



AHSAA

Esports in Alabama: A Partnership with PlayVS



AHSAA
ALABAMA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION



PlayVS



Benefits of an Esports Program: Video by PlayVS





Games Offered



Super Smash Bros. Ultimate



Mario Kart 8 Deluxe



NBA 2K



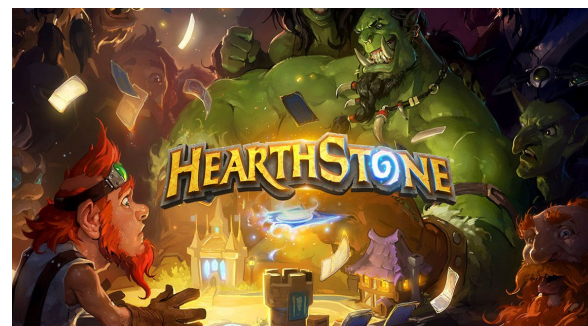
Madden



Splatoon 2



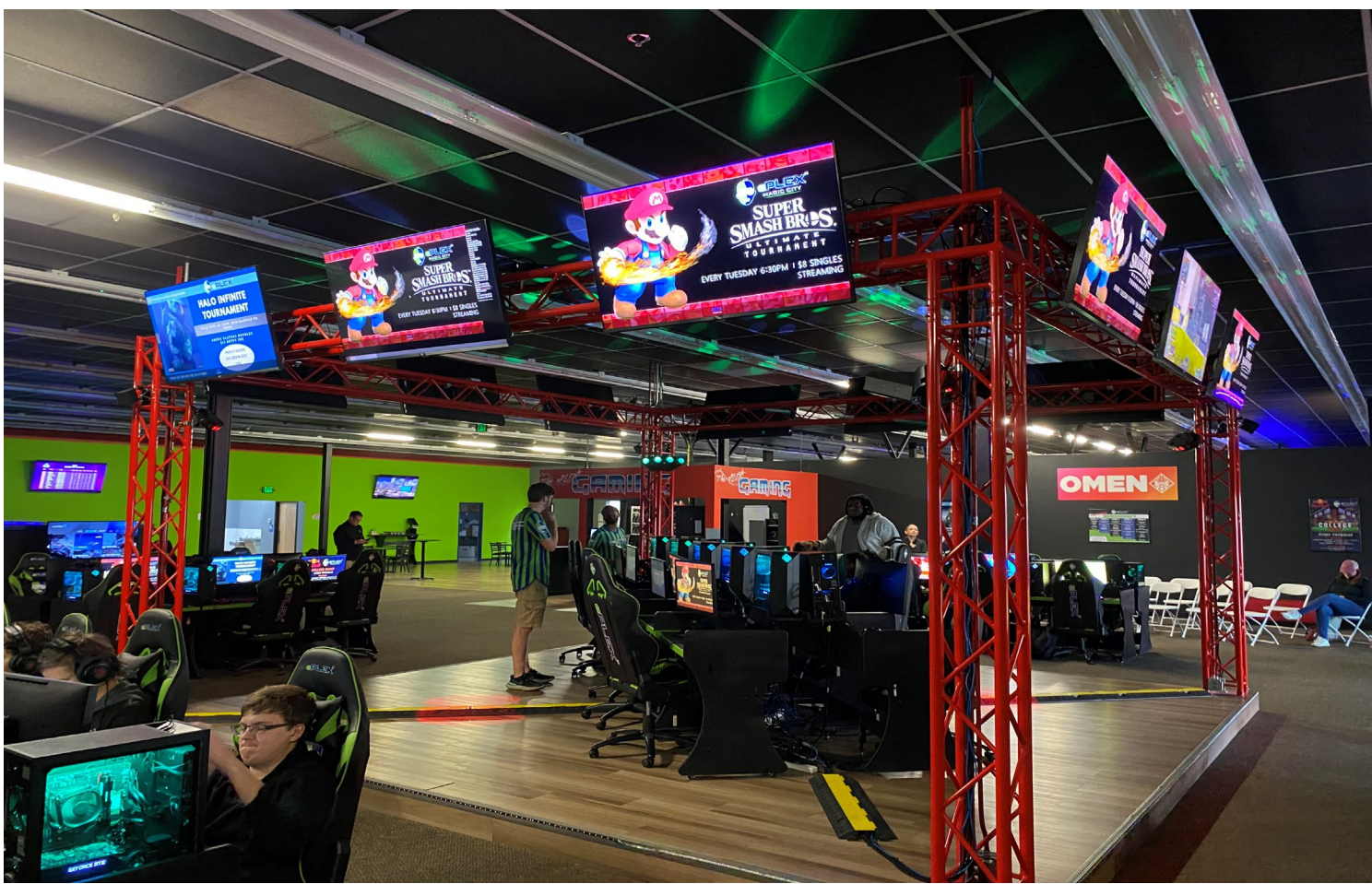
League of Legends



Hearthstone



Rocket League









PlayVS Has been a great partner for Alabama and offers resources and unlimited online support to help get teams started

[High School ▾](#)[Youth ▾](#)[About Us ▾](#)[Esports 101 ▾](#)[Local Esports ▢](#)[Log In](#)[Sign Up](#)

Resources

From helpful guides to program support, we've got everything you need to enrich your PlayVS experience.



Getting Started

PlayVS is building the infrastructure and platform for amateur esports. Follow this step-by-step guide to get an esports program started at your high school today!

[Learn More →](#)

PlayVS Academy

The goal of PlayVS Academy is to help people go from zero to esports coach as quickly as possible. Our four courses cover coaching fundamentals, game specifics for each title we offer, player growth, and program growth.

[Learn More →](#)

Help Center

Your source for all things PlayVS. From helpful guides to program support, we've got everything you need to enrich your experience with us.

[Learn More →](#)



Esports Growth in Alabama

Data Averages from 3 years (6 semesters)

Schools – 48

Teams – 139

Players – 605

2022 Spring Semester Data

Schools – 64

Teams – 218

Players – 823





Colleges have started offering Esports Scholarships creating more opportunities and athletes in Alabama are already taking advantage!





Questions?



ESPORTS IN THE STATE ASSOCIATION

HAWAII





WHY ESPORTS?

- ☐ Supports academic mission of school
- ☐ Inherently educational
- ☐ Promotes health and well-being
- ☐ Fosters success later in life
- ☐ Better educational outcomes
- ☐ Enhanced school engagement and sense of belonging
- ☐ Positive youth development/life skills
- ☐ Healthier behaviors
- ☐ Post high school positive results
- ☐ Developing better citizens
- ☐ School and community benefits



WHY ESPORTS?



Personal Agency, Joy
& Fulfillment



Economic & Workforce
Development



Competencies & Literacies



School Reform &
Improvement



Equity & Social
Justice



Technological, Social &
Scientific Innovation



Citizenship & Civic
Engagement

ESPORTS IN HAWAII

- Not an HHSAA sanctioned sport/activity
- Collegiate esports programs:
 - University of Hawaii, Manoa
 - University of Hawaii, Maui College
 - Hawaii Pacific University
- UH Manoa courses pertaining to esports
 - COM 369 Esports and Society
 - COM 355 Digital Cultures
- Farrington Complex educational curriculum
(1 high school / 2 middle / 9 elementary)



NEW E-RA IN PRESS

The HHSAA is pushing for the leagues statewide to adopt the rapidly growing national craze of esports so it can hold a state event

By Brian McNamara
bmcnamara@staradvertiser.com

The two bright, green-and-yellow banners plastered in a corner of the Lihala library loudly proclaimed something that would've been deemed preposterous 10, five, or even two years ago.

"Mules Esports," the banners read. Behind them, the setup was modest but unmistakable: two televisions connected to Xboxes. Two tables adorned with three laptop computers apiece, students with headsets rapidly starting at the screens while manipulating a mouse and keyboard. Clicks, bleeps, bleeps and music emanating.

Welcome to the "athletic" era of Hawaii high school esports.

Lihala is one of 23 schools around the state — and counting — to adopt the rapidly growing national craze of esports, in which players compete in video games, either remotely or in person, to advance up a skill placement ladder or in a tournament to declare a champion, not unlike a traditional sport.

Here, it exists in a gray area between a club competition and a fully sanctioned sport. But the HHSAA would very much like to see it pushed into the latter, and in the near future. Official play between schools began last week through the third-party website PlayVS, which clubs have self-

"The Mules boast 12 players on their roster."

"Proud," Dominic Castillo said of how he felt representing the school in "Rocket League." The eighth grader was previously in the archery club, but he and his brother Quinton played no official sports. "I get to play games to show not only we're good at sports, well, athletic sports. Even mental sports, too, which are video games."

Players may choose from three PC games for competition, but only one per person — "League of Legends," "SMITE," and "Rocket League" — to be held one afternoon a week through late April, followed by a postseason in mid-May.

The HHSAA's plan is to have remote esports officially adopted by each of the five statewide leagues (OAA, IJL, KIF, MIL, BIF), then create a sanctioned state tournament as soon as next spring at a centralized location such as Hawaii Pacific University's esports arena at its Aloha Tower campus.

"Something like this in a state like ours, where transportation costs are high — it's a perfect fit," HHSAA executive director Chris Chun said. "Kids can participate, they can use their teamwork, their coordination, there's no transportation costs, everyone's on a level playing field because of the way they have the filters and the setup. It just makes a lot of sense."

This has been dubbed "Season Zero." A dry run.

Not surprisingly, there have been some hiccups. While "League of Legends" got successfully underway through PlayVS' matchmaking last week, "Rocket League" encountered connectivity problems and was pushed back to, at earliest, this week. And the call has been put out to more schools to field "SMITE" teams.

Quinton Castillo shrugged off some disappointment of having the Mules' first official "Rocket League" match against the Vikings of Hilo High shelved on Thursday. "I will be awesome to actually be the first ones to represent the school ... in esports," he said. "So, that's going to be very exciting."



Lihala High School student Dominic Castillo, 16, tech coordinator Kristy Kahoaka, student Vellen Vega, 14, and student teacher Anthony Arneson attempt to get online for a Rocket League match.

HAWAII HIGH SCHOOL ESPORTS 'SEASON ZERO'

» **When:** 23 schools statewide from 8th to 12th grades (5 OAA, 3 IJL, 3 KIF, 3 MIL, 9 BIF).

» **What:** Competition in three PC multiplayer games — "League of Legends," "SMITE," and "Rocket League." Schools may have more than one team for each game, but each player must specialize in one game.

» **When:** 4 p.m. on Tuesdays ("League of Legends"), Wednesdays ("SMITE"), and Thursdays ("Rocket League") through April 22, postponement in mid-May.

» **Where:** Campus sites for remote play via PlayVS website, but HHSAA looking at a central location for the state championship as soon as 2020.

» **Why:** An explosion in esports popularity and corresponding rise in esports college scholarship opportunities. The Big Ten Conference now has an official "League of Legends" season. UC Irvine was the first public university to dedicate an esports arena in 2016. In 2017, HPU became the first in the state with an esports arena and esports scholarships. Forbes reported last year that the expected 2020 esports market value is \$1.2 billion, up from \$820 million in 2017.

GAMES

» **"League of Legends"** and **"SMITE"** are what's known as MOBA (multiplayer online battle arena) games. Teams of players choose a mythological champion, use its powers to gain experience points and strength, and coordinate to battle the opposing team for control of a map.

» **"LoL,"** released in 2009, is played from an overhead view, while "SMITE," 2014, features a third-person view. Both are typically played in teams of five.

» **"Rocket League,"** a 2015 game, comes the closest of the three to a traditional sport — but one with a twist. Players on teams of two or three take control of vehicles within an enclosed arena and engage in a game of car soccer. The objective is to use skill (including aerial maneuvers) to knock the ball into the opponent's goal more times than they do yours in a five-minute contest. In competitive play, winning three of five games takes the matchup.

Lihala principal Jason Nakamoto paced around the esports wing anxiously during the attempted matchmaking. Skepticism lingered among some peers and school athletic directors when it was discussed over the past couple of years. (Video games in schools? Really?) But not for him and several others.

"Esports is just a venue, an opportunity for them to ... be connected to the school in another way," Nakamoto said. "It does lead to potential scholarship money. If we can provide that opportunity for our kids, that's what we're all about. We're just trying to be successful helping them transition into the next phase of their lives."

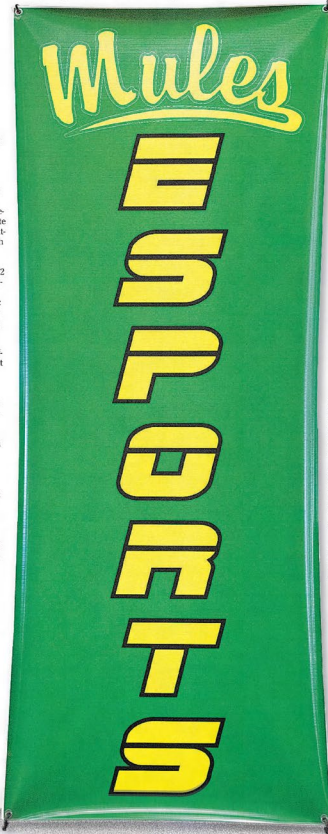
An increasing number of colleges award esports scholarships, almost entirely for PC games. Lihala's esports coach, Anthony Arneson, a HPU grad student who called around at the high schools to help link esports clubs, said there was \$20 million worth in 2018.

The launch required creativity. Lihala's library (many Nakamoto said the school has raised about \$15,000 for equipment through grant money applications (none from the school's budget) from groups like the Schofield Wine Club. Now that she's seen the payoff for the students, she's hoping for \$30,000 more.

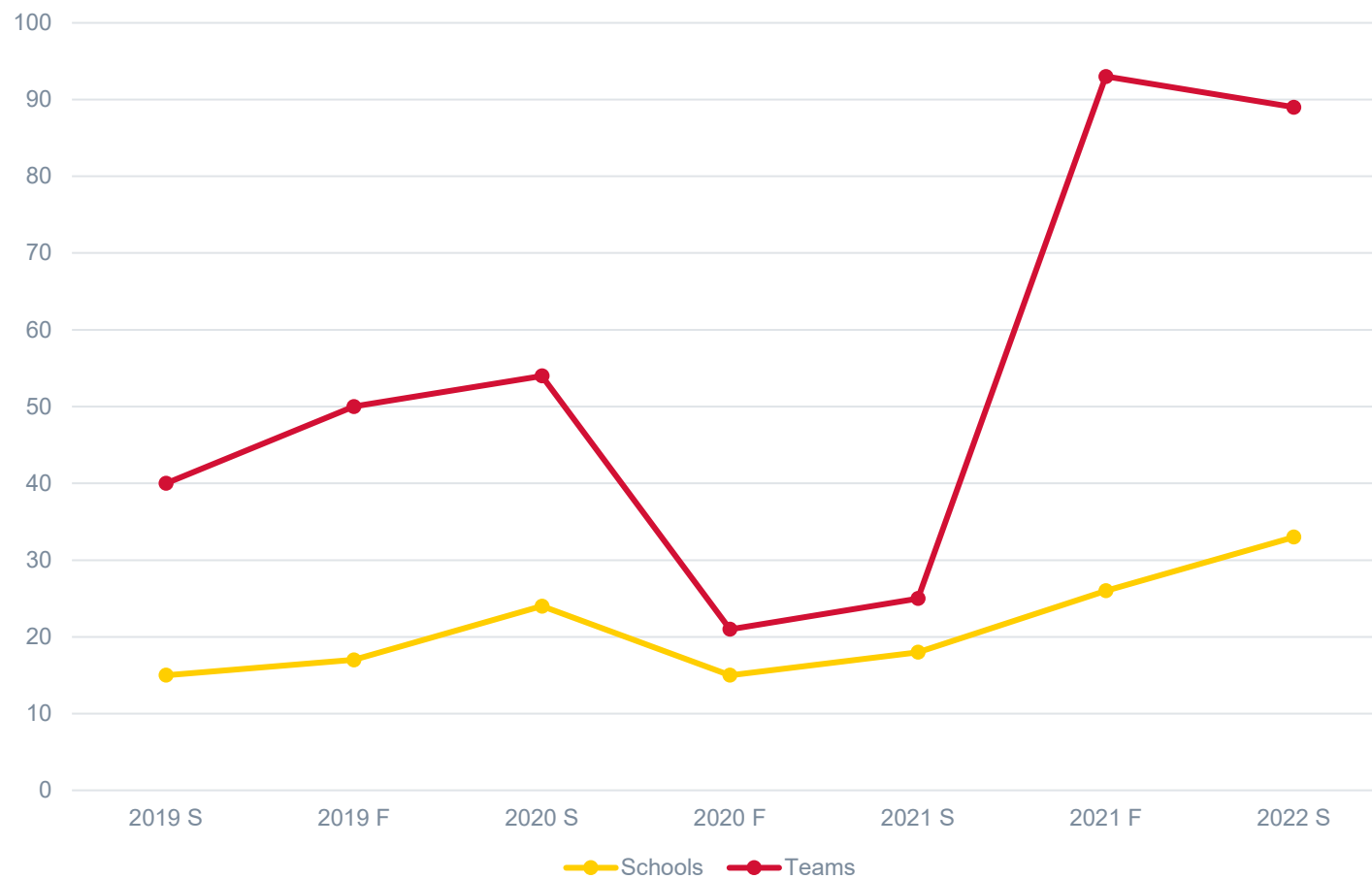
"They're very interested. I think they've been doing it on their own this whole time, so now it brings another aspect, and I think it's an educational one," Nakamoto said. "Because they're coming together as a group now, and they haven't been doing that."

Hawaii is one of at least 15 states laying the groundwork for esports this school year, according to the National Federation of State High School Associations. Connecticut was the first, in 2017-18.

"I'd like to think we're all (locally) doing this together — one team, one state — and putting Hawaii on the map," Nakamoto said.



HHSAA ESPORTS GROWTH (96)



'IOLANI SCHOOL ESPORTS



'IOLANI SCHOOL ESPORTS

MONDAY

3:10-3:15 stretch

3:15-3:23 mile

3:23-3:24 water

3:24-3:50

- 3 sets/15 standard push-ups,
- 2 sets/15 pseudo-planch push-ups,
- 3 sets/15 archer push-ups,
- 3 sets/15 wide squats (1 sec. hold),
- 3 sets/10 Bulgarian split squats

3:55-4:00 stretch/meet

THURSDAY

3:10-3:15 stretch

3:15-3:23 mile

3:23-3:24 water

3:24-3:45

- 100m sprint (2x)
- 200m sprint (2x)
- 400m sprint (2x)
- 4x100 relay (2x)

3:45: break

3:47-3:55 core

3:55-4:00 stretch/meet

FRIDAY

Weight room with strength and conditioning coach





'IOLANI SCHOOL ESPORTS



TESTIMONIALS

Not everyone can be a part of a team like basketball or football, and esports can substitute that feeling of pride and accomplishment. Video games mean a lot of different things to many different people, they can give people a sense of belonging and can pull people out of rough emotional places, exactly like how a physical sport can pull people together and give a sense of belonging.
— Jude M.

Thanks to esports I have a home at my school with people that also enjoy playing video games just like me. — Justin W.

After my breakup with my girlfriend, I was broken because I didn't know what to do, but the thing I was interested in was video games so I decided to join the eSports club with my friends. I thought it could help keep me busy so that I can forget about the incident I had which was a good idea along with tennis. A few months later in eSports, it helped me forget about the breakup because gaming was so much fun with others and having fun as a team. — Kobe L.





Good Luck, Have Fun!

Natalie Iwamoto, iwamoto@hhsaa.org

