



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

NEWS RELEASE

Introductory Esports Course Launched by NFHS Learning Center

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Dan Schuster

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (July 6, 2021) — Boasting an ever-increasing number of participants, esports (or electronic sports) continues to rise as one of the more popular and unique activity programs for high school students. The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and its Learning Center now address the competitive, organized gaming landscape with a first-of-its-kind course — “Introduction to Esports” — which is now available for free on [NFHSLearn.com](https://www.nfhslearn.com).

“Introduction to Esports” was developed by the NFHS Learning Center in partnership with Butler University (Indianapolis, Indiana) and PlayVS to not only more clearly define esports, but to offer several key examples of esports’ social benefits, inclusiveness, organizational structure and competition.

“The NFHS Learning Center is pleased to offer this online course for esports. These programs are oftentimes misunderstood, and the course provides education on what you need to know and do to get started,” said Dan Schuster, NFHS director of educational services. “Esports provides opportunities for students who may not have ever participated in other school programs, and this allows them to be a part of a team with their classmates.”

Similar to other student activities, esports fosters growth and development in many ways. Students can grow on a personal level, as well as develop key team-building concepts such as coordination with peers, strategy, communication and problem-solving.

Whether it's one of multiple activities a student is involved in or their first ever, esports caters to the widest possible range of students. Anyone who can use a computer can be an esports athlete. Through esports participation, students build bonds with fellow teammates over a shared passion; no matter the social group, they ultimately become part of a shared community.

The "Introduction to Esports" course is centered around five primary sections. Following the course introduction, the course dives into the background of competitive gaming and how schools can start an esports program.

The latter half of the course offers a more thorough look at the benefits of esports. Schools and students alike are afforded the advantages of specific esports skill development, in addition to increased social benefits, opportunities and inclusiveness. Also addressed are considerations and common misconceptions associated with esports.

Course partners PlayVS and Butler University have deep roots in esports. PlayVS, which is an online gaming competition platform, partnered with the NFHS and NFHS Network in 2018 to assist high schools with starting esports programs. Since the inaugural esports season in October 2018, the NFHS and PlayVS have grown from five member state associations and one affiliate group across five states to boasting competitive teams in high schools in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. There are currently associations in 18 of those states that have partnered with PlayVS for esports competition featuring season-ending championships during the fall and spring semesters. Another 31 states have schools participating in esports without an official state championship.

"Esports is the fastest-growing sport today and many educators and parents have requested more information on the multitude of benefits esports offers to students," said Aakash Ranavat, PlayVS senior vice president of partnerships and operations. "We are extremely proud to partner with the NFHS on an esports course for the first time ever. We look forward to bringing more education and awareness to esports and seeing the positive impact esports will continue to have on students across the country."

"Collegiate esports has taken off. Creating esports club and varsity teams is often the first step, but the curricular side of esports is really starting to take hold as well," said Lee Farquhar, Butler University associate professor and interim director of the Eugene S. Pulliam School of Journalism and Creative Media. "Butler is in an especially strong position on both fronts, and it's only getting started with more curricular, community and competitive programming ready to lift off this year."

For more information and to access “Introduction to Esports,” please visit:

<https://www.nfhslearn.com/courses/introduction-to-esports>.

###

About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and performing arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,500 high schools and 12 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.9 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; offers online publications and services for high school coaches and officials; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, speech and debate coaches, and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org.

About Butler University

Butler University is a nationally recognized comprehensive university encompassing six colleges: Arts, Business, Communication, Education, Liberal Arts & Sciences, and Pharmacy & Health Sciences. Approximately 4,600 undergraduate and 800 graduate students are enrolled at Butler, representing 45 states and 30 countries. More than 75 percent of Butler students will participate in some form of internship, and Butler students have had significant success after graduation, as demonstrated by the University’s 98 percent placement rate within six months of graduation. The University was recently listed as the No. 1 regional university in the Midwest, according to the U.S. News & World Report Best Colleges Rankings, in addition to being included in The Princeton Review’s annual “best colleges” guidebook. In 2017, Butler began competing in a variety of esports under the University’s name. The esports teams practice and compete in various intercollegiate leagues, as well as the BIG EAST Conference. Utilizing a holistic, three pillar model—Competition, Curriculum, and Community—Butler’s Esports program provides meaningful outlets for a diverse group of students, resources for faculty, and educational opportunities for the community. The University will launch an Esports Communication minor in Fall 2021 and plans to open a new state of the art esports arena in Fall 2022. For more information, visit the Butler Esports website at esports.butler.edu.

About PlayVS

PlayVS is the industry-leading, amateur esports platform. It is the single community where players come together to compete, fans gather to spectate and coaches manage their programs. Through strategic partnerships with the NFHS, state associations, and top game publishers, PlayVS has become the backbone of high school esports, powering league play and State Championships across the nation. Headquartered in Los Angeles, the company has raised more than \$96 million since its founding in January 2018. For more information, visit www.playvs.com.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Bruce Howard, 317-972-6900
Director of Publications and Communications
National Federation of State High School Associations

bhoward@nfhs.org

Chris Boone, 317-972-6900
Assistant Director of Publications and Communications
National Federation of State High School Associations
cboone@nfhs.org

Cody Porter, 317-972-6900
Manager of Media Relations
National Federation of State High School Associations
cporter@nfhs.org

Nate Perry, 317-972-6900
Coordinator of Media Relations
National Federation of State High School Associations
nperry@nfhs.org