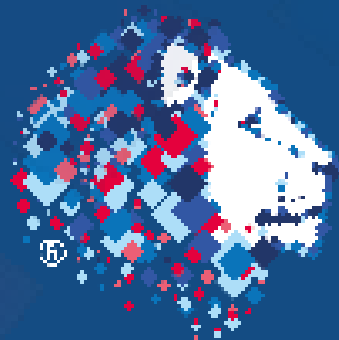


# BRITISH ESPORTS ASSOCIATION

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2021 ANNUAL REVIEW



**BRITISH**  
**ESPORTS**



# CONTENTS:

1. Executive summary
2. About the British Esports Association
3. Esports BTEC
5. British Esports Student Champs
7. Content and reach
9. Women in Esports
11. World Esports Day
12. Esports in Education Summit
13. Membership
14. NSPCC Parent's Guide
15. College of Esports
17. Global Esports Games 2021
19. Other tournaments, initiatives and partnerships
23. 2022 plans



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

FOREWORD BY BRITISH ESPORTS ASSOCIATION  
CHAIR ANDY PAYNE OBE

2021 was another successful year for the British Esports Association, with plenty of progress and new developments.

The British Esports Student Champs achieved new heights, including a brilliant live finals event at the Confetti Institute of Creative Technologies and a new tournament in Riot's popular team shooter, Valorant.

As part of our mission to celebrate great homegrown esports talent, we teamed up with the Global Esports Games and selected the team and talent to represent Great Britain. The players did very well, with the women's Dota 2 team picking up silver medals in Singapore.

Our Women in Esports initiative took further strides, with follower numbers jumping up significantly in 2021, several women's-only grassroots tournaments held and a new Women in Esports committee chair: Natacha Jones.

On the education front, we continued to reach new schools and colleges with our Esports BTEC qualification in conjunction with Pearson, and we partnered with the College of Esports for an exclusive content university-level deal.

We're also working to create a safer esports space for young people, and hope to update you on the progress later this year.

Last but not least, we've just announced we're opening a National Esports Performance Campus at Riverside Sunderland. We're so excited about the potential here and the education and bootcamping possibilities.

We look forward to breaking new ground in 2022 and are humbled to have you on the journey with us.

Andy Payne OBE  
Chair, British Esports Association

# ABOUT THE BRITISH ESPORTS ASSOCIATION:



The British Esports Association 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.

As a national body, our aims are to support esports and provide expertise and advice. We are focused on the grassroots level of esports and are not a governing body.

As British Esports is a not-for-profit organisation, all revenues generated go back into the running of the organisation, and into funding grassroots esports - including the running of the British Esports Student Champs for schools and colleges across the UK.

The British Esports Association has 18 members of staff, a mix of full-time and part-time employees, with an evergrowing advisory board and Women in Esports committee.

We are not pushing esports as a rival to traditional sports, but as a credible activity in its own right which has a wide variety of benefits when done in moderation. Esports promotes teamwork and communication, develops communities and provides jobs.

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

The UK has one of the biggest consumer markets for games, but has been behind other territories in esports, though times are improving. We are looking at the bigger long-term picture with the goal of fostering more British esports talent.

# ESPORTS BTEC:



In April 2020, the British Esports Association partnered with global learning company Pearson to create the world's first BTEC in esports. As of the end of 2021, the course has flourished to bring esports into the mainstream through schools and colleges.

The qualifications are skills-focused and are a major step forward in supporting the creation of long-term careers in the ever-growing esports industry.

The Level 3 esports qualification consists of 20 units including:

- Enterprise and entrepreneurship
- Strategy and analysis
- Events management
- Live-streaming and Broadcasting
- Coaching
- Health and wellbeing
- Law and legislation

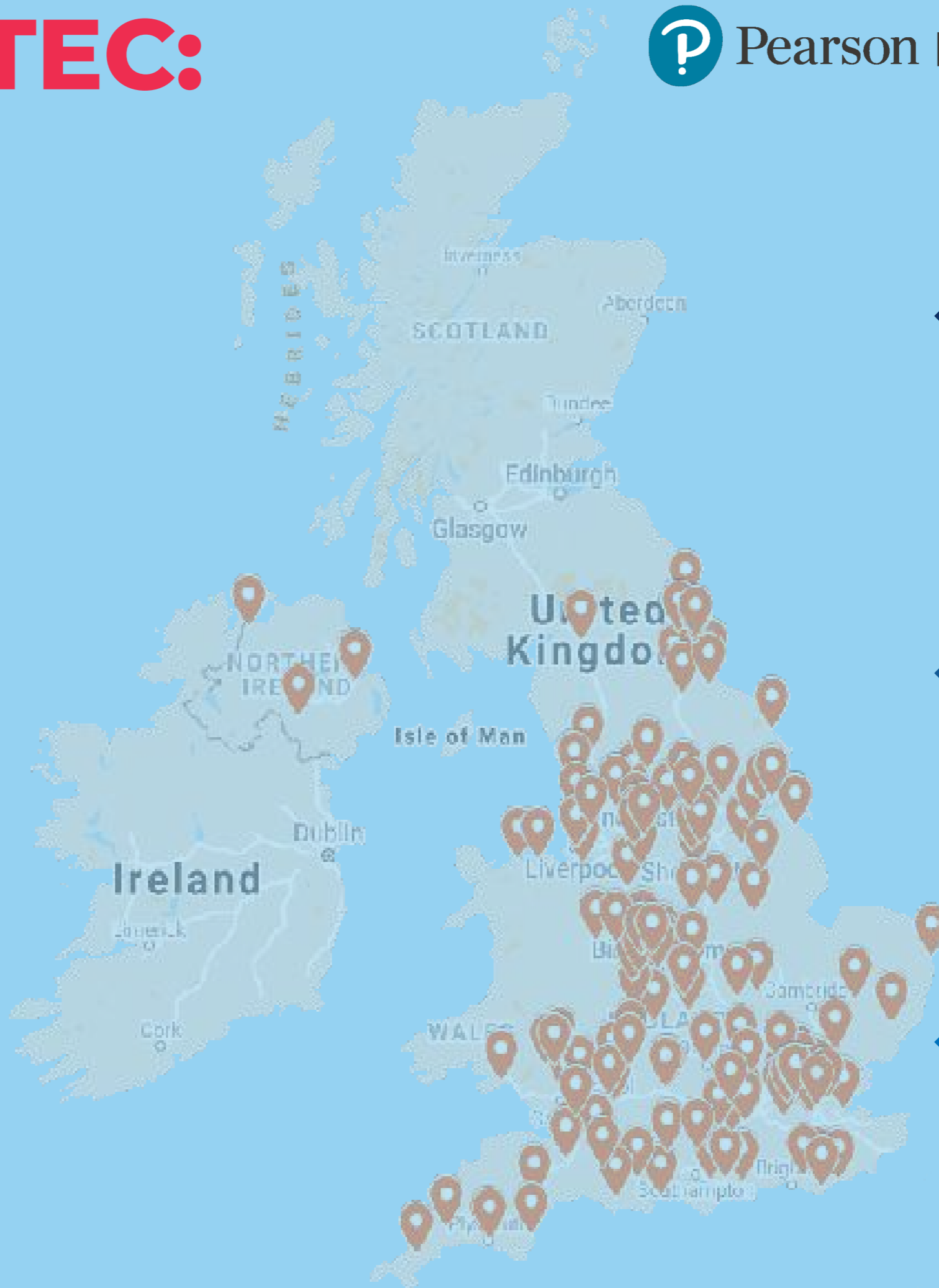
There is also a Level 2 version of this qualification, which covers the same sort of content in a condensed form.

The qualification will allow students to develop knowledge on all areas of the industry, and provide entryways for individuals to enter careers in esports.

As well as this, the BTEC provides the relevant progress for students to take their learning further, and progress into a relevant degree in Higher Education. Not only does the qualification provide teachings in relation to esports, it also gives students knowledge of gaming, technology and media sectors as well.

Spaces are available in institutions across the UK\* and beyond to take the qualification, and a full list of centres can be found [here](#).

\*Scotland runs under a different education provider meaning they do not run BTECs. For further information click [here](#).



1,800  
Students  
(approx.)

165  
Centres  
(approx.)

7  
Global  
Centres



# STUDENT CHAMPS

The British Esports Student Champs is a competitive video gaming competition for students in secondary schools, alternative provision schools and further education colleges across the UK.

It's a core initiative from the British Esports Association and is for students aged 12 and above, running across four games on PC:

- 5v5 League of Legends: multiplayer online battle arena game (PEGI 12 age rating)
- 6v6 Overwatch: a vibrant first-person shooter (PEGI 12)
- 3v3 Rocket League: football with rocket powered cars (PEGI 3)
- 5v5 Valorant: first-person shooter (16+)

The Student Champs were set up to engage with students and offer them a pathway to industry, as well as educate parents, teachers and others about the job prospects and benefits of esports.

Since the addition of Valorant during the Winter 2021 season, the Student Champs has seen significant growth in numbers. Not only from the teams partaking, but also retention to each season and the schools and colleges taking part.

In 2021, we held the grand final event in collaboration with the Confetti Institute of Creative Technologies, at the Metronome in Nottingham. The winners from this event included Farnborough Sixth Form, AGSB, and Exeter College.

## 2020-21 Overall Stats:

- Teams: 301
- Players: 1,716
- No of Schools & Colleges: 77
- Doing the Esports BTEC: 55.8%

## Winter 2021 Stats:

- Teams: 350
- Players: 1,547
- No of Schools & Colleges: 114

## Improvements from winter 2020:

- Winter 2020 had 132 teams, this winter there were 350
  - 165% participation increase
  - Introduced Valorant tournament to winter 2021, of which 96 teams entered
- 76.6% of schools and colleges returned to Champs in winter 2021
- 77 individual schools and colleges were involved in 2020/21, our winter 2021 season there was 114 actively playing which is a 48.05% increase



## JONAS KONTAUTAS

HEAD OF CREATIVE

Jonas heads up any and all creative tasks and projects. You'll mainly see his work displayed through our streaming assets, our higher production videos and videography and occasionally makes an appearance on our TikTok channel.

## BRYONY-HOPE GREEN

JUNIOR CONTENT EXECUTIVE

Bryony is currently studying Journalism at the University of Worcester and works part-time with British Esports. A lot of her work can be found displayed on the British Esports website, including her fantastic work around inclusivity and accessibility in esports.

## SAUL PARSONS

VIDEO CONTENT EXECUTIVE

Saul worked for BEA as a volunteer and is now a full-time member of staff who conducts most of our content across YouTube and Tiktok. He also makes guest appearances on our streaming segment Fun Fridays to engage with our community.

## WILLIAM GLEADALL

SOCIAL MEDIA EXECUTIVE

William works across all of our social media platforms to make sure that not only do we stay consistent, but that we're also ensuring growth across the board.

Ever wondered who says good morning to you? This is the man who does!

# CONTENT AND REACH

In 2021 we had a few staffing changes at British Esports. Former Head of Content, Dominic Sacco, moved away from BEA to pursue his Esports News UK site full-time. Alongside this, Morgan Ashurst progressed from Marketing Manager to Head of Marketing, and four new paid members of staff joined to help and assist on all forms of content (see left).

Through these new hires, we've been able to have a more designated focus on content, posting weekly videos, articles, having further consistency and growth on our social media channels. We also had capabilities to undergo a rebrand for the British Esports Student Champs, including its logo and supporting assets.

We saw in comparison to 2020 a 353% growth across our social media and content platforms through these role changes and are looking to expand on these successes moving into 2022.

With more designated staff in this area of the business we're able to look to branch out into more content and social media platforms and to better tailor to our communities for each platform. With further fixation towards some of our smaller platforms across Instagram, Facebook and TikTok. Here are some of our key figures from 2021:

INTERACTIONS

433%

Increase

PROFILE VISITS

933%

Increase

REACH

154%

Increase

VIDEO/LIVE VIEWS

159%

Increase

# WOMEN IN ESPORTS



In 2019 the British Esports Association launched the Women in Esports initiative to celebrate women within the esports industry, and to improve inclusivity in esports.

It is led by British Esports Head of Marketing, Morgan Ashurst and Head of Operations, Alice Leaman. Due to the success of the campaign in early 2020, the initiative formed a committee to help advice on projects and decisions.

Using their expertise from various areas of the esports industry, the members of the committee make suggestions and recommendations to steer the initiative in the right direction, similarly to the British Esports Association's separate advisory board.

The main pillars of focus for Women in Esports are:

- Creating a safer space
- Providing opportunities through tournaments
- Content & Community
- Education

During 2021 the committee discussed ways to progress or move forward with each of their key pillars, with aims to launch more information during 2022.

Whereas in other areas, they have kickstarted are both Tournaments and Content and Community - through hosting tournaments in both Valorant and Dota 2 (more details on the next page). In addition to launching both a Discord server and Twitter page.

Since launching the Twitter in September 2021, the page saw significant growth - and it now stands at over 6,000 followers in early 2022.

The voluntary team will continue to build on numbers in 2022 and hopefully expand out to more social media channels. As well as focusing on more ways to engage with the community and most importantly using our platform to celebrate others and their achievements within the esports industry.



## The Huntress Trials:

Early in 2021, British Esports' diversity initiative, Women in Esports, partnered with UK esports organisation Rix.GG for a £2,000 Valorant tournament called the Huntress Trials.

The event took place from the 30th-31st January and was streamed live on the British Esports Twitch channel.

The purpose of this partnered tournament was to promote inclusivity and diversity within the esports industry.

The tournament was created specifically for openly femme identifying or non-binary individuals, including but not limited to biological female, transgender women, openly femme-identifying, femme-presenting, or femme adjacent non-binary people.

LaGals won the competition and took home £1,000 of the prize pool, with Team Name Under Construction finishing second and TeamW taking third place. The success of this tournament set the ball rolling for further female-only and co-ed tournaments for Women in Esports.



## Dota Valkyries:

With intentions to expand female esports communities across a variety of titles, Women in Esports partnered with the Dota Valkyries to create the Valkyrie Cup.

Both parties look to work together in supporting women within the Dota 2 scene, in addition to collaborating on increasing participation of marginalised genders within esports.

This tournament was co-ed, but a minimum of two female or non-binary players were required to enter on each team of five to ensure everyone is included.

The first Valkyrie Cup took place between the 18th and 19th of September, and its success was closely followed by the Valkyrie Winter Cup in December.

The Winter edition aimed to support women within the Dota 2 scene, in addition to playing a part in increasing the participation of women within esports.

Women in Esports and Dota Valkyries hope to plan more tournaments moving into 2022 covering a wider range of levels.

# WORLD ESPORTS DAY:

The second-annual World Esports Day took place on Saturday 23rd October 2021, following the success of the inaugural event in 2020.

The global campaign aims to unite the esports community and celebrate all things to do with competitive gaming - including tournaments, streams, the games, the players and everything in between.

It is essentially a global celebration to focus on increasing awareness of the positive impact that esports can have on individuals.

Gamers, teams, associations, companies and anyone else interested in esports are encouraged to get involved with World Esports Day each year by using the hashtag #WorldEsportsday and running individual events streams as part of the day.

Following the success of the 2020 event, which raised money for SpecialEffect (the UK-based charity that helps provide customised gaming experiences for people with disabilities), World Esports Day 2021 raised funds for the World Health Organisation charity: COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX).

COVAX is a worldwide initiative aimed at driving access to COVID-19 vaccines directed by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, and the World Health Organisation.

In light of the pandemic, British Esports decided it was best to support this charity in its journey to provide COVID-19 vaccinations to countries all around the world.

Whilst COVAX was the main charity focus for British Esports, individual groups and organisations involved raised money for a variety of other charities too.



## Who got involved in 2021?

- British Esports Student Champs Valorant Showmatch
- Coventry Crosshairs Vs St Vincent Sharks Showmatch
- Esports News UK discussion stream
- GCS Owls Vs WDEsports International showmatch
- Burnley FC social post and live streams
- Alpine Racing social campaign
- Global Esports Federation Keynote panel
- Salford University Esports tournament

# 26,700

Live views on British Esports Twitch for World Esports Day



# ESPORTS IN EDUCATION SUMMIT:

The third annual Esports in Education Summit, an online event designed for teachers and lecturers, took place virtually on Tuesday 28th September 2021. This event was sponsored by Pearson BTEC, and put together in conjunction with AOC Sport.

During the summit, Senior Leaders, Curriculum Managers, Lecturers and Team Coaches came together from across the UK to discuss the impact and opportunities available for competitive gaming within educational settings.

A range of panel discussions, keynotes and interactive sessions took place throughout the day, with experts from across education and the esports industry providing insight into topics such as:

- The development of esports in Further and Higher Education
- Esports careers
- Safeguarding and inclusivity in gaming
- Women in Esports
- The British Esports Student Champs

The sessions allowed attendees to better understand the benefits of esports, and how they can get their school, college or university involved. As well as this, discussions were held for schools and colleges in varied stages of esports development to share progress and discuss solutions to any problems that occurred during the process.

As esports is growing significantly in the education sector, the summit aims to take place around the same time in 2022 - bringing more industry professionals together. With COVID-19 restrictions easing, we're planning to host this event physically as we did back in 2019 at Sixways Stadium.





# MEMBERSHIP:

Early in 2021, the British Esports Association announced plans for a brand new membership platform for young people within esports.

Initially, the platform is aimed at 12-19 year olds, but once the platform is up and running this age range will be extended. The online space will ensure users are verified at point of entry and that communication within the platform is reviewed to reduce toxicity and cyber threats.

British Esports has also teamed up with safety technology provider GoBubble for real-time content moderation and will deliver accurate age verification using privacy preserving AI technology from Yoti to ensure age appropriate interactions.

GoBubble and Yoti have been invited to test the platform within the Information Commissioner's Office's (ICO) Sandbox. This is a service developed by the ICO to support organisations who are creating products and services which utilise personal data in innovative and safe ways.

This creates an attractive proposition for parents and teachers looking for a safer space for their children and student gamers to play together.

Alongside all of this, British Esports is working alongside the NSPCC to put the safeguarding of young people at the forefront of the project. Online safety is an increasing issue, so this collaboration aims to create a positive and welcoming safe space in an online environment.

An exact date for release has not yet been confirmed, but aims to be completed later in the year.



# PARENTS GUIDE: NSPCC

On the 12th August 2021, the British Esports Association published the newly-improved Parent and Carers Guide in collaboration with the NSPCC.

The guide aims to educate parents and carers about the esports industry, how their children can get involved in the sector and online safety.

A wide variety of subjects are covered to ensure the reader is provided with relevant facts and information about what esports is, and the wide range of prospects that come along with it.

The most important topic highlighted in the guide is in relation to safeguarding and keeping young people safe online and in esports.

In the digital age, online safety has become more of an increased concern for parents and carers.

Having information about safeguarding and the practices British Esports have in place already, allows guardians of young people to help protect them from negligent behaviour.

This information regarding online safety has been backed by the NSPCC, and British Esports aim to use it to promote best practice in relation to safeguarding for young people.

As esports develops as an industry and online presence changes, the guide will be changed to reflect the current state of affairs.

This way, parents and carers can be assured that they are receiving the most up to date information and safeguarding protocols for their children.

## CONTENTS INCLUDE:

- ◆ Information about the British Esports Student Champs
- ◆ Benefits of esports
- ◆ Esports in education
- ◆ Academic pathways
- ◆ Inclusivity and diversity
- ◆ Parent testimonials
- ◆ Online safety
- ◆ How you can get involved with your child



# COLLEGE OF ESPORTS:

One of our final announced partnerships of 2021 was with the College of Esports - the first university-level institution entirely dedicated to esports education.

The university degree portfolio will include Foundation, Undergraduate and Postgraduate levels and will be delivered at the College of Esports campus at the iconic Velodrome, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in London, with students starting in September/October 2022.

The British Esports Association has helped produce part of the degree and provided College of Esports with some guidance, but will not be teaching the courses.

The student experience will centre on traditional academic subjects whilst being supported by the institutions' unique TRI-Curriculum.

This consists of the main degree courses plus two additional curricula to make students 'World-Ready', providing higher contact hours and a unique teaching approach.

The College of Esports is the vision of the two founders — Professor Philip Wilson and David Thomson — both of whom have a lifetime of experience in higher education and the global sports industry.

Students can register their interest for 2022 intake at [www.collegeofesports.ac.uk](http://www.collegeofesports.ac.uk).



# GLOBAL ESPORTS GAMES 2021



GLOBAL ESPORTS GAMES 2021 SINGAPORE

British Esports announced in 2021 that they have selected the 2021 teams and players representing Great Britain at the 2021 Global Esports Games (GEG).

GEG took place in Singapore in December 2021, which saw esports teams from more than 80 countries and territories compete for pride and glory. It was a medal event that did not include prize money. The 2021 games included tournaments in Street Fighter V, Dota 2 Open, Dota 2 Women and eFootball PES.



British Esports enlisted the support of Mark Weller, Chief Gaming Officer at Vexed Gaming as the Team Manager for Great Britain for GEG21.

The Dota 2 Women's team played on the main stage, securing a Silver medal to the hosting country Singapore.

Please find the overview of events listed below:

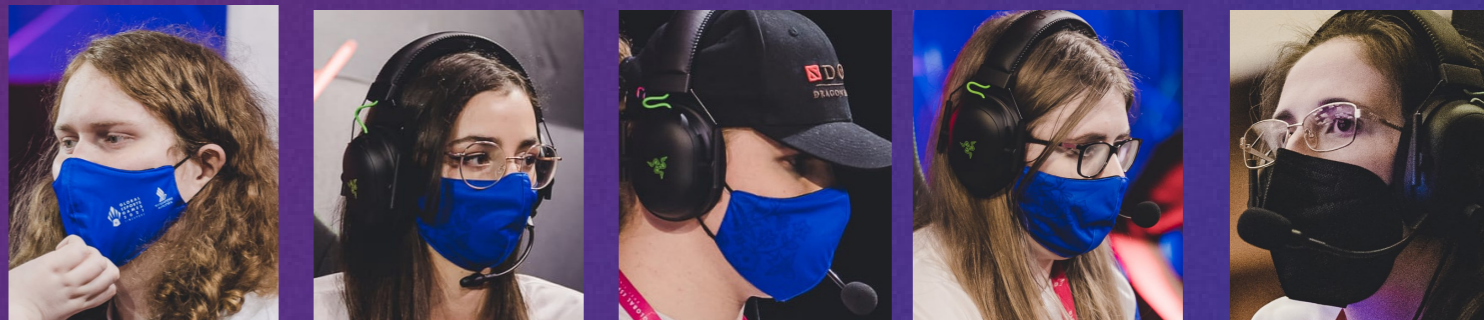
## DOTA 2 OPEN



**BILL OVERLOM ADZANTICK TANNER SYMETRICAL**

With an early start the Dota 2 Open team competed in their semi-finals game against Singapore. Despite their best efforts, Great Britain fell short against home nation 0-2 ending their journey in the Global Esports Games 2021 in 4th place.

## DOTA 2 WOMEN



**LITTLE LUCY LILYLANAYA VALKYRJARUBY BELLEMIKU SOONG45**

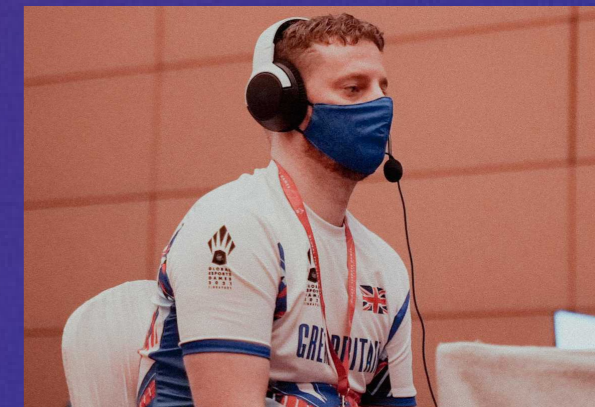
The Dota 2 Women team had a fantastic run at GEG21 leading to their eventual grand finals match against home nation Singapore. This was a best-of-three series, where they secured game one. After a long game filled with nail-biting moments, the hosting country leveled up the series 1-1, taking the match to its full lengths.

The final match saw the game running over 70 minutes long, where Singapore took the edge resulting in Great Britain securing a Silver medal finish.

## eFootball 2022 PES

On December 17th the eFootball PES qualifiers took place. The day started off strong with a victory against Hungary. Moving into the next two sets of games against Montenegro and Libya, despite a valiant attempt, we wasn't able to progress further in the tournament losing to both countries.

You can watch the full post-game interview here with player MrEHughes on YouTube [here](#).



**MREHUGHES**

## Street Fighter V



**THE4PHILZZ**

After an incredible group stage in the earlier stages in the tournament, Kim-Phillipe finished off with a clean sheet. He made his way all the way to the semi-finals, eventually falling short 1-3 against Chinese Taipei.

This left us to face off against Pakistan in contestation of the Bronze medal. Despite the back and forth series, Great Britain lost the series resulting in a 4th place finish.

# OTHER TOURNAMENTS AND INITIATIVES:

British Esports got involved with several tournaments, initiatives and partnerships throughout 2021. Here are a few of the highlights from the past year.



## Esports @ Bett 2022:

In November, British Esports announced the collaboration with Bett 2022, in order to bring esports into the world of education technology. Alongside plans to attend the annual Bett Show EdTech conference, British Esports will also be creating regular online content - of which will focus on how esports can benefit global educators.

The physical event will have a dedicated esports feature, where British Esports is working with Bett to curate 'Esports @ Bett' – the first of its kind at any Edtech show across the globe.

This strategic partnership will allow for further integration into the education sector, On top of this, the feature will also highlight the importance of digital skills and how esports is the starting point.

The show has been postponed until further notice due to COVID-19, and will take place at a new date later in the year.



## Esports in Education Conference 2021:

British Esports partnered with the College Development Network (CDN) to host the first annual Esports in Education Conference for Scotland. The virtual event was held on the 24th March 2021, and over 100 individuals from across the globe attending to discuss esports in the Scottish education sector.

This event follows the success of the Esports in Education Summit last year, which brought together educational institutions from across the UK to a virtual conference.

Guest speakers discussed the rise of esports as an industry, and the benefits of introducing it into the Scottish school, college and university curriculum.

In addition to these talks, CDN's CEO Jim Metcalfe presented Edinburgh College with their award for winning the Scottish College Cup, which was held back in November 2020.



## Microsoft Education Teachers Academy:

British Esports partnered up with Microsoft to put on the Education Esports Teacher Academy.

The one-week virtual course introduced educators from across the globe to esports, and gave these leaders the skills to implement esports into their classrooms. The main topic was around Minecraft: Education Edition, and how it can be used to incorporate esports into a learning environment.

At the completion of the course, educators were awarded Esports Leader badges to showcase their involvement in the program, as well as gaining exclusive access to a community of educators.



## Cops Vs Kids Pilot: North Yorkshire Police

In August 2021, British Esports collaborated with North Yorkshire Police to use esports as a way to engage with young people.

York-based Digital PCSO Chris Simpson led the pilot in collaboration with British Esports.

The pilot utilised esports and gaming to improve the engagement and relationships between young people and the police.

Whilst the overall aim for this project was to get young people engaging with police officers in a more comfortable environment, it also showed the positive aspects of esports on young players and their parents or carers.



## Scottish College Cup 2021:

The second annual Scottish College Cup took place in November 2021, with students across Scotland's college sector competing in Rocket League. This tournament was put together once again in conjunction with CDN, and worked to provide opportunities to engage students with both competitive and academic esports.

Quarter-final, semi-final and grand final matches were livestreamed on the British Esports Twitch channel, with over 115,000 total live viewers.

The overall experience of the competition was exciting and fun, and it has been fantastic to plan and run the event for Scottish Colleges.



### AoC FIFA Cup 2021:

Following the success of the FIFA Lockdown Championships in 2020, AoC Sport partnered with the British Esports Association to offer students the chance to represent their college in the AoC Sport FIFA 21 Cup.

52 colleges from across the country competed weekly from March until May in FIFA 21 fixtures on both Xbox One and PlayStation 4 platforms. More than 20% of colleges in England competed in this tournament from the 10th March.

Students formed teams of three to compete in 12-minute matches against other colleges on their designated platform - meaning there was a winner for both Xbox and PlayStation.

### National Star College:

Following the positive impact National Star students felt from competing in the AoC FIFA 21 Cup, British Esports looked at how it can help make the industry more inclusive.

A pilot tournament between four Alternative Provision (AP) colleges in the UK formed to give more students the opportunity to get involved in a competitive esports environment.

Microsoft collaborated in this pilot, providing each college with Xbox consoles and adaptive controller setups that were customisable to each individual.

The pilot was a big success, and provided a fun and competitive esports space for the individuals to gain valuable experiences.

Moreover, the two students from National Star who competed in the AoC FIFA 21 Cup, Dan and Christopher, came to the Metronome in Nottingham to play in a live showmatch at the British Esports Student Champs Grand Finals. This was streamed on our Twitch channel, and once again showcased that esports is for all.



# 2022 PLANS

British Esports will continue to be prominent in the education space, in continuing to develop the Esports BTEC with Pearson. Alongside this, further steps will be taken in higher education, with the exclusive university content partnership with the College of Esports being well underway.

The British Esports Student Champs will continue to take place, with more schools and colleges from the UK getting involved. With a live finals scheduled to return to Nottingham on the 2nd-3rd July 2022. As well as this, the Esports in Education Summit will take place once again on the 30th June 2022, with the event being in-person instead of digitally as COVID-19 restrictions are easing.

World Esports Day will be taking place for its third consecutive year on Saturday 22nd October 2022, and will focus on celebrating esports and those within the industry.

The new membership platform is set to be launched later in 2022, with a focus on providing a safe online space for young people to connect in esports. Initially, the platforms will be available for 12-19 year olds, with plans to expand to other age groups later on. This will ensure users are verified at the point of entry and that communication within the platform is reviewed to reduce toxicity and cyber threats. Alongside this, GoBubble and Yoti are undergoing testing for the membership platform within the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) Sandbox, a platform in itself to support organisations who utilise personal data in innovative and safe ways.

Finally, the biggest project for 2022 is the newly announced National Esports Performance Campus (NEPC) in Sunderland. The NEPC will become a centre of excellence, providing access to state-of-the-art equipment, training and investment that will support Sunderland, the North East and the UK to become a globally-recognised esports hub capable of attracting and developing the world's best esports talent.

After great success of our first time competing as Great Britain at the Global Esports Games, we'll see the return of this event in 2022 with hopes to secure further medals. In addition to this, the first Commonwealth Esports Championships event in August 2022.





[www.britishesports.org](http://www.britishesports.org)



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