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This House would include E-sports in the Olympic Games.

By Eliza Posner

Thoughts on the motion:

Our scrimmage topic, THW include e-sports in the Olympic games, is, in my opinion, a great novice topic. At first, it seems like a relatively straightforward, simple motion. New debaters who don't feel comfortable researching and writing cases could definitely brainstorm some very basic argument for this topic and practice their contention writing skills. However, I have found that the more you research this case, the more nuanced it becomes. If your debaters are interested in doing more extensive research, there is definitely a lot they can learn and a lot of complexity they can add to their arguments.

The first reason I think this resolution could provide a challenge for some teams is that a solid proposition case requires narrow definitions or a specific plan. "E-sports" is a pretty nebulous term and there are many different video games played in competitions that could be included or excluded by the proposition team. Like in my sample case, a smart proposition team might want to exclude any first-person shooter games from the debate at all. Or, they might want to go further and specifically name all of the e-sports games that they will include in the Olympic games. Limiting discussion on proposition is a reasonable way for debaters to make sure that the debate stays specific. If debaters end up talking about "e-sports" in general, the two sides could end up talking about completely different games or types of games and therefore not engaging or debating at all.

However, I am sure that there will be proposition teams that do not take the step of excluding certain e-sport games from the debate and, therefore, this resolution provides a great opportunity to practice writing flexible opposition cases. For example, if a proposition team excludes all violent video games from the round, the team on opposition should be prepared to drop or modify any violence related contention they were planning to run. However, if the proposition does not limit the resolution in any way, the opposition should have prepared contentions to present about issues like violence or the potential problems of the wide variety of e-sports that could be chosen for the Olympic games. Learning to modify the opposition case to fit what proposition runs is a good skill for debaters to learn—it will also teach them to think more carefully about what they chose to run on proposition as well.

I also think this a great resolution for debaters to practice impacting because, unlike some motions, the effects of adding e-sports to the Olympics might seem unclear or unimportant. Usually, the two dangers of motions where the impacts are unclear is that debaters either forget to impact altogether or hyperbolize their impacts. For example, debaters might argue that adding e-sports would increase the Olympics' popularity, but then forget to say why the Olympics matter and why increasing their popularity is beneficial. To avoid this problem, I would encourage debaters to think about the different actors in the resolution (the International Olympic Committee, the e-sports' players, the e-sports' viewers, Olympic viewers, etc.) and then brainstorm their goals and interests. That way, when they write impacts, they can think specifically about who is being helped by the contention and why helping them matters.

On the other hand, debaters might overdo it with their impacts. For example, they might feel tempted to argue that e-sports will significantly increase violence in society or brutalize youths. I would caution against making these arguments not only because the research does not support them, but also because running hyperbolic arguments prevents a more nuanced

discussion of the issues. Instead of trying to make every argument seem like it's of life or death importance, I think learning to talk about things in more nuanced terms will help debaters see what makes a really good argument.

If teams do make over-impacted claims, I think this resolution provides an opportunity for debaters to learn to weigh arguments in rebuttal speeches. Debaters can practice weighing techniques to help the judge see how their arguments are more realistic than their opponents. For example, a team on proposition could say, "while my opponent's argument about e-sports causes increased gun violence in society sounds scary, research shows that it is not probable. However, my argument about increased Olympic profits is very probable given the data on e-sports revenue. Therefore, my impacts should be weighed more heavily in the round given their realistic nature." The biggest problem I see in middle school debate is kids treating rebuttal speeches like another opportunity to refute their opponent point by point—this is not the purpose of that speech. Instead, debaters should again take it back to the basics, examine the major themes (like the effects on different actors in the round), and focus on comparing their impacts to their opponent's. This motion provides a great chance to practice that!

Note about prepared cases: I've written sample cases that I know are too long. I hope debaters can read them, read my research, and then rewrite the parts they like in their own words. Similarly, I would encourage writing more opposition points to increase flexibility. I also hope that debaters can use the time saved by having prepared cases on writing out well-researched refutations. Debaters should always come with some prepared responses to what they think are the most common arguments they will hear during the debate day. It might be a good idea for debaters to go through all the contentions I've written and write out a complete refutation (with a claim, warrant, and impact) to each one.

Note about research: there is a really great show on Netflix called "Explained" that has an episode on e-sports. There are 2 swear words in it, but it would be a great thing to show your debaters if you can cut those out (it's only 15 minutes).

Proposition Case:

Definitions and Plan:

- TH: The International Olympic Committee (IOC)
- E-sports: the particular games to be played at the Olympics will be determined by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), but all first-person shooter games and games deemed to depict realistic violence will be automatically excluded.
- The Olympic games: e-sports will be added to either the Summer or Winter Olympics at the discretion of the IOC.

E-sports will increase the Olympics' popularity:

1. The Olympics are currently losing popularity:
 - a. NBCUniversal's coverage of the Rio Olympics in 2016 averaged 27.5 million viewers across all platforms (including online), down 9% from the 2012 games in London AND viewership of the opening ceremony was down 28% from London.

Source: <https://variety.com/2016/tv/news/2016-olympics-ratings-rio-nbc-1201843200/>

- b. The 2018 Winter Olympics in South Korea were the least watched Olympics on record. Source: <https://variety.com/2018/tv/news/2018-winter-olympics-ratings-2-1202710137/>
 - c. Cities and countries are becoming less interested in hosting. Oslo and Stockholm both cancelled their 2022 bids after gaining more information about the high costs of hosting and Boston withdrew its 2024 bid, with the mayor saying that he “refuse[d] to mortgage the future of the city away.” Source: <https://www.cfr.org/background/economics-hosting-olympic-games>
2. E-sports will help solve this crisis:
- a. According to the CEO of Blizzard Entertainment, e-sports has 2 billion players worldwide and 380 million viewers. That number could increase to 600 million views in 2 years AND the demographic of e-sports is 20-40 years younger than traditional sports. Source: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/esports-into-asian-games-could-the-olympics-be-next/2018/08/27/c58b9748-a9d6-11e8-9a7d-cd30504ff902_story.html?utm_term=.81ac5f4bdf01
 - b. The 2017 League of Legends world championship had over 106 million viewers. Source: https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2018/08/27/massive-popularity-esports-charts/?utm_term=.cddf482670d2
 - c. Content related to the video game Fortnite received 2.4 billion views in February alone on YouTube. Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/02/style/fortnite.html>
 - d. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has already added new sports like sport climbing, surfing, and skateboarding to the 2022 games in Tokyo in a bid to appeal to younger viewers. Source: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/esports-into-asian-games-could-the-olympics-be-next/2018/08/27/c58b9748-a9d6-11e8-9a7d-cd30504ff902_story.html?utm_term=.81ac5f4bdf01
 - e. Adding e-sports to the Olympics would entice a new, younger viewership to watch the games, helping the IOC, the host country, and TV networks by increasing the Olympics’ popularity and appeal.
 - f. AND, people who watch e-sports won’t only watch online and on tv. In fact, e-sports event spaces like gamer bars and arenas like the Esports Arena in Santa Ana, California are increasingly popular. This means not only broadcasters will make money, but the host country will profit too. Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/02/style/fortnite.html>
 - g. In addition, e-sports is likely to appeal to a viewership that might not be interested in more traditional sports, meaning the new audience that would be captured is likely to be one that may not be interested in the new sports like skateboarding would be an entirely new market. Similarly, there are huge numbers of youth around the world who play video games, which will make the introduction of this sport more popular than others, like rock-climbing, that have small numbers of competitors and fans. As explained in The Atlantic, “Unlike viewers of traditional sports such as football or basketball, the people watching eSports tend to play the

game regularly as well. They watch to learn new moves and improve their own game.” Source: <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2014/04/more-people-watched-the-league-of-legends-video-game-championship-than-the-world-series/360123/> The many gamers around the world will provide a built-in fan base for e-sports.

3. Impact: as the Olympics grows, it will improve. With more revenue, the Olympics can invest in things like better stadiums, better oversight like anti-doping measures, and an altogether better experience for viewers. Since sports are about entertainment, the Olympics should do those things that improve the fan experience. And, by introducing e-sports to the Olympics and creating increased profits, we will support all the Olympic events, thereby helping all athletes and fans.

Inclusion in the Olympics will help e-sports:

1. The e-sports industry has problems that the Olympics will help solve:
 - a. E-sports has a drug problem: currently, e-sports has a doping problem similar to many other major sports like baseball or track and field. Recently, a professional Counter-Strike e-sports player revealed that many gamers used performance enhancing drugs like stimulants during competitions. Source: <https://killscreen.com/articles/does-esports-have-a-drug-problem/> Inclusion in the Olympics will help e-sports combat this problem, as all Olympic sports must enforce the Olympic Movement Anti-Doping Code. Source: <https://www.britannica.com/story/how-are-sports-chosen-for-the-olympics>
 - b. E-sports has a problem with diversity: currently, e-sports viewership is only 15% female and the number of female players is similarly small. Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/21/technology/personaltech/video-game-makers-try-to-get-better-at-luring-women-to-esports.html> A push to add e-sports to the Olympics will require leagues to improve on this number as the Olympic charter requires that a sport must be practiced widely by men in at least 75 countries and women in at least 40 countries to be accepted into the Olympics. Source: <https://www.britannica.com/story/how-are-sports-chosen-for-the-olympics> Adding e-sports will also introduce more women to the sport. An article in The Atlantic explains: “the Games tend to fuel spectator excitement, create awareness around sports, promote new role models, and encourage participation at a more local level—crucial opportunities for underfunded and underappreciated female athletes.” Source: <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2016/08/why-womens-softball-needs-the-olympics/495065/> Therefore, more women will be exposed to the sport, which will generate more female interest in e-sports and help increase gender diversity. Olympic regulations will also help decrease female player harassment in the e-sports universe by raising awareness of the abuse that many female players currently face and by allowing the IOC to implement and enforce new antidiscrimination rules.
2. Impact: by solving current problems with e-sports, we will improve the industry as a whole for competitors and make the sport more enjoyable. These solutions will also encourage new individuals (like more women) to join the sport and this increased

diversity will make e-sports more competitive and therefore more interesting for spectators.

3. Impact: making the e-sports industry more fair, safe, and diverse will increase interest in the sport as a whole. This will lead to more sponsorships for players, the creation of more leagues and tournaments that players can compete in, and more opportunities for game play and profit for competitors. If we want e-sports to be a thriving sport, we need to make it profitable so that individuals can invest the time and energy needed to succeed in the sport. This will make that possible and therefore raise the quality of the sport and the entertainment value.

The inclusion of e-sports promotes Olympic values:

1. E-sports helps teach the key Olympic value of excellence. Source: <https://www.olympic.org/videos/living-the-olympic-values> Victor Goossens, the co-CEO of a e-sports team, explains that professional players spend up to 12 hours a day practicing and studying their game and must take care of their physical and mental health in the same way that traditional athletes do. Source: https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/the-debate-over-esports-gamers-or-athletes/2018/08/24/d18d9ecc-a7da-11e8-ad6f-080770dcddc2_story.html?utm_term=.78d2ad8bae9f Just like many other sports in the Olympics such as volleyball or soccer, e-sports combines physical elements (like quick reaction times) with strategic thinking (like game theory knowledge). Therefore, e-sports is not significantly different from many other Olympic events.
2. E-sports spreads Olympic values worldwide. As the IOC President Thomas Bach says, "sport is not just physical activity...It also is an educational tool which fosters cognitive development; teaches social behaviour; and helps to integrate communities". Source: <https://www.olympic.org/development-through-sport> Because all that individuals need to participate in e-sports is a computer, many people around the world will be able to play. Compared to sports like tennis, which require specialized equipment and facilities and years of training to master, e-sports is very accessible, especially considering how many kids around the world already play video games. And, because competitions can be held online, the costs of e-sports competitions are low and individuals can participate regardless of their financial circumstances. The online nature of the activity will allow individuals from around the world to easily connect, fulfilling the Olympic goals of community integration and social and cognitive development.
3. Impact: e-sports will clearly advance Olympic goals, therefore benefitting all those who partake in the sport.

Opposition Case:

E-sports are unfair:

1. E-sports are hackable: the potential for specific video games or e-sports tournaments to be hacked is high. These hacks could change the rules for a game to benefit a specific player or could change the results of a tournament. TechCrunch explains, "hacks...can take many forms, including scripts that enable perfect aim, match-fixing and a rank manipulation practice known as boosting." Source: <https://techcrunch.com/2018/06/25/overwatch-hacker-seoul-jail-time/> Recently, 13

people were arrested in South Korea on charges that they hacked the game Overwatch. Source: <https://dotesports.com/overwatch/news/13-overwatch-hackers-arrested-south-korea-20363> Because e-sports games are controlled by the corporations that invented them, hacks of these companies could affect all players of the game and significantly affect game-play. Imagine if the rules of basketball could be changed by a computer hacker—with e-sports, this is the reality.

2. E-sports are created and controlled by for-profit corporations: with e-sports, a single company controls the video game, meaning that the rules of the game, and any potential rule changes, are made at the discretion of the company. Therefore, a company seeking to alter the results of a tournament could simply update the code of a game to change the rules. This potential for quick rule changes makes e-sports more unpredictable than sports like baseball or soccer, which have set in stone rules that have lasted for decades. Rule changes or updates to games made by corporations will unfairly advantage certain players, skewing the results of e-sports competitions.
3. E-sports has no single international organization: to become an Olympic event, a sport must have a single international governing body—e-sports does not have one. Source: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kurtbadenhausen/2016/08/09/how-a-sport-becomes-an-olympic-event/#6a25e9872ce9> There are multiple organizations that all claim to be the single e-sports authority. Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2018/08/30/sports/olympics/30reuters-games-asia-esport.html> This means there is no international body for e-sports setting rules or doling out penalties when those rules are violated. Today, the same companies that create games often function as these governing bodies. However, these companies have interests outside of e-sports, as they are also for-profit corporations that must consider the interests of customers not interested in e-sports. Therefore, the rules created might be beneficial for the company but not the sport. Source: <https://medium.com/@heyimJoost/esports-governance-and-its-failures-9ac7b3ec37ea> This problem with governance also has the potential to create unfairness.
4. Impact: the Olympics are about athletic excellence, something it is only possible to do if individual achievement can be accurately assessed. Given the potential for cheating in e-sports, this is not the case. The Olympics already has issues with cheating (like the Russian doping scandal) and letting in e-sports will make these issues worse. This will ruin the Olympics reputation and disadvantage honest, hardworking players who are not cheating or hacking.

E-sports do not align with Olympic values:

1. E-sports has significant discrimination problems: e-sports has a widespread problem with discrimination against women. Female players often receive threats and harassment. Stephanie Harvey, a top Counter-Strike competitor says, “it’s an extremely toxic environment for women...to be a woman in esports, you have to have a thick skin.” Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/21/technology/personaltech/video-game-makers-try-to-get-better-at-luring-women-to-esports.html> This rampant discrimination proves that e-sports is not ready for a larger stage. In fact, giving e-sports a larger platform will amplify this issue and seem to condone the harassment that women currently face.

2. E-sports can be violent: many e-sport games, like Overwatch, Quake, and Counter-Strike, are first-person shooter games in which the player takes part in simulated murder. Since the Olympic values include friendship and solidarity, such games clearly do not fit with the Olympic mission. Source: <https://www.olympic.org/the-ioc/promote-olympism> In fact, they could cause major diplomatic incidents. For example, imagine a final match between North and South Korea—while the violence might be simulated, the potential for an online conflict to become a real-life war is too dangerous to allow. The Olympics specifically supports the goal of “peace through sport” something that simulated murder does not support or help teach to youth around the world. Source: <https://www.olympic.org/the-ioc/promote-olympism>
3. Impact: e-sports will counteract the Olympic message and undermine the goals of peace, friendship, and solidarity. This will make the Olympics a weaker organization able to do less good in the world.
4. Impact: introducing e-sports to the Olympics would give them a larger audience of fans. These individuals would then be introduced to the discrimination and violence inherent in the e-sports industry. We should not seek to expose more children to online harassment or graphic violence.