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A comparison between professional traditional sports and electronic sports

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ABSTRACT

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This research was written in Oulu University of Applied Sciences by Mikko Lievetmursu and the topic of the thesis focuses on the differences of professional traditional sports and electronic sports. The objective of the thesis is to understand the main differences and similarities in athlete's professional growth on both sides as well as on an organizational business level. Background for the thesis came up from the exponential growth of e-sports industry in recent years, which means that e-sports is becoming a real sport industry alongside of traditional sports and comparing them can provide valuable knowledge to both industries and the client for the thesis in Oulu University of Applied Sciences. The author has also followed both scenes for years and has a large amount of interest towards both sports.

This research achieved a broad understanding of how professional traditional sports and professional electronic sports differ in their respectful sides but also how they are very similar. It also finds additional discussion topics and problems that electronic sports are still facing and what direction electronic sports is heading. Additionally, this research shows how young electronic sports are in history and how they are still in a development of becoming a serious sport within the community. Electronic sports are heading towards a promising future to appear along with all other traditional sports but will require additional five to ten years to be generally accepted as a sport and to reach the same level of organizational development that currently lies in traditional sports.

Sources for the thesis include various online articles, information about both sports, interview with an electronic sport organization and informational videos and books.

Keywords: electronic, sports, traditional, comparison, business, athlete

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1 GLOSSARY

Benched = An athlete is moved from active player position to passive player position.

Hype = Intensive promotion of an event or product, often overexaggerating the benefits.

META = Can be opened as Most Effective Tactic Available, which means the professional games revolve around the current best strategies and gameplay available to win a match.

MOBA = Multiplayer Online Battle Arena, a subgenre of RTS, in which players controls a single character.

MVP = Most Valuable Player, a title given to the player in professional sports who did most to achieve the victory to one's team.

RTS = Real-time Strategy, strategy video game where the game progresses on live time without pauses and players must strategically compete with game units.

Solo Queue = Player queues up in a game with four other random players for a match in MOBA.

Tilt = Emotional state in which the player fails to succeed, and repeats mistakes again and again leading in to suboptimal gameplay.

Franchising in sports = Teams have territorial rights for obtaining a spot in league from which they are unable to be removed while being a shareholder in the league.

2 INTRODUCTION

This thesis focuses on traditional professional sports and e-sports (electronic sports), compares them and argues the idea of e-sports becoming a part of sports that is considered “real” sports by the majority. E-sports has been rising massively in popularity during the last few decades and have shown that a video game can be brought in as a professional sport via tournaments where professional players compete against each other while having a massive audience behind it. Even though common aspects in both sides such as tournaments, player salaries, status, professionalism, etc. are shared, most common arguing points lie in the physical aspects of the athletes as well as on the tournament systems and organizations. Commonly e-sports players do not participate in physical training which has been considered the main key in professional sports for as long as they have existed in the past and e-sport league systems have clear differences compared to traditional sport leagues.

Sports are defined as a competitive physical activity or games, in which participants maintain or improve their abilities while bringing enjoyment to the participants or possibly also spectators (Oxford Dictionary, cited 14.3.2018). Professional sports are defined as physical exertion and skill where an athlete or a team competes against opponent(s) for entertainment, while earning income for it (Wikipedia, cited 14.3.2018). E-sports is the compound word from “Electronic” and “Sports” and is a general term to describe a competitive sport performed by using IT & Communication technologies such as PC, Display Equipment, Network and other electronic devices (International e-Sports Federation, cited 14.3.2018).

This thesis focuses to find questions on how traditional sports and e-sports differ in history, athletes, and in the organization management side as well as to understand the differences in business and league systems. Additionally, I will also interview a representative of an e-sports team called Hercules Esports and we will have a discussion around these questions and thoughts about e-sports current state in sports and future.

3 TRADITIONAL SPORTS AND HISTORY

As this research focuses on professional athleticism, amateur sports will be neglected from the topic. This will save time and enables the thesis to stick to the specific topic area. For the duration of this thesis, few diverse types of sports are taken as examples from both categories, traditional sports and e-sports. Due to traditional sports having a greater history and larger variety of different areas than e-sports, only two example sports are taken from traditional sports, with lesser amount of history, while many different games are taken from e-sports that have professional teams and players competing in tournaments. To decide these sports from the beginning, for traditional sports I will use ice hockey and table tennis. I consider these sports as good examples as they differ from each other in many ways, such as one being a contact team sport with fast-paced action and other being mostly an individual sport with precision and control. Both are also participating sports in the Olympic Games and for e-sports, there has been discussions about if e-sports could fit into the Olympic Games, but we will discuss about this more later in the thesis.

For e-sports, currently there are few games that have been rising in popularity for quite some time now and I will focus on these mostly. Due to the possibility of a short lifespan of a game being played professionally, which is measured by the interest of the public and the players, an older game that is disappearing from the professional gaming because of this reason but has had a massive impact on the industry will be taken as an example as well. Games that have been increasing in popularity and I will take as an example, are League of Legends (LoL) and Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CS: GO). Both are fast-paced action games with strategical and coordinated gameplay, where five team members battle against the other team in a chosen map, even though the style of these games is vastly different. Two games that have decreased in popularity that I will take as an example, are StarCraft: Brood War (SC: BW), a sequel StarCraft 2: Wings of Liberty (SC2: WoL) and its expansions StarCraft 2: Heart of the Swarm (SC2: HotS) and StarCraft 2: Legacy of the Void (SC2: LotV). These games are currently holding less tournaments than they used to and the viewership numbers started decreasing for StarCraft 2 in 2012 as other competitive games such as previously mentioned LoL started rising along other Multiplayer Online Battle Arena-games (MOBAs). "2012 was also the year that the tide began to turn in favor of other games and genres, most notably the rise of MOBAs. League of Legend had long left SC2 in a distant as second in stream viewership. By March of 2012, it had surpassed Wings of Liberty as the most-played game in Korea" (Hovdestad, 2016 cited 17.05.2017). It is, however a notable

example, as an individual sport where professionals play against each other in one versus one matches. Additionally, I will mention games that have smaller fanbase and popularity but can bring additional viewing angles to the topic. In the world of professional gaming, it is just natural that the older games will not last long in popularity and will get replaced by newer releases, which certainly is not the case in traditional sports (Shields, 2016, cited 8.5.2018).

3.1 Professional ice hockey and history

3.1.1 Professional ice hockey

In this chapter I will introduce the chosen example sports, video games that are played as sports and focus on the general history of professional sports and e-sports.

Professional ice hockey consists of two teams each having six players in the ring trying to score a goal by putting the puck inside the enemy team's net using a hockey stick. Five of these players are skaters who control the puck with the stick and aim to score a goal and one player is a goaltender, who is firmly in front of own team's net preventing the enemy team from scoring. A match consists of three rounds, which are all 20 minutes long and the match winner is the one who has more points at the end of three rounds. However, if after three rounds the game is tied, a fourth round begins, and it is called "sudden-death", where the team to score first one goal, wins the game. The length of this round has varied during professional ice hockey from 5 minutes to 20 minutes. And after that, if the game is still tied, a penalty shootout begins, where three skaters from each team go one-on-one against the enemy team's goaltender trying to score. The winner is decided in three rounds and if tied, penalty shootout continues again in "sudden-death"-mode. During the game, too aggressive behavior or breaking the rules can lead to a player being put in a penalty area for a short duration, giving the opposing team an advantage in player numbers. Normally this penalty lasts just two minutes, but in extreme cases five minutes or even leading into dismissing the player from the game. The heat of a moment in front of the Pittsburgh Penguins' goal shown in figure 1 below, when Pittsburgh Penguins were playing against the Tampa Bay Lightning.



Figure 1. Pittsburgh Penguins vs. Tampa Bay Lightning, in a professional ice hockey match (Photo by Mike Carlson, cited 28.5.2017)

3.1.2 History of professional ice hockey

Early structured ice hockey with standardization of rules began in the last quarter of 19th century originating from Canada. Birthplace of structured ice hockey is difficult to pinpoint exactly, but the biggest influence on modern ice hockey started to show up in Montréal, Windsor (Nova Scotia), and Kingston (Ontario). “The first organized ice hockey, as we would recognize it today, was set in Montréal in 1875, where J.G.A. Creighton, a McGill student, established a set of formal rules.” (The Canadian Encyclopedia, cited 16.05.2017). This quickly leads into forming the first organized team in 1879, the McGill University Hockey Club, which would use these basic set of rules to compete. Shortly after that the first “world championship” was held in 1883, which was won by the McGill University Hockey Club. World championship written in quotation marks as the only teams participating in this tournament were all established in Eastern Canada. The sport spread to American universities swiftly in the next following years in 1893 and shortly after in Europe.

In today's world, what we could specify as a professional ice hockey, started at the beginning of the 20th century, when the first professional league called the International Professional Hockey League was formed in 1904 and it included only Canadian teams. All players lived off luxury salaries, worked from one season to the next and played for the highest bidder. Additional leagues started to rise in the next following years, until the biggest and the most famous league, the National Hockey Association (NHA), was established in Montréal in 1909, which then re-organized to National Hockey League (NHL) in 1917 and it still exists today as the big league on earth in ice hockey. It is considered the last stop for a professional ice hockey player with the ultimate prize and honor in winning the Lord Stanley's Cup. Ice hockey also made its debut in Summer Olympics in 1920 and permanently became a part of Winter Olympics in 1924.

3.2 Professional table tennis and history

3.2.1 Professional table tennis

Professional table tennis is a game where two players (singles), as seen in the figure 2 below, or four players (doubles) are playing against each other by using a table tennis racket made of wood covered with a pimped rubber while trying to bounce the ball off the table at the opponent's side. A single player or team which scores 11 points first wins the game, unless both players or teams score 10 points. After that the winner is who first is leading the game by 2 points over the other. A match consists of the best of any odd number of games. In the Olympics, a match is best of seven in Men's and Women's Singles and best of five in Men's Team and Women's Team events.



Figure 2. World Team Table Tennis Championships 2016: USA Women (World Team Table Tennis Championships 2016 Photos, cited 24.5.2017)

3.2.2 History of professional table tennis

Professional table tennis, trademark named and widely recognized also as “Ping-Pong”, started at the very start of 20th century in 1901, when first tournaments were founded, and it had 300 participants. The Ping-Pong Association was formed during that time but was renamed as The Table Tennis Association in 1922. Table tennis was introduced in Japan in 1902 as a visiting Japanese professor took it back to Japan and during this time it quickly started to spread in Europe as well in places such as Vienna and Budapest. On 16th of January in 1926, a meeting in Berlin between representatives of a Table Tennis Associations of Austria, England, Germany and Hungary formed a provisional International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF). This was shortly followed by a tournament held in London, England which was designated as the first World Championship. Today, the sport is well established and growing bigger each year. “The culmination of this has been its recognition as an Olympic Games sport, being featured for the first time in the 1988 games in Seoul” (The History of Ping-Pong, cited 24.5.2017).

4 E-SPORTS AND HISTORY

4.1 Games in e-sports

League of Legends (LoL) is an RTS MOBA video game developed and published by Riot Games in 2009. Players compete in a fast-paced, competitive online game, with two teams of powerful champions, each with a unique design and play style, battle head-to-head across multiple battlefields and game modes. The game objective is to destroy the enemy headquarters, or in-game name “nexus”, to win a match. The same rules apply in professional games and amateur games (Riot Games, cited 14.3.2018.)

Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CS: GO) is a multiplayer first-person shooter video game developed by Hidden Path Entertainment and Valve Corporation. In CS: GO, two teams faces against each other, the Terrorists and the Counter-Terrorists. To win a round for Terrorists, they need to plant a bomb and defend it until it explodes or finish off all Counter-Terrorists. To win a round for Counter-Terrorists, they need to defuse a bomb planted by Terrorists or finish off all Terrorists (Wikipedia, cited 14.3.2018.)

StarCraft 2: Wings of Liberty is a military science fiction real-time strategy video game developed and published by Blizzard Entertainment. The player chooses a race from three different races, Zerg, Protoss or Terran, creates a base and an army to compete against another player. Who destroys enemy player's buildings and units first, is the winner. In professional games, athletes compete against each other in one versus one matches, eliminating opponents and climbing the tournament (Wikipedia, cited 8.5.2018.)

4.1.1 1980 – 1990: First touch to e-sports

Competitive gaming has a brief history compared to traditional sports, since the technology to enable competitive gaming has not been around for more than a few decades. However, competitive gaming is almost as old as the existence of video games. “Competitive gaming has existed almost as long as video games themselves” (Edwards, cited 18.05.2017). October 1972, Stanford University held a competition called “Intergalactic Spacewar Olympics” at their Artificial

Intelligence Laboratory. It featured two formats, a five-man free-for-all and a team-based knockout. All winners won a year's subscription to Rolling Stones magazine and the honor of being the world's first-ever e-sports champions. (How to be a professional gamer by Fnatic, cited 8.5.2018). It only scratched the surface of what e-sports could become and slowly after arcade and console games became more popular, more tournaments also started to rise.

4.1.2 1990 – 2000: Real professional competitions

Competitive gaming really started to rise during the 90's, when computer technology advanced, games developed even further and World Wide Web (WWW) became publicly available for everyone on 6th of August in 1991. Games such as Quake, a first-person shooter (FPS), was a popular genre among the sport and arcade games at the beginning and had the biggest competitive drive connected to it. "1997's Red Annihilation tournament for the first-person shooter (FPS) "Quake" is widely considered to have been the first real instance of eSports, drawing over 2,000 participants. The winner received a Ferrari previously owned by John Carmack, lead developer for "Quake" (<http://adanai.com/esports/>, cited 18.05.2017). Followed by a foundation of the Cyberathlete Professional League (CPL), next tournament held during the next year was already offering \$15,000 in prize money. During this time, several tournaments and leagues were founded, and professional video game athletes competed in different games in various tournaments. At the end of 90's, a new genre started to rise in popularity, especially in South Korea, a real-time strategy game (RTS) SC: BW (see figure 3 below). This leads us to the start of the 3rd millennium, where e-sports became globally known.

4.1.3 2000-2009: Rise of the biggest games, tournaments and leagues

3rd millennium started with a bang in e-sports as major leagues, media providers and social activities started to appear. In 2002, Major League Gaming was founded as a digital network to promote e-sports globally and deliver viewers a premium gaming content anywhere at any time. Followed shortly after in 2003, South Korean league, The Korea e-Sports Association (KeSPA), started as the world's first team-based e-sports league. This enabled many Korean e-sport teams to be founded and to play in professional StarCraft: Brood War tournaments, such as SK Telecom T1, KT Rolster and CJ Entus. Media providers and channels such as GOMTV (today GOMeXP) in Korea started to rise and provide live tournaments and streams to the audience. In 2008, The

GOMTV Classic tournament was held as an invitation tournament first and after as an open tournament.



Figure 3. Two famous professionals, Flash (Terran) vs JaeDong (Zerg) in Korean SC: BW tournament, (HDstarcraft, cited 22.5.2017)

The Korea e-Sports Association (KeSPA): KeSPA (the Korean eSports Association) was established in 2000 under the authority of the Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. It aims to protect professional gamers and pro-gaming teams, and to establish eSports as a new leisure activity, representing Korea's next generation. (Major League Gaming, 2012, cited 22.5.2017). This association focuses on managing e-sports in South Korea and they are members in the Korean Olympic Committee as well as in the International e-Sports Federation.

Major League Gaming (MLG): "Founded in 2002, Major League Gaming (MLG) is the dominant media property exclusively targeting tens of millions of consumers worldwide who have a passion for playing video games as a competitive social activity" (Major League Gaming, 2012, cited 22.05.2017). They are headquartered in New York City and in 2016 video game publisher

Blizzard Activision announced their acquisition of Major League Gaming. They are committed in building an e-Sports focused television network soon.

On 11th of May in 2012, KeSPA, and MLG announced an exclusive multi-year global partnership that would bring together the western and Korean StarCraft worlds. It allows Korean StarCraft professionals to compete in MLG-tournaments in the United States. It was a big step in the right direction in e-sports as before Korean professionals were only allowed to play under their KeSPA contract in Korean tournaments. The sequel to StarCraft: Brood War, StarCraft 2: Wings of Liberty had also come out just a few years ago, so the timing was almost perfect.

4.1.4 2009-present: Breakthrough

E-sports continue to thrive as new games are developed and in July 2010 a gaming company called Blizzard Entertainment releases the sequel to already famous StarCraft-series, SC: WoL. The game is caught up quickly by current Brood War-professionals, new upcoming professional gamers and by the audience while first tournaments are already held in the same year. For two years, SC2 exists as the most hyped up game and has its golden era, until other genres would become more popular and leave the StarCraft-franchise behind.

A genre that had been under development already a while, MOBA, began in early 2000, when Blizzard released a real-time strategy game called Warcraft 3: Reign of Chaos (W3: RoC) in summer 2002. As it would stand originally, this game was just another real-time strategy game that would have a small number of professional tournaments and a respectable number of casual players. However, in 2003, a map editor named Eul created a mod inspired by the Aeon of Strife called Defense of the Ancients (DotA) to its custom games area (see figure 4 below). DotA consisted of two teams, each having five players battling against each other. The idea of having two teams fighting in an arena seemed exciting to many players and it became massively popular among the casual players. The mod got updated regularly with new playable characters, items and skills, which enabled it to rise in popularity for many years (Mike Minotti, cited 14.3.2018.)



Figure 4: Defense of the Ancients -map, both teams have their bases which the enemy team proceeds to destroy to win the game. Map has three lanes in bottom, middle and top and other areas are covered with forests or water. (DoTA, cited 14.3.2018)

In 2009, a gaming company called Riot Games released LoL, which was anticipated to become one of the biggest MOBAs in the history. These people could not be more right as the game bloomed in player base as soon as it was released. At 2011, LoL already reached 11,5 million monthly active players with a total of 32,5 million unique accounts signed (see figure 5 below). This number of active players reached in two years was something never seen before as it surpassed one of the biggest games released in 2004, a famous Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game (MMORPG) called World of Warcraft (WoW) in such a brief time. During WoW's most active times, the game reached 12 million monthly subscribers in 2010. As the game continued to thrive in popularity, in 2014 these numbers already reached massive figures, having

32 million monthly active players with a total of 70 million unique accounts signed.

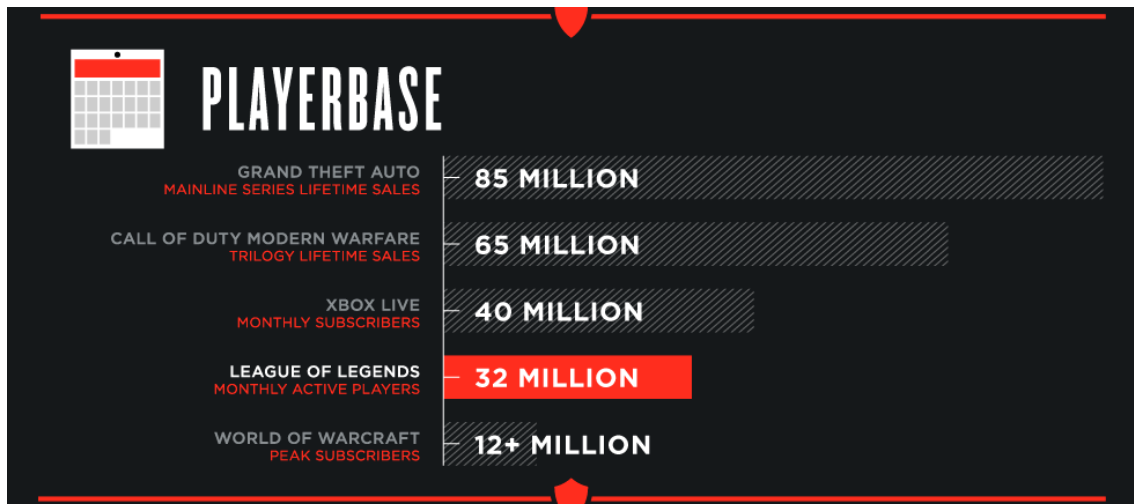


Figure 5: League of Legends became massive in 5 years. For comparison, Grand Theft Auto - franchise is the 5th biggest selling franchise among all video game franchises and Xbox Live a feature for the 6th biggest selling video game console. (Riot Games, cited 21.6.2017)

For LoL, this wouldn't be enough, and the game continued to become more popular and aiming to surpass every other video game in the world. Finally, in 2016 when statistics were released again, an unbelievable milestone was reached. "The latest figure for monthly active League of Legends players worldwide is in, and it's a big one. Riot Games estimates over 100 million players actively play each month, as co-founders Marc "Tryndamere" Merrill and Brandon "Ryze" Beck told Polygon's Phil Kollar in an exclusive interview this week" (Volk, 2016, cited 21.6.2017).

5 DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES BETWEEN TRADITIONAL AND E-SPORT ATHLETES

In this chapter I will focus on the differences and similarities on body and mind, between professional athletes in traditional sports (where the examples are again ice hockey and table tennis) and e-sports. I will also talk about becoming a professional athlete, practice, income, tournaments, retirement and future.

5.1 Becoming a professional athlete

Becoming a professional athlete always start with a passion of doing something that one loves. Becoming an ice hockey athlete requires that the athlete has started playing ice hockey at a very young age and has seen it something enjoyable. Young players often start playing in junior league where they practice the game constantly to become better at it. They often have a junior league coach teaching them more about the game and training them. Trying to become a professional and making it to the NHL is a dream for many, but only very few succeed. Sacrifices are needed to be made, such as cutting sleep, cutting free time, following a proper diet plan, taking time off and missing out on educational experience (Melodie Anne, 14.3.2018).

E-sport athletes also have developed an interest in gaming early in their age. They, however rarely start with the game where they will eventually become a professional player at. While other games enable them to practice for example hand-eye coordination and reflexes, they need to find a game for themselves that they enjoy playing and which also can be played professionally. Currently there aren't many e-sports ready games that can be played professionally and have a big enough spectator number to make one earn a living out of it. Possible short lifespan of a game is something to think about as well, in traditional sports this is not a problem while in e-sports a game can rise quickly for a few years, bring professionals to it and then slowly lose the interest of the community. However, if a player is good in a specific type of a game, they might be able to transition to another game that is similar. In traditional sports, transitioning to another sport is difficult as all of them are very different from one another.

5.2 Physical and mental aspect of sport athletes

5.2.1 Physical aspect

As ice hockey is a fast-paced sport with burst of action in a brief time, body contact, shooting a puck and quick movements, a good physique is required. Professional players train their bodies to be less than 12% body fat, as having larger body fat provides no benefits. Being lean also increases testosterone, which helps the athletes to focus on things such as recovery, energy levels, anabolism, motivation, protein synthesis and competitive drive. Structural balance is helpful as it helps to achieve this. Explosiveness is important in ice hockey and low body fat enhances it. Players must be able to take a hit to their bodies and recover quickly as ice hockey is a contact sport as well. As a general training, playing the sport is the way to get better but for ice hockey players general strength training is also necessary. Most importantly however, strength in the legs is needed the most, as a quick burst of speed starts from the legs, which is necessary to compete at a high level (Garner, cited 28.6.2017.)

In table tennis, however, it is all about speed while strength is a non-factor. Professional players train to be precise and fast, since hitting the ball does not require strength, in fact, being too strong would only bring disadvantage in the game. Endurance and speed are the key in being successful in table-tennis. To achieve good speed and endurance, the player must still be in a good physical shape. Endurance is extremely important as tournaments often last several days, in which the players compete in many matches against their opponents and thus are required to be ready to compete always. Players must be able to sustain the pressure with their bodies and be in control of the situation while saving energy for the matches.

For e-sport professionals, as a total opposite to ice hockey and table-tennis, physical activity is minimal during play. When players are sitting in front of the computer or other device, hands, fingers and eyes do all the work, while otherwise the player is not engaged in heavy physical activity. Players only train to have insanely fast reaction time and good eye-hand coordination. However, lately it has been considered better for players that they do have some sort of physical activity as a counterpart for gaming to ensure a healthy lifestyle, which has clear benefits to being able to play and focus for longer durations as endurance is important to being able to play for many hours in a row, during practice or in a tournament. Even though often gamers can be imagined overweight

and unfit, professional gamers are usually skinnier than an average person, the reason being in having the focus on gaming and sleeping only, neglecting nourishment. A professional team environment, scheduled eating, sleeping, workout and gaming is arranged to the gamers, which has recently been rising in importance (Fnatic, 2016, cited 9.5.2018.)

5.2.2 Mental aspect

Ice hockey is a team sport. Each player is playing in a team and this creates the situation that the player is not only playing for himself/herself, but also for his/her team. This provides pressure to each player to perform to the fullest, as underperforming as an individual can lead to a match loss and in the worst case for the player, getting benched and replaced by another player. Every player is replaceable as every nation is filled with amateur hockey players who are just waiting to have a chance to become a professional one. The key to be a good ice hockey player is not to be flashy, the best shooter or the greatest tackler, but to be consistently good in every situation, believe in yourself and be confident. This is achieved by preparing with visualizing, focus and creating a pregame routine for yourself before the match. By connecting the mind to the game and imagining beforehand how the game is going to proceed will help in doing the right things and steps during the actual gameplay. When the game starts, focus is narrowed only on one thing, the game. However, pressure is outside of the match too. Ice hockey players are considered to have busy lives as teams participate in tournaments often and environments change rapidly as teams travel constantly. Ice hockey is a lifestyle that does not keep a player in the same spot and this can be stressful as other areas of a player's life such as family and relationships can suffer.

Table tennis is an individual sport or a team sport, depending on the format. In one versus one, the pressure on one's self is massive. During the game, a slight mistake can bring an advantage to the opposing player and in a high-pressure situation such as last rounds of a tournament final, managing to control the nerves are a crucial factor. After a tournament, players are often drained physically, but also mentally tense as the game requires constant focus. In two versus two, believing in one's partner is as important as believing in yourself. "Match and practice analysis of the table tennis game indicates that during intense practice and competition, it is predominantly the anaerobic alactic system that is called into play, while the endurance system is relied on to recover the anaerobic stores used during such effort" (Miran Kondrič, Alessandro Moura Zagatto, Damir Sekulić, cited 28.6.2017).

For e-sports, it's mostly about the mental aspect of the players as physical aspects are not considerable important. Players must be able to control their nerves during intense matches and avoid tilting, which puts the player in a losing mindset. Able to adapt and be a fast-learner is highly important as games can change during patch updates immensely and create a scenario that previously didn't exist. For example, in CS: GO, current maps played in a tournament can be increased in quantity between tournament seasons. If new maps are created, they can be updated to the tournament map pool, meaning that the teams participating in this tournament must learn the map fully and create strategies around it so if a tournament is coming up in a near future, players must be able to adapt in time to do well in the tournament. Another case in LoL can be that the developers create a new champion which later will become part of the professional play. This champion can now be picked by the enemy team and it can completely change the meta of the game. Great coordination and teamwork is the most important skill of a player in team-oriented games such as LoL and CS: GO as these games require the players to work together and execute strategies in one pack. Some teams have more than enough players, so getting replaced can happen after one match if one of the current starting players is performing underwhelmingly. Additionally, e-sport tournaments require players to travel as well, not as much currently as there aren't a lot of tournaments compared to, for example, ice hockey, but in the future, this might change (Fnatic, 2016, cited 28.6.2017.)

For individual games, the pressure again on one's self is massive. Most popular one versus one game, StarCraft-franchise, include only one versus one matches in professional tournaments. Players are often playing for a lot of money, fame and points, which let players participate in bigger tournaments. Even though players are often part of a team and they are coached, in a stage they perform alone during the game. During the game, players must apply mind games to the enemy and try to counter their actions. In tournaments, games are usually a best-of three, five or seven and players must adapt to their enemy's playstyle and try to see what kind of strategy the enemy might do next. "Mental toughness is the most important aspect of StarCraft II" (Kang Dong-hoon, cited 14.3.2018)

5.3 Practice

It is known to all that to become good enough in a sport to earn one's salary by doing it, unbelievable amount of demanding work is required, and this does not change for traditional sport or e-sport athletes. In every sport, professional athletes are required to have a competitive mindset, disciplinary for training, excellent hand-eye coordination, high concentration level, good physique and healthy lifestyle and they should be able to sustain through physical and mental pressure. However, talent is also significant factor and gives the edge to some people over another. Between traditional sports and e-sports, some attributes are more important on each side than the other and the main key-focuses are different. For example, practice is important in traditional sports, but realistically, practicing throughout the day puts too much pressure on the body and it can bring up problems if the body cannot rest enough. In e-sports, practicing everyday constantly is not a problem to the body as it is not under a big physical stress. However, mental strength should be even higher to be able to have the discipline for training. While e-sports athletes focus on quantity of practice, traditional sport athletes focus on quantity, but also on the quality of the practice in both areas, physically and mentally.

5.3.1 Traditional sport athletes

For traditional sport athletes, they are required to train their physique every day. Ice hockey professionals practice daily in one way or another, from shooting a puck to net for hours just to practice aiming and precision to going to gym for general strength training. According to Paul Rogers, training programs are broken into three or four phases in the year, with each phase concentrating on a fitness development. First phase, early preseason focuses on aerobic fitness, basic functional strength and muscle bulk. Second phase, late preseason focuses on building aerobic fitness and maximum strength and power. Third phase, during in season, players focus on maintenance in all areas. The fourth phase, during off season players emphasize resting, but keep up light activity (Rogers, 2017, cited 8.5.2018). Ice hockey requires excellent endurance to be able to play with the needed speed in the ring for long enough.

5.3.2 E-sport athletes

For e-sport athletes, it is all about practicing every day, constantly, while excluding everything else but playing, eating and sleeping. It's a rhythm that the players have already adapted a long time ago. Becoming a professional player does not happen suddenly, firstly the players show their passion towards the game and if you have this passion, you play the game countless hours just because it is enjoyable, already having the ability to practice for long durations in a row, which makes the transition from hobbyist to a professional gamer easier.

To stay competitive and to stay on the same level as your opponent, players cannot stop playing. If one does not match the training and practice hours of an opponent, they will eventually get past you and defeat you in a tournament. According to business insider, some professional e-sport athletes push their physical boundaries and practice between 12 and 14 hours per day. (Jacobs, 2015, cited 8.5.2018). One of the greatest, widely considered the best LoL-player in the entire world, Korean Sang-hyeok Lee aka "Faker", has said to practice 12 hours each day during season and 15 hours before important matches. His team, SK Telecom T1 (SKT), has a gaming house in Korea, where the players live together and play together as a team. Their practice schedule starts by waking up in the morning, playing until lunch, continuing playing until dinner and finishing by playing until going to bed. Teams often also scrim against other professional teams in non-tournament matches for practice, hours of play are usually divided between players playing together in a team or players playing alone in Solo Queue.

5.4 Tournaments

The NHL, the most famous ice hockey league has 31 teams in it. Each team plays 82 games during on the regular season. This means every team faces the other team in their division four to five times. It is a league that restricts players for it for a long time in a row as the duration in the regular season is about eight months. Other biggest tournaments are Ice Hockey World Championship which is held every year for about two to three weeks and Olympic Winter Games Championship which is held every fourth year for fifteen days.

In table-tennis, players participate in many big tournaments. There are lots of continental championship tournaments such as African Cup, Asian Cup, European Championship, Latin-

American Cup, North-American Cup and Oceania Cup where players participate in their own continental tournament. However, players consider few other tournaments the most important ones, The World Cup, The Olympic Games and The World Championships where the best compete against each other.

For LoL, there are some tournaments for teams all-around the year, some of which are longer restricted regionally and some international shorter tournaments. Most skillful teams participate in their regional tournaments, League of Legends Championship Series (LCS), in their continents or countries, for example LCS North America, LCS Europe and LCK Korea. These tournaments begin around the end of January for Spring split which ends in March, after that begins Summer split for the duration of summer. These splits work as a training tournament for the most important tournament, League of Legends World Championship, where 16 teams in total, the three best teams from China, South Korea, Europe and North America, two teams from Taiwan/Hong Kong/Macau regions and two final teams from International Wild Card Qualifiers held in Brazil. (Liquidpedia, cited 8.5.2018).

CS: GO professional teams have tournaments all around the year as well, biggest one called "DreamHack Open" which has a prize pool of \$100,000 for each tournament. DreamHack Open provides many tournaments throughout the year. Smaller teams might participate in smaller tournaments with less money to be won, while best teams practice only for the biggest tournaments. Other tournaments include ESL Pro League and StarSeries i-League, which are held all around the year. (Liquidpedia, cited 8.5.2018)

5.5 Income

Professional sport athletes are known to earn enough money to sustain them through their lives and way beyond that. In 2011, an average NHL player earned \$2,4 million annually, which is 3rd biggest salary for a professional athlete in U.S.A right after basketball and baseball. Salary also always depends on the skill-level of the athlete, if the athlete brings more value to the team of skill level, more teams will want him, and this often leads to the athlete joining the team that pays the most. For table-tennis players, salaries aren't as high and to earn, one must win tournaments and matches. On average, in the regular season, players can earn between \$3,000 and \$35,000 per match.

For e-sports athletes, salary depend on the team environment, successfulness, sponsors and skill level. Currently in LoL, North America has slightly higher salaries than in Europe, which now is considered wrong by many e-sport fans and professionals. It has been getting more equal and will probably get balanced in coming years. According to ESPN, North American annual salary is \$105,385 and European average is €76,137 (\$80,816) (ESPN, 2017, cited 8.5.2018). However, best players can potentially earn much more, like Faker, who was recently offered 2,5 million dollars for an annual salary to resign with his old team SK Telecom T1 and before that he was rumored to have an offer of 4 million dollars coming from the Chinese team. Once again, skill matters and how much teams want the players.

5.6 Retirement and future

When a traditional sports professional athlete retires, it happens often when they are considered young among other common jobs. However, being at the top pays off well and it is not required for the retired players to continue searching for another job. Many traditional sports athletes move into a coaching position as they get older, when they cannot match the younger players in physical aspects anymore but have required enough knowledge to understand the game. Another option is simply retirement or other activity in the game, for example, staying as an analysis in the game studio to share knowledge and tell about the game to viewers. Reasons for retirement, usually include a decrease in speed, power and energy levels, which leads to younger players taking over the spot, even though competitive experience and understanding the game is seen beneficial for winning a match, it is not always considered enough though. Other reasons are possibly a physical injury that cannot fully heal anymore, mental burnout, wanting to retire to spend time with family or the feeling of achieving everything already, which happened to a now retired, widely considered the best player during his time and all of ice hockey, Wayne Gretzky, who retired at the age of 38 winning incredible amount of titles from many individual records such as most goals made to winning Stanley Cup. The average retirement age for ice hockey professionals is around at the age of 30, but more and more players continue to play until the age of 40. (Quant hockey, cited 7.5.2018)

Table tennis professionals are mostly the same with retirement, peaking with their careers around at the age of 25 and after that continuing for some amount of years until retiring. The usual reasons for retirement include exhaustion, decrease in performance and mental burnout once again. Some retired athletes start coaching, others became owners of clubs and some retire fully.

E-sports athletes rarely retire because of decreasing performance, but because of mental exhaustion. As e-sports still is a rather new form of competition, there is not much data about retirement from professional play yet. Even though most of the best active players are around at the age of 20, the scene still has players who have already reached the age of 30. While the decrease of skills might occur at the age of 25 even compared to younger players, in e-sports competitive experience and game knowledge is highly appreciated which leads to teams keeping their players active if they can and value them over younger less experienced players. However, tilt or seeing the game as work and not fun anymore, can be a key factor in retiring as well as the feeling of not achieving enough, which eventually burns out the athlete during few years.

After retiring, one option is to become a coach or analyst for any team who is willing to offer that position, become a person behind the scenes, or end up as gameplay streamers in streaming sites, where they broadcast live gameplay for thousands of people who tune in to watch retired players to play the game for fun or to teach anyone who wants to watch, and they get enough income from it to keep themselves on their feet if the income from professional play didn't reach large enough numbers.

6 BUSINESS

In this chapter I will focus on the business side of traditional sports and e-sports. I will bring up biggest factors on how professional sports become a profitable business, how the money emerges and how business differentiates between these two sides.

6.1 Sport business

The number one source of income of all the revenue in traditional sports is broadcasting revenue, which has overcome gate revenue recently (see figure 6 below). According to Greg McFarlane, “Almost two-thirds of the league’s money come from one uniform source: TV revenue, practically all of it national.” in NFL (National Football League). (McFarlane, 2018, cited 22.4.2018). In traditional sports, team organizations own the league. They bargain together, make the league happen together and make deals with one or many broadcasting entities from where most of the income stream comes from. Additional sources of income are merchandising and sponsorships.

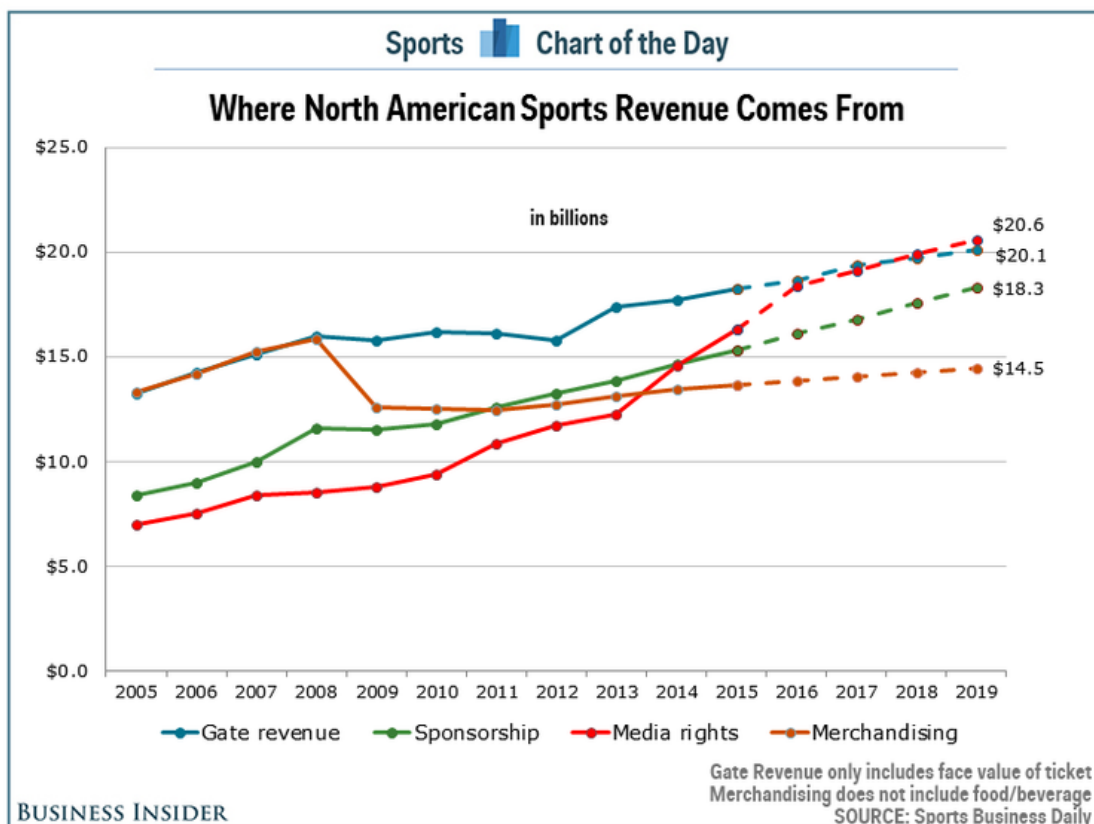


Figure 6: Sources of income in traditional sports in North America. As seen in the picture, media rights have passed gate revenue very recently. (Business Insider, cited 9.5.2018)

As said, in traditional sports teams own the league. They collectively bargain with broadcasters and then the broadcasters provide the teams with production, coverage and advertisement. The main source of revenue for the broadcasters however, comes from selling to cable and satellite service providers. Athletes nor team organizations in traditional sports do not depend on their sponsors. Salaries are high enough for players to sustain themselves even without sponsors, because teams have many sources of income listed previously and sponsorship money is just a little part of it. Individual sponsors are still possible, but not necessity. In NHL, first expansions of franchising happened in 1967, when six ice hockey teams were added to the league, which shows that the system has been used for a long time already.

When we ask ourselves, who owns ice hockey, there is no one person, one organization or one inventor to fit as an answer to this question. Ice hockey is not owned by anyone, thus, anyone who is willing to work for it, can create a league and can decide when and where they want to play, and do they want to broadcast it to others. Same as in football, if one wants to create a football league and sell the rights to a cable sports channel such as ESPN (Entertainment and Sports Programming Network), they have the rights to do it.

However, when compared to e-sports, according to Christopher Mykles, effectively 95% of the money to team owners in e-sports come from sponsorships and for the other parties it is still a huge portion, as seen in the figure 7 below. This creates a situation where the sponsors have a lot of control over the teams which affects practice, interviews, appearances and all other activities that the teams must do for their sponsors, which drains the actual athletes and takes time from their hands. This is not a sustainable long-term model and not healthy for the growth of e-sports and is being worked on by many e-sports organizations.

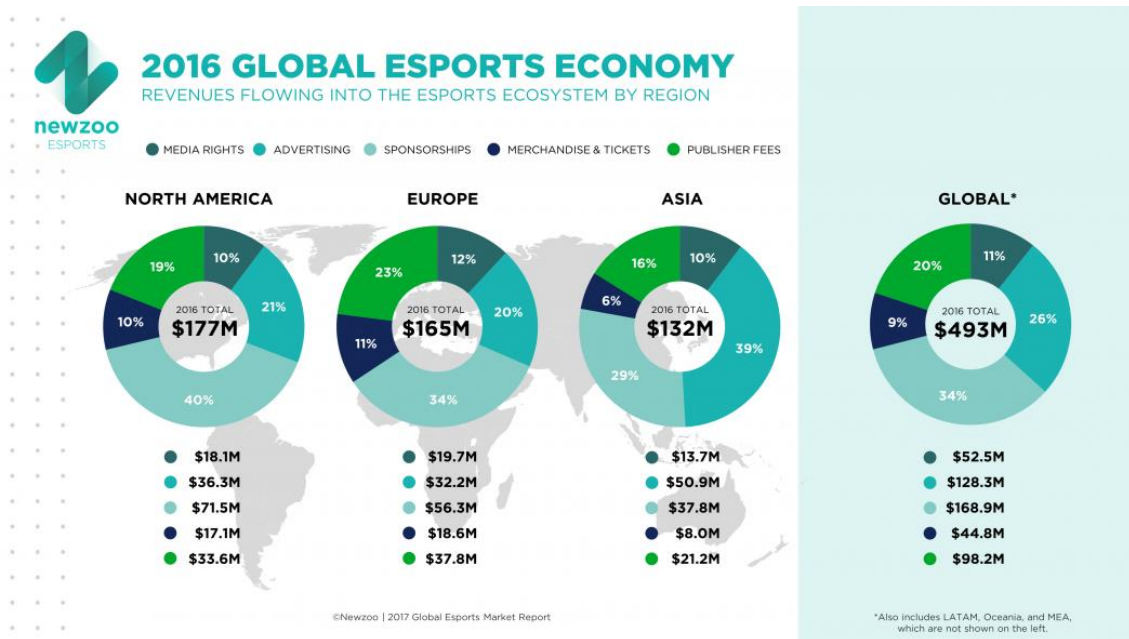


Figure 7: Sources of income in e-sports in North America, Europe, Asia and Global. (Newzoo, cited 9.5.2018)

Relegations in e-sports have created problems between team organizations and possible investors. Most visible, it is seen in LoL, where the system and the format, create this situation that if teams don't manage to stay in the Championship League due to mediocre performance and get dropped to lower league as known as Challenger League, there is nothing to back up the teams, compensation or anything similar. Therefore, team owners try to protect their teams, their investments from relegations, because if the team gets relegated, they lose their sponsors and if they lose their main source of income, the team will get dispatched.

Another problem in e-sports is that the intellectual property of the game is owned by the developer, for example, LoL is owned and operated by Riot Games as it is developed by them. They can have the control over everything that has something to do with the game. As a result, the current LCS owners own 0% of the LCS and get 0% of the revenue share. However, they pay stipends for LCS teams, which helps them to pay the costs and salaries, however, the cost of competing in the league costs much more. This eased for some players starting in 2015 when wealthy investors started to invest in e-sports, such as, a former basketball star Rick Fox, which enables players to get better salaries. However, it also raised competition between team owners as players started demanding more salary. But in the end, a lot of investors are scared to invest, because how the system is so different from traditional sports and how it doesn't serve the investors as well as it should.

However, some broadcasting companies started broadcasting e-sport leagues in 2016, such as American cable and satellite television channel TBS (Turner Broadcasting System) who created a league called ELEAGUE for e-sports. They sell their own sponsors and they have their own methods of monetizing, with a plan in e-sports future, while not spending any money from the developers of CS: GO, Valve Corporation. They are fully committed to produce it on their own without Valve's assistance, which is different from what Riot does with LoL. In the near future, LoL is also planning to move leagues from the current system to franchised leagues, which is a much needed change.

6.2 Leading a sports club

Forming a sport club requires time, resources, leading and people with passion for the sport. Planning for vision, strategy, budgeting and missions are necessary to make a sport club succeed. Turku University of Business made a research in 2012 about a good leader in a sport association and these attributes came up frequently:

- Knowledge of time management, prioritizing and ability to sustain pressure
- Administration, management (accounting, taxing, budgeting, etc.)
- Knowledge of management
- Knowledge of personnel leading (Especially volunteer personnel leading and motivation)
- Passion, ambition and entrepreneur – like attitude
- Juridical knowledge (Association law, data protection law, employment law)
- Ability to understand the big picture and to make long term plans
- Knowledge of marketing
- Ability to sell
- Knowledge of negotiating and performance
- Knowledge of organization of an event and creating “hype”
- Knowledge of working environment and connections
- Knowledge of communication
- Knowledge of society

Nobody necessarily is skilled enough to control all these areas perfectly, but that's why additional personnel are hired (Urheilu-seurojen sisäpiirissä, cited 8.5.2018.) Compared to e-sports, a team manager is required to acknowledge similar kind of skills to make sure the team stays organized and professional, according to e-sport team Fnatic team manager Finlay "Quaye" Stewart:

- Knowledge of player management
- Knowledge of communication
- Ability to understand the big picture and to make long term plans
- Knowledge of working environment and connections
- Knowledge of team effectiveness
- Agent duties
- Timing schedules
- Sponsorship meetings
- Knowledge of scouting players

What is unique to e-sports managers is that they live in the same house with the players and support them constantly with their decisions and help them to focus purely on their main objective, becoming better athletes (Fnatic, 2016, cited 8.5.2018). Same as in traditional sports, additional personnel are hired for duties such as analytical duties, accounting and coaching.

6.3 Entrance of big sport organizations and individual investors in e-sports

For few years now, there have been huge changes in e-sports due to big sports organizations and individual investors investing in e-sports. At the end of 2015, a former basketball star Rick Fox bought a LoL team, which participated in 2016 NA LCS. This was one of the first purchases which lead to many other celebrities investing in e-sports in 2016 and 2017, such as Basketball Hall of Famer Shaquille O'Neal, Hollywood actor Ashton Kutcher, DJ Steve Aoki and many more. (Alec Banks, cited 14.3.2018)

Later in 2016, German soccer club FC Schalke 04 announces a purchase of a European LoL team called Elements, which then changed its brand to FC Schalke 04 Esports and signed a new set of players and staff. They have been participating in European LCS since that. In 2017, another big

North American Organization joins e-sports, when the NBA's Golden State Warriors majority owners Joe Lacob and Kirk Lacob buy a spot in NA LCS, paying 13\$ million and naming their LCS team Golden Guardians. In 2016 FC Barcelona announced a global partnership agreement with Konami for the next three years and now competing in PES2018 League. "FC Barcelona, in keeping with its innovative spirit, has decided to participate in a pioneering competition in the world of eSports, by the best partners, Konami and eFootball.Pro" (FC Barcelona, cited 14.3.2018). A Brazilian superstar Neymar da Silva Santos Júnior, former FC Barcelona player, also has shown his interests in e-sports by being actively engaged in it.

7 DISCUSSION

In this chapter I will introduce important organizations that focus on the growth of e-sports and present the interview with Hercules Esports.

7.1 IE SF- International E-sports Federation

International E-sports Federation (IE SF) focuses on promoting e-sports as a real sport beyond language, racial and cultural barriers. They are an organization that has a mission to accept e-sports as legitimate sports, while establishing standards for referees, players, certifications, titles and competitions like in any other professional sport (<https://www.ie-sf.org/iesf/>, cited 9.5.2018.)

IE SF, founded in 2008 and is based in South Korea. Currently their mission is to have more member nations to join their cause and to increase visibility for e-sports. At this moment, they have 46-member nations, which most of them are in Europe or Asia. They have sourced data from Newzoo E-sports, showing that in global Esports Market Report Light from 2017, the Esports Economy growth was settled for \$696 million, the global sports audience reaching 385 million with 191 million enthusiasts.

7.2 Finnish e-Sports Federation

“The Finnish Esports Federation (SEUL) works as the umbrella organization for Finnish competitive electronic gaming” (Suomen Elektronisen Urheilun Liitto, 2018, cited 14.3.2018). This federation was established in summer 2010 and is actively promoting e-sports and activities of their members in the whole of Finland as hobbies and a respectable sport. Their activities are divided into the development of e-sports, player protection and communications work. They currently present Finland in the IESF and are given yearly grants out by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture for youth programs. Their missions include presenting Finnish e-sports amateurs and professionals, helping organizations who create gaming environments and to have an impact on international e-sports development. Their vision is to make e-sports in Finland and everywhere a valued practice of professional sports among other top sports (Suomen Elektronisen Urheilun Liitto, 2018, cited 9.5.2018.)

7.3 Interview with Hercules Esports

As a part of this thesis, I interviewed Sami and Kimmo from Hercules Esports. Our discussion lasted about an hour and provided good insight to the lives of e-sport athletes and how e-sports are seen today. Sami is working as a coach for Hercules Esports while Kimmo is working in the management and sales.

First question focused on the identity of Hercules Esports to which Kimmo replied: "Hercules E-sports started last year as a more traditional e-sports organization and the idea was to have a representative team, sponsors and start doing how we would like to do it. However, during the summer we noticed that it is not that easy, because business-wise it is hard to execute, a lot of capital goods are needed as well as good contacts. Player salary, training, etc. costs a lot, more than in traditional sports, so it is surprisingly expensive to do. So, we decided that Hercules E-sports will be Finland's first traditional e-sports organization, which takes example from traditional sport organizations, where all action is revolving around coaching. So, we did few coaching sessions and recently started coaching youngsters, for now once a week, while having collaborated with the city of Oulu. Our business is based on traditional sports, starting from the bottom with junior hobbyists and going forward from there. In the near future we hope to have more activists, more youngsters and more professional operation."

Interviewees were asked to tell about the schedule of a professional e-sports athlete and according to Sami, e-sports athletes train often: "Yes, I have a few examples from this, from my own experience to start with. Today we talk about Tier 3 -teams, while before we talked about Tier 2 -teams, like the ones I coached as well before or currently, coach of Hercules E-sports and analytic of Nemesis. These teams don't have full-time players, since they are also students, but in Hercules they have two hour "blocks" per one day, four times a week, and so 16 hours each week. Nemesis quite the same, but often instead of four days, it was six days of training per week, plus of course tournaments on Sunday. But when compared to professionals who get monthly salary, they play scrimms six to eight hours a day plus additionally individual practice before the scrimms. While practicing alone, coach is guiding and advising the players personally as well. These last about the whole week. During boot camps, players practice constantly when awake."

Next the focused on how big e-sports have grown and if it's going to continue to grow and how is the scene in Finland, to which Kimmo started by saying: "No, not at all, Finland always comes few

years behind and it has only recently started here.” Sami continued: “Let’s compare Asia, South-Korea, America and Europe. Europe has good teams and we are doing quite well here, but Europe has so many different languages and its harder here. In USA Overwatch team called Dallas Fuel has a sponsor called Jack in the Box, which reaches 300 million people all over the USA. How is it possible to reach so many people in Europe as a sponsor? Simply impossible.” And continued, “In Finland we understand the reality that it is extremely hard to do this in Finland due to lack of people and how much in the beginning we still are.” And Kimmo gave a conclusion: “In Finland we understand the reality that it is extremely hard to do this in Finland due to lack of people and how much in the beginning we still are. “

Mikko continued with an additional question: “So, Finland is not ready yet to make e-sports as a spectator sport?” to which Kimmo replied: “No and we also don’t have enough market for it. Ice hockey clubs barely go forward and football is behind a lot in high level. In e-sports we would have a chance to compete at the high level, but the resources just aren’t there. In five years there will be a lot of changes and the “explosion” will happen and it is good to start building it now instead of in five years when it is already happening. Success stories like Finnish players winning big in international tournaments raise the interest, but only slowly. But we are at that point which South Korea has already been at the beginning of 90’s so it shows how much later we are compared to them. We don’t have so many people here, so we must use different tools and get more people interested. As for now, we have barely started working on e-sports in Finland. Recently the Finnish Defense Forces agreed that e-sports are considered as sports and tax collectors see e-sports as a sport as well. At the bureaucratic point of view e-sports are considered as sports, which helps the athletes to get financial support.”

And Kimmo continued: “And people are interested, parents are asking if their children can join these e-sports clubs, but there isn’t much simply. There are more children who play video games than the children who play traditional games, but there simply isn’t a place for them to go. These children need advice from coaches and directions from adults like any child in traditional sports. This is what we are bringing to the children to get balanced players who are accepted to play games as a hobby and later as a sport.” Next question was about the differences between traditional sports and e-sports and can e-sports be considered as a sport, and according to Kimmo, there isn’t much of a difference: “Not that much in the end, competition wise. Team and individual sports, practice, support for players in mental and physical areas. All these sports can be put on a chard and on the left, there are sports with high physical activity and on the right with low physical activity. In

Motorsports, the driver is not moving in the car so much, even though good physique is required.” And Sami continued: “And when you think about if e-sports is considered sports... I see it as a sport, but not as an exercise. It is very simple like that, because e-sports has the “e” in front of and it is the same as before we started talking about e-mail. Or how trains have an e-ticket. See what I mean? I think it is not 100% a sport, but that’s why it has the “e” in front of it. I do see it, however as a sport, but not exercise.”

And Kimmo continues: “For many, sports automatically mean that it has physical activity in it and it depends on the person, how they define sports. But 100 years ago, Motorsports was never said to be sports as well, but things change. Now we have the same thing with e-sports and it takes time for these thoughts to change. “, Sami added: “As in Motorsports, you must have a good physical condition and it is the same in e-sports.” Kimmo continues: “In competitive sports, the most important part is the competition and then the sports come second, but as we said, it depends on the person and how they define sports. The thing is that sports are still always connected so deeply into physical activity. I don’t personally worry about it if someone is saying that e-sports isn’t real sports, I really don’t mind about it. In five years things will change when e-sports athletes are automatically celebrities and it is socially accepted as sports, then the minds will change on those as well who doubt it. Physical endurance is almost as important as everything else in high level. Playing skills, talent, physical endurance, mental state. These are the four main things that make a great e-sports athlete. It already takes you far if you love gaming, then you got the skills, physical state and mental state achieved. But in the end, that talent becomes a thing and picks up the best players from talented players. Simply, good physical condition is needed because the player must be able to concentrate for 8-10 hours each day and during tournaments, 8 hours straight as well. Like in football, that last for maybe 2 hours with breaks, e-sports matches can last 8 hours, and breaks are pretty much just 10-15 minutes long.”

Next the interviewees were asked about e-sports as a part of the Olympic Games, and according to Kimmo, there will be problems: “It will be difficult. A lot of people will not agree with it and e-sports have some weird problems, such as some of the games are violent and include shooting, like CS: GO. The world is not ready for a while and that is fine. There aren’t any games now that could fit into the Olympic Games. Maybe in the future there might be but there will always be problems with that.” Last question focuses on how it differs between traditional sports and e-sports when one wants to become a professional athlete. According to Kimmo, it is more difficult in e-sports currently: “There is no so called “athletes path” in e-sports. You just grind a game for a

long time and at some point, someone might find you and you might join an organization. Trying to make these “levels” for players that they climb step by step. That the process is reliable, and they get the right tools right from the start.” Sami adds final words: “This kind of career path does not exist yet, but this is what we are trying to accomplish here. Make it reliable for inexperienced players to pursue a professional career.” Interview has ended and participants have been thanked.

8 CONCLUSION

Professional traditional sports and e-sports are getting closer to each other every year we go forward. Their differences and similarities are minor in athlete's point of view, but generally e-sports players need to focus their minds to the game more and do less physical activity. Coaching, analytics, tournaments and business are becoming the same on both sides. However, because electronic sports are much younger industry and phenomenon, they are still moderately behind in organizational level and they have problems in how amateurs become athletes and how they are affected by the league system.

Athletes in traditional sports are always thought as a people who are in an excellent physical condition and have committed themselves to become great competitors in their own field. For e-sport athletes, many see them as an unproductive lazy person who simply just play video games. This might have been true still ten years ago, but times have changed, and these athletes are committed to their work as well. What comes to their physical or mental state, we now know that the physical health of an e-sport athlete matters as well even though mental state will always come first. It is a fine balance, however and to become a professional, it requires skills, determination and talent, just as in traditional sports.

Electronic sports have problems that are unique to it. Developers of the game own the intellectual property rights for the game and has the power to control the league system, which happened with Riot Games in LoL for many years. This system is not healthy for the growth of e-sports and is currently being changed to similar kind of system that the traditional sports has, a system with franchising. For the growth of e-sports, it matters that the system can promote a healthy and competitive way to grow so it can become a global sport that can be enjoyed by millions of people. I learned the main differences and similarities between traditional sport and e-sports athletes and learned about the organizational level in both sides. I understand now the main problems in e-sports and what is holding it back from becoming a global phenomenon.

Traditional sports may not have seen e-sports as a competitor yet, but this is changing. E-sports is currently the fastest growing sport and it will change the future of sports, so everyone in the business of sport must react accordingly. I personally think that e-sports will rise to become a global phenomenon with broadcasts in cable television as well as online. It will have more people

attending and more tournaments, buying tickets, rooting for their own favorite teams, buying merchandise, creating fan clubs and everything else that already exists in traditional sports, even though, it might still take five to ten years until we reach this state.

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