Thank you to our panelists!

Marcus Howard, President, Tampa Association of Gaming

Derek Watford, Co-Founder, High Point Gamer

Juan Rodriguez, Founder, Lodgz Financial and the Lodgz Podcast

Congrats to the winners of esportsLibate & Learn Bingo!

1st Place - Sandra Braham will receive a copy of "The Business of Esports" by Derek Watford

2nd Place - Shane Smith will receive a Lodgz Podcast t shirt

3rd Place - Jared Serfozo will receive a complimentary ticket to a future Synapse event

<u>Esports101</u>

Esports is defined as a structured game with teams and prizes.

Egaming is played independently without any competitive team features.

A streamer shares live game play on a digital platform like Twitch or Facebook.

Indie Games are content created by small, independent game developers. Some have gone on to be purchased by a large company and commercialized, like Minecraft which was bought by Microsoft. They may have a loyal cult following, similar to indie music or film.

Mainstream Games have a global following and are owned by major companies. Examples include Madden, Fortnite, Call of Duty and League of Legends.

Esports can be centered on any competitive activity like cooking, spelling, educational activities, and more. While some and the most popular are first-person shooter games, many are educational or sports-focused.

Leagues are centered around major games and often increasingly in collaboration with major sports teams now including an esports component with their traditional teams. I.e. The NBA and the 2K League; [Orlando Magic](#) and [Magic Gaming](#). The lines between "professionals" and "amateurs" are more blurred in esports than in traditional sports at this time.

   Minor Leagues are emerging, like "Challenges." These could be organized regionally as an entry point for younger players. They're easier to build around indie games.

Why Should Companies Pay Attention to esports?

- US viewership on track to eclipse all pro sports leagues except the NFL next year
- The largest esportsTournament had more than 600,000 live viewers - more than the Super Bowl
- Veteran support organizations use esports to engage and connect the veteran community
- 2K League already being broadcast on ESPN normalizing esports to mainstream audiences not watching on platforms like Twitch
- Valuable opportunity for brands to connect with young people and Millenials
- Your brand does not need to work specifically in esports- Puma and Prada have gotten involved as sponsors. You can connect to a gamer's life outside of gaming.

Why Should Communities, Parents and Educators Pay Attention to esports?

- Gaming promotes economic empowerment, social inclusion, team work, diversity, tech interests and opportunities for workforce development.
  https://www.thegamer.com/esports-more-jobs-2019-popular/
- Some companies seek out gamers because their mindset fits the company's team-oriented, committed mentality - similar to traditional athletes.
- Game play and game coding is often a starting point to get kids interested in coding, computer science and cybersecurity - careers of today and the future.
- Virtual and in-person tournaments are a potential source of revenue and tourism growth for communities that can host them.

- Investing in esports through gaming-focused ETFs

How Can Blockchain and Cryptocurrency be Connected to esports?
- Blockchain introduces "trust" in an industry against fraud and theft; could be used to verify age of gamers for access to certain games, protect against identity theft, etc.
- Cryptocurrency is like a "frequent flier" program with individual teams and/or game publishers offering customized tokens to encourage participation in an event, etc. Digital items and currencies are native to the gaming community and could be used to build brand loyalty and awareness, and audience engagement.
- [Blockspaces](#) is a good resource to learn more about both blockchain and cryptocurrency
- [Game Credits](#) - 1st gaming cryptocurrency getting involved in esports

What Opportunities are there for the future of esports?
- Diversifying the community of "influencers" and types of games they primarily play
- A more inclusive, positive environment that discourages misogyny.
    - The Esports Bar Association has a diversity committee addressing industry toxicity
    - An all-female league and more female-focused marketing and PR could help
    - Estimated 45% of players are female
      https://www.gamedesigning.org/gaming/female-gamers/
- More socio-economically diversity by reducing costs of gaming consoles and equipment that make competitive gaming more accessible
- Increased mobile gaming play to democratize engagement opportunities
- Increase in professional services for the gaming industry - finance, legal, accounting, career development
- Esports betting

How is Florida Leading in esports?
- Programs now available at several Florida colleges and universities:
    - Full Sail University [Study of Games](#)
    - Florida Southern College major in [Interactive and Game Design](#)

- University of South Florida [esports Summit](#)
- Several schools host esports teams
- Florida esports teams are growing:
    - Lightning Bolt's gaming initiative;
    - Tampa Bay Rowdies soccer
    - Florida teams Miami Heat and Orlando Magic partnering with the Misfits
    - Miami Heat & Heat Check (NBA 2K league)
    - Orlando Magic - Magic Gaming (NBA 2K league)
    - Florida Mayhem
    - Florida Mutineers

What are Good Games for Newbies?

- Rocket League - close to traditional sports as possible, like soccer with rocket powered cars; has scholarships and tournaments available; good option for non-violent game options
- Brawlhalla - Indie equivalent to Super Smash Brothers
- Super Smash Brothers

Additional Links & Resources:

Indie Gaming

https://app.hackernoon.com/stats/indie-games-the-future-of-esports-p41b3ug5

Marcus's Medium Page

https://medium.com/@projectmq

Upcoming esports Book

https://innovationsoftheworld.com/ecosystems/gaming-esports/

The Business of Esports" by Derek Watford

synapse
INNOVATION LIVES HERE