The Growth of Esports

In this essay I will talk about the growth of esports, some of the leagues and how similar esports are with traditional sports.

Esports are short for electronic sports. Is the name given to a game if it gets an esports scene. The competitors play the video game as player versus player or as team versus team, depending on the video game, while being watched by a live audience with more watching it online. As basketball fans watches basketball because they enjoy it, esports fans are the same.

For players and fans, competition goes beyond a career. It is a passion, if not an obsession. The agony of defeat can be just as compelling as the joy of triumph. **(Good luck have fun, the rise of esports) Roland Li p.7**

Being a professional athlete, a professional esports athlete or a fan, you watch and play the game because you are passionate about it. Just watching your football team winning a game it makes you so happy, the same goes for the esports teams. It shows that is not just a game is more than that. You will put everything on the line to achieve victory. Every fan dream that one day it will be them on that stage or field.

The common definition of a sport is an activity involving physical exertion and skill in which an individual or team competes against another or others for entertainment. **[(Should E-sports be considered real sport?) Gehrig Rossen].**

While in other sports the athletes must build their muscles, in esports the athletes must develop their hand-eye coordination. It may sound that it is easy or that it is not a muscle but more like reflexes, but, you will be surprised how much stress you must add to your fingers and how much practice it will take to achieve it, not to mention how high the standards are, for any player to achieve the top ranks and hopefully gain some attention from an esports organization. Practice improves the athletes, the ones who can not improve they left behind, maybe they even get dropped from their spot. For example, football players, based on ertheo website, they average 4 to 6 hours training for 5 days a week, to maintain and improve themselves. Based on the British esports association, the esports athletes' practice an average of 16 hours per day, not just to maintain their performance, but to also evolve themselves as the game rapidly changes month after month. If a player underperforms or they can not produce numbers, then they get benched or subbed with a player who is in form at the moment, until they get back on track or they get stacked as a reserve. That goes for both sports and esports they do not just play the game they are there to win it. Not to mention that they must be

mentally prepare for every game as their mentality will affect their decision making.

The team that keeps winning is not the most talented but the most hard-working. **[(The Invisible Game: The Mindset of a Winning Team) Zoltan Andrejkovics].**

Every team and every player practice to improve themselves, but in a game, there is only one winner. The more you practice more opportunities you will have to win. Either by punishing your enemies' mistakes or creating your own opportunities. Sports or esports if you do not practice every day you will not have a single chance to succeed. Patience is another key to winning a game. Everyone makes mistakes but it does not matter, the only thing it matters is how fast you can bounce back and get on the right track to help your team. For example, your teams end up in a 1 versus 2 situation or even worse or it may be in your favour, the player who loses their patience first, they will end up losing the match up. It is not uncommon as you are anxious and under pressure trying to avoid the worst outcome but keeping your cool can save you and your teams' the game. Either sports or esports, having knowledge is an advantage, being able to read your opponent's mind the right moment is a huge advantage for your team. the mind games are also an important fact in esports as well as in sports. The deeper you can read your enemies and their thoughts the easier is for your team to make a decision and win the game.

It is much more than a tournament. The halls are crammed with companies showing off their latest wares. **[(The rise of eSports: are addiction and corruption the price of its success?) Simon Hattenstone].**

As Simon Hattenstone said it is not just a tournament, it is more. If we compare the Football world cup with league of legends world cup, we will find out that they are the same. Both are selling merchandise to the fans, the companies are showing their latest products, the players meeting and greeting fans, the small friendly competitions for the fans, the atmosphere in the arena and all the excitement and hype during the game. None can deny the growth of esports and their presence right now. No one would have imagined that the arcade competition in 1972 at Stanford University would have led to this multimillion industry which is rapidly expanding looking for more opportunities to get the name known.

As esports grow day by day, the industry must grow simultaneously as well, to support the growth of esports. With more big names coming to the esports scene trying to get a piece of its pie. That shows how much presence the esports are getting and how serious they are. Let's take for example the NBA and the NBA 2K games. In 2017 they announced their NBA 2K league which would be the esports series of the NBA. 17 out of 30 NBA teams agreed to take part in the series. They draft the players as they would for their NBA teams, showing us that they are serious about the e-league as much as the original league. The Formula 1 now has its own esports series where the real formula teams must choose their players to represent their esports teams. The Overwatch league and the League of Legends series, they announced that their leagues would be franchised to provide teams more confidence into investing money in their representative teams, with a share revenue between the teams, the players and the publisher. Although franchising the league it provides the publisher and the teams stable income, not every league can be franchised. If the series does not have a regular fanbase watching the series and be there to support it, it will be hard to franchise it, not to mention problems with getting an approval to enter the country and work for any international player. That problem though was only stated in the United States, but it got fixed, while in Europe it is different, thanks to the European Union, but for players coming from Asian countries or from the United States, they still need to apply for a visa if they are moving to that country to stay. Back in 2013 The U.S. State Department recognized an esports player as an athlete and granted him a P-1A visa. Danny "Shiptur" Le, from Canada, was the first esports player to be given a P-1A visa to entry the country as an athlete and compete in the League of Legends Championship Series. The Vice President of esports at Riot Games Dustin Beck, said "This is a watershed moment, It validates eSports as a sport. Now we have the same designation as the NBA or NHL or other professional sports leagues.". With that move, the U.S. government officially recognised esports as sports, with more esports athletes being granted the P-1A visa and entering the country to compete in various tournaments or sign a contract with a team. That was the green light that gave them a boost to start franchising the series, which it debuted in 2017, a year later Overwatch followed up.

The designers/producers of eSports games may need to utilize the concept of team/institution/player rivalries to accomplish their mission of attracting more players and buyers. Knowing many other people playing eSports games, is likely to encourage individuals to play eSports games. [(Comparison of esports and traditional sports consumption motives) Donghun Lee & Linda J. Schoenstedt].

Rivalries could not be missed in esports. As well as sports have their own rivalries, esports have their own ones. Those rivalries not only motivate the fans to watch the games, they also make them to want to play the game. By watching your favourite team doing an insane play, it gets you hype enough to make you want to play the game and be one of the players on the stage. Some examples are Faze Clan vs Optic Gaming in the Call of Duty series, Navi vs Alliance in Dota 2, Team Solo Mid vs Counter Logic Gaming in League of Legends Championship Series. These are just some examples of rivalries that exist in esports and there will be more to come and there is the element of upset as well, but without the right equipment and knowledge, all those rivalries would be meaningless. With many media producers coming from Television production to the esports scene and bringing their knowledge and margining it with the livestreaming experience, the experience they make to the viewers is unique. With unique graphics to match the game's genre to awesome visual effects, they make each game feel like watching a proper sport game the production of showing the game to the audience is more than just showing them the game. With shout casters delivering the moments and colorizing the game, showing those important plays to the audience with replays and on screen highlights, to pre-game analyses of playstyles, strategies, mind games to all the way to a full analyst team in a post game lobby waiting for the match to end to analyse what happened to the audience. It is a full fledge production with countless people working Infront and behind the scenes to deliver the action and entertainment. If no one were serious about it, it would not have been a huge asset in the industry with companies trying to get involved in. Esports were popular in Asia for quite some time with huge arenas hosting bog esports tournaments and building hype in the gaming industry, and all this built up hype has been transferred slowly to the west and we are to that point where all of us wait the moment where a western team defeats one of those Asian titan teams or individuals.

*In the past, people thought that the craze of competitive video gaming was primarily an Asian phenomenon, yet today only 51% of esports enthusiasts are in Asia***. [(Esports: A Guide to Competitive Video Gaming) Josh Chapman].**

Each year esports have increased their audience viewership, especially in the west. The United States increased their fanbase from 2015 with 25.7 million viewers to 45 million in 2016 while Europe stands with 22.6 million viewers. China it will remain the country with the most viewers and revenue as esports growing rapidly. With 90 million viewers globally in 2014, in 2015 the audience grew to 120 million viewers. The fanbase was not the only thing that grew alongside esports, the revenue grew as well. From 194 million dollars revenue in 2014 it went up to 655 million dollars in 2017. In three years esports tripled their revenue and it is expected to be increased as more games will join the esports scene bringing more fans and more companies will want to show off their latest products hoping to gain some attention.

In conclusion, we discovered that esports have a lot of similarities with traditional sports. They have their leagues, their teams, their fans, sponsors. They are all there, borrowing what sports have been doing and expanding over the years into something beyond everyone would have expected. No one knows what path esports will walk to, when or if their growth will stop. One thing is for sure though, esports are here to stay and they have a huge fanbase and revenue around the world.

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