



PRESS RELEASE

Official Launch of the National Association of Collegiate eSports

Association dedicated to the creation and support of varsity eSports programs at the collegiate level

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (September 7, 2016) – The National Association of Collegiate eSports (NAC eSports) officially launched Wednesday, providing legitimacy and structure for eSports programs officially recognized by their college or university. NAC eSports is a member driven organization that focuses on the positive development of eSports programs at the collegiate level, and advocates for members to create varsity programs that include scholarships for its participants and a strong institutional commitment to the sport.

NAC eSports is the only association of college and university sponsored eSports programs that promotes the education and development of students through intercollegiate eSports participation and the institutional commitment to support those initiatives. Members of the association are dedicated to legitimizing collegiate eSports and providing college students the opportunities to live their passion for competitive gaming, while pursuing a quality education.

“We are entering our second year as a varsity eSports program and are thrilled to be one of the founding members of NAC eSports,” said Eric VanHoose, University of Pikeville eSports head coach. “The association is providing a legitimate structure for varsity programs to grow and compete in the eSports ecosystem.”

NAC eSports originated with six founding member institutions – Columbia College (Mo.), Indiana Institute of Technology, Maryville University (Mo.), Midland University (Neb.), Robert Morris University (Ill.) and University of Pikeville (Ky.) – and has expanded to 20 institutions for the 2016-17 academic calendar with additional institutions expected to join throughout the year.

Robert Morris University is arguably the most decorated institution among the founding group. The Eagles of Robert Morris, which broke new ground in the eSports community in June of 2014 when they announced that they were offering scholarships for eSports athletes, finished runner-up last season in the League of Legends North American Collegiate Championship – one year after claiming the title in 2015.

NAC eSports provides a structure to varsity eSports regardless of the size of institution. Miami University (Ohio) is one of the largest NAC eSports members with an enrollment of nearly 19,000 on its main campus in Oxford, Ohio, while DigiPen Institute of Technology in Redmond, Wash., has a total enrollment of approximately 1,000 students.

To qualify for NAC eSports membership, institutions must be fully accredited by an authorized higher educational accrediting agency relative to their region and national affiliation. Additionally, programs must be officially endorsed by the school that they represent. NAC eSports’ framework allows students to receive eSports specific scholarships from the institutions they attend. How financial aid is distributed is dependent on specific institutional policies and not controlled by NAC eSports.

In addition to providing a consistent competitive structure for current varsity eSports programs, NAC eSports looks to be a resource for college club and start-up programs looking to move into the varsity space.

“NAC eSports is a member driven association that focuses on developing eSports programs from the institutional level,” said Michael Brooks, NAC eSports administrator. “We want to further expand the ecosystem by providing a home for existing varsity programs, while also acting as a resource for club teams wanting to move to varsity or for institutions that want to start a team.”

The inaugural NAC eSports Invitational will take place in the spring of 2017, followed by full regular-season and postseason competitions coming in the 2017-18 academic year.

Since its establishment in the early 2000’s, professional and club eSports has seen rapid growth in both participation and viewership. According to ESPN The Magazine’s June 22, 2015 eSports issue, the 2014 League of Legends championship drew an online viewership of 27 million people, which is more than the NBA Finals (15.5 million), Major League Baseball’s World Series (13.8 million) and the National Hockey League’s Stanley Cup Finals (5 million). DOTA 2 – another popular eSport – drew 20 million that same year according to the article.



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For more information about NAC eSports or how to become a member visit www.NACeSports.org.

About NAC eSports

The National Association of Collegiate eSports (NAC eSports) is the only association of college and university sponsored eSports programs that promotes the education and development of students through intercollegiate eSports participation. NAC eSports member schools are dedicated to legitimizing collegiate eSports and providing college students the opportunities to live their passion for competitive gaming while pursuing a quality education.

NAC eSports promotes the education and development of students through intercollegiate eSports participation. Member institutions share a common commitment to high standards in education, and to the principle that participation in organized eSports competition serves as an integral part of the total educational process.

Organizational support and structure for NAC eSports is being provided by the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA). The NAIA has been administering traditional athletics programs and championships in balance with the overall college educational experience since 1937.