eSports: The New Intercollegiate “Athlete”

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Association Supporting Computer Users in Education (ASCUE) National Conference

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Myrtle Beach, SC
Is this a Collegiate Athlete?
Is this a Collegiate Athlete?
Is this a Collegiate Athlete?
Is this a Collegiate Athletic Facility?
Is this a Collegiate **Athletic Facility?**
Is this a Collegiate **Athletic Facility?**
### Is this a Collegiate Sport Roster?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMAGE</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>SUMMONER NAME</th>
<th>POS.</th>
<th>CL.</th>
<th>HOMETOWN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Steven Deaton</td>
<td>Suspensionful</td>
<td>Jungle/Support</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>Hazard, Ky.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Macick Dolny</td>
<td>Raven914</td>
<td>AD Carry</td>
<td>So.</td>
<td>Koszalin, Poland</td>
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<td>Tyler English</td>
<td>Powerbuster</td>
<td>Jungle/Support</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>Inez, Ky.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Nick Honkanen</td>
<td>GROuNdEFFECT</td>
<td>AD Carry</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>Big Rapids, Mich.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mark McNeil</td>
<td>Prydex</td>
<td>Top Lane</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>Houston, Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nicholas Mundy</td>
<td>TheFlopsy</td>
<td>Jungle</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>Lexington, Ky.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>James Prouty</td>
<td>Warriors</td>
<td>Top Lane</td>
<td>Jr.</td>
<td>Baltimore, Md.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Juan Reyes</td>
<td>ZombieRevolver95</td>
<td>Mid Lane</td>
<td>So.</td>
<td>Cali, Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cory Smith</td>
<td>Cory 1</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Sr.</td>
<td>Pikeville, Ky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Johnathon Song</td>
<td>Hollywood</td>
<td>Mid Lane</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>Cottage Grove, Minn.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Keenan Turner-Quillen</td>
<td>BlackyWarrior</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td>Inez, Ky.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>James Williams</td>
<td>Maash29</td>
<td>Jungle</td>
<td>Sr.</td>
<td>Manchester, Ky.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Coaching Staff**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eric V.</td>
<td>Head Coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Assistant</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Look at the last **Co-Ed Sport** listed on the U of Pikeville **Athletics Website**

http://upikebears.com/index.aspx
ROBERT MORRIS UNIVERSITY ILLINOIS NOW RECRUITING

COLLEGIATE GAMERS

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE UP TO 50% BASED ON PAST PARTICIPATION IN LoL

According to HSL and Riot games, RMU is the first college to offer LoL at a Varsity level.
“eSports” – Sport & Athletes

• Today **eSports** is now becoming more accepted as a “**sport**” and...

• **Gamers** being identified as “**athletes**” within society today

• *Welcome to the world of competitive video gaming, also known as eSports!*
RMU eSports Team Members
“eSports” Synonyms

- Synonyms:
  - e-Sports
  - Electronic Sports
  - Cybersports
  - Gaming
  - Competitive Computer Gaming
  - Virtual Sports
“eSports” Definition

• “Any organized multi-player video game competition, where individuals and teams assemble in stadia and arenas to compete in sanctioned, real-time, broadly streamed, financially incentivized, and widely-attended tournament events.” (Xue, Pu, Hawzen, & Newman, 2016)

• Organized Video Game Competitions (Jenny, Manning, Keiper, Olrich, 2016)
What is LoL?

- League of Legends (i.e., LoL)
  - MOBA – Multiplayer Online Battle Arena
  - Fast-paced, competitive online game that blends speed & intensity
  - Two teams, each with a unique design and playstyle, battle head-to-head across multiple battlefields and game modes

(Tassi, 2014a).
eSport Teams (LoL)

• Consists of six team members
• Five players and one substitute/coach
• Each player has a role/job, these jobs include:
  – Toplane
  – Midlane
  – Support
  – Attack Damage (AD) Carry
  – Jungle
Map of League of Legends

Win by destroying enemy turrets and their Nexus
eSports Video

https://www.youtube.com/user/LoLChampSeries
eSports In College

FIVE higher ed. institutions currently offer eSports scholarships:

1) Robert Morris University (RMU) in Chicago

- In 2014, first college/university to began offering athletic scholarships to gamers
- RMU allocated $500,000 for their intercollegiate gaming team (Wingfield, 2014c)
2) University of Pikeville (KY) - 2014

- Offers full-ride scholarships - available ($23,000/year tuition; $14,000 room and board)
- Called “student-athlete”
- Maintain minimum GPA
- Commit to Practice, video and study sessions (Tassi, 2015)
eSports In College

3) Maryville University (St. Louis, MO)

- Club team, but university offers scholarships
- University Participation Awards: eSport participants are eligible for a $2,000 participation award.
eSports In College

4) Southwestern College (Winfield, KS)

- $5,000 grant each year, equaling $20,000 for four years to participate in eSports

eSports In College

5) Columbia College (Columbia, MO)
• Fall 2016

History of eSports

• Over **70 million people watch eSports** (internet or TV) **globally** (Wingfield, 2014a)

• Most popular eSport video game: **League of Legends (LoL)**
  • Fantasy Combat Strategy

• In 2013, LoL had over **70 million registered players**, including **32 million monthly active players** (Snider, 2013)
What’s largely driving the esports boom is better videostreaming technology and faster internet connections, allowing fans to follow tournaments and their [favorite] players online... Watching your [favorite] player talk you through their game is a unique attraction of esports... If you had Usain Bolt giving an analysis of his own race, people would love that. (Heaven, 2014b, para. 10-11)
LoL World Champs 2014

Sangam Stadium, is located in Seongsan-dong, Mapo-gu, Seoul, South Korea (Seoul World Cup Stadium)
Other Popular eSports Games

• Hearthstone
• Counter-Strike: Global Offensive
• DotA2
• LoL
• Madden NFL
eSports in the Media

2010 – estimated **8.4 million viewers** watching eSports (“INFOGRAPHIC: The 50 Million-strong market”, 2013)

2014 – over **71 million viewers** watching eSports and competitive gaming (Llamas & Barberie, 2014)

2014, **ESPN** covered The International DotA 2 Championships held in Seattle, Washington’s, sold-out Key Arena (Valve, 2014).

https://www.twitch.tv/
eSports in the Media

- Turner Broadcasting (TBS)
  - eSports League
    - Two 10-week seasons annually
    - *Counter Strike: Global Offense*

eSports in the Media

- ESPN
- X-Games
  - Halo
  - Call of Duty

SHOULD ESPORTS REALLY BE CONSIDERED A SPORT?

Can eSport Be Considered a Sport?

In order for **eSport to be considered a sport** it must fulfill the following:

1) Play
2) Organized
3) Competition
4) Skill
5) Physicality
6) Broad Following
7) Institutionalization

(Jenny, Manning, Keiper, Olrich, 2016)
eSport-Play

- **Play** forms the foundation for all sports (Guttmann, 1978)

- eSport participants voluntarily play video games for **enjoyment**
eSport – Organized

- Sports are all *goal-directed activities adhering to rules* (Suits, 2007)

  - eSports Tournaments:
    - Rules and Regulations specify tournament and match regulations
    - Teams of Four to Five Players
    - Multiple Rounds
    - Certain Time Period (e.g., 1 hour and 45 minutes)
    - Play a Selected Video Game (e.g., League of Legends)
    - Game and Server Settings
    - **Players are required to adhere to these specific guidelines**

eSport- Competition

- **Sports** must include competition resulting in a winner (or winners) and loser (or losers) (Guttmann, 1978)

- Inherent within the concept of *competition* is the presence of an *opponent*, to which one will win, lose, or draw (Drewe, 2003)
  - eSports eventually **leads to a winner** (or winners)
  - eSports **allows GLOBAL competition**
eSports- Skill

- Sports must involve **skillful play** where **chance or luck is not the sole reason for winning** (Suits, 2007)

- eSports:
  - Skillful coordination - manipulate controller buttons to effectively manage on-screen avatar
  - Skillful play in eSports should not be limited to technical dexterity utilized with a controller, but also “Sporting Intelligence” (Hemphill, 2005)
  - “Cyber-intelligent Action” - eSport players exhibit game sense through skillfully linking avatar movement actions to game-posed challenges.
  - Wagner (2006) noted, “teams that train for eSports disciplines will increase their competency in making complex strategic decisions at a high speed” (p. 4).
**eSport- Physicality**

- Skill involved in sports **must include Physical skill** (Suits, 2007)

- Due to nature of sport, an essential characteristic is **physical prowess**, which distinguishes it from games (Hemphill, 2005)

- For a game to be elevated to the level of “sport”, the physical movement by the participant must be integral to the successful completion of the task (e.g., chess vs. basketball)

- Until eSports include **motion-based video games** (MBVGS) that track gross motor physical body movements within the game, the general public may not accept eSports as “real” sports (Jenny et al., 2016)
Motion-based Video Games (MBVGs) use motion-detection sensors and software to simulate physical movements made by the user and display them via an onscreen avatar, typically without the use of a handheld controller (Jenny, Hushman, & Hushman, 2013).

Example MBVG devices:
- XBox Kinect
- PlayStation 4 (PS4) with motion camera
- Nintendo Wii

Currently, MBVGs are employed for entertainment or exercise, and not competitive eSports.
eSport- Broad Following

• Sport must **move beyond a local attraction or fad** and must have a **broad following** (Suits, 2007)

• Over 2.4 billion hours of eSports video was viewed steaming live in 2013 (Heaven, 2014a)

• In 2013, the LoL World Championship Final, which was hosted at the Staples Center in Los Angeles, CA, touted an attendance of 11,000

• In 2014, MLG (2015) opened a 14,000-square foot eSport arena in Columbus, Ohio (MLG.tv Columbus Arena)
  • MLG studio in New York City

• 15,000 seat MLG stadium in Hengqin, China by 2017 – the world’s first dedicated eSports stadium (Heaven, 2014a)
**eSport – Institutional Stability**

- **Institutionalization** refers to an activity having a long history in which:
  1) Rules are Developed and Standardized
  2) Learning of the Game becomes Formalized
  3) Expertise Develops
  4) Coaches, Trainers, Officials and Governing Bodies Emerge (Drewe, 2003; Suits, 2007; Tamburrini, 2000)

- eSports institutional stability and regulation are **still unproven**:
  - Several **competing Organizations** developing regarding **Championship Events & Governing Bodies**

- **Who sets Rules** – Game Developers, Players or Championship Hosts?
Where eSports fit within the Characteristics of Sport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport Characteristic</th>
<th>Sample Activity NOT considered a “Sport” due to Sport Characteristic</th>
<th>Do eSports Qualify?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A “sport” must...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. …include play (voluntary, intrinsically motivated activity).</td>
<td>Any Activity Not Intrinsically Motivating</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. …be organized (governed by rules).</td>
<td>Tag</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. …include competition (outcome of a winner and loser).</td>
<td>Solitaire (Card Game)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. …be comprised of skill (not chance).</td>
<td>Dice Games</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. …include physical skills – skillful and strategic use of one’s body.</td>
<td>Board Games</td>
<td>Debatable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. …have a broad following (beyond a local fad).</td>
<td>Clarkball*</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. …have achieved institutional stability where social institutions have roles which regulate it, stabilizing it as an important social practice.</td>
<td>Hula-Hoop</td>
<td>Debatable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Characteristics 1, 2, 3, and 5 are adapted from Guttmann (1978) while characteristics 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7 are adapted from Suits (2007). *See Seybert (2008).
eSports in College- RMU

- Robert Morris University (Illinois) is a private (accredited) university which focuses on ‘hands-on’ and ‘career-focused’ education (Ruby, 2014).


- First U.S. college/university to add a League of Legends (LoL) Varsity eSports team as part of its official athletics program.

- Believes the eSports scholarships serve as a way to reach an underserved gaming population (“Gamers get scholarships,” 2014; Keilman, 2014).

- RMU’s eSports teams consists of thirty-five students who are eligible to athletic scholarships of up to 50% of tuition, room and board, which amounts to almost $19,000 per student (“2014-15 League of Legends Coaches,” 2014; Bradley, 2014; SBRnet, 2014).
RMU eSports Budget

- $19,000 – Annual eSports scholarship
- $100,000 – Amount RMU spent on retrofitting a classroom into an eSports hub
- $349 – Value of each 40 ergonomic gaming chairs (sponsored)
RMU eSports Gear

- 5 RMU gaming coaches (1 head coach, 4 assistants)
- 37 ASUS gaming computer monitors
- Team is equipped with jerseys with sponsorship logos
Potential Implications of Adding eSports to Intercollegiate Athletics

• Some **Negative Implications**:
  • Sedentary nature of the eSports
  • Start-up funding & maintenance costs
  • Institutionalization/Regulation
  • IT support (who manages additional IT demands)?

• **Potential Positive Impacts** to Athletic Departments:
  • Revenue Generation
  • Title IX Compliance
  • Diversity

(Jenny, Manning, Keiper, & Orlich, 2016)
Equipment Needed

Minimum equipment needed for one eSports team includes:

• 5 desktop Computers
  – Monitors (Asus #1 brand, 165Hz refresh rate)
• 5 keyboards (not wireless)
• 5 computer mice (not wireless)
• Cable internet (preferably not Wi-Fi)
• Turtle Beach headphones (optional)
Technology Required

- Ping time: < 200 milliseconds
- Frame time needs to be >30
  (Below 30, graphics are not able to keep up with the game)
- Cable Internet speed of 1 Mbps or higher

- **Wireless** mice, **wireless** keyboards and **WiFi** are not recommend because it creates delay and **lag time**.
eSport Arena’s

- Arenas are filled with fans to watch eSport members battle against each other
- Arenas were created to increase validity for eSport players
- All equipment is standard for every member to decrease lag and misplay
References


References Continued

Questions?

- Dr. Seth Jenny – jennys@winthrop.edu