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## From Casual Player to In-Game Leader: A Pathway to Successful leadership in Tactical Shooter like Valorant



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## **Abstract**

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On the stage of digital competition, where every click is a gunshot and every millisecond lost can spell doom for an entire team, one role stands apart in its gravity and complexity: the in-game leader. Not just a player, but a commander; not just reactive, but visionary. The role that demands a variety of skills: strategic ingenuity, psychological acumen, and mechanical prowess. As esports has grown from underground passion to a multi-billion-dollar industry, the responsibilities, and challenges of being an effective in-game leader have evolved into a study of art and science in its own right.

This study will research, discuss, and analyse how in-game leadership, and communication allow one to reach expert/professional level play in shooter esports. With the assistance of field data, interviews, and past studies, the study will define what it takes to achieve pro-play and excellent In-game leadership.

## **Foreword**

Special thanks to my Sister and parents for pushing to finishing the work and all the players who have been interviewed without them I would not have been able to complete my first thesis project. Many thanks to my instructor Janus Pitkänen for absolute professionalism and being very helpful with the process of finishing.

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## 1 Introduction

Since its debut by Riot Games in June 2020, VALORANT has swiftly become a tour de force in the esports landscape, combining first-person shooter elements with character abilities. As it transitions from a new release to esports staple with lucrative sponsorships and a prominent fan base, the role of In-Game Leaders (IGLs) within Valorant's teams has become a subject of increasing importance.

IGLs are crucial for coordinating team strategy, making real-time decisions, and facilitating communication between team members. Their role is not merely an extension of individual player skill but a complex interplay of game knowledge (game sense), leadership, and communication skills. This multidimensionality makes IGLs in Valorant a compelling focus for studying the broader dynamics of leadership and teamwork in competitive gaming environments.

### 1.1 Research Objective and questions

This research aims to dissect how Valorant's unique game mechanics and burgeoning esports scene influence the roles and effectiveness of IGLs, drawing on interviews, analytics, and observational data for a comprehensive understanding. The central idea of the thesis will require us to obtain information on in-game leading through theoretical background on team leadership and communication. Interviews and research on topics covered by IGLs will be the primary research material.

The research questions are as follow:

What does it take to be a successful in-game leader in esports?

How does communication positively affect game leading?

What leadership style and skills are needed to lead a team of esports players?

The limitations of the thesis are as follows:

The research used in this thesis will be derived mainly from already crafted theory on communication and leadership which may be dated.

The Primary research will focus on Valorant semi-pros and pros as well as coaches only.

The genre used for this will be Fps games (first-person shooters), otherwise known as multi-player tactical shooter. Sample Size and Composition: The study itself had a small sample size and not many were interviewed, this potentially could generalize the study's findings.

Methodological Limitations: the study was based on the role of the IGL alone and the skillset that the Igl should own is large and extensive, this study does not cover them all, instead the study focuses on communication and leadership as well as mindset that greatly limits the study.

Scope and Depth: The study specifically focused on FPS games such as valorant where most interviewees' inspiration comes from.

Furthermore The level of players interviewed is limited to Tier two of esports scene, this will affect the quality of answers given by the interviewees but also act as more relatable content.

The study itself discusses "theoretical standpoints" and opinionated answers, which means that most of the results gathered are to be taken with a grain of salt.

## 1.2 Research methods

Qualitative research method will be used in the making of this thesis, mainly we will be focusing on using Interviews to gain insights on the topics of leadership and communication in esports. These interviews will be based on asking a series of questions relating to our topic while also finding out how one can succeed in esports and valorant In- game leading.

The secondary research method used are academic journals, articles, books, and previous theses, which all will aid in building the platform on which the interview questions will be created.

### **Base of the research:**

- 1 Communication theory and its transactional model of communication as well as accommodation theory.
- 2 Leadership theory, traditional leadership compared to esports leadership, Situational leadership and different team leadership models.

## 2 Theory

In The theoretical foundation of this thesis, we will study and research topics that will allow us to understand the value of IGLs, their understanding of game sense, the overall communication used in esports, and the differences between traditional and esports leadership.

For the communication we will refer to the transactional model of communication. This model considers communication as a two-way process and could be used to explore the back-and-forth nature of communication between an IGL and team members as well as in diverse teams, how do IGLs adjust their language and communication style to be understood by all players?

In the leadership theory we will be reviewing how situational Leadership has an impact on teams. This theory proposes that effective leadership is task-relevant and that the most successful leaders are those who adapt their leadership style to the maturity of the individual or group they are leading. Furthermore, we will explore transformational leadership and the ability of an IGL to use inspirational motivation, idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration to enhance their teams' performance. Lastly, this thesis will visit the overall traditional leadership vs the esports leadership which will be discussed as we go through this section.

### 2.1 Esports background

Before delving into the theoretical background of Leadership and communication I would like to take a closer look at esports as a whole and define its importance.

Esports, an abbreviation of "electronic sports," refers to competitive video gaming where individuals or teams compete against each other, typically in organized multiplayer game competitions. These competitions can range from local amateur tournaments to professional global events with substantial prize money. As per Jenny, Manning, Keiper, and Olrich (2017), esports encompasses "a form of sports where the primary aspects of the sport are facilitated by electronic systems; the input of players and teams as well as the output of the esports system are mediated by human-computer interfaces."

## 2.2 Growth in esports:

The growth of esports in recent years has been nothing short of phenomenal. Initially considered a niche subculture, esports has transformed into a multi-billion dollar industry, reaching audiences worldwide. Newzoo, a market intelligence company, noted that global esports revenues surpassed \$1 billion in 2020, with global audiences reaching over 495 million people. This growth can be attributed to several factors, including the rise of streaming platforms like Twitch, large investments and sponsorships, and the inclusion of esports in traditional sports programs and even discussions around its potential inclusion in the Olympics. Several renowned universities now offer esports scholarships, underscoring its significance in contemporary culture. Moreover, the expansion of esports into mainstream media, with major broadcasting networks covering significant tournaments, and the establishment of dedicated esports arenas further indicate its surging popularity and acceptance. Another pivotal factor in the esports growth story is the support from the gaming industry. Game developers have recognized the potential of competitive gaming and are designing games with esports in mind, fostering a symbiotic relationship that drives both game sales and esports viewership. Rietkerk, R. (2020) GlobalEsports Market Report 2020, newzoo.com.

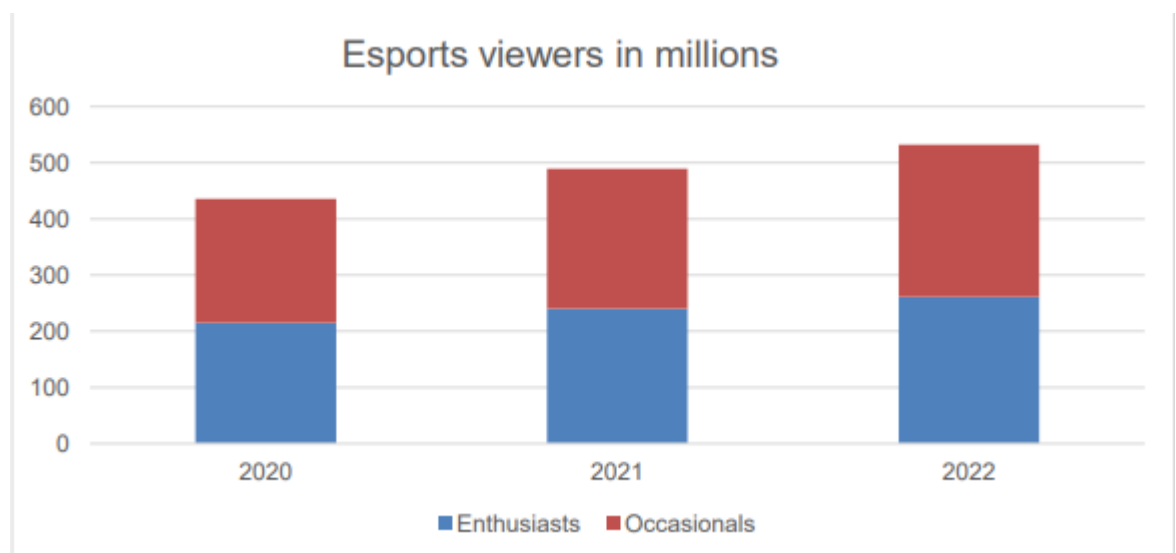


Figure 1 esports viewers compared to esports enthusiasts in 2020, 2021, 2022 Scholz, T.M. (2019)



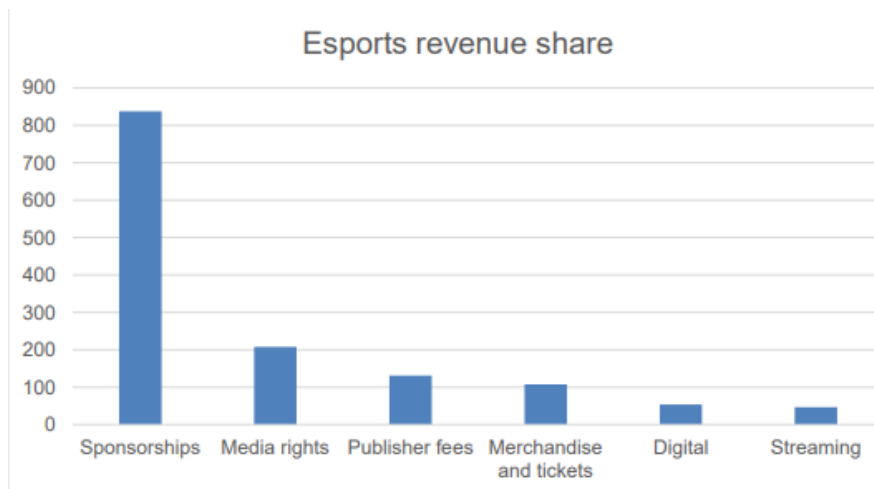


Figure 2 **Revenue in esports 2020 forward.** Scholz, T.M. (2019)

### 2.3 Communication theory

Research by Vasalou, Joinson, Bänziger, Goldie, and Pitt (2008) demonstrates the intricacy of human communication, emphasizing that it is not just about transmitting information, but also about building understanding, nurturing trust, and ensuring coordination.

In traditional sports, where team dynamics can significantly impact performance, it is evident that cohesive communication can spell the difference between a team that is disjointed and one that moves with a unified purpose (Sullivan & Feltz, 2003).

As we navigate the field of communication theory, it's crucial to understand its profound implications in the fast-paced, high-stakes world of esports. In this section, we'll delve into the theoretical underpinnings of communication and its pivotal role in the success and dynamics of esports teams.

#### 2.3.1 Transactional Model of Communication

The Transactional Model of Communication, as discussed by writers like Dean Barnlund, posits that communication is a simultaneous, ongoing process, with individuals playing the roles of both sender and receiver at the same time. Unlike its linear predecessors, this model acknowledges the dynamic nature of human interaction, emphasizing feedback and shared meaning (Barnlund, 2008).

In traditional settings, this model can be observed in conversations where feedback is immediate. Non-verbal cues, intonations, and immediate responses all contribute to the simultaneous decoding and encoding of messages. The environment, or noise, can influence this process, resulting in miscommunication or altered understanding. This dynamic is evident in classrooms, business negotiations, and daily interactions.

In the line of esports, the Transactional Model takes on an intriguing dimension. Communication within a team during a game is crucial. Here, players do not just communicate their moves but also respond in real time to the actions and strategies of their teammates and opponents. Much like the general premise of the model, in esports, the sender-receiver dynamics occur almost simultaneously. Players act as both message senders and receivers, adjusting strategies based on continuous feedback. The noise in this context could be external distractions, technical glitches, or even the pressure of the game itself.

Furthermore, the esports environment spanning the game developers, players, commentators, and the audience represents a complex web of transactional communication. Live chats during game streaming on platforms like Twitch exemplify this, where streamers interact with their audience in real time, influencing game strategies and audience perceptions concurrently.

### 2.3.2 Communication accommodation theory

The Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) has emerged as a cornerstone in interpersonal communication research. Initially proposed by Howard Giles in the 1970s, this theory proposes that individuals tend to adjust their communicative behaviors when interacting with others, aiming for a sense of social harmony or distinction (Giles & Ogay, 2007). In the rapidly expanding domain of esports, where team dynamics and quick communication are crucial, the application of CAT becomes relevant, especially when considering In-Game Leaders (IGLs) and their role in multicultural teams.

- CAT in esports

As a global phenomenon, Esports often witness the connection of players from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds in a single team. An IGL, entrusted with the pivotal role of strategy formulation and real-time decision-making, faces the challenge of ensuring that every team member understands instructions and tactics to perfection. The principles of CAT shed light on how IGLs might adapt their speech rate, pause frequency, language choice, and even non-verbal cues to align more closely with their audience (Dragojevic, Gasiorek, & Giles, 2016).

For instance, "convergence," a fundamental aspect of CAT, pertains to making one's communication style more similar to the speaker's. An IGL, when interacting with a player whose first language is not English, might deliberately slow down, simplify phrases, or use widely recognized in-game terminologies (key word callouts or other) to facilitate comprehension. On the opposing, "divergence," another aspect of CAT, involves emphasizing the differences in communication. Although seemingly counterintuitive, an IGL might employ divergence to assert authority or to emphasize critical tactical nuances during high-pressure scenarios.

In conclusion, as esports continues its ascendancy in global entertainment, the complexities of team communication become even more crucial. The Communication Accommodation Theory offers a subtle lens through which the strategies and challenges of IGLs in diverse teams can be understood. As the esports landscape grows, further empirical studies are warranted to evaluate the dynamic interplay of CAT and leadership communication in this domain.

#### 2.4 Traditional vs esports leadership

The leadership landscape has been broadly explored within traditional sports, often emphasizing traits, decision-making, team dynamics, and motivational strategies. In contrast, leadership within esports is a relatively developing field of study. This part will attempt to compare and contrast the nuances of leadership in these separate yet similar realms, drawing upon existing literature while highlighting areas ready for future research.

Leadership in traditional sports has been thoroughly characterized by a multi-dimensional model confining transactional, transformational, and situational leadership styles. Although most of these leadership styles are the basis or platform in which a "type of leader" is to be moulded from.

Transactional leaders in sports are known for their focus on structured practices, performance-based rewards, and penalties, while transformational leaders inspire athletes through vision, charisma, and personal relationships (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Situational leadership, which underscores the adaptability of a leader to the changing needs of the team and individual athletes, is also prevalent in conventional sports settings (Hersey & Blanchard, 1996).

In esports, however, leadership takes on a different hue. Esports teams are often characterized by their virtual nature, with team members potentially spanning various geographical locations, cultures, and time zones. This environment demands a unique set of communication and leadership skills from the In-Game Leader (IGL). The IGL must navigate online communication platforms such as Discord Teamspeak and other ways of communication, manage remote team dynamics, and make split-second decisions in highly stressful situations, often without the physical presence that aids traditional sports leadership (Taylor, 2012).

Studies on esports leadership are few, but emerging research suggests that emotional intelligence, digital communication ability, and strategic thinking are key traits for esports leaders (Funk et al., 2018). Unlike traditional sports, where physical presence and charisma can be substantial leadership assets, esports leadership hinges more on technical proficiency, tactical knowledge, and maintaining team cohesion in an online world. Despite these differences, there are also common points. Both forms of leadership require the ability to motivate, the sense to develop strategic plans, and the ability to adapt to individual and team needs. Leadership effectiveness in both contexts fundamentally affects team morale, cohesion, and general performance.

In conclusion, while there are differences in leadership approaches and required skill sets between traditional sports and esports, there are unavoidable similarities in the basic objectives and challenges each type of leader faces.

The field of esports leadership, still in its "infancy," presents a fruitful ground for academic search.

## 2.5 Situational Leadership

Situational leadership, a concept widely recognized in traditional sports, is increasingly relevant in esports. This leadership style, characterized by adapting to team members' needs and the

match's situational demands, offers a valuable understanding of the dynamics of esports and traditional sports teams.

In traditional sports, situational leadership plays a critical role. Hersey and Blanchard, who developed the Situational Leadership Model, argue that effective leadership varies not only with the task at hand but also with the maturity level of team members (Hersey & Blanchard, 1996). In sports contexts, this translates to coaches and captains adjusting their leadership style based on their athletes' skill levels, confidence, and motivation. For example, a coach might adopt a more directive style with novice players while communicating with experienced athletes (Chelladurai, 2007).

Esports, on the other hand, demands a similar adaptability in leadership. The arenas of esports introduce unique challenges such as managing remote teams, bridging cultural differences, and navigating rapid changes in game strategies (Taylor, 2012). The IGL (In-Game Leader) in esports must then be adept at assessing the needs of their team members, which can vary significantly due to diverse backgrounds and skill sets in which intercultural communication begins to take place. Adjusting communication styles, strategy development, and decision-making processes are critical aspects of situational leadership (Hamilton et al., 2012).

To conclude, situational leadership is a versatile and practical approach in both esports and traditional sports. The role of an esports IGL, akin to a traditional sports captain, requires similar adaptability in leadership style. However, the IGL faces unique challenges inherent to the virtual nature of esports, such as managing remote teams and constant technological changes, including game updates and changing Meta.

Despite these differences, the core principles of situational leadership — adaptability, awareness of team member needs, and context-specific strategies, remain fundamentally the same, highlighting the theory's broad applicability across various competitive team environments.

## 2.6 Team Leadership model

For the application of “team leadership model” as proposed by Michael Hackman and Craig Johnson, emphasizes the role of the leader in facilitating team functions and tasks (Hackman & Johnson, 2009). In the context of esports, the model becomes particularly relevant. Esports teams, characterized by their reliance on technology, digital communication, and diverse team compositions, require leaders who can effectively navigate these complexities. Studies from 2010 onwards highlight the increasing professionalism in esports, necessitating a more structured approach to team leadership (Seo & Jung, 2016). The role of an In-Game Leader (IGL) in

esports parallels the facilitator role described in the Team Leadership Model. An IGL must ensure clear communication, effective strategy implementation, and resolve conflicts, all within the high-pressure environment of competitive gaming (Taylor, 2012).

One critical aspect of the Team Leadership Model in esports is the management of remote teams. Research by Hamilton et al. (2012) underscores the challenge of leading a team that may never physically meet. The IGL must foster team cohesion and a shared vision, often relying solely on virtual communication tools, such as valo plant, cs planner, strategy tools paint, and other applications with the tools necessary for explanation.

as esports evolves, the challenges facing team leaders have also changed. The rapid development of new games, changing game dynamics, and the growing diversity of team members in culture and language have required IGLs to adapt their leadership style continually. This adaptability is a crucial component of the Team Leadership Model (Northouse, 2013). One must focus on both task-oriented and relationship-oriented aspects of leadership. While simultaneously dealing with unique challenges, such as remote team management and rapid technological changes, the core principles of the Team Leadership Model, clear communication, facilitation of team processes, and adaptive leadership, remain crucial for the success of esports teams.

### 3 Methodology

This chapter outlines the qualitative research methodology, focusing on two main data collection methods: semi-structured interviews with experienced esports IGLs and a review of existing research literature in the domain. The choice of a qualitative approach, centered around interviews and literature analysis, offers the opportunity to gain rich, contextual insights directly from those with hands-on experience in in-game leadership roles. This methodology aims to provide a comprehensive and authentic perspective on what it takes to become a successful IGL in the competitive world of esports.

Throughout this thesis there has been an aim to delve into the complex and multifaceted role of In-Game Leaders (IGLs) in esports, with a specific focus on identifying the skills, behaviours, and strategies that contribute to becoming successful at this role. Given the exploratory and nuanced nature of leadership roles within the esports environment, a qualitative research methodology will be the best approach to this study. Through qualitative study, it is possible to comprehend player behaviour in their natural setting, making it well-suited for unpacking the many layers of leadership, decision-making, and team dynamics in esports.

#### 3.1 Data collection Methods

Firstly, academic websites such as Google Scholar and Thesus and academic libraries such as Kamk Finna were the primary research platforms. Google Scholar provided a wide range of articles across disciplines, helped me sort by date and relevance, and also helped me see who cited a paper. thesus and academic platforms at KAMK supported by showing previous studies made on similar thesis objectives.

Secondary methods involved books, website articles, and social media platforms such as Reddit esports pages and Twitter, which could be used to proofread existing literature on esports.

lastly, websites and apps such as Zotero and Mendely allowed for citation management and literature review.

As this is qualitative research, we will use a semi-structured interview model to gain natural and direct insight into players' perceptions and approaches to esports leadership and "successful In-game leading." The method used in obtaining the following information was gathered by approaching semi-pro to be pro-level payers with two or more years of experience in tactical shooter fps esports games with previous game-leading skills and having participated in official tournaments. These players were handpicked for the research to gain the best information from a player's career stage that matters to their growth in said stage. Using this method, I will bring some insights

### 3.2 Interview design

For the interview design we will be looking to understand the key skills, behaviours, and strategies that contribute to being a successful In-Game Leader (IGL) in esports. Furthermore, we will be asking about the methods used to endorse proper communication between teammates, and then finally their shared mindset towards the sport.

The tools and medium in which the interviews will be taken place are through Discord, a communication platform where video camera, audio and screen recording can be captured. The recording will be done via the streaming software known as "OBS studio" where the conversation will be recorded.

The interview format below will be accompanied by an excel sheet created to facilitate the interview as well as streamline and annotate important parts of the conversation as well as control the flow of the interview.

At the end of the interview, I will write the results found from each player's perspective and then categorize them depending on the answers for further detailed analysis during the discussion part of the thesis.

To find the interview format please scroll to the appendices.



### 3.3 Interview study

#### Overview:

**Purpose:** The purpose of the interview is to gain insight on what makes a good In game leader by gaining information from semi pro to pro level players on the topic of what makes a successful IGL through leadership and communication.

**Methodology:** A semi structured interview on successful IGL behaviors, the interview will be questioning seven individuals with two to three years of experience in esports and in the level of semi and pro level play. The interview will take place on a online communication platform known as discord. Each of the interviews will be recorded and submitted if needed.

#### Respondent Demographics:

**Profiles:** players with experience in tier 2 esports and have 2 to 3 years of experience in tactical shooter esports.

**Pal:** a coach who has retired from playing at the tier 2 level to coach instead, now working with teams such as " WYLD" for the past year and a half. He has been in for the past 8 years.

**BOOM:** a player from Spain who is currently competing for "team Queso" in a tier 2 Valorant based organisation playing in the Spanish qualifiers. He is currently the main "fragger" but his experience as a leader in the team goes far beyond his current team.

**NIXXOON:** this player originates from Finland with the intent of becoming one the world's best Leaders and player combo. He is the current IGL of the Finnish esports team known as "OnlyFinns" with 4 to 5 years of experience, making him a great contender for the interview.

**Munstur:** A former student of esports business at Kajaani University of Applied Sciences who has had the opportunity to be part of the analytics team for the csgo team known as GamerLegion where he took part in management and close work with the team leaders. This experience was crucial for the interview.

**Solof:** a team leader from Russia with an outstanding amount of experience in game leadership, he is the current leader of the previously aforementioned team of "Team Queso".

Stike: Known IGL in the Nordics/ United kingdom who has been around many different teams his mindset and extended period in esports being one of the key reasons for his appearance in the interview.

Sheuta: French player In game leader formidably known in the French game scene as one of the greatest IGLs. His game sence and backing from various Coach suchas DJAZ, CleM, and Pal makes him another Great choice to have on the interviews.

Structure of Results Presentation:

Question Overview, The results of the interview will be discussed through analysis of each individual question. I will be writing a summary of each of the questions' answers and perspectives to write a short paragraph detailing the insight gained.

Data Handling, In order to write about the answers of each question I will be using the content analysis method of the interviews' content in order to get as much information of the different perspectives as possible and write them down how I see fit. Furthermore i will be providing a source to listen at the interviews found in the appendices part of the thesis and images e of the notes taken from the answers.

Presentation format, the results presented below will be the accumulation of seven different interviewees instead of each individual's Answer for each question. The format will introduce the question briefly and then administer insight from each interviewee.

## 4 Results and Qualitative insights

In this section, we will be observing the qualitative insights as well as results obtained from the interviews. The text will be organized in the fashion of categories belonging to each theme of the interview with the purpose of explaining the results and insights under each theme respectively. The format will be organized with the question first, its overview and key findings at the end. Please note that not all questions will incorporate an overview, overview will only be given when necessary.

### 4.1 Skillset category

Question 1: What technical skills do you consider essential for an IGL?

Overview: the purpose of this question was to get an initial reaction from a technical standpoint on what is considered important for an IGL to have.

Key findings were that The ability to use self-control as a tool and regulate emotions. Ability to communicate with the rest of the team in a sensible manner and controlling how the words come out of your mouth. Using information gathering and communicating that with the rest is a crucial technical skill which are needed.

Question 2: How do you keep up to date with the game meta?

Overview: the Game meta referred to in this question means that one should be able to follow a superior strategy including the most advantageous means of victory. This question is more of a trick question as it allows me to see if one is open to the thought of “winning in their own terms”. Key findings were that there is no predetermining theory in Valorant because the game changes, unlike CounterStrike. Watching specific teams and individual players is how you will gain the advantage not in form of “meta” but in a form of understanding how to bend the rules of the game.

Question 3: How do you keep up to date with the game strategies?

Overview: being able to gain information on strategies and methods to gain advantage is a crucial skill to have, these questions were about that aspect.

Key findings were to watching video overviews (VODS)

Question 4: How do you keep up to date with esports?

The Key findings were that Most players rely on data analytic websites for their game, and some prefer social media curated platforms. Websites like VLR, liquipedia, twitter (now X) are mainly used.

#### 4.2 Leadership and communication category

Question 5: Can you describe your leadership style as an IGL?

Overview: it is a fundamental basic to understand what type of Igl exist and this question answers just that. As for the key findings, Neutral unemotional leading you straight the point, reactive control, Micro and macro managing IGLs, laissez-fair Igl.

Question 6: What makes a good leader?

Overview: Similar to the first question the Igl needs to know what tools he has at his disposal to be a good leader. this isn't about skill "In-game" but more about what personality need to BE to Lead. In the key finding: a leader can be anyone, someone who looks after success, a person who puts the will to win as the priority, it is learned and developed, is able to achieve goals he sets. Help team come together, work for his team and not the other way around, works for the task and the needs of the individuals off the team.

Question 7: What makes a bad leader?

Overview: vice versa this question allows one to crucially say what doesn't work and shouldn't be done as a leader or simply what "hasn't worked".

Key findings found that it is a player who can't succumb to the expectations said in the previous question are bad leaders.

Question 8: How do you effectively communicate with your teammates, both in and out of gameplay? Overview: asking this will give us insight on how a leader is able to get information give and introduce information in game and outside of it. For the Key findings, giving players information EARLY and not waiting is one big aspect of pre-emptive communication, make your communication short concise and to the point without losing the value. Being able to say a lot in

short form concise and digestible order. An IGL must be a good teacher too. The ability to turn complex ideas to simple ones. Repetition and more repetition.

Question 10: What are other methods of communications that you have come across in your time as an IGL or a player?

Overview: a good way of acknowledging different styles from those who have experienced them. The key findings state that North American teams are loud, some people have seen communication as two-way ideas back and forth, if you coordinate a plan and suggest something to do you should expect a response. Code word usage and Key words. Contribution through communication every player should be able to speak their mind and give ideas.

Question 13: What methods have you personally found to be ineffective or not the best?

Overview: this question will give the ability to identify weakness in leadership styles albeit communication or leadership. As for the key findings no relevant information apart from mostly repetitive opposition to previous ideas.

Question 14: How do you resolve conflicts or disagreements within your team?

Overview: knowing how to resolve these disagreements is crucial part of leadership and with all the intercultural communication happening in the international team experience, there are usually many disagreements. The key findings suggest that Dealing with the issues depends on the individuals its it important to have a good grasp about the information. Ask how people feel and find out if people want to work the problems. IGL must be the one who initiates and know the people the best. Find compromise emotions are verry important for a successful team and being assured that these emotions are always safe. Being understanding of sociology and social knowledge and cultural communication.

### 4.3 Mindset and Psychology category

Question 15: What kind of mindset do you believe is essential for effective leadership?

Overview: the mindset is important not just for the win but to be the apex predator. One must be sure about themselves and believe it. Asking this will allow us to see how. Key findings state that being adaptable, open mindset, ALWAYS having a plan. failure is not having one. Being able to deal with failure, promote learning, and curiosity. Having growth mindset sense of balance and justified confidence and humility.

Question 16: How do you build or increase this mindset?

Overview: understanding the concepts usually is the first step, but how to achieve those states of mind is what will be answered here. As for the key findings, Investing genuine time into the game, team, and individuals. Learning how to fail emotionally and learning to deal with it. Learn from pros and ask questions whenever accessible, encourage and develop a psychological safety to learn. Being able to risk and do new things while being in a safe environment. Take and implement feedback learn from mistake.

Question 17: What behaviours must be avoided to build this mindset?

Overview: behaviours of individual on the team and Igl all comes down to mindset and what is valued physiologically. Being able to avoid bad habits are the essence of the question. Key findings state that people should not feel criticised on the team. Criticism leads to fear. Build discipline in that direction. Don't allow comfort to settle and chase uncomfortable situations be it in the micro or macro scale. Stick to a process don't deviate, the end results are usually success. Don't stop reviewing. Take time to reflect and don't forget it.

Question 18: How do you mentally prepare yourself and your team before an important match?

Overview: Preparation is the key to success, knowing how these IGLs prepare will give us insight on that very path to success. As for the key findings, every individual must be checked, coach, player, and leaders, each take their own preparation and make sure it is complete. Planning and replanning. Finding evidence on what works and what doesn't.

#### 4.4 Strategy and decision making category

Question 19: Can you walk me through your thought process during a typical game? Especially during crucial or high stress moments? Overview: idea of this question was to gain an insight on how the player approaches the game mentally. Key findings: enter the game with confidence and a plan, set the pace and flow of the match early, have strategy for every round type (eco, anti eco, full buy), calling a lot of timeouts. Which are allowed in games such as cs2, and valorant.

Question 20: What do you think you do differently from others during high stress situations during the game? Overview: Being able to dictate how the game flow will proceed during high pressure is critical for any Igl and being able to be the example is crucial. Key findings: Set an example to others, if Igl is confused so is the team. Keep emotional focus. Don't criticise allow humility. Have a system in place to allow yourself to know how to react when you are losing and how to react when you are winning. Understand the symptoms of being under pressure and devise your own way of dealing with it. Share those emotions with the rest of the team.

Question 21: What strategies do you employ to maintain team morale and focus? Key findings: Emotional shielding, group activities, humour, and warmups were mainly discussed in the data.

Question 22: What advice would you give to someone aspiring to become a successful IGL? Key findings: learn the ability to lead a team, do a lot of research ask questions. Learn technical abilities and knowledge, understand how to develop talent and what "weapons" people have that you can use. Always work for your team. Work harder than them. Analyse pros and make your own deductions don't follow blindly. Understand reactions and how to react properly and smoothly, slow is smooth and smooth is fast.

## 5 Discussion

The data gathered in this thesis, similar to the questions of the interview, has been allocated in different themes. The themes are skillset, leadership and communication, mindset, and psychology, and lastly strategy and decision-making.

To interpret the results, the separation of the themes will be the main priority in interpreting the answers of the grouped Key findings. Furthermore, I will be providing the interpretation of the results while keeping the theory as a reference to the answers.

### 5.1 Skillset

In the context of an IGLs over all skillset, focus on emotional self-regulation, effective communication, and information gathering highlights the need for IGLs to possess a blend of personal and technical skills. Emotional regulation being crucial to maintaining team morale and making objective decisions under pressure as well as Effective communication is key to ensuring team members are on the same page and executing strategies efficiently.

Information gathering is essential for understanding and adapting to in-game situations, which are the prime concepts that an IGL should be experienced in.

Moving on, the emphasis on watching specific teams and players rather than sticking to a rigid "meta" suggests a dynamic and flexible approach to strategy development. In games like Valorant, where the game environment is constantly evolving, IGLs need to be adaptable and creative. Understanding how to "bend the rules" implies an innovative mindset, essential for staying ahead in a competitive landscape. This approach encourages IGLs to develop unique strategies that can give their teams a competitive edge.

To conclude the findings, suggest that successful esports IGLs must balance technical game knowledge with "soft" skills like communication and emotional intelligence. They must be adaptable, continuously learning, and innovative in their approach to strategy. As well as, from VODs to data analytics and social media, is key to staying informed and ahead of the curve



## 5.2 Leadership and communication

For this series of results the questions explore various aspects of leadership styles, qualities of good and bad leaders, communication strategies, and conflict resolution in the context of an In-Game Leader in esports.

The variety of leadership styles (neutral, reactive, micro/macro managing, laissez-faire) indicates that there's no one-size-fits-all approach to being an IGL as Pal states.

Effective leadership can vary based on the team's dynamics, individual player needs, and game requirements.

The traits of a good leader mentioned in the "what makes a good leader" question underscores the importance of being goal-oriented, team-centric, and capable of fostering unity and collaboration. The emphasis on leadership being a learned and developed skill suggests that effective leadership in esports is not just innate but can be cultivated through experience and conscious effort. In the interview with Pal we also discussed the importance of how intercultural communication is a major factor in the success of the IGL and that his communication must be nurtured and cannot be taught if the person themselves isn't interested in the cultural of communication of his teammates.

Moving on we go through the communication part of the results, and we can note that concise, and digestible communication highlights the importance of clarity and timeliness in conveying information.

The role of an IGL sometimes as a teacher, simplifying complex ideas, and the use of repetition signifies the need for IGLs to be effective educators as well as strategists, in the interview with MUNSTER we notice that he explains IGLs are not only actively teaching players but also a role model.

Furthermore, on the topic of communication we also understand that two-way communication, use of codewords, and encouraging all team members to contribute ideas illustrates the diversity of communication styles. Adapting to and leveraging these different styles can be vital for effective team management.

The insights gathered from the rest of the section suggest that successful esports IGLs must be focusing on goal orientation, team unity, and effective communication. Leadership in esports is not static but requires continuous learning and adaptation to the team's needs and game dynamics. For IGLs, these findings offer valuable guidance on how to enhance their leadership and communication strategies to lead their teams effectively.

### 5.3 Mindset and psychology

While analyzing then answered of all individuals and the summation of findings in the previous chapter I understand that the findings emphasize adaptability, open-mindedness, and a growth mindset as essential for effective leadership. The ability to deal with failure, promote learning, and maintain a balance between confidence and humility are basics one must master. This suggests that an effective IGL must be flexible in their approach, eager to learn, and confident yet grounded.

To effectively train such mindset one must invest time in the game, their team as a whole and individual player, learning from failures, and seeking knowledge from experienced professionals. Creating a psychologically safe environment for learning and taking risks underlines the importance of a supportive team culture that usually excels teams' performances.

As for where criticism leads one it is equally important to understand that avoiding criticism that leads to fear, maintaining discipline, embracing uncomfortable situations, are welcome aspects of a teams' learning curve.

So, in conclusion a growth-oriented, adaptable, and open mindset is effective for esports leadership. Building this mindset involves a combination of personal development, learning from experiences, and fostering a team culture of psychological safety to allow continuous learning.

### 5.4 Strategies and decision making

In this section the approach to both regular gameplay and high-stress situations highlights the importance of preparation, Emotional management, and setting a positive example.

Entering the game with confidence, a clear plan, and strategies for different scenarios (like eco rounds) sets the stage for effective gameplay. The use of timeouts suggests a strategic approach to managing the game's flow and team focus.

In high-stress situations, the role of the IGL as a stabilizing force becomes even more crucial. Maintaining emotional focus, practicing humility, and having a system to respond to different game situations (winning or losing) are key. The IGL's ability to understand and manage their own stress responses and to communicate effectively with the team during these moments can significantly influence the team's performance.

On the emotional side of things what I interpret from the following findings is that emotional shielding, group activities, humor, and warmups as strategies to maintain team morale show the importance of team bonding and emotional well-being of each player. An IGL must be adjusted not just to the technical aspects of the game but also to the emotional and psychological state of their team members. Creating a positive team environment through activities that foster camaraderie and reduce stress can better overall team performance and resilience.

In conclusion, according to my findings and the results obtained from the interviews IGLing involves a balance of strategic gameplay management, emotional intelligence, team-building, and continuous learning to be exceptional. An IGL must be adept at both planning and adapting strategies, managing their own and their team's emotional states, and creating a positive, cohesive team environment.

## 6 Conclusion and future research

The IGL is not just a team member but the cornerstone of strategy, morale, and decision-making. This thesis talked about the critical components of becoming a successful IGL in esports, focusing on effective communication, leadership qualities, and the mindset required to lead a team to victory.

**Effective Communication: The Backbone of Team Coordination and Communication** which is the lifeblood of any successful Valorant team. An IGL must excel in clear, concise, and timely communication. This involves not just issuing commands but also actively listening to team members. Key aspects include Clarity and Precision, Instructions must be straightforward and specific to avoid confusion during high-pressure situations. **Situational Awareness:** Constantly update and inform the team about enemy positions, strategies, and potential threats. **Encouraging Team Input:** A good leader recognizes the value of their team's insights and experiences, fostering an environment where teammates feel comfortable sharing information.

**Leadership: More than just strategy**

An IGL's responsibilities are more than just tactical commands. They are responsible for setting the tone of the team's dynamics and flow. Essential leadership qualities include Adaptability, Valorant is a game of ever-changing scenarios. An effective IGL must quickly adapt strategies to counter opponents' moves. Decisiveness, in split-second decision-making situations, hesitation can lead to defeat. An IGL should be decisive, taking calculated risks when necessary. **Motivational Skills,** Keeping the team morale high, especially after setbacks, is crucial. An IGL should encourage and motivate team members, highlighting the positives while constructively addressing areas for improvement.

**Mindset: The Foundation of Enduring Success**

The mindset of an IGL can determine the team's overall atmosphere and performance. Key components of a successful mindset include: "Growth Mindset" Viewing challenges as opportunities for growth and learning from both victories and losses. Resilience, the ability to stay focused and composed, even under pressure or after a defeat, is vital. Strategic Thinking, Understanding the nuances of Valorant, including map strategies, agent synergies, and economy management. Finally, Emotional Intelligence Being attuned to the team's emotional state and managing conflicts or stress effectively.

## 6.1 Future research opportunities

Building upon the findings of this study, future research could explore more into the creation of strategies and how IGLs use game sense and “mental games” to compete against their opponents. Furthermore, the leadership Topic discussed in this thesis is broad and has a lot of sub-topics to offer many different disciplines and way of leadership could be discovered and talked about. Finally, the use of Tier one players in the esports field in the same topic of this thesis could uncover a lot more and give details unexplored in this research.

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## Appendices

### Interview Format

- Semi-structured
- One-on-one
- Interviews will be conducted either in person, via video conferencing on discord, or phone depending on the participant's location and preference.
- Duration: Approximately 30-60 minutes per interview
- Audio-recorded with participant's consent

### Sample population:

- Experienced IGLs from various esports titles (preferably those who have participated in regional, or international tournaments taking place in tier 2 or tier 1)
- Minimum of 3 years of experience in esports, with at least 2 years as an IGL

### Guide to the interview:

#### 1. Introduction

- Brief introduction of the researcher and the research objectives
- Explanation of the confidentiality measures
- Permission to audio-record the interview

#### 2. Background and context

- Can you describe your role today?
- Can you describe your journey into becoming an IGL in esports?
- What game(s) do you primarily serve as an IGL for? Why did you choose them?

#### 3. Skillset

- What technical skills do you consider essential for an IGL?
- How do you keep up to date with the game meta?
- How do you keep up to date with the game strategies?
- How do you keep up to date with esports?

#### 4. Leadership and communication

- Can you describe your leadership style as an IGL?



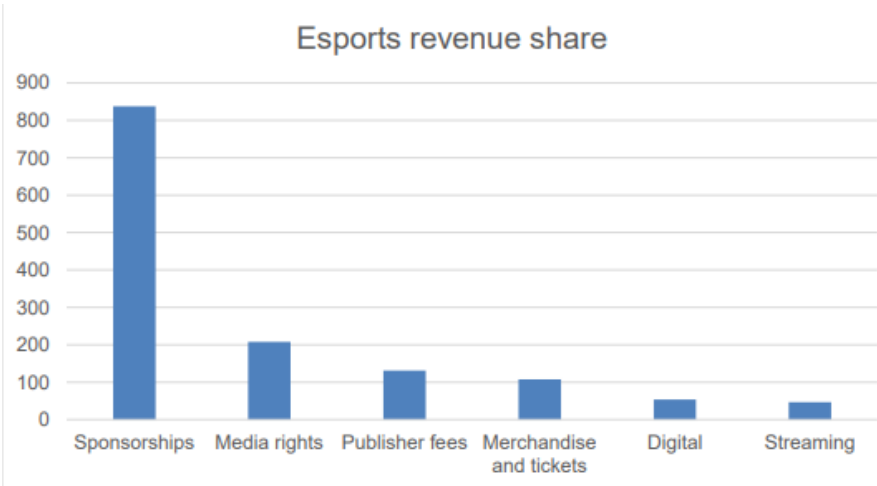
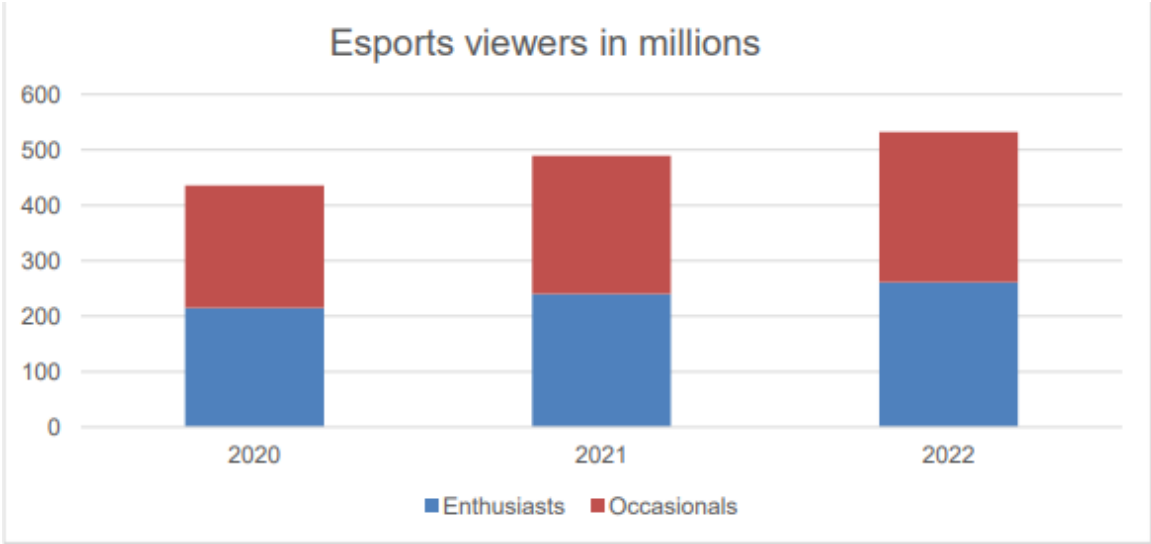
- What makes a good leader?
- What makes a bad leader?
- How do you effectively communicate with your teammates, both in and out of gameplay?
- What are other methods of communications that you have come across in your time as an IGL or a player?
  
- How do you resolve conflicts or disagreements within your team?
- What methods have you personally found to be ineffective or not the best?

#### 5. Mindset and psychology

- What kind of mindset do you believe is essential for effective leadership?
- How do you build or increase this mindset?
- What behaviors must be avoided to build this mindset?
- How do you mentally prepare yourself and your team before an important match?

#### 6. Strategies and decision making

- Can you walk me through your thought process during a typical game? Especially during crucial or high stress moments?
- What do you think you do differently from others during high stress situations during the game?
- What strategies do you employ to maintain team morale and focus?



<b>Interview with</b> <i>insert name</i>
<b>Interviewee Bio</b> Role: Years of Experience:
<b>Interview Objectives</b> - Introduce yourself ( if required ) - objective of interview: Collecting data on PRO and semi pro IGLs on the topic of " what makes a good IGL in esports" - permission to record and use recording findings on my thesis.

Theme	Questions	Answers
Background and Context	Can you describe your role today?	
	Can you describe your journey into becoming an IGL in esports?	
	What game(s) do you primarily serve as an IGL for? Why did you choose them?	
Skillset	What technical skills do you consider essential for an IGL?	
	How do you keep up to date with the game	
	How do you keep up to date with the game strategies?	
	How do you keep up to date with esports?	
Leadership and Communications	Can you describe your leadership style as an IGL?	
	What makes a good leader?	
	What makes a bad leader?	
	How do you effectively communicate with your teammates, both in and out of gameplay?	
	What are other methods of communications that you have come across in your time as an IGL or a player?	
	What methods have you personally found to be	

Leadership and Communications	teammates, both in and out of gameplay?	
	What are other methods of communications that you have come across in your time as an IGL or a player?	
	What methods have you personally found to be ineffective or not the best?	
Mindset and Psychology	How do you resolve conflicts or disagreements within your team?	
	What kind of mindset do you believe is essential for effective leadership?	
	How do you build or increase this mindset?	
	What behaviours must be avoided to build this mindset?	
Strategies and Decision Making	How do you mentally prepare yourself and your team before an important match?	
	Can you walk me through your thought process during a typical game? Especially during crucial or high stress moments?	
	What do you think you do differently from others during high stress situations during the game?	
Future Outlook	What strategies do you employ to maintain team morale and focus?	
	What advice would you give to someone aspiring to become a successful IGL?	
	How do you see the role of IGLs evolving in the future of esports?	
	Do you have any other thoughts to share that could be useful to know regarding leadership and communication skills?	

**Conclusion**

- Ask whether they would like to ask any questions before we end the recording.
- Ask whether it would be okay to revisit the interview and create a follow-up to answer unanswered NEW questions.
- Thank the participant for their time.

<b>Interview with</b>	<b>Munster</b>
<b>Interviewee Bio</b> Role: ROLE CSGO COACH. Years of Experience: 2 years use and esports 6 years ago.	
<b>Interview Objectives</b> - Introduce yourself (if required ) - objective of interview: Collecting data on PRO and semi pro IGLs on the topic of " what makes a good IGL in esports" - permission to record and use recording findings on my thesis.	

Theme	Questions	Answers
Background and Context	Can you describe your role today?	COACH
	Can you describe your journey into becoming an IGL in esports?	started out as analysit. At tier 2 level first then moved forward to professional team.
	What game(s) do you primarily serve as an IGL for? Why did you choose them?	CSGO only
Skillset	What technical skills do you consider essential for an IGL?	be good at the game. Skillset very good. Attitude towards game and the ability to learn and improve automatically.
	How do you keep up to date with the game meta?	watch a lot of games, VOD REVIEW ALL THE TIME
	How do you keep up to date with the game strategies?	watch a lot of games too
	How do you keep up to date with esports?	same way
Leadership and Communications	Can you describe your leadership style as an IGL?	Dependant to the person. He likes an leader of the team. Spiritually socially and game sence wise.
	What makes a good leader?	persoanlity type, outgoing socialbe confident, emotional
	What makes a bad leader?	opposite of top
	How do you effectively communicate with your teammates, both in and out of gameplay?	as an Igl TRUST, and understanding between teams and lis to others, give a room to talk and improve.
	What are other methods of communications that you have come across in your time as an IGL or a player?	there are diffrences he has had a culture shock from seeing something different from NA and eu, the diffrence is that they are more organised and the team dynaicms is different no matter the situation and such they are keeping things by the book and LUCK it wont work long term.
What methods have you personally found to be ineffective or not the best?	there is a cut off point here, there is a time when things are on a thin line , and not everything is effective, there needs to be a set in stone to stop things like critisim and such.	

	What methods have you personally found to be ineffective or not the best?	their is a cut off point here, there is a time when things are on a thin line , and not everything is effective, there needs to be rules set in stone to stop things like criticism and such.
	How do you resolve conflicts or disagreements within your team?	don't put EMPHASIS on conflicts treated light hardedly most of the time the problems are very niche and subjective react calmly and reason. Remind your players that it's a sport and business and have a psychologist! The coach needs to not be SCOLDING players, and needs to.
Mindset and Psychology	What kind of mindset do you believe is essential for effective leadership?	discipline , wanting to win. is the most important mindset, try hard mentality. Adaptable.
	How do you build or increase this mindset?	discipline , wanting to win. is the most important mindset, try hard mentality. Adaptable.
	What behaviours must be avoided to build this mindset?	impulsiveness, when you are leader you are expected to be rational don't act on lash out and be impulsive
	How do you mentally prepare yourself and your team before an important match?	shielding your players from pressure. Even if its hiding from what the real nature of the reality. The pressure is always there just have to accept it but remember to have fun and focus on that. Focus on the right things. And mental gymnastics till your able to think that way.
Strategies and Decision Making	Can you walk me through your thought process during a typical game? Especially during crucial or high stress moments?	try to keep the SPIRITS HIGH. Be calm through the game. And talk properly and just get to the end of it and take the breaks !
	What do you think you do differently from others during high stress situations during the game?	reset calls to reset the mindsets. Calmness is very important. anyone who panics he also has doubt so focus on the positive as a coach and IGL.
	What strategies do you employ to maintain team morale and focus?	same way as above shielding, being calm and be jokeful a team who has fun is a winning team.
Future Outlook	What advice would you give to someone aspiring to become a successful IGL?	be open , appear open too. REVIEW A LOT, and learn alot from DIFFERENT SOURCES, INVESTED and creative.
	How do you see the role of IGLs evolving in the future of esports?	there are gonna be players becoming , because there is VERY low amount atm, we just need to wait and see how they become IGL and such.
	Do you have any other thoughts to share that could be useful to know regarding leadership and communication skills?	N/A

**Conclusion**

- Ask whether they would like to ask any questions before we end the recording.
- Ask whether it would be okay to revisit the interview and create a Followup to answer unanswered NEW questions.
- Thank the participant for their time.

A	B	C	D	E	F
	<b>Interview with Solof</b>				
	<b>Interviewee Bio</b> Role: IGL, initiator. Correlation, smokes is best for IGL. Flases are harder Years of Experience: 4 to 20 been playing sports. 6 years in esports now				
	<b>Interview Objectives</b> - Introduce yourself (if required) - objective of interview: Collecting data on PRO and semi pro IGLs on the topic of "what makes a good IGL in esports" - permission to record and use recording findings on my thesis.				

Theme	Questions	Answers
Background and Context	Can you describe your role today?	solof is an IGL
	Can you describe your journey into becoming an IGL in esports?	IGL in valorant. Before that in csgo never played IGL then but now does. But through his time he started playing valorant he picked up the role. Started duelist on valorant and continued as IGL. He likes prefers being the leader
	What game(s) do you primarily serve as an IGL for? Why did you choose them?	answered above
Skillset	What technical skills do you consider essential for an IGL?	having a mindset is important for IGL you need to be a try hard, focus on mentality. Everyone around you becomes better when you are performing mentally, you need to be on the best MECHANICAL play. You cannot be fully focused on your aim because you are leading so when a fight comes you need to be able to be good for 1 player atleast and not throw easy kills. 3rd communicate alot. communication is very important. need to be hard on people. disciplined.
	How do you keep up to date with the game meta?	for the meta he watches VCL plays tournaments and watches esports. Being influenced all the time in the game is the best way to stay in meta. You can make your own game is early.
	How do you keep up to date with the game strategies?	same way as meta
	How do you keep up to date with esports?	watching esports through twitch. USES TWITTER ALOT through filtering what he needs to see. He looks at liquipedia. To watch vods he uses twitch and VLR.gg and one russian social media called contacti. And uses it for news.
Leadership and Communications	Can you describe your leadership style as an IGL?	strategical. Doesn't leave any stones unturned. Agasint stronger teams he focuses on defaults and play out time and adaptive. Adaptive and not micro management. Depending on player level he controls everything.
	What makes a good leader?	confidence in himself speaks well and is relaxed. very talkative, and say things the way
	What makes a bad leader?	"opposite of the above"
	How do you effectively communicate with your teammates, both in and out of gameplay?	keeping things organized is the best way. Using platforms such as valopaints and discord is the best way to communicate effectively. In game creative scripts and papers for the game start and smthign they can look at, using KEYWORDS, like freez, tower, and other keyword. communications freq depends on the game and situation you are competing in. be yourself in the game and outside more official.
	What are other methods of communications that you have come across in your time as an IGL or a player?	has noticed different ones. Micro management types never let them do what they do. There are some people who default only and allows his teammates to do what they need there is also a mixtype of player.
What methods have you personally found to be ineffective or not the best?	the ineffectiveness comes from individual styles. People are limited to their view. Not being able to discipline the team and depending on the team play style. So toxicity and being TOO hard on the players it is not affective to talk mid round to players does not work well to keep mentality.	

	be ineffective or not the best?	not work well to keep mentality.
	How do you resolve conflicts or disagreements within your team?	1st I try to decrease the conflicts. Head to head communca group meeting to discuss what they wana do. See each pla mentality towards the problem and find middle grounds. F them with calmness and being cooled down.
Mindset and Psychology	What kind of mindset do you believe is essential for effective leadership?	SO being try hard is 100 % important you need to give it you matter what you can half something either full in or full ou Self believe , and discipline and being energetic.
	How do you build or increase this mindset?	to be a try hard is a mindset you need to be born with it an needs to be a natural habbit and you should always be tha and out of game.
	What behaviours must be avoided to build this mindset?	don't be toxic. Focus on self reflection and not acting on er aspect don't go into recreational . Focus like an athelestes workout to keep your mind and stamina in check. Warm up FULLY as a habbit and behavior do not leave rest away from calculation. focus on having good habbits in disipline and clean. anything that makes you happier person is better.
	How do you mentally prepare yourself and your team before an important match?	focus on being relaxed and well rounded phsically not tire not hungry. Working on making your anxiousness into exci Preping your team to be confidnet by playing with them bet games and review work already done. Study helps ( starts such )
Strategies and Decision Making	Can you walk me through your thought process during a typical game? Especially during crucial or high stress moments?	for a mix it is important to check how other pros work and u as an advantage. Learn the enemy and try to play that way depends what you and who you have and what you are pla agasint. Play slow or fast depending on those factors. Don't alot its bad to predict, allow good players to feel supportd allow your player who is popping off to feel free about how about the game FOR a TEAM COMP fully focus on a script, the game to your pace as you have the teammates who are r play and know what you want. in high stress moments foc staying calm and GATHER ALOT of information dont be blin
	What do you think you do differently from others during high stress situations during the game?	answered above
	What strategies do you employ to maintain team morale and focus?	first its imporant to not give up no matter what. two main If youa re dominating, keep the moral going and DON'T all teammates to lose sight of the real objective and stay focus dotn celebrate early. When you are losing and not domiat iportant to keep telling your teammates there are options. understnd why and sexplain why there is a probelm , is it focus or predicatbily or is the strat not wroign find out that take a break and explain what goes on and show that ther
Future Outlook	What advice would you give to someone aspiring to become a successful IGL?	try hard, be calm and believe in yourself , if something doe wrok its not because of you most of the times.
	How do you see the role of IGLs evolving in the future of esports?	more popular. People want to maintian control more peop yong and new yong blood wants to come to esports.
	Do you have any other thoughts to share that could be useful to know regarding leadership and communication skills?	N/A

**Conclusion**

- Ask wether they would like to ask any questions before we end the recording.
- Ask wether it would be okay to revisit the Interview and create a Followup to answer un answered NEW questions.
- Thank the participant for their time.



B	C	D
<b>Interview with <i>nixoon</i></b>		
<b>Interviewee Bio</b> Role: IGL, Leader, fill. Years of Experience: couple year in cs and around 3. 6		
<b>Interview Objectives</b> - Introduce yourself ( if required ) - objective of interview: Collecting data on PRO and semi pro IGLs on the topic of " what makes a good IGL in esports" - permission to record and use recording findings on my thesis.		

Theme	Questions	Answers
Background and Context	Can you describe your role today?	IGL
	Can you describe your journey into becoming an IGL in esports?	was never an Igl before, he decided in valorant to go into the game.
	What game(s) do you primarily serve as an IGL for? Why did you choose them?	VALORANT, CS has an FPS lover, the superior multiplayer game and leading teams is fun for him in these circumstances
Skillset	What technical skills do you consider essential for an IGL?	being a leader inside and outside the game. Being reliable. Pave the road to everyone. Adding layers.
	How do you keep up to date with the game meta?	watch games and vods from pro players. Meta is for a reason, some agents are more powerful than others sometimes. But in valorant it's important to make your own because valorant allows that right now
	How do you keep up to date with the game strategies?	WATCH A LOT OF PRO games
	How do you keep up to date with esports?	VLR and twitter
Leadership and Communications	Can you describe your leadership style as an IGL?	very neutral. Don't show emotion never tilts emotional control. Especially for IGL reliability
	What makes a good leader?	confidence, reliability, kindness, and firmness
	What makes a bad leader?	individually people do small mistakes a bad leader is one that doesn't follow through his learning curve and doesn't learn a lot nor communicates.
	How do you effectively communicate with your teammates, both in and out of gameplay?	mix of micro talking and PREPLANNING the whole game, he discusses the a lot with individuals and thinks being a mentor is important!
	What are other methods of communications that you have come across in your time as an IGL or a player?	no answer he only knows his way.
	What methods have you personally found to be ineffective or not the best?	depending on the person receiving the information. Criticism is ineffective DURING GAME, being constructive matters when the time is chosen right.
	How do you resolve conflicts or disagreements within your team?	he believes this is the role of the IGL and coaches, don't take sides neutral mentoring and agree to disagree don't raise your voice and don't show frustration. If he has one with someone, he takes them individually and talks with them alone and teaches them, TEACHER VALUE
	What kind of mindset do you believe is essential for effective leadership?	frontline leadership. Is important not commanding, teacher mentality is extremely effective, playing their own strengths! Always reward and punish the same frequency. Be a leader not a commander

Mindset and Psychology	How do you build or increase this mindset?	practices makes improvement, be aware of what you do and yourself making the right and wrong decisions
	What behaviours must be avoided to build this mindset?	CHASE your teammates and knowledge
	How do you mentally prepare yourself and your team before an important match?	pre work, pre plan and more pre plan, good confidence come PLANNING the more they know how to be optimized the less worried. If its important he tells them if they are stressing drink !
Strategies and Decision Making	Can you walk me through your thought process during a typical game? Especially during crucial or high stress moments?	based on analysis and previous work, unless we don't know about them. We focus on our own game plan. and set our own focusing on defaults at higher level especially when you do how player enemy starts its important to feel how they play how to counter
	What do you think you do differently from others during high stress situations during the game?	he recognises stress in teammates and during overtime and stress. He doesn't believe numbers on the screen affect him, and calmness no matter what the situation. Leader is leader energy
	What strategies do you employ to maintain team morale and focus?	in winning situation ALWAYS play as if the game is zero zero your teammates get loose keep them in line but don't take them from any happy MOODS. If its losing, he is always asking them and keep calm and the same mental each round by round.
Future Outlook	What advice would you give to someone aspiring to become a successful IGL?	keep your life in check. BALANCE is the most important.
	How do you see the role of IGLs evolving in the future of esports?	more IGLs are going to come in and young ones are going to with more information now accessible. They are going to approach more strategically and they are going to be able to adapt and stronger. Based on individual.
	Do you have any other thoughts to share that could be useful to know regarding leadership and communication skills?	N/A

**Conclusion**

- Ask whether they would like to ask any questions before we end the recording.
- Ask whether it would be okay to revisit the interview and create a follow-up to answer unanswered NEW questions.
- Thank the participant for their time.

<b>Interview with</b>	<b><i>boom</i></b>
<b>Interviewee Bio</b> Role: IGL, Years of Experience: 10 years	
<b>Interview Objectives</b> - Introduce yourself ( if required ) - objective of interview: Collecting data on PRO and semi pro IGLs on the topic of " what makes a good IGL in esports" - permission to record and use recording findings on my thesis.	

Theme	Questions	Answers
Background and Context	Can you describe your journey into becoming an IGL in esports?	the role basically was there when the team needed. he is real leader when people needed and it stuck to him.
Skillset	What technical skills do you consider essential for an IGL?	the essential for HIM, is to speak properly. and make things simple and be able to call with confidence. the way they speak and the way they call they should sound confident.
	How do you keep up to date with the game strategies and meta?	watching competitive, games. twitch, youtube.
Leadership and Communications	Can you describe your leadership style as an IGL?	He likes to have control. building a solid plan before it starts. he likes to give freedom to players. as long as he trusts that they are working on doing it.
	What makes a good leader?	A good leader has to be very serious when he needs to be. engaged with you players outside the game too.
	What makes a bad leader?	Not following up on teammates, not being confident, not coming with a plan, and not communicating properly.
	How do you effectively communicate with your teammates, both in and out of gameplay?	In game communication is important. Keywords, and being slow and steady. outside the game it's important to update the team with new plans and knowledge. and refreshing it constantly
	How do you resolve conflicts or disagreements within your team?	Coming from a background where he himself used to argue but through experience has learned not to. He reminds teammates that the way that people feel towards you is because they know you care about them better, and not because they hate, reassurance and reminding the team to stay hopeful is his way.
Mindset and Psychology	What kind of mindset do you believe is essential for effective leadership?	it's important to have a balanced, mindset OUTSIDE of life affairs. to be in check a good routine. you can't play good if you don't feel good.
	How do you build or increase this mindset? behaviours or habits	fix the schedule if you don't have. find a way to focus your mind on the fact you want to do it. You cannot gain this if you DON'T want it.

		he believes that important matches should not be giving any importance. focus on going in the mood of practice and that you are trying to prove yourself and the team that you guys can surpass yourself and be better at the game. don't pressure the game and motivational speech.
Strategies and Decision Making	How do you mentally prepare yourself and your team before an important match?	
	What do you think you do differently from others during high stress situations during the game?	he thinks that the teammates are thinking what he does. so his mood is very important because he knows they are relating to him so staying calm and being able to focus is crucial. As for the enemy he focuses pressure on wins and loss he focuses on risks.
	What strategies do you employ to maintain team morale and focus?	he believes that IGL should always hype up the players. during times of defeat and low morale. he likes to pause and during these pauses takes around 15 to 10 seconds to relax and then focus on the final goal. being a problem solver and actively chasing solutions is important.
Future Outlook	What advice would you give to someone aspiring to become a successful IGL?	find an example. learn to talk and listen. be confident in yourself. spend many hours into the game. because you will need them.

**Conclusion**

- Ask whether they would like to ask any questions before we end the recording.
- Ask whether it would be okay to revisit the interview and create a follow-up to answer unanswered NEW questions.
- Thank the participant for their time.

Interview with <i>stike</i>
<b>Interviewee Bio</b> Role: IGL Years of Experience: 2 years, football for the years before it.
<b>Interview Objectives</b> - Introduce yourself ( if required ) - objective of interview: Collecting data on PRO and semi pro IGLs on the topic of " what makes a good IGL in esports" - permission to record and use recording findings on my thesis.

Theme	Questions	Answers
Background and Context	Can you describe your role today?	FLEX , FLASHES IGL he focus on competing agiasnt himself and others to.
	Can you descibe your journey into becoming an IGL in esports?	he always know that he was charsimatic, and enthusiastic with others. when he got in he realises that he was leader since he learned about the qualities and became straight wiht it. he likes to be leader.
	What game(s) do you primarily serve as an IGL for? Why did you choose them?	valorant is the primary game for him
Skillset	What technical skills do you consider essential for an IGL?	IGL need be very thick skinned. cant be annoyed as much. always buildign atmosphere, confidence, vocal and being able to speak and listen .
	How do you keep up to date with the game meta?	there are many metas, and meta in valorant is not as imporant as csgo or other games like overwatch , since there is alot of confidence
	How do you keep up to date with the game strategies?	watching alot of esports games is the main thing , HE watches back all the scrims he play. he comapres his games to pro games alot.
	How do you keep up to date with esports?	VLR, twitter, spike .gg youtube as well.
Leadership and Communications	Can you descibe your leadership style as an IGL?	give a genral plan , he plays alot of macro and gives genral direction on how things are and just pre plan the game , once the micro game starts its his job to start working. he thinks the game is very much life 5 IGLs people need to think , he leades but people also need to make calls, he cant be the only one to think.
	What makes a good leader?	dedicated. needs to be the most experinced. dont cristisze teach. pasi
	What makes a bad leader?	not being methodical, findin solutions if the IGL doenst do that its really bad., no cursiisity, not teaching , its individual people have bad trasits and they need to also rectify their bad points. players should be to help with that , but a good leader cannot have those points.
	How do you effectively communicate with your teammates, both in and out of gameplay?	in game: protocls , keywords. the fsaster you say things the better, no time to waste, and paint a picture and make a complex call wiht stress involved. out of game. friendly and open is important. you need to be able to use your persaonlity traist that you are open and always following up off game on the progress of the game.
	What are other methods of communications that you have come across in your time as an IGL or a player?	diffrent culture makes diffrent coms. He hasnt experinced alot of differences in calls as hes been the sole Igl but he believee in diverstiy of skill show diffrent results
	What methods have you personally found to be ineffective or not the best?	talking over each other , again the culture thing is imporant intercultural speaking is imporant to speak about. inefective comms is one that is said but has no meaning.
	How do you resolve conflicts or disagreements within your team?	best method is to give all thoughts on the table. during low emotinal times , its i imporant to say all that you blivee and all you wana emotionally say. also you can say thigns like one good one bad thing.

	within your team?	bad thing.
Mindset and Psychology	What kind of mindset do you believe is essential for effective leadership?	open minded , hardworking. growth mindset is the most important like hes said before being thick skinned is is important because you will go through many hard lessons.
	How do you build or increase this mindset?	practice, be actively in uncomfortable situation where you are going to fail. always paying attention to your instincts. and what you do in that situation where you autopilot. always process your emotions and come to a progressive conclusion and fuel your failure to become better. being conscious and aware how you are and try to actually change negatives.
	What behaviours must be avoided to build this mindset?	balance in your life is important you cant play remove .. strike believes there is a lot in life that you can get better in . doing those well ., be it dress well eat well , or go for a walk and be healthy will allow you to be better . so avoid being lazy in the LIFE part.
	How do you mentally prepare yourself and your team before an important match?	he never really had that much of important answers. something that he should have done if he had an important game. he would talk with the team. and hype people in general and make them laugh and keeping them off the serious mental and the less anxious is the best.
Strategies and Decision Making	Can you walk me through your thought process during a typical game? Especially during crucial or high stress moments?	the thought process is very adaptive. he really tries to pay attention to info and what the enemy does, he is constantly reacts and practices reaction to things. apply pressure on weakness what u can we use an what pressure and exetera.
	What do you think you do differently from others during high stress situations during the game?	he tried to make sure the team is relaxed shielding the team from emotion is the key. ultimately the leaders actions speaks louder than words so watch your tone and make the disadvantageous position calm everyone and HIMSELF FIRST, composed.
	What strategies do you employ to maintain team morale and focus?	speaking to the players individually is important.
Future Outlook	What advice would you give to someone aspiring to become a successful IGL?	study the game. watch a lot of games and compare to yourself. but dont compare to yourself in a way that would make you feel bad. focus on macro and plans. how do they do what they do in specific situations because reactions are number 1 importance, just go play as much as you can and do as many mistakes and vod yourself. watch yourself and watch others and compare.
	How do you see the role of IGLs evolving in the future of esports?	if a lot of players are like him he sees a bright future. if people neglected new information and scared away it wont evolve he thinks IGLs will be good. and in needed. younger IGLs with good mechanics area gonna strive in the near future especially when the info is all out there.
	Do you have any other thoughts to share that could be useful to know regarding leadership and communication skills?	he has said everything. he thinks IGLs are the center of the team and he thinks that he realizes that he needs to be humble.

**Conclusion**

- Ask whether they would like to ask any questions before we end the recording.
- Ask whether it would be okay to revisit the interview and create a follow-up to answer unanswered NEW questions.
- Thank the participant for their time.



A	B	C	D	E
	<b>Interview with</b>	<b>PAL</b>		
	<b>Interviewee Bio</b> Role: coach, previous IGL Years of Experience: esports 2 years, 23 years in sports			
	<b>Interview Objectives</b> - Introduce yourself ( if required ) - objective of interview: Collecting data on PRO and semi pro IGLs on the topic of " what makes a good IGL in esports" - permission to record and use recording findings on my thesis.			

Theme	Questions	Answers
Background and Context	Can you describe your role today?	FLEX , FLASHES IGL he focus on competing agiasnt himself and others to.
	Can you describe your journey into becoming an IGL in esports?	natural leader , wanted to come to esports, best way to play is to counter and outhink, he never wanted to play.
	What game(s) do you primarely serve as an IGL for? Why did you choose them?	valorant only , and not good at csgo, his skills were strategic and wanted to comepte because it mixed tactical fps principles and macro strategy with incedible ability to be creative and nto back and forth like csgo. Creative aspect important.
Skillset	What technical skills do you consider essential for an IGL?	ability to control emotions , ability comm with the rest of the team in a way that makes sence. So things like confident, slowly and controlled. Being able to read. Information gathering, and processing. Being able to cross our game plan and recongise the info on the game and then.
	How do you keep up to date with the game meta?	2 different ways: meta and what people think is the meta, is what a team wins the most. No predetermined theoery valorant is hard that way things change, not the most adopted tactic. Not practical way of being. Watch INDIVIDUAL TEAMS who are succesful and yo compare there apraoches againt diffrent enemies. keep up wiht strategy wby watching vods, and keepig up with esports through VLR and official liquipedia. 2nd way look at maps and how you wana approach and then that will allow you to get ahead and introduce yourr next best apraoch
	How do you keep up to date with the game strategies?	answered above
	How do you keep up to date with esports?	answered above.
Leadership and Communications	What makes a good leader?	a leader can be anyone , with any personality. Leadership is learned and developed. People need to be able to help team to achive goals. needs to work with individuals to help them. Help the team come together, work for people they are working with. Work for the task, the team and work for the needs of individual
	What makes a bad leader?	a leader who can surcome to those expectaions said above.
	How do you effectively communicate with your teammates, both in and out of gameplay?	effective communicaion can be complicated and can be simple topic too , the key points out of the server give infomratin to players EARLY and don't wait. 2nd make your comms as concise as you can do, withough losing value, if there is somthingyou wana get acros in the gaem. consition tha bility to say things in the short possible way and digestible, simplicity is the ability to turn the complex concpet to tell and explain to your teamtes which is the hardest
	What are other methods of communications that you have come across in your time as an IGL or a player?	NA is loud, some like it some don't, some people have seen communication as two way thing. If you try to coordiante a plan and you suggest something to do you should expect a response , CODE WORD uage people use code word sytem tower, checkmate, freez. someplayers NEED contribution EVERY PLAYER HAS TO HAVE THE ABILITY to speak.
	What methods have you personally found to be ineffective or not the best?	answered above.

	be ineffective or not the best?	answered above.
	How do you resolve conflicts or disagreements within your team?	depending on the people and WHO THE PROBLEM is TO there I a way to deal with those, you need to ask and find out how eople want to work through problems. IGL must be the one who INITIATES and KNOW THE PEOPLE he is working with because you will know who . if someone has conflict ask what is the best way to find compromise between the two, emoitna IS VERRY imporant as you need the person to be able to say what he feels to get best results. BEING undseranding of SOCIOLOGY and social knowldge and culutral communication.
Mindset and Psychology	What kind of mindset do you believe is essential for effective leadership?	adapatble ALWAYS HAVEA PLAN , 2nd minsset HOW TO DEAL WITH FAILURE and how you pmooote the ability to learn from failure growth mindset. 3rd, sense of balance of justifeid confidence and humility .
	How do you build or increase this mindset?	people need to undsertand, INVEST GEINUNE TIME with a team on the individual level. And teaCH them how to EMOTIONALLY fail. And how to dael with it get pros to tell themhow through experince. Encogare A devlope pshyicologica saftey , being able to take risks and econgaes. and no fear for crisisisim. people ned to realise why learning is valubel then safety to take risk and then finlay impliminte FEEDBACK cycles and allow themt o learn from their mistakes.
	What behaviours must be avoided to build this mindset?	its imporant that people don't feel critisized , DON'T critisizes because this creates fear. Build disipline in that direction. Don't allow yourself to feael comfort always push towards uncomftr leveisl of work for you and stick to the process. A good behvaouse is T review ALOT , what ever it takes, always review. need to bel abe to reflect wit yourself. about yourslef and spend time reflect how you felt and about them and how all things intertwerienw
	How do you mentally prepare yourself and your team before an important match?	individually EVERYONE DIFFERENT it dpends how it goes. PLANNIG AND REPLANING IS the most imporant for him evidence is imporant tfind evidence andmove forward from that.
Strategies and Decision Making	Can you walk me through your thought process during a typical game? Especially during crucial or high stress moments?	explained
	What do you think you do differently from others during high stress situations during the game?	2 ways of doing this the first thing is to set the exmaple. If the igl is confused and cant follow so will the team they leashed off negative and positive way of being , and diffrently the iGL who can will SUCEED and always better better according to PAL have systems for these situations. self warwanes and understanding the symstomes of being under pressure a dhving your own ways of sdealing wiht and having it shared wiht the rest of the team,.
	What strategies do you employ to maintain team morale and focus?	answered above.
Future Outlook	What advice would you give to someone aspiring to become a successful IGL?	3 things to give an Igl : ability to lead the team. Tchincal knowledge. Undertand how to devleope talent and WHAT weapons people have . How tocontribute MAXIUM t what we said in the past. Always wrok for your team. And work harder than them. And have good techincal knowledge, you can havea g odo leader that cant lead , BUT YOU NEED both , go and learn and look and learn from good leadership and work for your team in that directions what can you do to imprive the team and what exmaple can you set that is perfec for their eys and analyze gaes of pros and see how they reaact , REACTIONS IS IMPORATNT always the best thing to do how do they play and how they respond
	How do you see the role of IGLs evolving in the future of esports?	a lot of potential for them to surpaxe them. THEY ARE ONLY WILLING TO LEARN.
	Do you have any other thoughts to share that could be useful to know regarding leadership and communication skills?	N/A



Recordings during interview.

[interview with munster - YouTube](#)

[INTERVIEW WIHT NIXXON \(youtube.com\)](#)

[interview with PAL \(youtube.com\)](#)

[SOLOF interview \(youtube.com\)](#)

[interview with stike \(youtube.com\)](#)

[BOOM interview \(youtube.com\)](#)