See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/353211608

Esports Will Not Be at the Olympics

CITATION	S	READS	
0		61	
1 autho	r:		
	Jim Parry		
	Charles University in Prague		
	99 PUBLICATIONS 677 CITATIONS		
	SEE PROFILE		

Models of bodily experience in the theoretical foundations of experiential education and its kinanthropological context (GAČR 16-

Review View project

19311S) View project

Forum: The Future of Esports at the Olympics

Esports Will Not Be at the Olympics

Jim Parry

Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic s.j.parry@leeds.ac.uk

Over the past three or four years, there has been much discussion and negotiation over the place of esports—both as sports and as acceptable sports—on the Olympic program. In this short time, many actors have shifted position, and the terminology (what, exactly, count as esports?) has become confused. In this article, I will try to set out the debates as they relate to the Olympic Games, chart the terminological terrain, and suggest some proposals for the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to consider as they develop their own policies on the topic.

Hitherto, the most popular esports have been first-person shooter or war strategy games, which have been seen by the IOC as ethically problematic from the start. More recently, however, we see a sustained effort on the part of international sporting federations—notably, FIFA, the world governing body of soccer—to employ computer-game versions of their sport in the interests of "growing" their sport, in terms of increasing the "engagement" of fans and providing new sources of income by monetizing identity rights.

My question is whether esports might (or should) be at the Olympics. My answer is "obviously not." But it is a bit more complicated than that. In a previous article, "E-sports Are Not Sports," I argued that those "most popular" esports do not count as Olympic-type sports, which are defined as "institutionalised, rule-governed contests of human physical skill." I explicitly left out of consideration the status of other kinds of computer games because I was most concerned with those games that are currently most popular, that are currently being touted as sports, and that are currently seeking the recognition of various agencies (visa issuers, universities,

Journal of Olympic Studies Vol. 2 No. 2 Fall 2021 © 2021 by the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois

JOS_2_2_text.indd 1 7/6/21 9:56 PM

mega-sport event organizers, media outlets, etc.) as sports. In particular, given my definition of sport as "Olympic" sport, I was especially concerned with those computer games whose owners are currently seeking the recognition of the IOC as Olympic sports, such as League of Legends and FIFA 21.

The conclusion of the previous article was that sedentary competitive computer games such as these do not count as Olympic-type sport on the grounds that they are inadequately "human"; they lack direct physicality; they fail to employ decisive whole-body control and whole-body skills and cannot contribute to the development of the whole human; and their patterns of creation, production, ownership, and promotion place serious constraints on the emergence of the kind of stable and persisting institutions characteristic of sports governance.

The aspirations of esports to gain admission onto the Olympic program therefore fail at the first hurdle, since the answer to the question "are they Olympic-type sports?" is "no." Claims as to their popularity with youth, their similarities with sports (in terms of training, preparation, physical demand, spectatorship, etc.), their institutionalization, and their ethical status are all beside the point. If esports are not sports to begin with, other considerations are otiose. Too often, discussion of, for example, surfing, break dancing or esports begins with descriptions of their popularity and their appeal to youth, but these are second-hurdle issues. The logically prior question to be answered before considering their popularity with the youth demographic is, Are they sports? The same applies to the ethical objections of the IOC regarding the unacceptable violence in some computer games. Those objections may well hold, but conceptual objections about whether esports are sports come first.

Remember, the question "are they Olympic-type sports?" is just the first hurdle. There are hundreds of Olympic-type sports that do clear the first hurdle yet for various reasons have never been, and remain unlikely ever to be, accepted on to the Olympic program, such as lacrosse, jai alai, sepak takraw, or croquet. Thus, the esports question should be recognized as not just a question about esports but rather as also about the competing claims of many sports that have already been recognized by the IOC as Olympic-type sports.

To see where esports fit into the conversation about the Olympic program, let us begin by dispensing with three poor arguments for the status of esports as sports: the Argument from Resemblance, the Argument from Recognition, and the Argument from Acceptance.

The Argument from Resemblance

There are those who wish to assert that sport is religion, or that sport is drama. Often, their tactic is to try to show resemblances between sport and religion, or sport and drama. For example, sports fans "worship" their stars, Wembley is a "cathedral"

JOS 2 2 text.indd 2 7/6/21 9:56 PM of football, we "pray" for victory, and we have "faith" in our team; so, sport is a kind of religion. However, it seems that such arguments from resemblance show, at best, only that sport has *similarities* to religion; not that sport *is* a religion. Again, sport may resemble drama, and may exhibit dramatic qualities, but this does not mean that watching the Cup Final is the same as watching Othello. Such arguments from resemblance often fail to account for the relevant dissimilarities.

Similarly, it is often suggested that, because esports bear some resemblance to some quality or characteristic that has been attributed to sport (by someone, somewhere, at some time), this is evidence that esports are sports. Here are some "resemblance" examples. The following are often claimed as reasons that esport is just like sport:

- The esport "athlete" must train, prepare, be fit for the game, etc.
- Esport stars are as famous as sports stars.
- The industry is a signatory to the WADA Code.
- It has the same social mission as Olympism—to engage people in physical activity.
- Esports encourage family relationships—gaming with the children brings closeness.
- There is a global community, affording a sense of connectivity.
- Gaming takes place in special social spaces and environments.
- There are mass-spectator competitions, echoing sports festival rituals.³

Even "representatives of the Olympic Movement" echo these claims. At the 6th Olympic Summit, it was agreed that "competitive 'eSports' could be considered as a sporting activity, and the players involved prepare and train with an intensity which may be comparable to athletes in traditional sports." IOC President Bach also seems to acknowledge that professional preparation and esports competition imposes comparable physical demands and requires similar concentration, quick reactions, and tactical understanding as traditional sports. 5

Some of the above claims are highly questionable. But, even if we allow the claims of resemblance, none of them contributes to an argument showing that esports are sports—they can only show that esports *resemble* sports in some way. However, there are also very many non-sport activities that bear some resemblance to some quality or characteristic that has been attributed to sport. Many non-sports also resemble sports too. For example, mass-spectator competitions echo non-sport festivals. They look like a rock concert or a WWE Smackdown event, the latter of which is also not a sport, but rather a kind of soap-opera entertainment in the form of noncompetitive "wrestling."

Sometimes, the resemblance ploy takes an "alignment" form: the claim here is that, in future, all sport will become esport, because esport will "align" with sport

JOS_2_2_text.indd 3 7/6/21 9:56 PM

through processes such as "gamification," which will change spectators' experience of sport. Firstly, the spectator experience will be transformed—for example, the use of drones, allowing us to experience sport from the perspective of the drone. (But how does the "gamification" of the fan's experience of sport change sport into esport?)

Secondly, gamification may provide exercise and health benefits by "aligning" sport with gaming. For example, the computer game Zombies, Run incentivizes running (by running away from zombies). (But this kind of running is not sport.) Sport, health, and gaming, it is claimed, all come together to create new ways of exercising.⁷ (But this is mere exercise, not sport.)

Resemblance claims are an inherently weak form of argument. To show that A resembles B is a far shout from establishing that A is a kind of B. That is to say, any such resemblance claim requires further justification if it is to do any work—the claimant is asserting that some resemblance is significant.

The Argument from Recognition

Sometimes it is suggested that the recognition of esports as sports by some "official" organization is evidence of the growing status of esports and thus of the wider acceptance of the idea of esport as sport. For instance, there are many examples of "government recognition," evidenced by the issuing of official documents such as visas.⁸ Then there is recognition by sports authorities, such as sports ministries. "Esports Recognised as Official Sport by Pakistan," shrieks one headline. We should, however, note that Pakistan also recognizes chess, billiards and snooker, caving, mountaineering, and motorsport, all of which are just as unlikely to find themselves at the Olympics, since they are not Olympic-type sports. ¹⁰ Of course, like other sports ministries, the Pakistan Sports Board also recognizes many sports that, although they are unlikely to find a place on the Olympic program, are Olympic-type sports, such as sqay, gulli danda, kabbadi, and tent-pegging. The point is that recognition by some government department or some sports organization does not confer Olympic sport status on an activity.

The same applies to the practices of academia, both in its policies regarding both sport and the study of sport. With respect to sport itself, University Sport New Zealand has held an Esports Challenge Series "after a recent boom in esports in the nation, which is now part of many university sport programmes worldwide."11 However, while this media report mentions *League of Legends* and "fighting games," there is no mention of sport in the report but rather a focus on jobs in gaming development, promotion, and operations. It remains unclear what this has to do with "sports" departments, as opposed to sports management departments.

With respect to the study of sport, it appears that conceptual issues get short shrift from some voices in the sports management field. For example, Heere argues that, "regardless of whether e-sports qualify as sports, they should be examined in

JOS 2 2 text.indd 4 7/6/21 9:56 PM sport management because they are a manifestation of sportification.... As the sport industry itself is embracing e-sports as a sport, scholars should embrace e-sports." Heere's conclusion suggests that sports managers will manage anything that aggrandizes their profession, whether or not it really is a sport, and that it is against their interests to do too much thinking about what sport actually is.

Finally, it might even be thought that the IOC *in a sense* "recognizes" non-Olympic sports as sports. Indeed, since 1995, the IOC has had a category of "mind sports," including chess and bridge. ¹³ But it would be a mistake to read too much into this, because this kind of recognition is two-edged: it *includes* mind sports in the general category of sports-and-games *in order to* exclude them as Olympic sports—that is, as activities that might ever find themselves on the Olympic Games sports program. So, even if the IOC were *in a sense* to "recognize" esports as a special category of "sport," this would not argue in favor of their inclusion on the Olympic program; rather, it would betoken their recognition as non-Olympic sports.

The Argument from Acceptance (Esports "at" the Olympics?)

Sometimes it is suggested that the "acceptance" of esports by some sports organization is a significant development, and that their appearance at various Games venues as demonstration sports, or as separate but parallel events, is evidence of such acceptance. "Esports Is Coming to the Olympics After All" exclaims a headline announcing the acceptance of the possible roles of electronic applications at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games. Read on, though, and we are told that "while esports will not officially be on the programme at the 2024 Olympics in Paris, organisers last week revealed 'virtual and connected' events will be organised alongside sporting competitions." So, despite the early optimism of esports promoters for Olympic inclusion, those ambitions have had to be muted and downplayed.

When addressing the question of whether esports might (or should) be at the Olympics, I interpret the question as whether esports might (or should) find a place on the Olympic (Sports) program. However, there are other ways to interpret the phrase (the operative word here is "at"): McDonald's might be said to be "at" the Olympic Games, in that, as a TOP sponsor, it has a presence on Olympic sites and at Olympic events. Art used to be "at" the Olympic Games, in that the Summer Games included an Arts Program in addition to a Sports Program, and medals were awarded for both.

I was assuming that the question was whether esports might be "at" the Olympic Games in some more substantial sense, such as being on the Olympic program—not that esports might be "at" the Olympics in virtue of some commercial connection (as with McDonald's), nor even that "parallel" esports competitions might be held (as with the arts). McDonald's has nothing to do with sport, and the arts competitions were separate from the sports competitions. No, for me, the

JOS_2_2_text.indd 5 7/6/21 9:56 PM

question of whether esports will be "at" the Olympics means, Will esports ever be officially on the Olympic program? Isn't that what all the fuss is about?

Similarly, Morgan teases us with his report that "esports is coming to the Olympics": "'virtual and connected' events will be organised alongside sporting competitions, ... increasing engagement opportunities for fans and spectators." This includes the possibility of "virtual" sports events (not on the Olympic program) and a "connected" mass participation marathon event over the official course on the same day as the Olympic marathon. These seem to be exciting developments, promising to enhance our experience of the Games, and to realize the slogan of Paris 2024: "made for sharing." But the fact that these events are "coming to the Olympics" is not evidence that esports will (ever) be accepted on the Olympic program—it does not mean that they will be "at" the Olympics in that sense.

Esports have, however, been accepted as a medal event for the 2022 Asian Games.¹⁷ It is understandable that this would happen here first given the popularity of esports in Asia and the close connections of those with investments in esports and those in sports administration.¹⁸ However, I believe that when the organizers come to understand the "new" IOC rationale, discussed in the next section, they will come to regard their acceptance of esports on their sports program as a blunder. I predict that they will rapidly move toward an exclusion of "esports gaming," and will replace them with "virtual sports."

Olympic Summits, Esports, Virtual Sports, and Gaming

Now let us move to a consideration of "official" Olympic perspectives on the issue. At the IOC's invitation, "leading representatives of the Olympic Movement met in Lausanne on October 28, 2017, for the 6th Olympic Summit." They discussed several topics, including for the first time "the rapid development of what are called 'eSports,' and the current involvement of various Olympic Movement stakeholders." They agreed on the following:

- 'eSports' are showing strong growth, especially within the youth demographic across different countries, and can provide a platform for engagement with the Olympic Movement.
- Competitive 'eSports' could be considered as a sporting activity, and the players involved prepare and train with an intensity which may be comparable to athletes in traditional sports.
- To be recognized by the IOC as a sport, the content of "eSports" must not infringe on the Olympic values.
- · A further requirement for recognition by the IOC must be the existence of an organization guaranteeing compliance with the rules and regulations of the Olympic Movement (anti-doping, betting, manipulation, etc.).

JOS 2 2 text.indd 6 7/6/21 9:56 PM The Summit asked the IOC together with General Assembly of International Sport Federations (GAISF) in a dialogue with both the gaming industry and players to explore this area further and to come back to the Olympic Movement stakeholders in due course.¹⁹

Whereas the 6th Olympic Summit considered "the development of 'esports," the 9th Olympic Summit, held in Lausanne on December 12, 2020, continued the discussion under the heading of "Virtual Sports and Gaming," in a report presented by David Lappartient, chair of the Esports and Gaming Liaison Group. The change of title indicates the emergence of important conceptual distinctions and a significant change of emphasis. Notice that we already have three terms in play: esports, gaming, and virtual sports. However, from this point on, the term "esports" is not mentioned again (rather, "gaming" is preferred).

A significant distinction is made between virtual sports and gaming—significant enough for the IOC to consider support for virtual sport in the coming Olympic programs and *not* for gaming. However, neither term is defined, and each is only minimally clarified, so we must attempt a reconstruction of the rationale employed.

Virtual sports are of two distinct kinds: physical and nonphysical. Physical virtual sports (such as stationary cycling on the platform Zwift) seem to require "direct physicality," akin to real sport; while nonphysical virtual sports (such as ice hockey on *EA Sports NHL 21*) do not. Significantly, this concedes the point that nonphysical virtual sports are, after all, just computer games, with sport as their content. On this account, nonphysical virtual sports are not sports.²¹

Gaming is also of two distinct kinds: competitive (such as *League of Legends*) and casual (such as games in the Super Mario franchise).

These distinctions raise several questions, as we interrogate their adequacy:

- On what basis are virtual sports and gaming to be distinguished?
- On what basis are physical and nonphysical virtual sports to be distinguished?
- On what basis are competitive and casual gaming to be distinguished?
- Across the various virtual activities, what does "virtual" mean?
- And what is the future of "virtuality" in sport?

There is room here to address only the first two questions.

It appears that the main distinction between virtual sports and gaming has been made based on content. Virtual sports have sport as their content; gaming does not. Significantly, this seems to suggest that gaming has no claim to be sport, while virtual sports seem to be (in some way or another) connected to real sport.

While physical virtual sports appear to be physically distinct from gaming, nonphysical virtual sports, such as *NBA 2K21* (basketball), are dependent on typical gaming controls and other hardware identical to that of competitive computer

JOS_2_2_text.indd 7 7/6/21 9:56 PM

games. The only significant difference between the computer games FIFA 21 and League of Legends is that sport forms the content of the former. Apart from their differing content, it is hard to see how else they differ.

This suggests that the Summit might have developed three categories, based on the sporting criteria of physicality and competition:

- Physical virtual sport (which is physical and competitive)
- Nonphysical virtual sport and competitive gaming (which is competitive, but not physical)
- Casual gaming (which is not necessarily competitive, and not necessarily physical)

The difference between the 9th Summit distinction and my alternative threecategory suggestion can be represented as follows:

TABLE I. 9th Summit Suggestion

Virtual Sports	- physical - nonphysical
Gaming	- competitive - casual

TABLE 2. My Alternative Three-Category Suggestion

	Physical	Competitive
Physical virtual sports	✓	✓
Nonphysical virtual sports gaming + other forms of competitive gaming	X	✓
Casual gaming	?	?

The upshot of this is the creation of a category that cuts across the Summit's suggested distinction between virtual sports and gaming. I am suggesting that physical virtual sports might well be "real sports," but that nonphysical virtual sports are not, and neither is competitive gaming. The further suggestion is that the IOC's elision of these distinct categories is motivated by their desired policy outcomes. The recommendations of the 9th Summit for virtual sports were "for IFs (International Federations) to embrace both the physical and non-physical virtual forms of their respective sports, with a focus on regulating fair competition, respecting the values of sport in these virtual forms, and reaching out to new audiences." But their recommendations for gaming were to maintain contacts with gamers "as a gateway to promoting physical activity and the values of sport to young generations."22 Thus, the primary area of concern lies in encouraging the acceptance of both kinds of

JOS 2 2 text.indd 8 7/6/21 9:56 PM virtual sports by ISFs (because they both have sport as their content, regardless of their category difference). The secondary area of concern aims to bring Olympic values to everyone, including gaming competitors, regardless of games and genres—focusing on encouraging gamers at all levels either to participate in sport and/or pursue a healthy lifestyle. The IOC seems to have developed a policy that seeks to secure maximum leverage for its future association with esports. A three-pronged approach to all computer games seeks either to engage youth with sport (physical virtual sports); or to assist in the promotion and marketing of sport (nonphysical virtual sports); or to improve the health and values of all kinds of gamers through Olympic education.

The Quest for Inclusion

The Asian Electronic Sports Federation is at the forefront of efforts to secure Olympic Games inclusion: "We need national teams, and we need NOCs (National Olympic Committees) to recognise the national esports associations if we want to enter the Olympic family," says its president, Kenneth Fok. He continues: "We see entering the Asian Games as the first step for e-sports entering the Olympic Games." As noted above, esports were a demonstration sport at the 2018 Asian Games, and are scheduled to be a medal event in 2022.

The recently constituted Global Esports Federation (GEF) also has as its goal Olympic Games inclusion. Recently, however, the IOC warned ISFs not to join the GEF. In fact, David Lappartient, president of the International Cycling Union (UCI) and chair of the IOC's Esports and Gaming Liaison Group (ELG), "has written to all to the summer and winter International Federations telling them they do not plan to recognise any organisation as the world governing body for esports." ²⁴

Behind this news snippet is an interesting story. There are two federations competing for governance leadership, since the GEF was set up as a rival to the International Esports Federation (IESF), and there have been others too, for example, the World Esports Association (WESA). Since the launch of the GEF, several Olympic sports—including archery, canoeing, karate, modern pentathlon, surfing, tackwondo, and tennis—have become members. It will be interesting to see what happens to the GEF if the ISFs heed the IOC's strictures. The IESF, however, has not signed deals with any Olympic sports and instead channels its efforts into recruiting national esport federations and hosting the Esports World Championship, the organization's flagship competition where esports athletes represent their national teams. It is therefore styling itself as just another ISF, recruiting national federations. And in explaining the ELG's edict, its president, Vlad Marinescu, says that no ISF can belong to another ISF.

The Quest for Inclusion also takes the form of obfuscation, as evidenced in Miah and Fenton.²⁶ Firstly, they assert that there are "compelling reasons for

JOS_2_2_text.indd 9 7/6/21 9:56 PM

recognising esports as part of the definition of sport," but they do not actually give any of those reasons. Further, they do not say what they mean by "sport"—and, of course, anything can be part of sport, so long as "sport" remains undefined. Do they really mean that there are compelling reasons for recognizing esports as Olympic sports (which is what the IOC has just effectively denied)? Well, now it depends on how they will define esports and, again, we cannot find an answer. facilis descensus averni—that argument is an easy way to the purgatory of obfuscation.

However, they do offer a quote from Intel, which is worth repeating for the insights it yields: "Intel announced a long-term technology partnership to bring the company's leading technology to enhance the OG through 2024. Intel technology will show viewers the future of the Olympic Games—where greatness is experienced with Intel True VR, esports reaches a world stage, drones take wonder to new heights and 5G powers a connection that's faster and stronger than ever. With Intel technology, fans can do more than just watch the OG, they can experience them."²⁷ Here, Intel promises viewers an enhanced experience of the Games—a kind of TV on steroids. They promise digital innovations and enhanced digital experiences. However, they also throw in a mention of esports for good measure—presumably hoping that esports will be popularized (and monetized) by their association with the Olympics. There is an obvious elision here—Intel is mixing up the issue of esports inclusion (as sports) with the enhanced digitization of the sporting experience of spectators. The issues are separable—it is quite possible to relish the promise of enhanced digitization while opposing the claims of esport to be sport.

However, whilst Miah and Fenton give many examples of the "alignment" and growing "closeness" of the sports world and digital developments, and of relationships between companies and various interest groups, it remains clear that alignment and closeness are a long way from integration. Whatever the enthusiastic and wildly hopeful assertions of esports cheerleaders, alignment and closeness in no way entail that "the future of all sports is the integration of esport." The 9th Olympic Summit has put a stop to all such fancies, once and for all. It denied the status of sports to the most popular (non-sporting) computer games and denied the status of sporting computer games as "physical" activities. What is left is prey to an obfuscation of the issues—the future of all sports will obviously include the integration of digital developments of some kind but definitely not esports, unless there is to be further conceptual maneuvering and unclarity.

Conclusion

The IOC has made the right calls over the esports invasion issue. It has determined that the major (most popular) esports have little to do with sport, and the 9th Olympic Summit torpedoed their aspirations to Olympic status. Instead, the

JOS 2 2 text.indd 10 7/6/21 9:56 PM Summit championed "virtual sports." I hope that the reader will forgive my pointing (in self-justification) to the final sentences of "Esports are not Sports": "This, I believe, will be the eventual position of the IOC with regard to computer games. Anxious though they might be to capture their share of the 'youth market,' and keen to forge alliances with new media and new forms of sport consumption, they will not confuse this with sport. I predict that their final position will be: e-sports are not (Olympic) sports." ²⁹

Vlad Marinescu, president of IESF, has seen the writing on the wall and has retreated from any suggestion that there is an easy route to Olympic acceptance, especially for what has hitherto been referred to as esports—that is, computer gaming, with or without sport as its content. He now says that he is "conflicted" over that matter—a nicely balanced political position, which is, of course, consistent with all possible outcomes.³⁰

The final report of Olympic Agenda 2020+5 was approved at the 137th IOC Session scheduled for Athens, but held virtually, that ended on March 13, 2021.³¹ It firmly reiterated the IOC's disapproval of unethical video games. President Thomas Bach said, "Any game where violence is glorified or accepted, where you have any kind of discrimination they have nothing to do with the Olympic values." I think that the basis of the rejection of the label "esports" lies partly in its ambiguity (its lack of specificity) and partly because of its present unfortunate association with just those games. Furthermore, it was realized that computer games are not sports, and also that the term "esports" does not properly describe those computer applications that *are* deserving of alliances with ISFs and the IOC. World Rowing recently staged virtual Indoor Championships, and FIFA's licensing income from video games been a major revenue stream in COVID times. But notice the differences in these two examples, as to what they reveal about the "virtual" in "virtual sport"—for only one of them (virtual rowing) is a physical virtual sport.

This suggests that Thomas Bach's remark that virtual versions of sport "will not replace sport as we know it" is both unclear and premature. 33 Just as the term "esports" had to be abandoned, I further predict that the term "virtual sports" will also have to be abandoned, or at least have its use redefined. This is because term "virtual" conceals the significant differences between the different types of applications that the 9th Summit wanted to call "virtual." In particular, the currently preferred term "virtual" will have to be reconsidered when it is realized that *physical* virtual sports are real sports, and *nonphysical* virtual sports are not. This issue is pursued in a forthcoming paper entitled "Esports, Virtual Sports, and Real Sports."

Acknowledgment

This paper was written with institutional support from Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic (PROGRES Q19).

JOS_2_2_text.indd 11 7/6/21 9:56 PM

Notes

- 1. Philip Barker, "IOC Votes for Closer Ties with Esports but Warns It Will Reject 'Violent' Video Games,' Inside the Games, March 12, 2021, https://www.insidethegames.biz /articles/1105352/ioc-closer-ties-with-esports.
- 2. Jim Parry, "E-sports Are Not Sports," Sport, Ethics and Philosophy 13, no. 1 (2019): 3–18.
- 3. All of the above resemblance-claims are to be found in Andy Miah, "In the Future, All Sports Will Be E-sports," Prezi, accessed April 30, 2021, https://prezi.com/ih6d_tvsvj6h /in-the-future-all-sports-will-be-e-sports/; and Andy Miah, Sport 2.0: Transforming Sports for a Digital World (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017).
- 4. IOC, "Communique of the Olympic Summit," Olympics (website), October 28, 2017, https://olympics.com/ioc/news/communique-of-the-olympic-summit/.
- "Press Conference with IOC President Thomas Bach," IOC Media, streamed live on July 20, 2018, YouTube video, 1:03:37, https://youtu.be/PvV0RcpI7a8. Play specifically from 38:00.
- 6. WWE Smackdown is regarded as non-sport because it involves the wrestlers' rehearsed and choreographed moves and because the winners are often known in advance. This makes it a performance, a kind of theatrical entertainment show, rather than a genuine contest. (There is also a computer game version.)
- 7. Again, all the above resemblance claims are to be found in Miah, Sport 2.0.
- 8. Paul Tassi, "The U.S. Now Recognizes eSports Players as Professional Athletes," Forbes, July 14, 2013, https://www.forbes.com/sites/insertcoin/2013/07/14/the-u-s-now -recognizes-esports-players-as-professional-athletes/?sh=668e1f373ac9.
- 9. Michael Houston, "Esports Recognised as Official Sport by Pakistan," Inside the Games, January 25, 2021, https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1103419/pakistan-esports -fawad-chaudhry.
- 10. Parry, "E-sports Are Not Sports," 6.
- 11. Michael Houston, "University Sport NZ Opens Esports Challenge Series Registration," Inside the Games, July 30, 2020, https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1096849 /university-tertiary-new-zealand-esports.
- 12. Bob Heere, "Embracing the Sportification of Society: Defining E-sports through a Polymorphic View on Sport," Sport Management Review 21, no. 1 (2018): 21–24.
- 13. Olympic Programme Commission, Review of the Olympic Programme and the Recommendations on the Programme of the Games of the XXIX Olympiad, Beijing 2008, August 2002, https://stillmed.olympic.org/Documents/Reports/EN/en_report_527.pdf.
- Liam Morgan, "Esports Is Coming to the Olympics After All as Paris 2024 Reveal Ideas to Improve Fan Engagement," Inside the Games, February 25, 2019, https://www insidethegames.biz/articles/1075990/liam-morgan-esports-is-coming-to-the-olympics. -after-all-as-paris-2024-reveal-ideas-to-improve-fan-engagement.
- Logan Bradley, "Paris Open to Esports Being An Olympic Sport In 2024 Summer Games," Sport Techie, August 11, 2017, https://www.sporttechie.com/paris-open-esports -olympic-sport-2024-summer-games/.
- 16. Morgan, "Esports is Coming."
- 17. Daniel Etchells, "E-sports to Become Official Medal Sport at 2022 Asian Games," Inside the Games, April 18, 2017, http://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1049340/e-sports -to-become-official-medal-sport-at-2022-asian-games.
- 18. One might even sense a conflict of interest here. See Parry, "E-sports Are Not Sports," 15.

JOS 2 2 text indd 12 7/6/21 9:56 PM

- 19. IOC, "Communique of the Olympic Summit."
- 20. IOC, "Declaration of the 9th Olympic Summit," Olympics (website), December 12, 2020, https://olympics.com/ioc/news/declaration-of-the-9th-olympic-summit/. Additionally, these recommendations appear as Recommendations 8 and 9 of the IOC's strategy "roadmap" Olympic Agenda 2020+5, announced at the 137th IOC Session of March 10-12, 2021. See IOC, "IOC Executive Board proposes Olympic Agenda 2020+5 as the strategic roadmap to 2025," Olympics (website), February 15, 2021, https://olympics.com /ioc/news/ioc-executive-board-proposes-olympic-agenda-2020-plus-5-as-the-strategic -roadmap-to-2025.
- 21. Parry, "E-sports Are Not Sports."
- IOC, "Declaration of the 9th Olympic Summit."
- 23. Duncan Mackay, "International eSports Federation Accepts United States as Latest Member in Attempt to Establish Itself as Recognised World Governing Body," Inside the Games, November 14, 2018, https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1072236 /international-esports-federation-accepts-united-states-as-latest-member-in-attempt-to -establish-itself-as-recognised-world-governing-body.
- 24. Duncan Mackay, "Blow for Global Esports Federation as IOC Warn Olympic Sports Not to Join Them,' Inside the Games, October 29, 2020, https://www.insidethegames.biz /articles/1100130/ioc-warn-sports-of-joining-gef.
- 25. Mike Rowbottom, "IESF President Marinescu Claims IOC Ruling on Esports Corrects 'Ridiculous' Situation," Inside the Games, October 30, 2020, https://www .insidethegames.biz/articles/1100164/iesf-ioc-gef-vlad-marinescu-olympics.
- 26. Andy Miah and Alex Fenton, "Esports in the Olympic and Paralympic Games: The Case for Inclusion," in Routledge Handbook of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, ed. Dikaia Chatziefstathiou, Borja García, and Benoit Séguin (London: Routledge, 2020), chap. 15.
- 27. IOC, "Communique of the Olympic Summit."
- 28. Miah and Fenton, "Esports in the Olympic and Paralympic Games."
- 29. Parry, "E-sports Are Not Sports," 13.
- 30. Rowbottom, "IESF President Marinescu."
- 31. Liam Morgan, "IOC Approves Olympic Agenda 2020+5 Strategic Plan at Virtual Session," Inside the Games, https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1105339/ioc-approves -olympic-agenda-20205.
- 32. Barker, "IOC Votes."
- 33. Barker, "IOC Votes."

JOS 2_2_text_indd_13 7/6/21 9:56 PM