

Minutes of the Esport Canada 2025 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Date: 2025-08-20

Platform: Virtual Meeting

Fiscal Year Reflected: July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025

Voting Members in Attendance:

- Melissa Burns - Esport Canada
- Myra Davis - Esport Canada
- Carol Meissner - Esport Canada
- Emil Vanjaka - Esport Canada
- Jonathan McDaniel - Esport Canada
- Bernard Mafei - Esport Canada
- Nathan Koblun - Esport Canada
- Rosaline Leung - BCEA
- Ryan Coutts - ASEA
- Michael Saretzky - ASEL
- Dean Vendramin - SSEA
- Karl Hildebrandt - MSEA
- Joseph Raimondo - Ontario Competitive Representative
- Dan Rolo - OSEA
- Bryan Ouellette - New Brunswick Representative
- Tyler Hetherington - Fanshawe College
- Zack Dodge - Conestoga College
- Shaun Byrne - St. Clair College

1. Welcome and Land Acknowledgement

- The meeting marked the organization's **fifth AGM**. The competitive and post-secondary divisions are currently in their third year of expansion.
- The organization acknowledged the dedication of the community in advocating for Canadian esports.
- A land acknowledgment was provided, recognizing that Esport Canada brings together gamers across the traditional Indigenous lands of **Turtle Island**. The organization dedicated itself to authentic alliances with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and cooperation.
- The speaker noted they were personally joining from **Treaty 1 Territory**, the homeland of the Anishinaabek, Ininiwak, Cree, Dakota, Dene, and the Red River Metis.

2. Procedural Motions

Myra was designated to record all voting responses.

2.1 Acceptance of Minutes from 2024 AGM

- **Motion:** To accept the minutes from the 2024 Annual General Meeting, which had been previously shared.
- **Seconded By:** Ryan Coutts - Alberta Esports Association
- **Outcome:** Carried.

2.2 Acceptance of Agenda

- **Motion:** To accept the agenda for the 2025 meeting.
- **Seconded By:** Bernard Mafei - Humber College
- **Outcome:** Carried.

3. Purpose, Vision, Mission, and Values

The organization revisited and refined its mission and vision during the year.

- **Mission:** To empower Canadian gamers and gaming communities through collective advocacy, representation, and sanctioned competition and events that allow Canadians to engage and excel in esports.
- **Vision:** To build the Canadian esports ecosystem by fostering a national community built on respect, excellence, and love of the game.

3.1 Organizational Status and Goals

- Esport Canada is a federally registered non-profit.
- It serves as the registered entity for both the International Esport Federation (IESF) and the Global Esport Federation (GEF).
- The organization continues negotiations with the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC) to advocate for talent development and equitable opportunities for Canadian athletes.

3.2 Core Values

The organization's core values, which have not shifted, are founded on:

- Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA)
- Advocacy
- Collaboration
- Play

4. Personnel (2024-2025 Fiscal Year)

The following appointments reflect the reporting period from July 1st, 2024, to June 30th, 2025.

4.1 Board of Directors

- Chair: Melissa Burns
- Vice Chair: Myra Davis
- Board Members: Carol Meissner, Emil Vanjaka
- National Council Chairs (also sit on the Board): Jonathan McDaniel, Bernard Mafei, Nathan Koblun

4.2 Executive Team (Focus on operational aspects)

- CEO: Melissa Burns
- CLO: Amar Sidhu
- CFO: Carol Meissner
- CMO: Kendryx Lindscott
- Director of XP Boost (New): Kyra Bernard
- CPO: Landon Gorbenko
- Director of IT (Newly appointed): Matt Kovacs

4.3 Game Advisors

Game advisors were instrumental in ensuring initiatives are authentic to specific games.

- Rocket League: Seb.
- Dota 2: Excess
- FGC titles: Uncle Vinch
- Counterstrike: Jimmy Lin
- Valerant: Silver
- Overwatch 2: Lenna

4.4 Volunteer Teams

Volunteer teams were added during the spring (Marketing, Broadcast) and June (Legal).

- **Marketing:** Aylin Lim, Dmitry Afanasev, Daria Anokhina, Matthew Spadafora.
- **Broadcast:** Joseph Raimondo, Alexander Kiiffner, Elliot Beer, Corey Manuel.
- **Legal Team:** Donny Jackson and Daniel Dai.

5. Division Reports

5.1 Education National Council (EDU) Report (Nathan Koblun)

- **Growth:** Continued growth and expanding representation across Canada were reported. The **Alberta Scholastic Esports League** was introduced, originating as a subcommittee of ASEA.
- **Membership Highlights:**
 1. Manitoba School Esports Association (MSEA): 80 member schools, over 1,000 participating students.
 2. Ontario School Esports Association (OSEA): 51 member schools.

3. Esport Canada Direct: 28 registered member schools.
- **Post-Secondary Partnerships:** Partnerships led to in-person events at institutions including Humber College, St. Clair College, Bow Valley College, Red River College, and Conestoga College.
- **National Events Hosted (3 total):**
 1. Fall 2024 U15 and U8 Scholastic Invitational (Rocket League).
 2. Spring Scholastic National Open Rocket League Tournament (U15 and U18).
 3. National Minecraft Competition (organized by Karl Hildebrandt and Dan Rolo).
- **Strategic Plan:** Goals marked as completed included hosting two academic year tournaments and developing educator-led provincial affiliate organizations. The goal for the next year is **codifying an agreement** between EC EDU and provincial associations.

5.2 Post-Secondary National Council (ECPS) Report (Bernard Mathy)

- **Challenges:** The council faced volatility due to institutional restructuring, leading to member attrition (now sitting at four National Council members).
- **Pillars:** Advocacy, Recognition, and Education.
- **National Footprint:** ECPS represents 25 institutions across six provinces, including its first institution from Saskatchewan. The broader network engages over 50 post-secondary institutions.
 - These 25 schools operate over 220 active esports teams.
- **Canadian Esports Nationals (3rd Annual):** The event is established as the premier national collegiate tournament.
 - Participation reached a high of 588 student competitors across 102 team rosters from 39 institutions.
 - A new division, Valerant Game Changers (all-woman identifying), was added to promote inclusive representation.
 - The broadcast was a collaborative effort powered by 18 institutions across the country.
- **Strategic Plan:** The plan includes a Year One focus on tightening operations and a Year Ten goal aiming for national and global legitimacy, expanding Nationals into a live championship series.

5.3 Competitive National Council Report (Jonathan McDaniel)

The division focuses on interacting with competition at the recreational, club, and national team levels, with significant effort dedicated to compliance with Canadian National Sports Organizations (NSOs) and future Olympic requirements.

- **Canada Day Event (July 1, 2024):** Hosted an on-site activation in Ottawa featuring a partnership with the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) and broadcasting a national Rocket League tournament. The tournament was the number one trending Rocket League tournament on Liipedia that day.

- **International Mergers:** The IESF (151 members) and GEF signed an MOU and Letter of Intent to explore a potential merger, a step deemed necessary for International Olympic Committee (IOC) recognition, which requires a single international federation.
- **IESF World Championships (Saudi Arabia):**
 - The CS2 Women's Team advanced from regionals to the IESF World Esports Championships but did not pass the group stage.
 - The CS2 Open Team advanced from the expanded North/Central American pool to the IESF World Esports Championships but finished last in Pool A, tied with Australia.
 - E-Football player Allan Showtime remains the national player for the upcoming IESF 2025 World Esports Championships, following the cancellation of the 2024 individual title.
- **National Team Selection:** The process adapted a physical sport model, using combine tournaments or applications reviewed by a selection committee that weighs technical skill, experience, and adherence to a structured Code of Conduct and Ethics.
- **GEF Competition:** The Dota 2 Open team opted to only participate in the GEF regional tournament in 2024 (due to a negative 2023 IESF experience). They placed third in the North/Central America regional qualifier and did not advance to the Global Esports Games.
- **NSO Compliance:** Strategic planning is focused on establishing systems that mirror NSO requirements, including ethics, anti-doping, and policy, such as the required concussion policy.

6. Introduction of New Initiatives

6.1 XP Boost (Kyra Bernard)

XP Boost is a new initiative focusing on equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA), conceived as an affinity space that moves away from solely focusing on "women in gaming".

- **Soft Launch:** Held in June during Toronto Games Week, including the Girls Who Game Show Match (with Dell and the French Embassy) and an inclusive co-ed Tekken 8 Show Match.
- **Year One Goals:** Establish a solid foundation, organize 3 to 5 events focused on underrepresented youth (K-12), run quarterly workshops, and launch a moderated Discord server.
- **Long-Term Goals (Year 5 & 10):** Increase membership (25–50% annually), implement specialized tracks (e.g., coaching, public speaking), organize a recurring annual tournament, explore charitable status, and develop a self-sustaining ecosystem and scholarship program.

6.2 National Players Commission (NPC) (Emil Vanjaka)

The NPC is an independent advisory board modeled after the COC's National Athletes Commission.

- **Purpose:** To represent Canadian esports players regarding their rights and welfare.
- **Structure:** Former national team players are eligible for election; the elected chair holds a direct seat on the Esport Canada Board of Directors.
- **Inaugural Nominees:** CS2 players Athxna, MagiC, Melio, and Miss Harvey. Bylaws allow for the appointment of two additional commissioners to prioritize K-12 and post-secondary representation.

7. Financial Report (Carol Meissner)

- The financial report covers the period from July 1st, 2024, to June 30th, 2025.
- The Canada Day event was highlighted as being net positive financially.
- Tax returns and corporate filings are up to date.
- Note was made of outstanding expenses still owed to the CEO.

7.1 Motion to Accept Financial Report (Un-Audited)

- **Motion:** To accept the financial report, noting it is currently un-audited.
- **Seconded By:** Ryan Coutts - Alberta Esports Association
- **Outcome:** Carried.

8. General Activities and Advocacy

- **Canada Day Activation:** The Ottawa event involved partnerships with the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) (providing an airsim) and included family-friendly titles such as FC 24 and SSBU, alongside the racing sim and Rocket League tournament.
- **Event Partnership Initiative:** Introduced this year to foster mutually beneficial relationships with external communities. Partnerships require alignment with EC goals and intentional inclusion of EDIA elements. Partners included Comic-Con (League of Legends, featuring Billy Boyd), CIE, CIS, Toronto Auto Show, and the Pitaka esports festival.
- **Global Affairs:** Relationships are being intentionally built with Canadian and foreign embassies to advocate for the credibility of esports. There are plans to approach the Canadian Embassy to France for the 2026 Toronto Games Week initiative, mirroring events hosted in Canada.
- **COC Status Update:** Esport Canada's file has been moved to NSO status, and the organization is formally applying for recognition.
 - **Safe Sport Roadblocks:** The organization faces a "bizarre feedback loop" where official Safe Sport signatory status depends on Sport Canada funding, which itself often relies on COC status.
 - EC has created mirroring Safe Sport policies and secured an independent third party willing to review Safe Sport cases on a pro bono basis until official status is obtained.
 - Anti-Doping approval has been secured, and the organization is seeking a sponsor to cover the associated fees.

- **NSO Relationships:** EC is strategically building relationships with physical NSOs (who have primary jurisdiction over simulated and VR sports) to offer operational support. A positive rapport has been developed with FIFAE, who are ready to advocate for Esport Canada for next year's Esports World Cup.

9. Bylaw Amendments and Additions

9.1 Motion 1: Bulk Adoption of Major Bylaw Changes

- **Details:** Submission of bulk changes to meet compliance with COC standards, the Canadian Sport Governance Code, and the Canadian Sport Policy. These changes strengthen governance and enhance transparency.
- **Submitted by:** Governance and Ethics Committee.
- **Seconded By:** Michael Saretzky - Alberta Scholastic Esports League
- **Outcome:** Carried.

9.2 Motion 2: Amendment to Post-Secondary Council Makeup

- **Details:** Amendment to Article 3, Section 3.I, to expand the Post-secondary Council from nine seats to **13 seats** to allow for greater geographical and EDIA representation.
- **Submitted by:** Bernard Mafei - Humber College
- **Seconded By:** Tyler Hetherington - Fanshawe College
- **Outcome:** Carried.

9.3 Motion 3: Amendment to Post-Secondary Pillars

- **Details:** Amendment to Section 9, Article 1.I, adding a section to highlight ECPS programs demonstrating excellence in academic integration, research initiatives, or curricular innovation related to esports.
- **Submitted by:** Bernard Mafei - Humber College
- **Seconded By:** Zack Dodge - Conestoga College
- **Outcome:** Carried.

9.4 Proposed Addition: Emergency Measures Act

- A proposed addition (Section 9, Article 5) submitted by Bernard Mafei and seconded by Zack Dodge was presented to address governance gaps caused by council attrition and lack of quorum.
- **Action Taken:** Bernard formally withdrew the motion to allow the Governance and Ethics Committee to review and reword the measure for broader application across all national councils.

10. Elections and Acclamations

Position	Candidate(s)	Outcome	Notes
Chair of Education National Council	Matt Kovacs	Acclaimed	Nominated by Nathan Koblan.
Chair of Post- Secondary National Council	Bernard Mafei	Acclaimed	Acclamation for the full term.
Chair of Competitive National Council	Isaiah Cyrus and Majam (Individual); Jonathon McDaniel and Gabriel Zoltan- Johan (Co-chair duo)	Postponed	Vote postponed due to a lack of quorum within the Competitive National Council. August 23, 2025 - Jonathon McDaniel and Gabriel Zoltan- Johan confirmed as Co-Chairs by a vote of 3-2.
General Board of Directors Seat	None	Vacant	Vacancy due to the upcoming retirement of Carol Meissner in December. The Board will appoint an interim candidate who must be non-endemic and preferably female or gender diverse, per new by-laws.

11. Adjournment

- Carol Meissner was formally thanked for her significant contributions to the organization upon her upcoming retirement.
- **Motion:** To adjourn the 2025 Esport Canada AGM.
- **Seconded By:** Michael Saretzky - Alberta Scholastic Esports League
- **Outcome:** Carried.