

Cape Town comes out tops in inter-regional eSports championship

Cape Town took on Johannesburg last Friday, 19 July 2013, in the first electronic sports (eSports) inter-regional championship in South Africa. The competitors battled it out in COD Black Ops 2 and FIFA13.



L-R Richard van Wyk (regional director for Western Cape MSSA, Nicolas van Ysendyk (Xtaz Radical), Callam Stroud (Unleashed Psycho), Rory Burmeister (Adept Hazzards), Lee-Michael Bransgrove (Xtaz Eos), Glenn Alexander (provincial director for Western Cape MSSA)

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Gamers clashed across the internet with the MWEB MCave hosting the Cape Town players and The Hive in Monte Casino hosting the Johannesburg players. Matches were streamed live from the MWEB network with commentary from Nicholas Holden and Francois van Schalkwyk.

The Cape Town FIFA13 gamers came out tops on the evening, winning the Xbox match 4-0 and the PS3 match 3-0. The Call of Duty Black Ops 2 match also saw the Cape Town team coming out triumphant, but it was a closely fought match that kept the crowd on the edge of their seats waiting until the fifth and final round to see the skilled Jo'burg gamers 'pipped to the post'.

Governing Sports Body, Minds Sports South Africa joined MWEB Gaming in hosting this event and started the evening off by awarding local gamers their colours. MWEB Gaming manager Des Kurz said, "With eSports now recognised as a tier 1 sport, the online gaming community is now taken more seriously. Around the world eSports has audiences in the millions watching championships and recently comments were made that the sport would soon become as big as the NFL in the US."

According to BMI-TechKnowledge, online gaming is forecast to show moderate growth from 4.4 million users in 2012 to 6.9 million users in 2017, increasing market penetration from 42% in 2012 to 54% in 2017." Kurz added that South Africa's gaming community has seen phenomenal growth, "There are an estimated 4.426 million gamers across mobile, console and PC in SA," he says.

Plenty skill and practice required

"Gaming requires a lot of skill and practice. Most gamers have been playing for many years and it's awesome that our efforts are finally recognised, and that we have the support of MWEB and the Mind Sport South Africa (MSSA)," said local gamer Lee-Michael Bransgrove. Western Cape director of MSSA, Glenn Alexander added, "It is events like these that prove gamers are not guys who just sit on the couch and slack off. The educational benefits of eSports and advantages of competitive gaming are widely acknowledged across the globe."

COD Black Ops 2 and FIFA13 were a sound choice for the evening, as they are the two top titles used in competitive gaming in South Africa and internationally. EA Sports has called FIFA13 the most authentic football game on the planet, selling more than one million copies in the first week of its release. COD Black Ops 2 has been described by gamers as "incomparable" to any other first person shooter games in the competitive field.

"The MSSA has also received very positive feedback from gamers across the country. Other regions are now readying themselves to participate in this dynamic league. The Nkangala District (from Mpumalanga) and the Winelands Region (also Western Cape) are already gearing up to challenge the City of Cape Town Regional Team," said Colin Webster, president of MSSA.

"The evening was a great success and we definitely plan on having more events like this. It's fantastic that we can give coverage to these competitive gamers who put in hours of hard work and dedication to get to the amazing skill levels that were demonstrated on the night," said Kurz.

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