

Targeting the next generation of gamblers?

Gambling sponsorship of Esports Teams

Esports fans have been described as the “**wagerers of the future**”. As gambling companies increasingly worry about potential lack of interest in some of their products among Generation Z, **esports offers a large target audience** to focus marketing and offer products.

Concerns for the demographic of esports bettors

- Preliminary studies on esports bettors suggests that they are mostly young men and from non-white ethnic backgrounds (Wardle, 2021, p. 58).
- **17-21 year olds** are more at risk of developing gambling-behaviours due to advertising and the gambling-like practices embedded within games (e.g. **loot boxes** and **skin betting**).
- These bettors are more likely to have problematic gambling behaviours and be heavy gamers.

Esports and gambling sponsorship

Our systematic assessment of this relationship found that **gambling companies sponsored 50%** of the esports teams in the world championships for Dota 2 and CS: GO in 2021. In League of Legends there was no direct sponsorship as LoL developer Riot Games has banned gambling sponsors from their competitions.

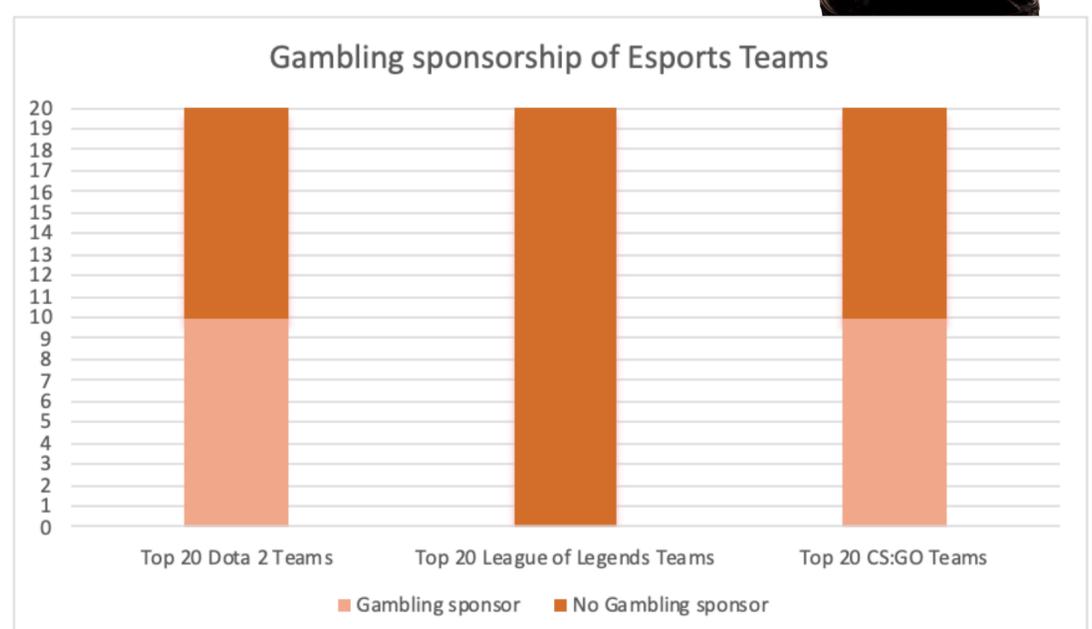
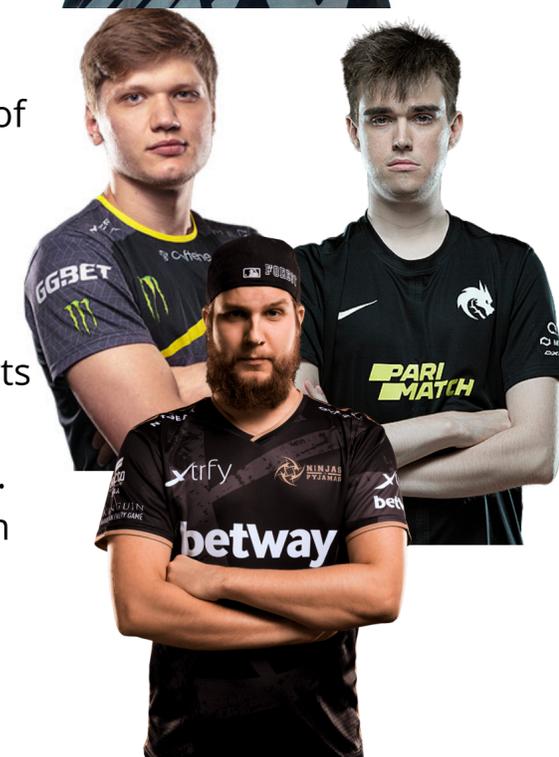
Esports Teams' reach

Top teams in these Esports have a significant following. For example, **OG esports** (see co-founder and player N0tail pictured top) who compete in Dota 2 and CS:GO have **756k Twitter followers** and **1m** on Instagram. Thus, their branded content with sponsors such as Fun88 is reaching a large number of followers.

Esports fans as the next generation of gamblers?

Esports also has an **increasing revenue, viewership**, and place within **mainstream** entertainment. With an intense focus on **betting companies' sponsorship** of football, and tightening of this in some jurisdictions, Esports has been identified by the industry as an effective site to look for the gamblers of the future.

To target future gamblers through esports is also to target gamers who are already embedded within a whole “**ecosystem ...** which may encourage or facilitate certain forms of gambling and gambling-like practices” (Wardle, 2021, p. 58).



References:

Wardle, H. (2021). Games Without Frontiers?: Socio-historical Perspectives at the Gaming/Gambling Intersection. Palgrave Macmillan: Cham

Image references (from top to bottom, left to right):

N0tail of OG esports: <https://www.facebook.com/OGDota2/photos/pcb.2831045927183360/2831045810516705/?type=3&theater>

S1mple of Natus Vincere (NAVI): https://www.kindpng.com/imgv/ihRxTo_s1mple-the-best-csgo-player-right-now-s1mple/

Miposhka of Team Secret: <https://ggscore.com/en/dota-2/player/miposhka>

F0rest of Ninjas and Pyjamas: <https://www.prosettings.com/f0rest-csgo-settings/>



Blair Biggar
blair.biggar@glasgow.ac.uk

W: grg.scot

T: @glagamres

University of Glasgow, charity number SC004401