



AP CHAMPIONSHIPS

A Rocket League tournament for Alternative Provision (AP) schools demonstrating how esports can be used to motivate and engage young people and facilitate positive character development.

BRITISH ESPORTS ASSOCIATION
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SUPPORTED BY:



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green man gaming



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CONTENTS

- 3 Foreword
- 4 What is esports
- 5 About the British Esports Association
- 6 About the tournament
- 8 Results
- 9 Feedback and findings
- 18 Thanks to our partners
- 19 What happens next

FOREWORD



The positive impact of the AP Champs on the young people who took part has been truly phenomenal. It really has exceeded all our hopes and expectations at the start of the project.

Please take your time to read the detail of this report, especially the comments and case studies from the students and staff involved. It demonstrates, without a doubt, how esports can be used to engage and motivate young people and act as a positive vehicle to facilitate the development of character, resilience and other positive, holistic personal attributes.

We also need to acknowledge the fun and enjoyment young people have playing and competing in esports, and therefore the contribution this makes to their overall happiness and positive mental well-being.

I hope this summary report helps to convince more leaders in education to recognise and support esports as a credible, beneficial activity that also has links to STEM subjects and the development of digital skills and digital literacy.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Dore".

Tom Dore,
Head of Education,
British Esports Association
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WHAT IS ESPORTS?

Esports is organised competitive, video gaming where individuals or teams play against each other online or at live events, often held in arenas or stadiums. It is played by both amateurs and professionals and teams are gender neutral.



The esports industry is growing exponentially around the world. Some international tournaments are being played in front of sell-out live audiences, with millions of people watching online via streaming platforms such as Twitch and YouTube. Prize pots for the biggest tournaments can be worth millions of pounds.

In the UK, esports is classified as a game, like chess or bridge, not a sport. Esports appeals to a wide demographic of people. Players develop all the same holistic character/life skills that traditional team activities support such as teamwork, communication, leadership, problem solving and decision making as well as faster reaction times and processing abilities.

Esports has obvious links to STEM subjects and the development of digital skills and digital literacy. There are an increasing number of FE, HE and career pathways developing with explicit links to the industry. In the US, over 200 Colleges now offer esports scholarships to students in exactly the same way they do for traditional sports.

WHO ARE THE BRITISH ESPORTS ASSOCIATION?



British Esports is a not-for-profit national body established in 2016 to promote esports in the UK, increase its level of awareness, improve standards and inspire future talent.

We provide expertise and advice and are focused on the grassroots level of esports.

We are not pushing esports as a rival to traditional sport, but as a credible activity in its own right which has positive benefits when done in moderation. We promote esports as part of a balanced lifestyle.

As the British Esports Association is a not-for-profit organisation, all revenues generated go back into the running of the organisation, and into funding grassroots esports, such as the British Esports Championships for schools and colleges.



We help to educate parents, teachers, media, policy makers and government around what esports is and what its benefits are. We're working with schools, colleges and other educational establishments to encourage them to embrace esports and create inspiring events and activities.

For further information about the British Esports Association, please visit www.britishesports.org

ABOUT THE AP SCHOOLS CHAMPIONSHIPS



The AP Championships took place as a standalone tournament in February and March 2019. It followed a successful pilot that took place in four pupil referral units in 2018 which demonstrated positive changes in behaviour of the students taking part.

It was free for the schools to enter. System builders PC Specialist and Fierce PC kindly agreed to loan 12 high specification gaming PCs each, while digital download platform Green Man Gaming supplied free copies of Rocket League. This meant the eight AP Schools that took part each received three systems and three Rocket League licenses at no cost.

Rocket League is a fantastic esports game and involves teams of three driving rocket powered cars around an arena to knock an oversized football in to a goal. It has a PEGI (Pan European Gaming Index) age rating of 3+ years.

Weekly fixtures between school teams were played online at Wednesday lunch time. Lunch time was chosen to avoid complications around students staying after-school. Schools and their teams were encouraged to organise practise sessions similar to traditional sports and also arrange 'friendlies' against each other to help develop their skills.

WHICH AP SCHOOLS WERE INVOLVED?

The following Schools took part in the Champs and included one residential school:



The eight schools represented the full spectrum of Alternative Provision providers:

- Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH)
- Special Education Need (SEND)
- Speech Language Communication Needs (SLCN)
- Autistic Spectrum (ASC)
- Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)
- Complex & Severe Needs
- Emotional & Behavioural Needs (EBD)

Schools were also strongly encouraged to make use of the three high specification PCs for other academic purposes in addition to using them for esports.

- Notton House School, Chippenham, Wiltshire
- The Green Room, Windsor, Berkshire
- The Gateway, Slough, Berkshire
- Millside School, Slough, Berkshire
- Glebe School, Bromley, Kent
- Sheffield Inclusion Centre, Sheffield, Yorkshire
- Nightingale Community Academy, Wandsworth, London
- Orchard Hill College, Sutton, Surrey

British Esports provided all the logistical and operational support for the schools involved through our partnership with epic.LAN.

The AP Championships ran alongside Season 2 of the separate British Esports Championships, which is for mainstream secondary schools and further education colleges and includes three esports titles: Overwatch, League of Legends as well as Rocket League.

THE RESULTS



The team from the Green Room in Windsor (pictured) amassed the most points over the course of the season to win the Rocket League tournament. Team captain Connor said: "Esports has been a really brilliant experience for our school. It gave us a taste of competition against other schools and helped us socialise with students we wouldn't normally.

"We are all very proud to have won the competition and cannot wait until next season!"

See the final league table here:

Team	Played	Won	Lost	Drawn	For	Against	Diff	Streak	Points
The-Green-Room	7	7	0	0	21	3	18	7	21
Haybrook College Post 16	7	6	1	0	19	5	14	3	18
Haybrook-College-Millside 1	7	5	2	0	15	8	7	0	15
Notton-House-School 1	7	4	3	0	13	10	3	0	12
Glebe-School 1	7	2	5	0	9	12	-3	1	6
Orchard-Hill-College 1	7	2	5	0	8	12	-4	1	6
The Nightingales	7	1	6	0	4	19	-15	0	3
Sheffield Inclusion Centre	7	0	7	0	1	21	-20	0	0

FEEDBACK AND FINDINGS

'STUDENTS ARE SHOWING RESILIENCE AND COMMITMENT THAT WE'VE RARELY SEEN IN THEM BEFORE'



Lou West, Deputy Head and Team Leader, Millside School

Millside School has a team of six students from school years 8 to 11. The team players were purposely not chosen from friendship groups (some had actively avoided each other in the past).

They were selected by staff as students known to enjoy esports outside of school and in need of positive engagement in school.

The students were reluctant to attend any practices before our first match – the hardware provided by Fierce PC had aroused interest across the school but the students didn't believe that they'd been set up properly to work over our network, or that the teachers would actually let them play.

Our first match was chaotic, with our players colliding with each other, scoring own goals and losing by a crushing three games to nil. This defeat initiated an overwhelming determination to improve performance – the students began to plan a team strategy,

attend lunchtime practices and evaluate their performances.

Our older students spontaneously began mentoring the younger ones; communication became the key to improvement and planning for the next match. The group had to make decisions about team selection for the second match and decide on individual roles for attack and defence.

Our second match was a joy to watch, not because of the action on the field but because of the student interactions and shared joy when they won. Three students play at a time in Rocket League, but staff have also observed the non-players who have been coaching and supporting the players. The players are communicating with each other to track the ball, block the opposition, attack the goal and score!

Subsequent matches have been getting tougher as the other teams improve as well, but our students are showing resilience and commitment that we've rarely seen in them before.



DEMONSTRATING THE POSITIVES OF ESPORTS TO PARENTS



school and taking pride in the achievements of the team.

Everyone needed some reassurance, so in the early days we set up a 'code of conduct' using helpful guidance from the British Esports materials. For example:

- Use at social times only
- Adult supervision at all times (which standard practice in AP schools)
- No access to the hardware during lessons (we just take the plugs and peripherals away)
- Team play only – no one practices alone. This maintains an element of interaction.
- No swearing during play
- Access can be withdrawn for poor behaviour or attendance and has to be earned back
- Weekly team selection has to be a team decision, everyone has a duty to coach and mentor other players

These are all very worthwhile and positive mantras that demonstrate how it's just like representing the school on the football team.

The team and tournament are attracting attention from the rest of the school too; one member of the team is organising a teacher vs student tournament which is helping to build really positive and surprising relationships across school.

At first, parents and carers didn't understand why we were getting involved with this, but conversations that we've had with them have helped them to see the positive side of esports

10 – they see their children more keen to attend

STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES MILLSIDE SCHOOL

'IMPROVED ATTITUDE, COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND ATTENDANCE LEVELS' (STUDENT A, YEAR 10)

A's attendance prior to the tournament was 75%. During the five weeks of the event he has attended 98% and so his total attendance to date is now 80%.

Previously, he hardly spoke to his peers and has been violent towards staff. He has become the most reliable member of the team, arriving early to set up the kit, organising the lobbies and the in-house tournament, providing coaching for staff, laughing and enjoying his time around school and taking a vital role as defender in matches.

Teachers have reported a more positive attitude in lessons and better communication skills. His carers have said it's easier to get him up and come to school.



The Millside team consists of Jack, Liam, Darnel, Charlie, Malaki and Riley, while the 16+ Sixth Form Haybrook College side includes Alan, Liam, Josh and Adam.

'FROM HOSTILE TO THE ROCK OF THE TEAM' (STUDENT B, YEAR 11)

B's communication with other students has been limited in the past, he has speech and language difficulties and struggles to regulate his emotions.

He used to be openly hostile to student A. Now he has become the rock of the team, providing mentoring to younger players and leading on team strategy.

He oversees the shape of the matches, sitting in the middle of the three players and directing the others. At this week's challenging match he boosted morale and kept them calm using words learned from his PE teacher: "It's just like nil-nil, keep it together and just score the next goal."

He was elated when we won and announced to the team: "I'm proud of you all."

'HAS ATTENDED EVERY MATCH AND DEVELOPED BETTER SELF-ESTEEM' (STUDENT C, YEAR 8)

C has always struggled academically in school. He was amazed to be chosen for the team and very excited to play in his first match.

He has attended every match to support the team and developed better self esteem and a new sense of personal pride in his achievements.

He is our youngest player and the other students have developed an uncharacteristically nurturing relationship with him.

STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES

THE GREEN ROOM, WINDSOR

'STUDENT BEHAVIOUR IMPROVED SIGNIFICANTLY'
ASHLEY SHEEHAN, THE GREEN ROOM, WINDSOR

We track our behaviour extensively and is the foundation of progress tracking. The data below is for the 3 students who made up the core of our team, from term 1 before the tournament, and term 2 when the tournament was taking place.

Student A - Term 1:

100 negative, 25 positive. Term 2: 63 negative, 35 positive.

Student B - Term 1:

88 negative, 25 positive. Term 2: 77 negative, 41 positive.

Student C - Term 1:

5 negative, 21 positive. Term 2: 2 negative, 30 positive.

Obviously we can't say that esports was the whole reason that the behaviour has improved for these students, but we can say that whilst the tournament was on their behaviour improved significantly.

STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES

NOTTON HOUSE ACADEMY

'ESPORTS HAS BEEN A REAL EYE-OPENER FOR US'
PAUL KEARLEY, NOTTON HOUSE ACADEMY

Esports has been a real eye-opener for us. The tournament has been great with no technical issues of any concern. As a boarding school, the boys who achieve top points in the day have been playing esports in the evening as a reward/ incentive and this is proving very popular.

The levels of communication and cooperation during the matches are great to see. There is also a real buzz in the school around match day, so some genuine excitement builds and the boys get a well-deserved cheer after the wins.

BENEFITS

- The boys have enjoyed playing, giving them a taste of what they would like to have at home perhaps. It offers a chance to unwind, escape and is just good fun.
- Notton has had a team representing the school, this has not happened in some time. Other boys and staff inquire about the results and want to spectate.
- Teamwork, specifically leadership and communication, have improved. Also, the individual skill level has improved. This has taken a commitment to practice
- It has given us a chance to celebrate success and attract positive publicity.

NEGATIVES

- Some of the boys are not good at sharing and the PC room is popular in the evenings - this has caused care staff headaches on numerous occasions.
- The fixtures have put the boys on the team under a lot of pressure that none of them are fully able to cope with. Learning to share and cope with failure are important and this experience will ultimately have a longer term positive impact.

STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES

GLEBE SCHOOL

“50% OF THE TOTAL SCHOOL POPULATION TOOK PART IN THE GLEBE CHAMPIONSHIPS AT LUNCHTIMES”
MICHAEL KITTERIDGE, GLEBE SCHOOL



Teacher Michael Kitteridge (pictured left, next to PE teaching assistant Luke Hagon)

Glebe School played in the British Esports Championships for alternative provision schools organised by the British Esports Association.

Three high specification computers were loaned to the school for the spring term 2019 to enable the competition to take place. Every student in the school was encouraged to participate in esports either at the end of their PE lesson or during lunch or break times.

Alongside the inter-school British Esports Championships we also organised an intra-school competition. Every class was asked to complete a questionnaire on how they felt the involvement in esports has made an impact on them across the school.

7 KEY FINDINGS FROM THE GLEBE SCHOOL STUDENT SURVEY

- 1** 98% of all students who have taken part said they have enjoyed esports. When asked for the reasons why, they said: fun, playing with friends, helping and leading others, not stressful.
- 2** 96% said esports helped them with their social skills. Reasons stated: sharing equipment, mixing with other students, watching matches with others, communicating by sharing ideas.
- 3** Personal development – being able to play Rocket League has helped with...
 - Attendance – 20% said it made them want to come in to school
 - Behaviour – 35% said they behaved better in class
 - Concentration and focus – 50% stated an improved level of focus
- 4** Curriculum – areas where students felt esports has helped support their learning and why:
 - Literacy – reading instructions, writing scores and reports, listening and speaking, vocabulary
 - Maths and numeracy – time, angles of attack, scoring, league table information
 - PE – coordination, strategic thinking, tactics in a match, teamwork, coping with defeat, competing
 - ICT – using computers, coding
 - Geography – countries, different climates during matches
 - Music – listening to different background music
- 5** Other benefits
 - Mental health
 - Stress relief
 - Fun / feeling good
 - A supportive place to be
 - Calming down / relaxing
 - Sharing ideas
 - Feeling more confident
- 6** Links to potential career pathways:
 - Professional esports player
 - Web Design
 - Streaming
 - Business opportunities
 - Animation
 - Announcer/shoutcaster
 - Event planning
- 7** 100% of students stated they would like esports to continue.

KEY INFO:

- 214 pupils on role
- 208 students from across the schools participated in Esports
- 8 students were selected for the team to compete in the British Esports Championships
- 102 students competed in the Glebe Championships taking place during lunchtimes

'WE HAVE SEEN AN IMPROVEMENT IN ATTENDANCE, BEHAVIOUR AND SOCIAL INTERACTION'

**DANIEL HALSTEAD, IT / NETWORK MANAGER,
NIGHTINGALE ACADEMY**

The Nightingale Community Academy is a school for boys who have Social Emotional Mental Health needs, from Primary right through to 6th Form. We currently have 101 learners on role. With outdated hardware in place (some PCs are over five years old), our IT suite was severely lacking any interest from the learners during breaks or after school.

Upon installing the new hardware in the IT suite there was an immediate positive reaction from the boys, wanting to play many games including Rocket League, Overwatch and Fortnite.

The Wednesday matches are a big thing for our boys, we have not picked a dedicated team but allow all learners to experience esports. With so many wanting to get in on the action, we constantly substitute players to allow all the boys to get a game in. The camaraderie among the boys taking part has gone through the roof!

We now run a video games club after school that allows boys who do not have access to this equipment at home to come and socialise and play some more. Originally only one learner attended, but now we have eight learners regularly in the club.

In terms of setting the PCs up, we established a strict access control system, with learners unable to access games during lessons. Instead, we allowed the machines to be made available as a reward for good work and behaviour as well as coding to support GCSE during ICT lessons.

Since the machines have been installed, we have seen not just an improvement in attendance and behaviour, but also social interaction with some learners who would not participate in any of our lunch time activities before the hardware was installed. At the end of the season the boys were sad to see the machines go.

'STUDENT FEEDBACK HAS BEEN EXCELLENT'

SIMON GALE, ORCHARD HILL COLLEGE



Students from the Digital School (part of Orchard Hill College & Academy Trust) have enjoyed participating in the esports tournament. Student feedback has been excellent and they have all been very impressed with the gaming PCs loaned to us as part of the scheme.

The students have been working in small teams, learning to play the games and working on softer skills like communication and working as part of a team. This ties into their overall educational targets as well as being part of this fantastic tournament.

The support and communication between all the schools and organisers has been excellent and it would be great for this opportunity to be given to even more AP and SEND providers moving forward. Our young people have been inspired by this tournament to run their own esports club across the college sites, so even

more of our students will have opportunities to game together.

Quotes from students:

- "I think it helped with my patience, I had to play with people that weren't as good as me or that I didn't usually socialise with, so I had to work hard to be patient with them"
- "It has been really fun and I've learned to play new games like Rocket League."
- "I got to spend more time doing something I love in school which ultimately made school more enjoyable"
- "Esports make students care about school more, they will attend more, it's the new era, get with the programme"
- "This has a big impact on students and could kick-start a career in esports or IT"

THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS

BRITISH ESPORTS WOULD LIKE TO SAY A HUGE THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS, WITHOUT WHOM THE AP CHAMPS WOULD NOT HAVE TAKEN PLACE

Morgan Ashurst, Senior Marketing Executive at Fierce PC, said:

“We’re extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to work alongside the British Esports Association. We were really excited to see what results were produced from this project and it’s great to see that everything had such a positive impact.

“To hear directly from each of the schools about the uplift on student behaviour and attendance is truly heart-warming. With there being some negative press around competitive gaming, it’s great to show everyone the complete opposite with the Alternate Provision Schools and hopefully many more projects to come.”



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?



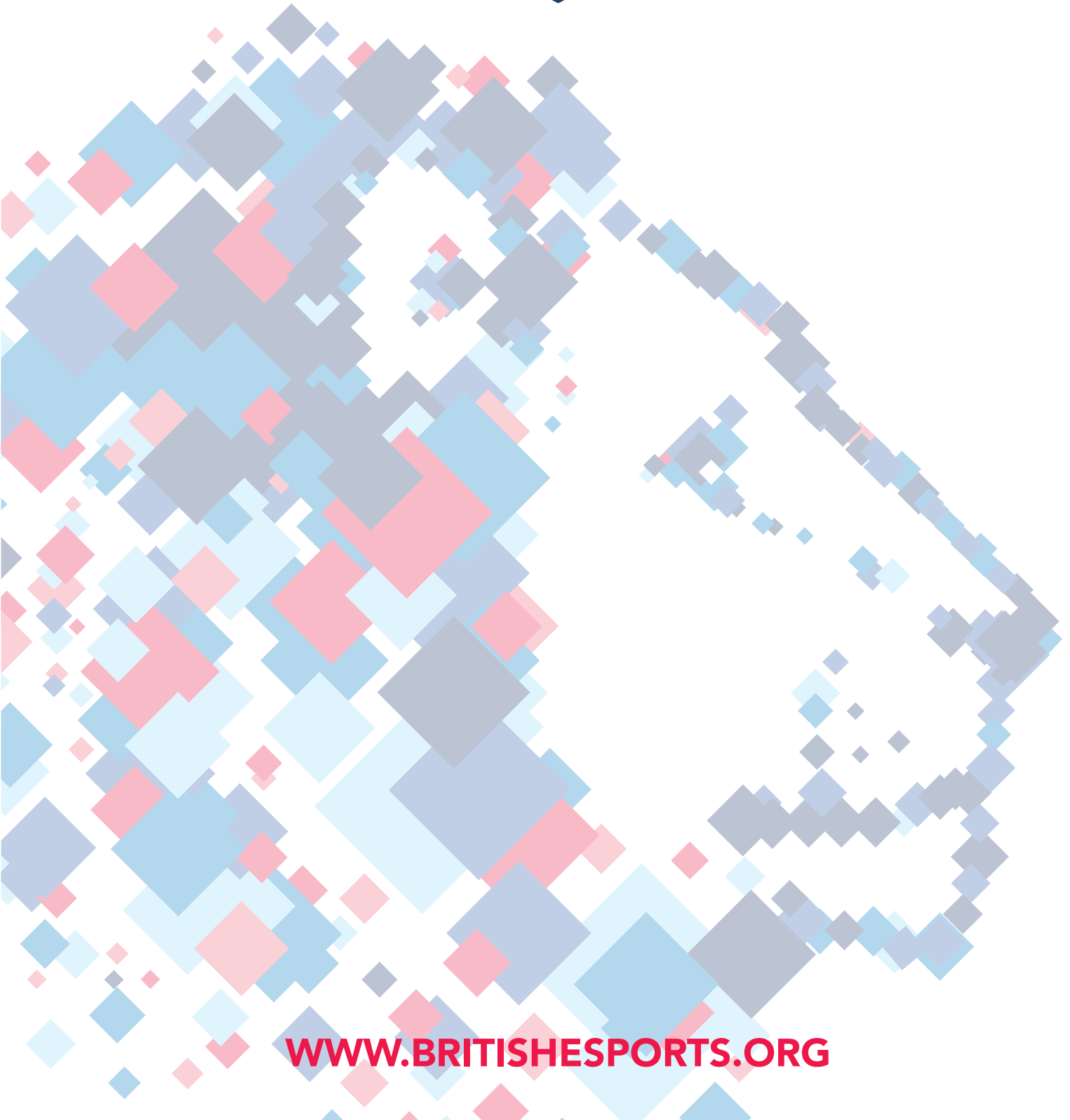
The impact of the AP Championships has far exceeded our expectations. Feedback from both the students and staff involved has been overwhelmingly positive. Moving forwards, we want to grow the project and give more students in more AP schools the opportunity to take part.

The main challenge we face is hardware. AP schools simply do not have the PCs with the capacity to run these esports games, nor the finances to upgrade their existing, generally basic systems. To extend this project from September 2019 we need to find the support/ sponsorship to provide a minimum of three full systems per school taking part.

Moving forwards, we will also be seeking support to design and implement a rigorous, continuous evaluation of the AP Champs to further demonstrate impact of the project.

If you require any further information about the AP Champs or are interested in taking part or supporting the AP Champs, please contact:

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WWW.BRITISHESPORTS.ORG