Smarter technology for all

Lenovo

Building an Elite Collegiate Esports Program

Unleash the full potential of gaming in college athletics— enhancing student engagement and boosting academic success.

Windows 11

Table of Contents

Enter the New Era of Esports

The Name of the Game

Merging the world of sports and gaming, esports brings a new level of competition to the collegiate game. They can offer students a screen-lit path towards a brighter future. Filled with the great potential that esports can offer your school, you'll want to take an effective approach towards building a successful program. And Lenovo has the power and tools to provide your school with everything you need to start your esports program off right.

Esports in Education

Leveling Up Brings Rising Problems

Esports is a booming industry—experienced by Seton Hall University, boasting more than 200 club members on campus since 2018[1]—showcasing just how desirable and beneficial it can be for a university to add an esports program to their academic and extracurricular rosters.

Worried about the barrier to esports entry? Institutions like the National Association of Collegiate Esports (NACE)—a collection of 170+ competing institutions dedicated to developing esports programs—serve as an advocate for collegiate esports programs. They help colleges and universities by offering scholarship opportunities and commitment to excellence beyond the game—empowering higher academic performance. You can bring great opportunities to your students by following an effective plan for creating the best esports program possible.
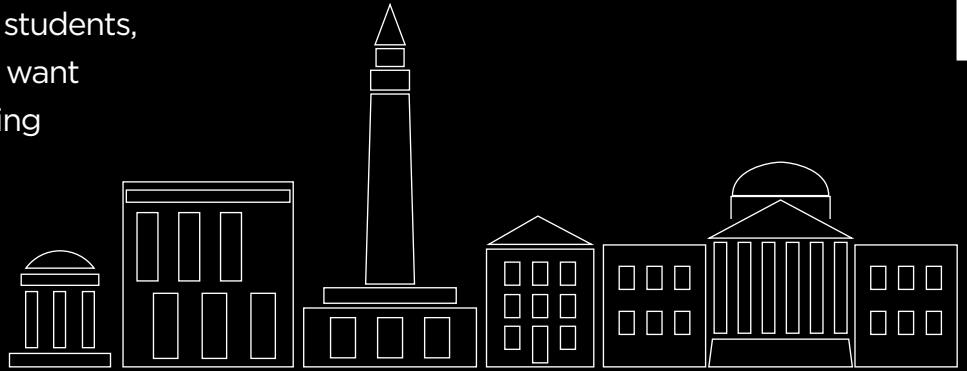
Why Every School Needs Esports

Empowering Student Success

With planning and strategy, schools can create a program that benefits all students, whether they're playing for fun or want to compete professionally—enabling new opportunities in and outside the realm of academics. Here are just a few ways an effective esports program can enhance the college experience:

Lenovo

Increases Attendance & GPA
Esports enhances engagement which is proven to increase attendance rates and GPA. Some schools even require players to maintain a certain GPA to continue competing in the sport they love. It lets students engage with their passion through esports while being rewarded for positive behavior and skill development.

Creates Scholarship Opportunities
Almost all NACE members offer full-ride or partial scholarship opportunities for students to join their esports programs—accounting for about $15 million annually in esports scholarships and drawing in top esports and academic talent.

Promotes Career Opportunities
Gaming facilities can be used as both classrooms and competitive arenas as cutting-edge video game tech can be a great access point for incorporating high-demand workforce skills into the curriculum— like programming, coding, website and game development, data analysis, and much more.

Advances Inclusivity
Esports brings the community together, helping individuals find a sense of belonging in a team setting. These programs reach students that wouldn't otherwise be represented. Esports crosses gender, economic, and racial boundaries—offering the same opportunities for everyone.

Builds Competitive Spirit
Organized competition allows students to tie their esports passion to their academic success. Adding real time results and rivalry to gaming gives students a sense of purpose that increases engagement while enhancing life skills.

Windows 11

Building a robust esports program in college—so you can offer the full force of esports benefits to your students—requires consideration for a series of new challenges. When getting started, keep in mind these six core components in the program-creating process:

Collegiate Leagues

Research the competition that's most suitable for your esports program and matches your players' skills and level in specific games. Esports can be year-round with spring or fall leagues and a preseason. Here are just a few collegiate leagues to check out:

- Battlefy
- eFuse
- College League of Legends
- NACE Starleague

Coaching

An onsite staffer can help guide meetings and practices, establish and enforce program and arena rules, and assemble a series of individual players into a cohesive team.

Lenovo

Gear

As with any sport, quality equipment is paramount for offering the best chance for players to perform at their top potential. Secure, high-end tech can help futureproof your institution with reliable hardware and services that can run new games with no interruption.

Facility

Your gear needs a home base—and so does your players' competitive gaming talents. An accessible and welcoming room dedicated to gaming, which can be repurposed for classroom education, is the stomping ground for big competitions, practices, and general interaction for students and faculty alike.

Support

How can you find on-going support to maintain your program and associated hardware, software, and services for the long haul? While some school athletic departments may provide funding for esports programs, it may not be enough. Cost-effective solutions— like Lenovo's full suite of tech equipment—must be carefully considered.

Recruitment

Effective recruiting tactics can help make a strong case that your program is worthy of adequate funding. Proven methods include streaming and recording play, offering scholarships, showcasing an increase in GPA and attendance rates, and welcoming current high school players to virtual or physical tours.

Mastery Starts with Reliable Equipment

Gear for Keeping Your Esports Program Competitive

Equipping your esports facility with powerful tech tools will benefit players and faculty alike—helping to increase engagement and enjoyment. With proper tools in place, coaches can find it easier to lead meetings and empower teamwork.

Legion by Lenovo

This series of laptop and desktop computers are designed to meet the high-quality demands of today's competitive gaming performance—with vivid displays, extreme processors, and cutting-edge GPUs. Legion also hosts a gaming community open for everyone where guests can check out behind-the-scenes content and live discussions with Legion founders, employees, and users. Being part of a supportive gaming community can help players strengthen their talents and communication skills.

LEARN MORE

Computers

Lenovo desktop computers are designed for simple upgrade and easy cooling and, when powered by Microsoft, it unleashes endless gaming possibilities. Many competitive games today have high system requirements. Not sure what PC specs you need for the games your students will be playing? Just ask us and we can help match your needs with the perfect PC combination to achieve your goal.

Monitors

A pivotal element of esports success, high-resolution monitors must be able to handle the intense weight of esports game graphics— demanding a suggested minimum 24" TN Panel, 144hz, to keep your players from cracking under pressure.

Lenovo

Gaming Mice

Many competitive games require swift and precise movement, making the mouse a critical accessory to the esports setup. Here are a few features to keep in mind when looking for a mouse that can keep up with your team's ruthless playstyle:

- Lightweight build
- Responsive touch
- Ergonomic design
- Long-lasting battery-life

Keyboards

Don't underestimate the importance of your team's keyboards. They may just be what your team needs to stay keyed in and engaged. There are two types of keyboards to choose from:

- The gold standard, mechanical keyboards are faster and provide tactile feedback, increasing accuracy and making mistakes less frequent.
- Inexpensive, membrane keyboards may be a good option for games where keyboard performance won't affect the gaming experience.

Headsets

Speaking of success—a gaming headset with a microphone is essential for building teamwork and improving communication skills. Also, consider comfortability. It should be wearable for hours at a time. Other things to keep top of mind when it comes to headsets:

- Wireless headsets for full movement
- Adequate audio quality range (20-50mm)
- Noise cancellation to block out distractions
- Noise cancelling microphone to ensure clear inter-team communication

Creating the Ultimate Arena

It's Your World. Modify it to Your Liking.

Another important piece of the puzzle is the esports arena where your equipment will live. With three key elements in mind—design, security, and budget—you can create the perfect facility that will help unleash student success in every corner.

Looks & Functionality

First, the facility must be easily accessible. And once you're in, feel the full force of the breathtaking visual experience. The arena should be high-energy, inviting, and spacious for easy mobility and comfort. When building an esports arena, it's important to take stock of all the necessary components, like finding space for a computer lab and study lounge, an arena with a stage, spectator seating, and even video walls for a viewing experience.

IT Responsibility & Security

Arena accessibility matters, but so does accessibility to game servers. IT departments must get specific ports opened on your network firewall to connect your computers to these servers. Plus, every device is an access point for cyber threats. Keep your tech secure from cyber-attacks so that your team can continue attacking the competition, without interruptions.

Expected Costs

Costs depend on several factors, but a popular way that schools are creating the most cost-effective facility is by repurposing an existing space on campus—classroom, computer lab, or residence hall. With an average equipment budget ranging from about $44,000 to $87,000, it's important to understand your needs and options.[3] Fortunately, Lenovo has a series of low-cost tech with high-performance capabilities.
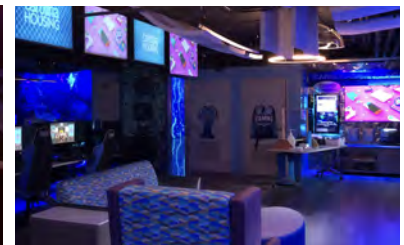
Carolina Gaming

A Real-World Facility Done Right

Carolina Gaming[4] is the collective group of competitive teams representing the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill under the NACE Starleague. Turning a residence-hall rec room into a savagely designed esports facility, the program is equipped with the perfect environment for menacing gaming competition. Plus, their partnership with Lenovo helps propel their gaming ability to new heights— outfitting their arena with a full catalogue of advanced tech.

Explore the Carolina Gaming Arsenal:

Lenovo T730 Gaming Desktops (37)
9th Generation i9-9900K Processor (3.60GHz, up to 5.0GHz with Turbo Boost, 16MB Cache)
32 GB DDR4 2666MHz | 2 TB 7200 RPM + 256GB PCIe SSD
NVIDIA GeForce RTX 2080 8GB | Z370 Motherboard

Legion Y27gq-25 27″ Gaming Monitors (32)
Max 240Hz | NVIDIA G-Sync | .5ms Response Time | 2560×1440

Legion Y44w-10 43.4″ WLED Curved HDR Gaming Monitors (6)
Max 144Hz | AMD FreeSync 2 | 4ms Response Time | 3840×1200

Lenovo Legion K500 RGB Mechanical Gaming Keyboards (39)
Lenovo Legion M500 RGB Gaming Mice (39)
Legion H500 Pro 7.1 Surround Sound Gaming Headsets (39)

THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

Game On!

The rise of esports has given a mainstream voice to an inclusive community of college video game athletes. Like with any sport, these competitions have created a place for students to feel comfortable around peers, engage socially, and do more of what they love, all while boosting academic success.

The growth of collegiate esports isn't slowing down anytime soon, so the time to start (if you haven't already) is now. With your newfound knowledge for creating an imposing collegiate gaming facility, start styling your arena with complete Lenovo equipment powered by Microsoft, and join the competition.

CONTACT US

[1]Seton Hall University. Esports, "About"
[2]ggCIRCUIT. ggROCK.
[3]Burroughs, Amy. EdTech, Focus On Higher Education,
 "UB Tech 2019: How to Start an Esports Program on Your Campus." 12 June 2019.
[4]UNC. Carolina Gaming, "Equipment."