-level data (that is, the individual wagers placed) spanning more than 50 esports betting markets at over 120 global operators. In addition to traditional bookmakers, Sportradar monitors specialized online esports operators, including virtual skins betting sites. Sportradar also delivers periodic reporting and trend analyses to partners to help them understand the betting activity related to their respective competitions.

### b) Education and prevention

Sportradar offers services to educate stakeholders and help them prevent integrity breaches. Workshops and webinars, which can be held in conjunction with prominent tournaments and events, are targeted at match participants as well as team and league employees. eLearning tutorials that allow for more dynamic video presentations and interactive exercises are also available. Finally, Sportradar's mobile integrity reporting app ensures relevant individuals have a channel through which to anonymously, confidentially, and directly report integrity breaches or any other suspicious activity to their organization.





### c) Intelligence and investigation

Sportradar employs a team of expert investigators, including former law enforcement, military, sporting, and intelligence officials, to assist when rules breaches are identified. Sportradar's specialized in-house team can follow up on suspicious games or other pertinent information, identify persons of interest, map out a network of potentially involved individuals, help interview witnesses, and even testify in disciplinary proceedings.

### d) Strategy and policy

Sportradar's staff includes many of the world's foremost sports integrity experts, each of whom has experience developing, reviewing, implementing, and enforcing programs to prevent corruption in sports. As a result, Sportradar also provides consulting and advisory services to its partners to ensure they have the necessary rules in place to protect their events from the risk of match manipulation, corruption, or rules breaches. Sportradar is able to review and develop betting rules, whistleblowing guidelines, investigative standard operating procedures, disciplinary best practices, and crisis management plans.

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### e) Anti-doping

As esports continue to witness a rise in doping, Sportradar is at the forefront of assisting with anti-doping efforts. Sportradar can scope, implement, and execute comprehensive and effective anti-doping programs so esports organizers can protect the health of their players and the reputation of their brands. From offering anti-doping education and policy reviews to monitoring athlete performance and implementing remote testing programs, Sportradar's approach to anti-doping mirrors its approach to anti-match fixing in its innovation and reliability.



## 7. Where are esports headed?

While COVID-19 has posed challenges for much of the sports industry, esports have experienced a significant increase in exposure throughout the pandemic, both in terms of betting and viewership, resulting in the emergence of new esports titles and lower level competitions as viable and popular global betting products for the first time. In the first half of 2020, bookmaker coverage for certain esports events increased anywhere from 20% to 200%, and it is believed that the global amount wagered on many esports may

have increased by over 500% from March to late summer.

As betting exposure continues to grow both organically and due to external factors, integrity risks will continue to increase as well. Esports' sustained success is dependent on ensuring that fans, bettors, bookmakers, and brands have a reliable product in which they can believe and invest for years to come — making proper integrity protection more important than ever.



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