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Beyond the Game

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It does not matter how slowly you go,
so long as you do not stop.
Confucius

The eSports... A virtual battlefield. Could you try to imagine gaming boot camps? Could you try to picture a world-class tournament with record breaking crowds? What did they look like? Huge arena... Legendary atmosphere... Experience eSports as it's meant to with the full stadium experience, huge screen, blazing sound and roaring crowd. Witness full time packed with intense live matches, as the world's best teams play on stage.

People playing computer games is nothing new - gamers have been doing this for over 30 years. Now, players have become so skilled - and gained so many millions of fans - that computer gaming has become organized, competitive and professional. As a result, it has been given its own name – “eSports”. Getting paid to play video games sounds like the cushiest job in the world, like a dream come true - and to many people it is! But don't be fooled, the best eSports players have to put in a lot of hard work and training. Training can be up to 10 hours a day of gaming just to perform that one movement or skill shot better. Some players might train for up to 14 hours a day to make sure they have extremely quick reflexes and reactions. The Chinese e-sports teams take the training to its logical extreme by having the whole team live together under one roof throughout the year. They don't even consider to

practice unless all five players are in the same room, working as a team. Those parties are called boot camps. In other words the team, usually of five, takes together in the one place and trains a lot [1].

Despite eSports being a field where men and women can compete on equal terms, the scene is still extremely male-dominated. The problem is that women don't look at the game in the same way. Some girls think that they don't stand a chance against guys because it's always been that way and still is. Women don't put in the time and fight for it like the guys do. To motivate more women getting into eSports a handful of tournaments are arranged where there's an all-female lineup, like Copenhagen Games and ESWC (Electronic Sport World Competition).

The difference is that you will never be a professional footballer at the age of 14, but you can be the best Dota2 player in the world. There are many young talented eSports players. For example, the Czech 14-year-old pro player David "Frozen" Cernansky just bursted in the Counter-Strike: Global Offensive pro league by himself which is really hard to do. Sumail "Sumail" Hasan, who is a 15-year-old Dota 2 player, made the most important work in the finals of Dota Asia Championship and won \$1.2 million. The Ukrainian world-known CS:GO player Alexandr "S1mple" Kostylev started to play for pro teams at the age of 15 and now he is one of the top players in the world. We are proud to mention a Belarusian 18-year-old Dota 2 player from Minsk Artiom "fng" Barshak who won \$400,000 in total. Young and rich – isn't it a dream coming true?

Not everyone agrees that computer gaming should be considered a sport. Some people think that sport should involve being more physically active. But others think that despite it may not be as physically athletic as tennis or rugby, the skill involved means it can be considered a sport. Video games are

well positioned to be a spectator sport. Some video game events already attract thousands of spectators. Professional gamers' reflexes are lightning quick and they are having to make very quick decisions on the fly. But if you want to define sport as something that takes a lot of physical exertion, then it is hard to argue that video games should be a sport. It is rather a mind game similar to playing chess [2].

And many countries admit it. Thus, Russia has made the first step into the electronic sport future having recognized cybersport as an official form of athletic pursuit. The Russian Ministry of Sports has included virtual games in the register of official sports of the country. Young people even can compete for such official athlete ranks as the Master of Sports of the Russian Federation, the Master of Sports of the International Class and Merited Master of Sports of the Russian Federation.

Belarusian players are also interested in developing eSports area in the country. In November 2016 Minsk hosted the first conference of the Republican Nonprofit Association "Belarusian eSports Federation". The main aim of the Federation is to promote the development of cyber sports in Belarus as a new kind of sport competition activity. A lot of tournaments are held in Minsk every month. There you are able to meet talented Belarusian players, some of them play at the international level in pro league and some are making their first bold steps in the area. No doubt eSports has great future.

References:

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2. Is computer gaming really sport? [Electronic resource]. – Mode of access: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/zygq2hv/>. – Date of access: 25.01.2017.