eSports:
Electronic Gaming in School

Matt Munger, Associate Superintendent for Secondary Education

Armando Soto, Director of Interscholastic Activity

Table of Topics

- What is eSports
- Similarities to Traditional Interscholastic Programs
- Growth Trends
- Games Offered
- Costs
- Technology Requirements
- Challenges and Considerations

AMPHITHEATER
Public Schools

What is eSports?

- *"Esports are video games that are played in a highly organized competitive environment. These games can range from popular, team-oriented multiplayer online battle arenas (MOBAs), to single player first person shooters, to survival battle royales, to virtual reconstructions of physical sports."*

- Harvard International Review
(April 2020)

AMPHITHEATER
Public Schools

Similarities to Traditional Interscholastic Programs

- Students try out for teams

- In Arizona, AIA has requirements similar to Athletics
- Districts have ultimate determination in what games are played, team sizes, etc.

- Post-season play

- Teams are matched to be competitive

- No Pass, No Play academic requirements

- Guidelines on player conduct, including AIA violations

- Games/matches are played on campus

Growth Trends

- *Esports is a far bigger phenomenon than a few players with headsets gaming in their bedrooms, said Nyle Sky Kauweloa, a teaching assistant and Ph.D. candidate at the University of Hawaii at Mānoa whose research focuses on competitive online gaming. He said it is a growing industry.*
(Education Week, May 2018)

- *Professional leagues have publicity teams and commentators, and have seen investment from NFL team owners. At the college level, more than 475 schools offer club teams and about 50 offer esports scholarships, according to the NCAA. The Paris 2024 Olympic organizers are in discussions to include esports as a demonstration sport, and it will be included as a medal event at the 2022 Asian Games.*
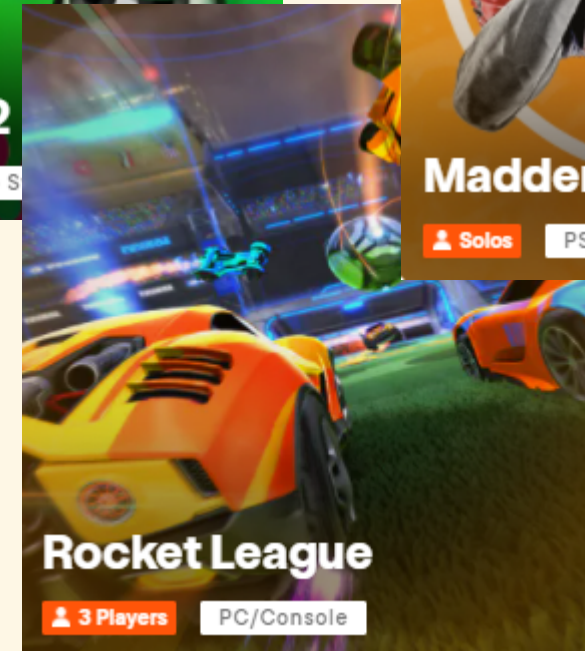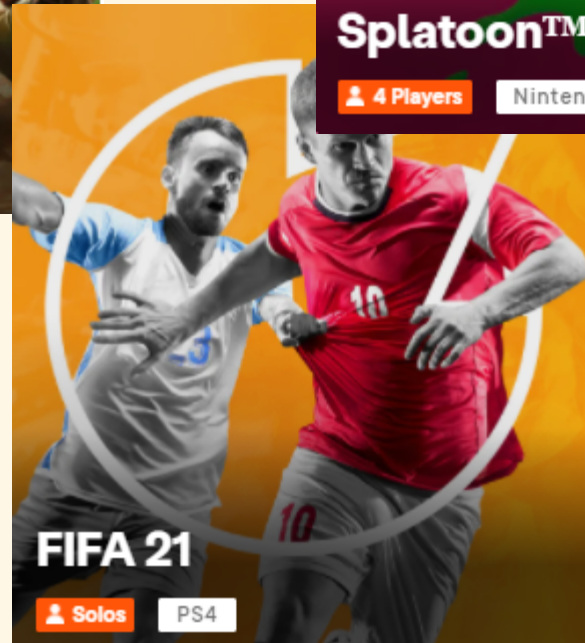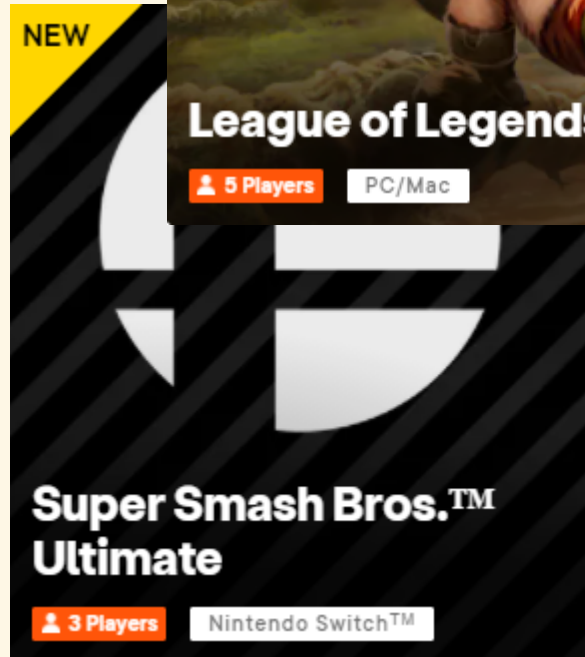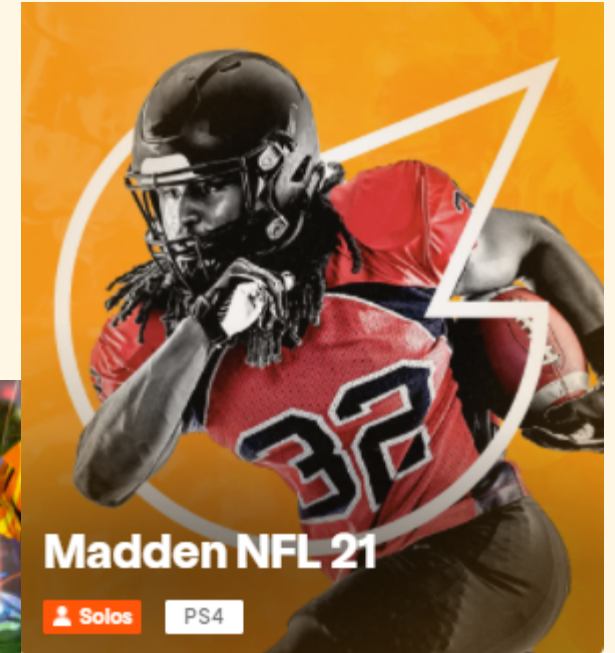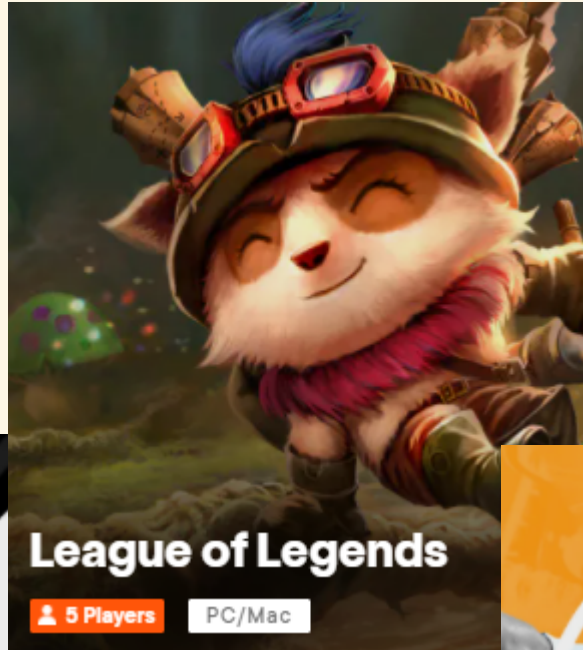*(Education Week, May 2018)*

Growth Trends

- *Today, more than 170 colleges and universities participate. And there's money on the table – more than $16 million in college scholarships. Naturally, high schools have followed suit... This year, 17 states and the District of Columbia are offering formal esports teams.*
(NPR, January 2020)

- *The rise in this genre of video games comes as the adult demographic has started to create and control a host of new cultural trends. Specifically essential in this transformation is an evolution of young adults' fundamental relationships with sports. Viewership in traditional sports is declining, while that of esports is skyrocketing. The boom is so significant that almost every major popular game on the market has some type of pseudo-professional circuit.*
(Harvard International Review, April 2020)

Games Offered

League of Legends
5 Players — PC/Mac

NEW
Splatoon™ 2
4 Players — Nintendo S...

Madden NFL 21
Solos — PS4

NEW
Super Smash Bros.™ Ultimate
3 Players — Nintendo Switch™

FIFA 21
Solos — PS4

Rocket League
3 Players — PC/Console

Costs

Initial Program Start Up Considerations

- 10 Students per Season
- *If* we use PlayStation or XBox for gaming platform
  - $500 per unit x 10 units = $5,000
    - o Challenge: Gaming consoles cannot be modified/upgraded and therefore short-term life period for games
    - o Benefits:
      - ➤ Easier to "whitelist" gaming sites without dropping firewall
      - ➤ Greater variety of gaming titles available

Costs - Continued

- *If* we use Nintendo Switch for gaming platform
    - $250 per unit x 10 units = $2,500
        - Challenge(s):
            - Gaming console cannot be modified/upgraded and therefore short-term life period for games
            - Requires suspension of internet filtering software (iBoss)
        - Benefit(s):
            - Most popular, current games, are on Nintendo Switch

Note: Super Coach advised of difficulties with Nintendo Switch

Costs - Continued

- *If* we use a Gaming PC System
  - $1,100 - $2,100 per unit
    x 10 units = $11,000 - $21,000
    - o Challenge(s):
      - ➤ Cost prohibitive, *may* limit the number of participants until more systems are purchased
    - o Benefit(s):
      - ➤ Gaming towers have greater life expectancy due to ability upgrade with minimal costs/effort.
      - ➤ Greater variety of games can be played

Note: Super Coaches believed this was the better investment in long-term.

Costs - Continued

Additional costs beyond gaming systems

- **Coaching Addendum**
  - $2,400 per coach, per season (2 seasons)
  - Depending of games played during a competition, an assistant coach may be necessary.
- **Uniform**
  - $50 - $75 per polo shirt
- **Participation Fees:**
  - $62 per student (1 game title, 1 season only)
    - **Note**: Minimum per year is 20 students ($1,240)
      - ➢ Each game costs $62 per player (1 player, playing 3 titles could cost $186)

Costs - Continued

Initial Program Start Up Costs:

- Gaming Systems: ~$11,000 (midpoint b/w gaming systems)
- Instillation: 2 hrs per device x $12.15/hr." ~$250
- Addendum: $2,400 (1 season)
  - 2 seasons = $4,800
- Uniforms: $600
- Participation: $1,240 (1 season, 1 game)

- Total Projected Start Up Costs: $16,000

Costs Comparison: eSports and Athletics

Athletics (Low, Medium, High)

- Uniforms
  - Tennis (Low): 10 x $59 (yearly) = $590
  - Baseball/Softball (Mid): 10 x $70 (4 yr. rotation) = $700
  - Football (High): 10 x $97 (4 yr. rotation) = $97

- Equipment:

- Coaching Addendum:
  - Tennis: $2,600
  - Baseball/Softball: $3,000
  - Football: $3,800

eSports

- Gaming Console
  - Nintendo Switch: $2,500
  - Xbox/PlayStation: $5,000
  - Desktop: $11,000 - $21,000
  (Excludes necessary yearly upgrades)

- Uniform (Polo): $500 - 750

- Coaching Addendum: $2,400

- 1 Game eSport: $1,240

Technology Requirements

- Gaming systems
  - Would need to determine what gaming system would offer most game choice
- iBoss
  - Manual entry of all game sites
- AIA Lockdown browser
- CIPA
- Twitch and Discord
  - Possible alternatives:
    - YouTube
    - Google Chat/Meet

Challenges & Considerations

- Upfront costs of gaming devices are considerable.

- Currently, we do not have indicator to reflect student interest

- Gaming area would have to be secured from regular use

- All competitions would have to occur at school to ensure AIA rules are followed
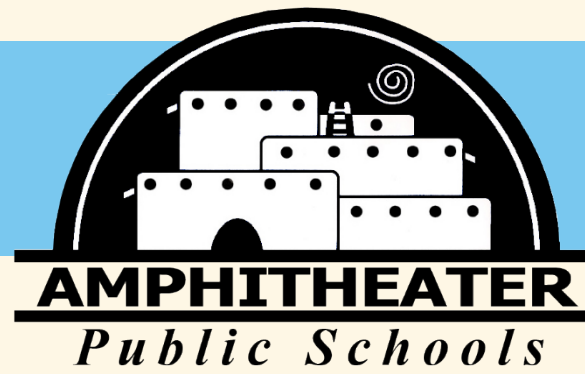
Challenges & Considerations

- All game sites are outside of iBoss filters and would have to be manually entered for each game event.

- Sites, such as Twitch (social media streaming) and Discord (social media chats) are notoriously "toxic" environments.
    - Could use YouTube or Google Chat as an alternative

- Potential CIPA (Child Internet Protection Act) compliance
    - Super Coaches at two sites, were unfamiliar with CIPA and eRate monies.
    - One site indicated they used WiFi devices to circumvent district filters.

Questions