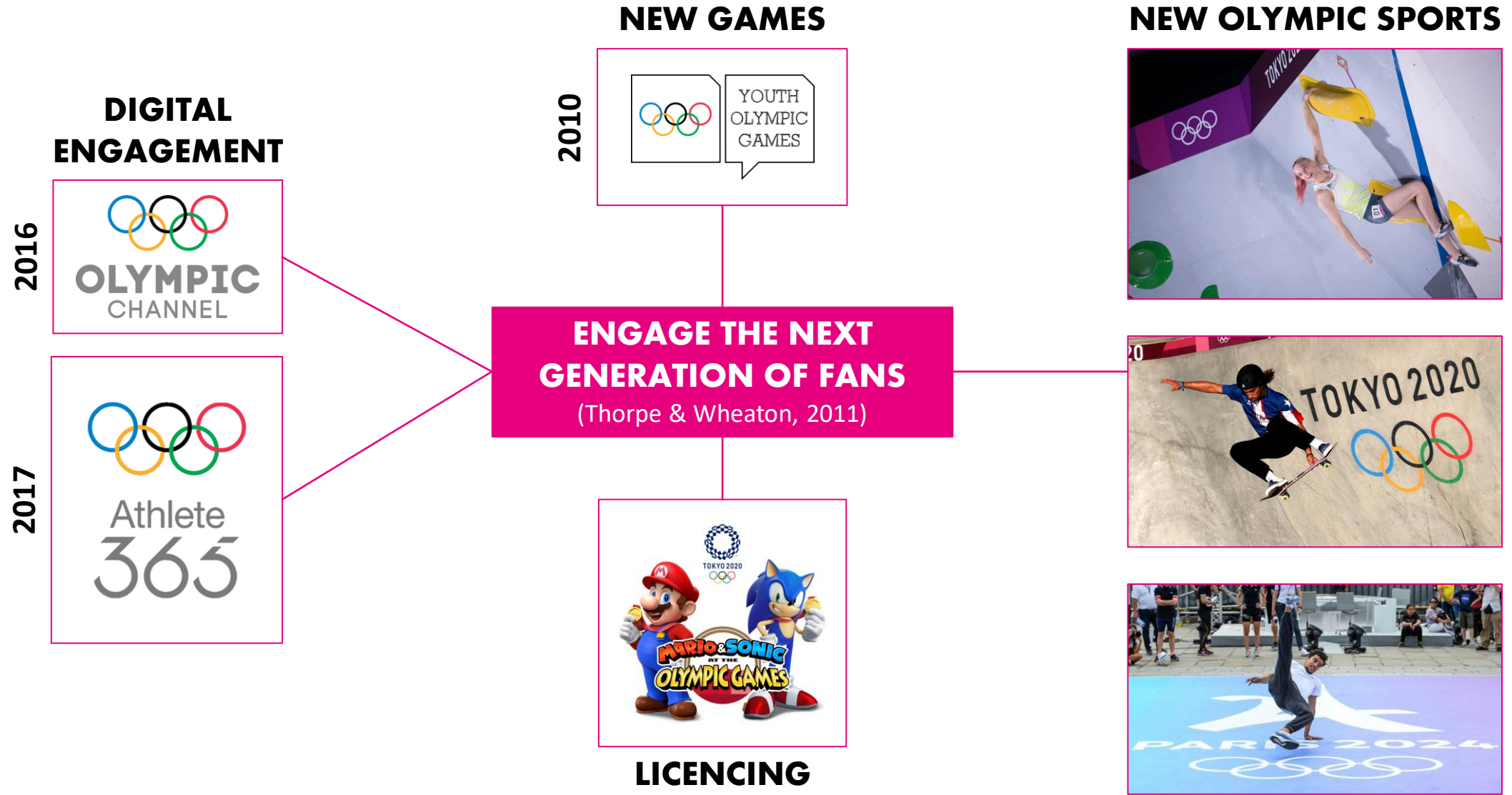


ÉTAT DES LIEUX DE L'ESPORT DANS LA DIMENSION OLYMPIQUE

Nicolas BESOMBES
MCF STAPS
Université Paris Cité
Institut des Sciences du Sport-Santé de Paris (URP 3625)

CONTEXT: Rejuvenating Olympics Audience



CONTEXT: The Olympic Movement's Interest For Esports

« **We have to look at it** [esports], because we can't say "it's not us".
This is not about the Olympics.
Young people are interested in esports and that sort of thing.
Let's take a look at all this. **Let's meet them.**
Let's see if we can make some connections. »

Tony ESTANGUET – OCOG 2024 President – August 9, 2017



« We are not yet 100 percent clear whether esports is really sport,
with regard to physical activity and what it needs to be considered as a sport.
But **if ever somebody is competing at playing football
or other sports virtually, this is of high interest.**
We hope that, then, these players are really delivering sports performance. »

Thomas BACH – IOC President – August 30, 2017

LITERATURE REVIEW: An Emerging Research Theme

Academic work on the relationship between esports & Olympics are relatively recent and rare.

If the integration of esports within the Olympic & Paralympic Games (**Miah & Fenton, 2020**) can be seen as the **culmination of the process of esports international institutionalization** (**Witkowski, 2016**), it proves to be complex in many aspects, whether it be because of:

- I. the **“esports distribution”**, which is mostly restricted to certain geographical areas (South-East Asia, North America and Europe) and to the younger generations (**Wu, 2019**)
- II. the **private, commercial and monopolistic aspect** of video game publishers (**Gries, 2019**)
- III. the **lack of legitimate national and international esports governing bodies** and the **violence inherent in certain types of esports** (e.g., first-person shooter games) would not be easily compatible with the values of Olympism (**Pack & Hedlund, 2020**)
- IV. the supposed **lack of values in the esports industry**, even though IOC policies are enthralled by commercialisation and not solely values-based (**Abanazir, 2021**)
- V. **esports is no a sport**, although it looks like it and is recognized by sport governing bodies in some countries (**Parry, 2021**)

In this respect, some authors propose to **include esports “at” the Olympics as medals events within the cultural program** (**Miah, 2021**)

RESULTS: The Olympic Strategy Evolution

FIGURING OUT THE « WHAT »

Connect & understand the ecosystem, design a vision

DATE	TAGS
08 DEC 2018	OLYMPIC NEWS, IOC NEWS, PRESS RELEASE
28 OCT 2018	OLYMPIC NEWS, IOC NEWS, PRESS RELEASE

IOC NEWS

COMMUNIQUE OF THE 7TH OLYMPIC SUMMIT

AT THE INVITATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE, THE LEADING REPRESENTATIVES OF THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT MET IN LAUSANNE TODAY FOR THE 7TH OLYMPIC SUMMIT.

The Olympic Movement and esports/egames

Recognising the fact that the sports movement is in competition with the esports/egames industry for the leisure time of young people, the Summit agreed that the Olympic Movement should not ignore its growth, particularly because of its popularity among young generations around the world. It was agreed that competitive gaming entails physical activity which can be compared to that required in more traditional sports. This, on the other hand, cannot necessarily be said to apply to leisure electronic gaming. For this reason, the use of the term sport with regard to esports/egames needs further dialogue and study.

It was agreed that the Olympic Movement should continue to engage with this community, whilst at the same time acknowledging that uncertainties remain. It was noted that:

- some egames are not compatible with the Olympic values and therefore cooperation with them is excluded;
- the industry is evolving rapidly, with the changing popularity of specific games and the rapid development towards augmented reality and virtual reality;
- the industry is fragmented in nature, with tough competition between commercial operators; and
- the industry is commercially driven, while on the other hand the sports movement is values-based.

For all these reasons, a discussion about the inclusion of esports/egames as a medal event on the Olympic programme is premature.

The Summit advises major sports events organisers within the Olympic Movement to respect this principle for their own competitions.

A number of these uncertainties do not apply to esports simulation games. Because of this, accelerated cooperation with regard to these kinds of esports is encouraged by the Summit. The Summit encourages the IFs to explore the potential benefits and applications of the electronic and virtual versions of their sports, while:

- ensuring they gain or retain appropriate control over the electronic/virtual versions of their sports; and
- restricting their engagement to activation in the e-versions and virtual forms of their traditional sports.

2017

2018

October : Olympic Summit 2017
Public Statement

February : IEM PyeongChang
WOG 2018

July : Esports Forum
Lausanne

October : Olympism in Action Forum
YOG 18' Activation
Buenos Aires

November : IF Forum
Lausanne

December : Olympic Summit
Public Statement

IOC NEWS

COMMUNIQUE OF THE OLYMPIC SUMMIT

The development of "eSports"

- Esports proplayers could be considered as athletes
- Open the dialogue

IOC NEWS

COMMUNIQUE OF THE 7TH OLYMPIC SUMMIT

The Olympic Movement and esports/egames

- Esports within the sports program is premature
- ELG creation

RESULTS: The Olympic Strategy Evolution

FIGURING OUT THE « WHAT »

Connect & understand the ecosystem, design a vision

DEVELOPING THE « HOW »

Develop an action-based strategy to reach the vision

DATE

07 DEC 2019

TAGS

OLYMPIC
NEWS, IOC
NEWS, PRESS
RELEASE

DECLARATION OF THE 8TH OLYMPIC SUMMIT

ESPORTS AND GAMING

The Olympic Summit received a report from the Chair of the Esports and Gaming Liaison Group, UCI President David Lappartient, on the recommendations to promote the Olympic sports and the Olympic values in Esports and gaming.

The Summit agreed on a two-speed approach:

- With regard to electronic games simulating sports, the Summit sees great potential for cooperation and incorporating them into the sports movement. Many sports simulations are becoming more and more physical thanks to Virtual and Augmented Reality which replicate the traditional sports.

The International Federations are encouraged to consider how to govern electronic and virtual forms of their sport and explore opportunities with game publishers.

- With regard to other electronic games, the Summit concluded that, at this stage, the sports movement should focus on players and gamers rather than on specific games. This focus on individuals should promote the participation in sport and its benefits as well as healthy lifestyle at all levels, including a health management model for elite esports competitors including both physical and mental health.

A continuous dialogue between the Olympic Movement and Esports and gaming communities should be fostered to develop strategic partnerships, including platforms and events as appropriate. The participants also agreed that guidelines for sustainable relationships between sports stakeholders and Esports communities should be developed.



February : IEM PyeongChang
WOG 2018

July : Esports Forum
Lausanne

October : Olympism in Action Forum
YOG 18' Activation
Buenos Aires

November : IF Forum
Lausanne

November : ELG Meeting #2
Lausanne

June : ELG Meeting #1
Los Angeles

2017

2018

2019

October : Olympic Summit 2017
Public Statement

December : Olympic Summit 2018
Public Statement

December : Olympic Summit 2019
Public Statement

IOC NEWS

COMMUNIQUE OF THE OLYMPIC SUMMIT

The development of "eSports"

- Esports proplayers could be considered as athletes
- Open the dialogue

IOC NEWS

COMMUNIQUE OF THE 7TH OLYMPIC SUMMIT

The Olympic Movement and esports/egames

- Esports within the sports program prematured
- ELG creation

NEWS

DECLARATION OF THE 8TH OLYMPIC SUMMIT ESPORTS AND GAMING

- IFs must govern the virtual versions of their sports

RESULTS: The Olympic Strategy Evolution

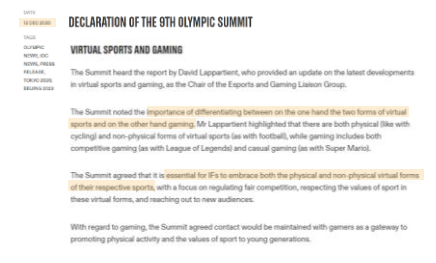
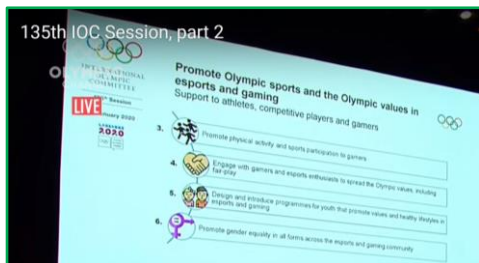
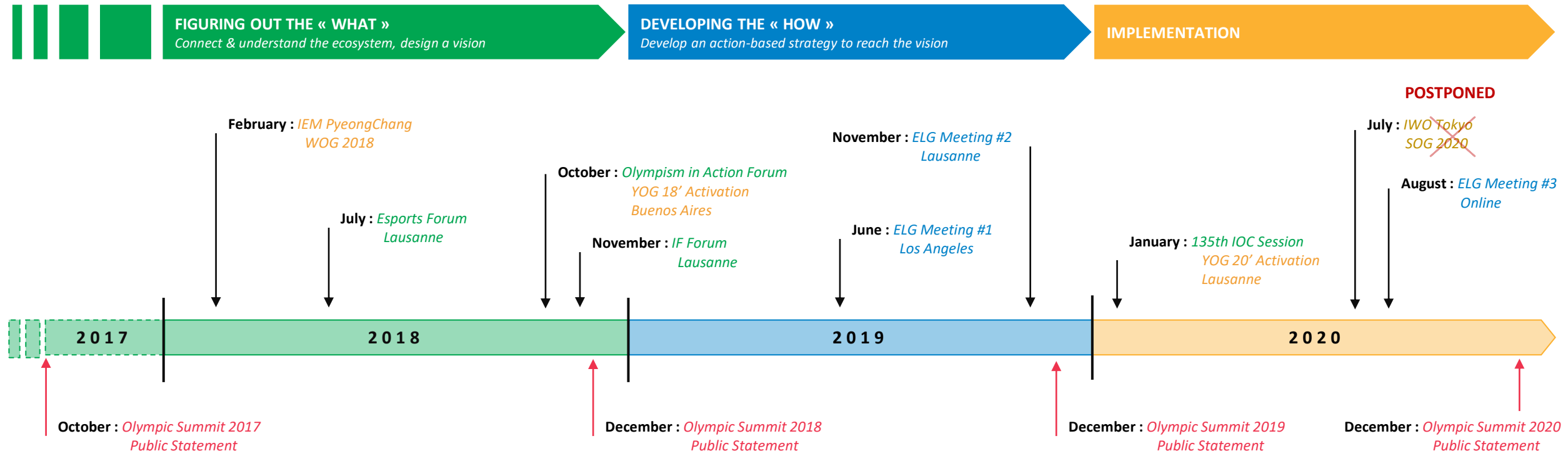
FIGURING OUT THE « WHAT »

Connect & understand the ecosystem, design a vision

DEVELOPING THE « HOW »

Develop an action-based strategy to reach the vision

IMPLEMENTATION



RESULTS: The Olympic Strategy Evolution

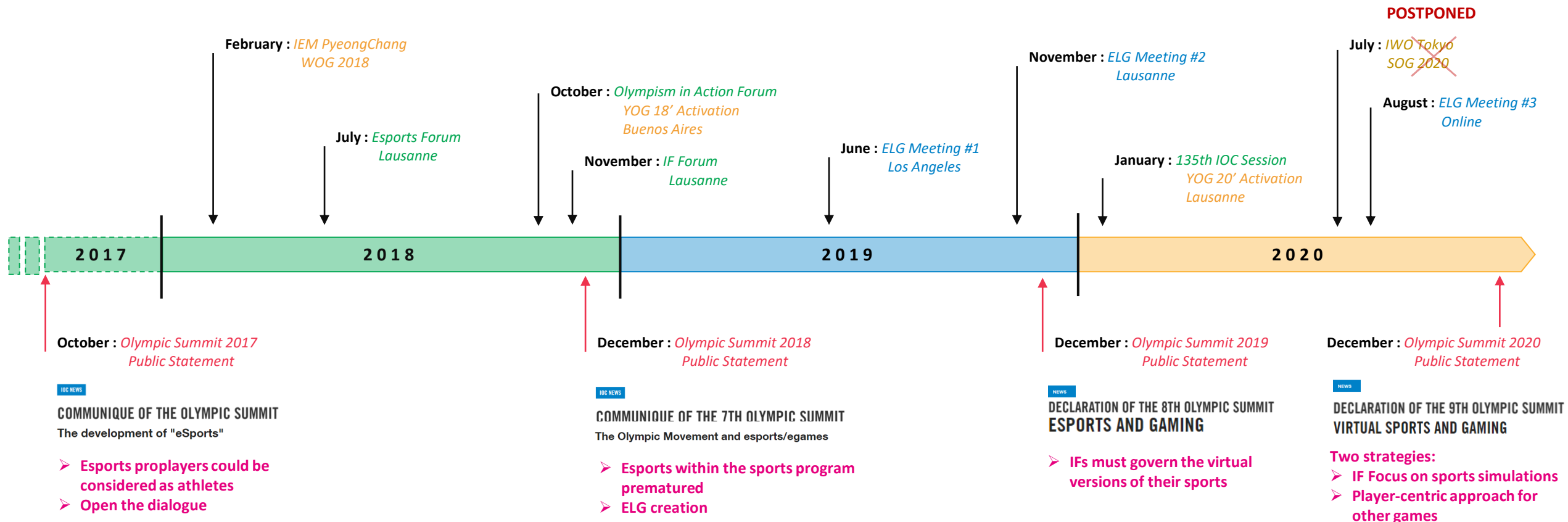
FIGURING OUT THE « WHAT »

Connect & understand the ecosystem, design a vision

DEVELOPING THE « HOW »

Develop an action-based strategy to reach the vision

IMPLEMENTATION (POSTPONED)



RESULTS: An Affirmed And Embodied Choice

2017

IOC NEWS

COMMUNIQUE OF THE OLYMPIC SUMMIT

The development of "eSports"



2018

IOC NEWS

COMMUNIQUE OF THE 7TH OLYMPIC SUMMIT

The Olympic Movement and esports/egames



2019

NEWS

DECLARATION OF THE 8TH OLYMPIC SUMMIT

ESPORTS AND GAMING



2020

NEWS

DECLARATION OF THE 9TH OLYMPIC SUMMIT

VIRTUAL SPORTS AND GAMING



David LAPPARTIENT – UCI President & ELG Chairperson



ZWIFT – Physical Virtual Sport

RESULTS: Redefining the Types of Games

WHAT IS ESPORTS FOR THE ESPORTS COMMUNITIES & INDUSTRY

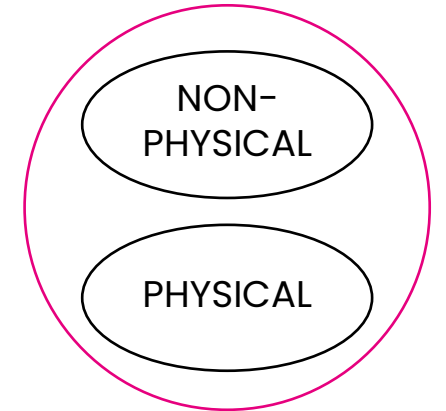
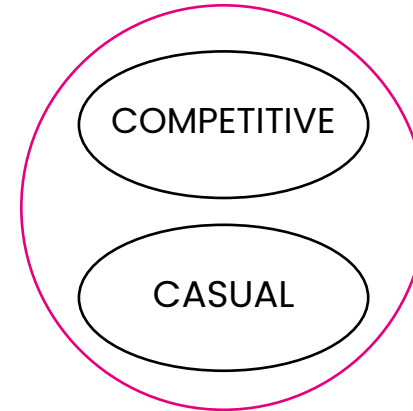
	GENRE	SUBGENRE	GAMES (Examples)
ESPORTS	Shooting Games	FPS	CSGO, OW, COD, etc.
		TPS	Splatoon
		BR	Fortnite, PUBG, etc.
	Fighting Games	2D GROUND	SF, MK, KOF, etc.
		2D AIR / ANIME	Guilty Gear, Blazblue, etc.
		3D	Tekken, Soul Calibur, etc.
		PLATFORMER	SSB Ultimate, Brawlhalla
	Strategy Games	RTS	SC2
		MOBA	LoL, Dota 2, Arena of Valor
		AUTOBATTLERS	TFT, Dota Underlords
		TOWER DEFENSE	Clash Royale, Clash of Clan
	Card Games	TURN BASED	Hearthstone, MTG Arena
	Sports Video Games	SPORTS SIMULATIONS	FIFA, NBA 2K, etc.
		SIM RACING	rFactor, Project Cars, etc.
		ARCADE	Rocket League, Trackmania

WHAT ARE « VIRTUAL SPORTS » FOR THE IOC

~~ESPORTS~~

VIDEO GAMING

VIRTUAL SPORTS



GENRE	SUBGENRE	GAMES (Examples)
Virtual Sports	NON-PHYSICAL	FIFA, NBA 2K, Virtual Regatta, Gran Turismo, eBaseball
	PHYSICAL	Zwift, World Rowing

 **OLYMPIC VIRTUAL SERIES**
OFFICIAL LICENSED EVENT



RIO

SAILING

Non-Physical VS

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 **OLYMPIC VIRTUAL SERIES**
OFFICIAL LICENSED EVENT

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CYCLING

Physical VS



ROWING

Physical VS



BASEBALL

Non-Physical VS

 **OLYMPIC VIRTUAL SERIES**
OFFICIAL LICENSED EVENT

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シュート
129 km/h

published by
KONAMI



RACING

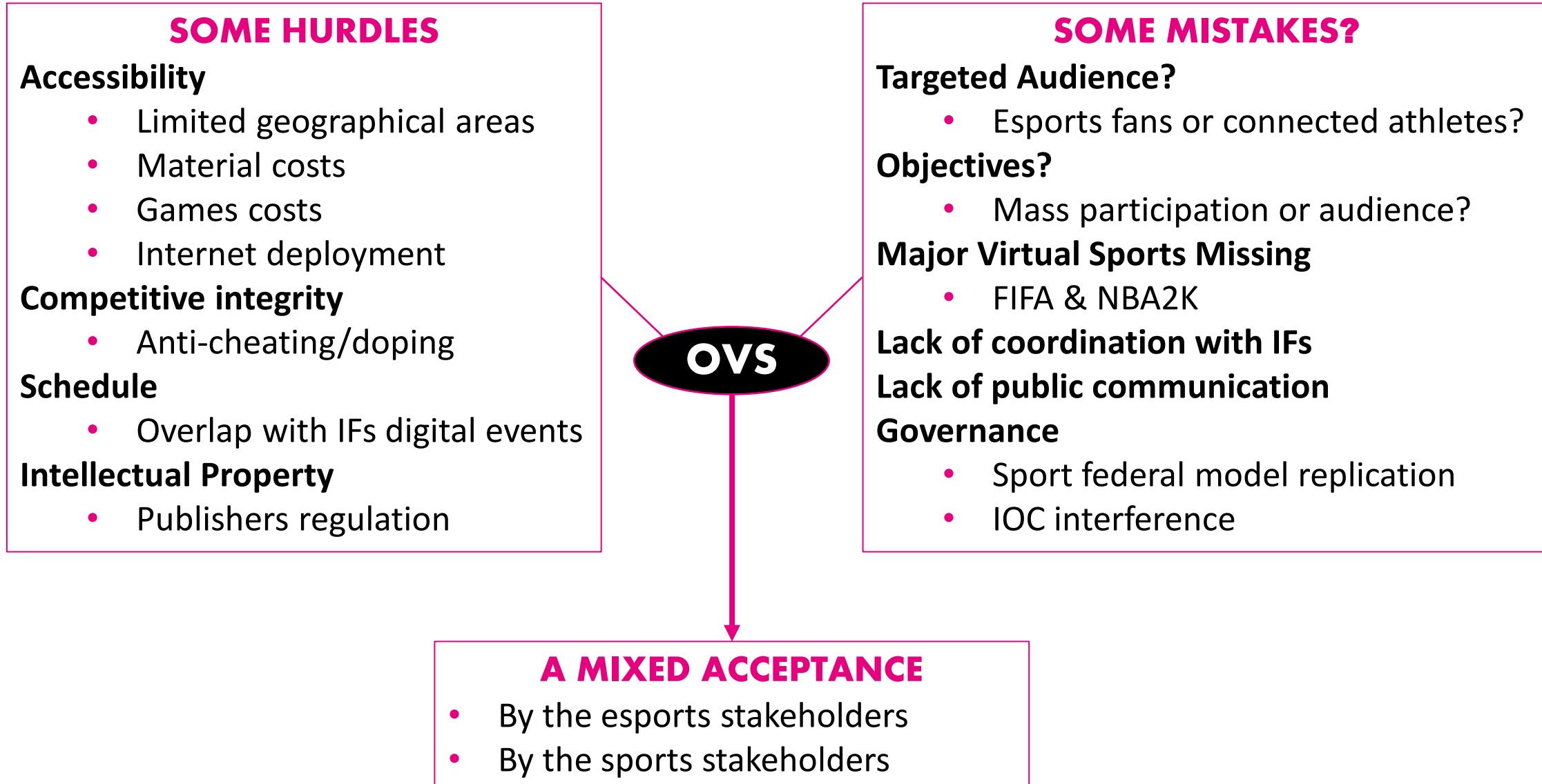
Non-Physical VS

 **OLYMPIC VIRTUAL SERIES**
OFFICIAL LICENSED EVENT

Available on Gran Turismo™ Sport

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RESULTS: OVS, A Missed Opportunity?



CONCLUSION & PERSPECTIVES

PARADOX OF VIRTUAL SPORTS

By so much imitating in a realistic way the real sports, what is the added value of virtual sports as a broadcasted show compared to the real sports they simulate?

HOWEVER...

*"We open the door to the possibility of seeing **physical forms of virtual sports** like Zwift (virtual cycling) or rowing, these types of **physical simulations could integrate the Olympic program in the future.***

*The Olympic program of Paris 2024 is already finalized but **for Los Angeles this door is open**".*

Kit McConnell – IOC Director of Sports – June 1st, 2021



OLYMPIC AGENDA 2020+5

15 RECOMMENDATIONS

Background to recommendation 9: Encourage the development of virtual sports and further engage with video gaming communities

It is important to note the difference between on the one hand the two forms of virtual sports and on the other hand video gaming. There are both physical (such as cycling) and non-physical forms of virtual sports (such as football), while video gaming includes both competitive gaming (such as League of Legends) and casual gaming (such as Super Mario).

Throughout the impacts of COVID-19, the gaming industry has continued to grow, highlighted by a 30% growth in gamers, 75% growth in gaming usage and the industry being worth an estimated USD 159 billion in 2020. This growth has been mirrored in virtual sport, where several IFs have leveraged the virtual forms of their respective sports to engage with the youth demographic and hosted their own virtual competitions.

The IOC aims to build on this by assisting IFs to develop virtual and simulated forms of their sport. As these virtual sports develop, the roles and responsibilities of IFs around virtual sports will increase. Therefore, it is important that IFs ensure good governance and necessary regulations around sports simulations (cf. recommendation 1).

Keeping in mind youth's affinity with video games and digital entertainment, creating unique Olympic products and experiences through virtual forms of sport will grow direct engagement with people. This is in line with the IOC digital strategy. The objective of this direct engagement is to encourage sports participation and promote the Olympic values with a special focus on youth.

In addition, these products and experiences can fill the gap between virtual sports and the Olympic Games, creating valuable brand associations with IFs and their respective virtual sports. This could include looking at feasibility studies to anticipate potential proposals from IFs to include their respective physical virtual sports in the Olympic programme for future editions of the Olympic Games.

Video games are bringing communities together with people gathering around their passion. By entering strategic partnerships with those communities at a regional level, sports organisations can reach youth demographics outside of their direct environment and get these youth engaged in sport while reaching out to new populations (cf. recommendation 12).

As elite esports and gaming competitors are relatively new to the highly competitive environment, they have more limited access to resources than athletes in traditional sports. The IOC recognises these challenges and aims to adapt various existing tools and resources to support them in different fields such as gender equality, mental and physical health, competition integrity and career transition.

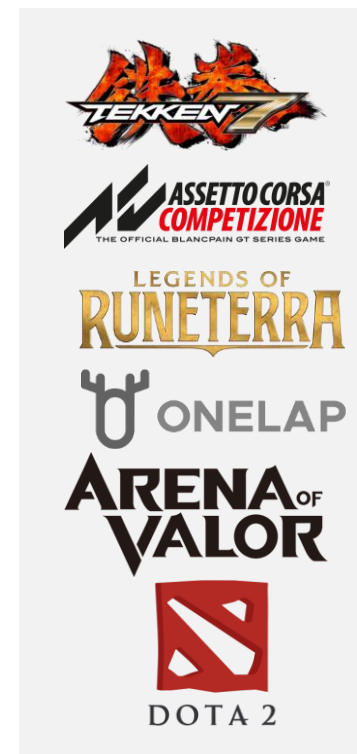
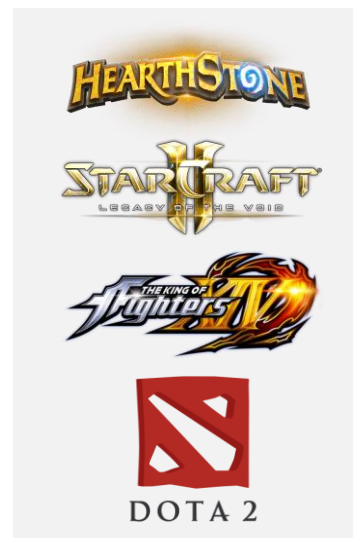
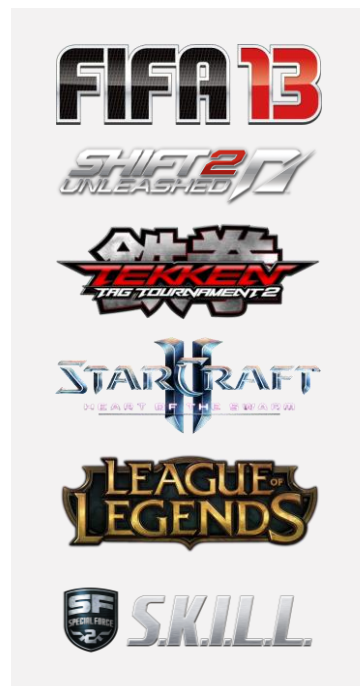
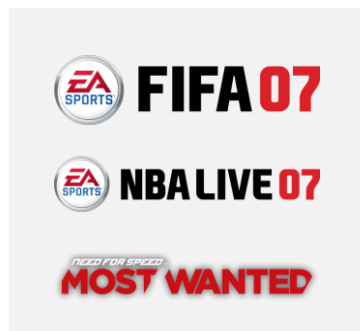
	SPORTIZATION OF VIDEOGAMING				DIGIT(AL)IZATION OF SPORTS	
	ESPORTS (= competitive video gaming)				VIRTUAL SPORTS	
					NON-PHYSICAL & PHYSICAL	EXCLUSIVELY PHYSICAL
EVENTS	Asian Indoor & Martial Arts Games (AIMAG)	South East Asian Games (SEA)	Asian Games	Intel Extreme Masters (IEM) Intel World Open (IWO)	Olympic Virtual Series (OVS)	Olympic Games (OG) ?
OLYMPIC LEVEL	Continental	Regional	Continental	International	International	International
YEARS & LOCATIONS	2007 (Macau) 2013 (Incheon) 2017 (Ashgabat) 2023 (Bangkok)	2019 (Philippines) 2022 (Hanoi)	2018 (Jakarta) 2022 (Hangzhou)	2018 (PyeongChang) 2021 (Tokyo / online) 2022 (Beijing / online) 2024 (Paris) ?	2021 (online) 2022 (Beijing / online) ?	2028 (Los Angeles) ?
SELECTED VIDEO GAMES	Dota 2 StarCraft 2 Hearthstone FIFA 07 & 13 Tekken Tag 2 et Tekken 7 King of Fighter XIV Need for Speed Arena of Valor Assetto Corsa Legends of Runeterra Onelap eCycling	Dota 2 StarCraft 2 Arena of Valor Hearthstone Tekken 7 Mobile Legends League of Legends FIFA Online 4 Wild Rift PUBG Mobile Free Fire	Arena of Valor Hearthstone Dota 2 PES 2018 League of Legends StarCraft 2 Clash Royale PUBG Mobile FIFA online 4 Street Fighter V Three Kingdoms	StarCraft 2 Street Fighter V Rocket League Dota 2	eBaseball Powerful eCycling (Zwift) eRowing Virtual Regatta Gran Turismo Sport	eCycling (Zwift) ? eRowing ?
Olympic Movement's Stakeholders involved	Olympic Council of Asia (OCA)	Olympic Council of Asia (OCA)	Olympic Council of Asia (OCA)	International Olympic Committee (IOC) The Olympic Partners (TOP)	International Olympic Committee (IOC) International Federations (IFs)	International Olympic Committee (IOC) International Federations (IFs)
Esports' Stakeholders involved	Asian Esports Federation (AESF)	Philippine Esports Organization (PESO) Vietnam Electronic Sports & Entertainment Association (VIRESA)	Asian Esports Federation (AESF)	ESL	DreamHack Sports	?
Olympic Sport ?	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES , it could be considered as an Olympic Sport under the control of the IFs

ASIAN INDOOR & MARTIAL ARTS GAMES (AIMAG)

SANCTIONED BY THE OLYMPIC COUNCIL OF ASIA (OCA)

© Nico Besombes – Jan 2022

POSTPONED
in 2023



SOUTHEAST ASIAN GAMES (SEA)

SANCTIONED BY THE OLYMPIC COUNCIL OF ASIA (OCA)

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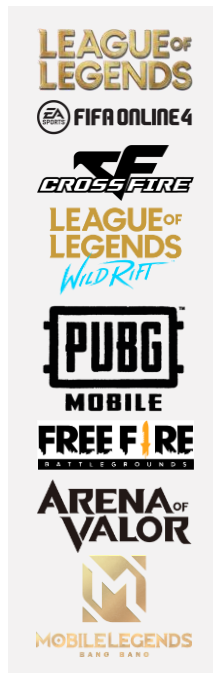
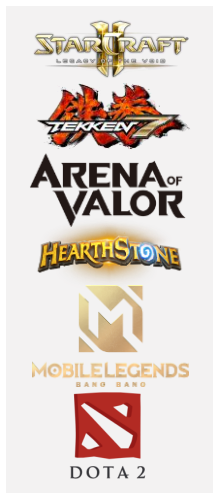
POSTPONED
in 2022



PHILIPPINES 2019
30th SEA GAMES



31st SEA GAMES
HANOI 2021



ASIAN GAMES

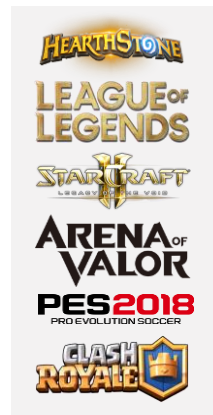
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DEMONSTRATION
SPORT



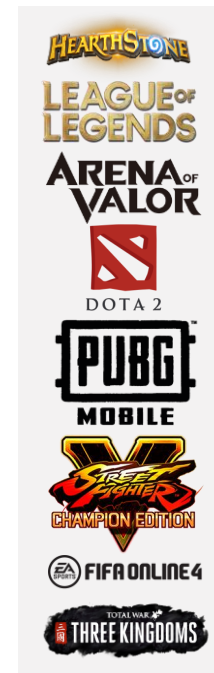
18th ASIAN GAMES
Jakarta
Palembang
2018



MEDAL SPORT

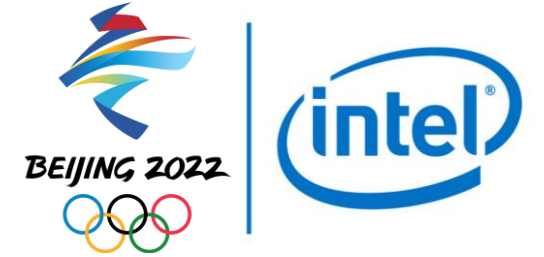
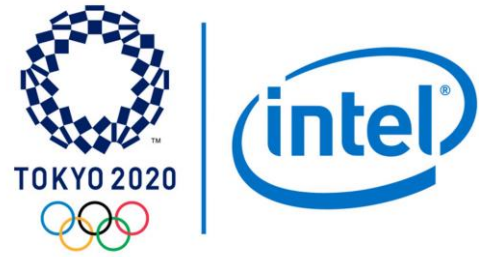


19th Asian Games
Hangzhou 2022



INTEL EXTREME MASTERS (IEM) & INTEL WORLD OPEN (IWO) UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF THE OLYMPIC PARTNERS (TOP)

© Nicolas Besombes – Jan 2022



OLYMPIC VIRTUAL SERIES (OVS)

UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE (IOC)

© Nicolas Besombes – Jan 2022

2021



**OLYMPIC
VIRTUAL SERIES**

**Virtual
Regatta**



ZWIFT



2022



**OLYMPIC
VIRTUAL SERIES**

