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ACAC Expanding into eSports on a Trial Basis

Edmonton, AB, October 23, 2020 - The ACAC is taking preliminary steps to explore expansion from traditional post-secondary sport competition into the growing world of eSports. A pilot ACAC sponsored online eSport competition is scheduled to take place on November 21, 2020 and could potentially involve participants from 17 or more Alberta post-secondary institutions.

In partnership with the recently formed Alberta Esports Association (AESA), this event will offer the familiar Smash Bros Ultimate game, played on the Nintendo Switch console. The popularity of the game and the ease of play is expected to attract existing eSports participants and foster new connections between students interested in eSports with each campus athletics department. This initiative supports the wider movement to legitimize gaming from the commonly held perception as a recreational activity. The ACAC understands how eSports share a number of similarities with traditional sports competed at the post-secondary level. Grassroots competitions at the community and provincial level combined with coaching other similar developmental activities mimic the experiences of traditional sport athletes. Developmental pathways facilitate the progression of the best participants to national and even professional levels of eSport competition.

The International Olympic Committee recently welcomed eSports into the quadrennial Games program which further reinforces the proposed integration of eSports within the ACAC's existing sport offerings.

Discussions about hosting an ACAC sponsored eSports competition have occurred in the past however conditions created by the challenges of Covid-19 restrictions accelerated ACAC planning. This is a pilot project to evaluate interest amongst the post-secondary student population and additional events may be scheduled in the future based upon the outcome of a post-event review.

Alberta Esports Association (AESA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to connecting gaming communities, and fostering growth through the efforts of community collaboration and the support of industry partnerships. Information about AESA can be found at esportsalberta.ca.

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