

ESPORTS

A person is shown in profile, wearing a headset with a microphone and glasses, focused on playing a video game. They are sitting at a desk with multiple computer monitors. The room is dark, with the primary light source being the screens and a bokeh effect of out-of-focus lights in the background. The person's hands are visible on a keyboard.

BY M.G. HIGGINS

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On the Rise

People enter an arena. Music blasts and lights flash. Finally, the game begins. Big screens show the action. Announcers call out plays. Fans cheer for their favorite players.



It could be a pro basketball game. But there is no court or hoops. Instead, ten players sit in chairs. They stare at screens and work the controls. Their fingers move at lightning speed. This is the world of esports.

The Gaming Life

Esports is short for electronic sports. It is also called competitive **gaming**. The players are professionals. For them, gaming is a career. Their moves must be fast. The timing must be perfect. Mistakes can cost them the win.

Pro gamers practice for hours each day. They have little time for anything else. Not all players can handle this lifestyle. But the payoffs can be huge. Top stars earn millions.



FAST FACT: An estimated 380 million people watched esports in 2018. The number of viewers is predicted to keep growing.

Big Business

Pros who play esports compete in contests. Hundreds of these events are held each year. Many happen online. Some take place in arenas. Ticket sales bring in millions of dollars.

Game companies make big money. Ad deals boost their earnings. **Sponsorships** increase sales. Some companies even own teams and **leagues**.

More people want in on the action. Famous celebrities now **invest** in teams. Schools offer programs for students. The popularity of esports continues to grow.



FAST FACT: There were nearly 600 major esports events in 2017. Ticket sales brought in around \$59 million.

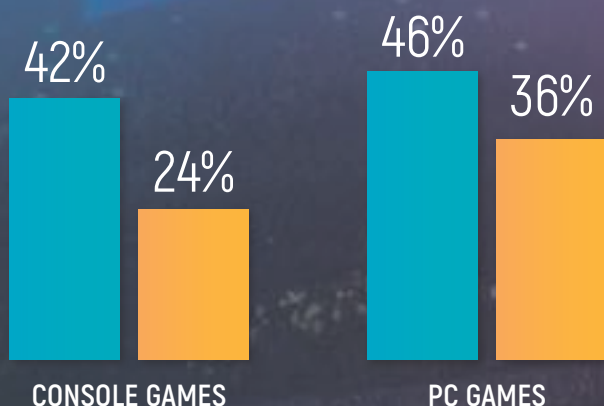
ESPORTS IN SOUTH KOREA

Esports is especially popular in South Korea. It is a national pastime. Contests there can draw over 100,000 fans. Top gamers are big stars. TV channels have shown tournaments since 2000. Companies compete to place ads. The nation sets an esports trend for the world.



Internet Users Who Played Online at Least Once a Month in 2018

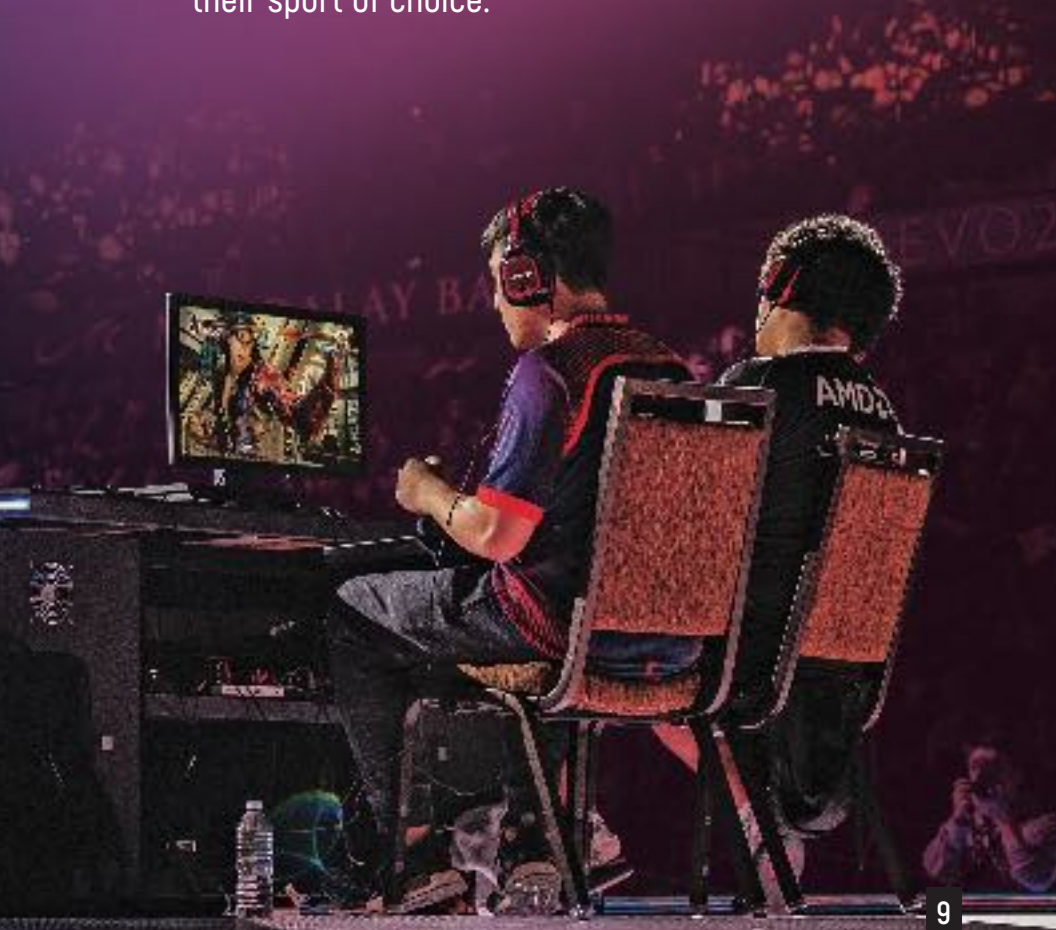
● Male ● Female



FAST FACT: In 2018, over 178 million people played video games in the U.S.

Sport of Today

Some say esports is not a real sport. Players are not true athletes. They sit in chairs and only move their hands. All the action happens on screens. But fans love the events. Most are gamers too. Esports is their sport of choice.



Glossary

banner: a large piece of material that companies use to advertise

commitment: a promise to do something

console: a computer set up for playing video games

final: the last contest in a series

following: a group of fans

gaming: the act of playing PC or video games

genre: a certain type or category of games

industry: a group of related businesses

inspire: to make people hopeful or excited

invest: to spend money on something in order to make money

league: a group of teams that play against one another

ESPORTS

Esports is more than just professional gaming. There are hundreds of contests, serious cash prizes, and millions of fans. Pro gamers have been working hard since the 1970s to build their skills and win big. The esports industry isn't perfect, but it's definitely on the rise.



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