

What is eSports?

- eSports are a form of sport competition using video games.
- There are multiple types of eSports in the exact same way that there are multiple types of sports. The most common eSports games fall into the following genres: action, strategy, and sports.
- Each of these games are played on one or multiple video game systems, often referred to as consoles. The most commonly known consoles types are the PlayStation 4, XBOX ONE, and Nintendo Switch.
- Video games are one of the most popular activities in the world today. There are 2.5 billion active gamers across the world with 211 million in the United States alone. With so many people playing games, it's important to ask who these people are, why gaming is so popular and what impact (positive or negative) these games are having on the people who play them.

Who is a Special Olympics NY eSports Player?

- Anyone that plays competitively online against others in a game on a compatible console, or personal computer
- Athletes & Unified Partners must be 8 years or older to participate in Special Olympics NY's eSports
- Athletes aged 8-18 must have parent/guardians' permission to participate in Special Olympics NY's eSports.

Benefits to eSports

Video games can benefit gamers in the following ways:

- **Cognitive benefits** - Multiple studies have found that video games strengthen a wide range of cognitive skills including problem-solving, spatial attention, multi-tasking and short term & long-term memory.
- **Communication & teamwork benefits** - gaming provides teambuilding and communication training. For many of the most popular competitive video games, individuals compete on a team and cannot win unless they communicate strategies with each other, not unlike traditional sports.
- **Emotional benefits** - Gaming is a type of play that, not unlike other physical activities, provides gamers the opportunity to learn how to manage their emotions and deal with stressful experiences.
- **Social benefits** - Despite stereotypes portraying gamers as socially isolated individuals, gamers prefer playing with other people. For teens, gaming is a primary way they interact with their friends.

eSports Concerns

Potential concerns that parents and guardians have expressed with video gaming:

- **Addiction** - As gaming has become more and more popular, there have been concerns about the potential addictive behavior of gaming and gamers spending too much time on their gaming consoles.
- **Physical health** – Spending too much time inside playing video games could potentially mean less time taking part in a physical activity.
- **Toxicity** – There is a general lack of parameters to keeping vulnerable people safe from toxic situations
- **Violence** - Fighting and shooting games have always been amongst the most popular genres within the video game industry. The concern over the impact playing these games has on individuals has increased dramatically as the games have become more graphic realistic.

Special Olympics NY eSports is Safe

- Special Olympics NY takes great pride in offering sports and programs that help our athletes develop new skills, get healthier, increase their self-confidence and make lifelong friendships.
- Living with an intellectual disability can be a very isolating experience. It's our goal to change that for every Special Olympics NY athlete.
- eSports is no different to any other program offered by Special Olympics NY so safety measures will be implemented:
 1. **Coaches, Unified Partners and Staff**
 - All eSports training, competition and leagues will be overseen and monitored by Special Olympics NY staff, approved admins & officials and Special Olympics NY coaches.
 - All coaches and staff have completed a background check and have signed a Special Olympics NY Code of Conduct.
 2. **Only Special Olympics NY participants**
 - All training, competitions and/or leagues will be offered to Special Olympics NY athletes and Unified Partners who have completed their Application for Participation. These programs will not be open for anyone who is NOT a Special Olympics NY approved athlete or Unified Partner.
 - All athletes and Unified Partners must sign a Special Olympics NY eSports specific Code of Conduct.
 3. **Online safety and streaming**
 - All games, servers, trainings, competitions, leagues, etc. will be protected either by a password or set up on a server that is only accessible by invitation.
 - SONY may live stream eSports events through Facebook Live, YouTube, Twitch or other safe streaming platforms and participants (see Code of Conduct).
 4. **Rating on games**
 - All video games that will be offered by Special Olympics NY will have been rated "E" (Everyone) by the ESRB (Entertainment Software Rating Board).
 - No game offered by Special Olympics NY will involve alcohol & drug references, blood and gore, crude humor, mature or explicit language, nudity and sexuality.
 - Special Olympics NY will monitor games for Fantasy Violence which can be defined as "violent actions of a fantasy nature, involving characters in situations easily distinguishable from real life".

eSports Code of Conduct

Rules for a Better Sport

- eSports should be a welcoming environment, where everyone involved feels safe, has fun and can develop their skills.
- To create such an environment, we need to take personal responsibility for how we behave toward our fellow players, coaches, staff, volunteers, and spectators.
- The rules and conduct below will apply to Special Olympics NY eSports league training and competition as well as communication outside of the league.
- **Online is the same as offline** meaning you treat teammates, opponents, and admins in the same manner both online and offline, based on how you would behave at an in-person training or competition.
- Special Olympics NY is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all athletes to honor sports and Special Olympics. This includes E-Gaming, eSports and all virtual programming. All Special Olympics NY athletes and Unified Partners agree to the following code:

eSports Code of Conduct



I. Sportsmanship

- a. I will practice good sportsmanship
- b. I will act in ways that bring respect to me, my coaches, my team, and Special Olympics NY
- c. I will not swear or use bad language
- d. I will not insult other persons
- e. I will not argue or fight with other athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers or staff

II. Training and Competition

- a. I will attend virtual practices and competitions as scheduled, arriving on time and ready to participate
- b. I will learn and follow the rules
- c. I will listen to my coaches and the officials and ask questions when I do not understand
- d. I will always try my best during training and competitions

III. Responsibility for my Actions

- a. I will not make inappropriate verbal or sexual advances/ comments towards others
- b. I will not drink alcohol, use marijuana, or take illegal drugs while representing Special Olympics at any events; including eSports training and competition
- c. I will obey and follow all Special Olympics NY rules

IV. eSports Specific

- a. I will not cheat or hack
- b. I will avoid sharing Special Olympics NY's account information or any other private information that could put myself and/or our peers at risk
- c. I will follow and respect the rules and the Code of Conduct of Mission Control (League Platform) as well as the Special Olympics NY Code of Conduct
- d. I will share my gamertag/ virtual alias on the registration form. I will also make sure my coach is aware if I change my gamertag/alias during a training/ competition season
- e. I understand that when joining a game with "live streaming" capabilities, I can be heard by every other participant, as well as possibly being broadcasted through live video on all Special Olympics NY social media accounts (including Twitch)

Consequences

I understand that if I violate the Code of Conduct, I will be subject to a range of consequences:

- **Warnings.** Low severity or first-time offenses may be offered a written warning, along with supplemental opportunities for mediation.
- **Immediate forfeit of game or match.** In this case, the tournament referee has the right to call for immediate forfeiture due to misconduct.
- **Player suspension from the entire match.** In this case, a single player may be suspended, while the team may continue to compete with a replacement.
- **Player suspension from the league.** In this case, players would be banned from attending the events.
- **Team disqualification.** In this case, if two or more players on a single team have violated the Code of Conduct, the entire team may be disqualified

**** Games that are not approved for reschedule will result in an automatic forfeiture. In the event of four (4) no show forfeits, a team/individual will be subject to removal from the league**