



# COACH HANDBOOK

FALL 2021.1

A GUIDE TO GETTING STARTED

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# 01

WELCOME TO **PlayVS**

# WHERE AMATEUR ESPORTS HAPPENS

## Your Esports Journey Begins Now

PlayVS is the leading amateur esports platform in the United States and Canada for high school and college competitions and leagues. Think of us as a trusted partner to handle matchmaking, scheduling, logistics, stats, tournaments, and more. All so you can coach and your students can play.



## Who are we?

The people and platform with a whole suite of features to help you build and manage your school's esports program. Here's why thousands of schools trust and run their esports programs with PlayVS...

### We get your school ready-to-compete

Our esports specialists guide you every step of the way from your program's inception to your first game day and beyond. On-boarding to the platform, team management, match-days, and IT – we're here to help you.

### Proven success *(We're obsessed with esports!)*

Hundreds of thousands of matches later, PlayVS is an industry leader in scholastic esports. We're battle-tested providing all the logistical support you need: scheduling, rulebooks and standings.

### Cash Prizes

\$140,000 in cash prizes across titles

### Be a hero/trailblazer in your district

It's coming. Thousands of schools have started...

### We provide the games your students want to play

We offer the top games from the professional esports scene. Our partnerships with the game creators ensure matches are balanced and fun and competitions align closely with their pro counterparts. Game creators trust us and this allows us to add more games every year.

### Affiliations

PlayVS partners with the NFHS and states associations, working directly to elevate esports as a sanctioned sport. This means more awareness and legitimacy in high school sports. Winners are recognized as state champions that receive the same prizes and acclaim as traditional sports in the state.

# What are esports?

Esports, short for electronic sports, is a collective term that describes organized competitive video gaming, where individuals use video game consoles, PC's, or mobile phones to play popular video game titles against other esports teams.

## Why are esports beneficial to your students?

Esports provides many benefits to students, and unlocks opportunities that never existed before, including:



### Scholastic benefits

Engaged students perform better in school. Esports uniquely appeals to and engages a wider audience, including co-ed teams. For many of our players, esports is the first time they've participated in a coached, athletic activity.



### College scholarships

Collegiate esports is exploding, which translates into tens of millions of dollars in scholarships every year. Every season, more and more high-performing players on our platform get snapped up by top collegiate esports programs.



### Potential careers

Esports provides students the perfect entryway to the booming video game industry. Gaming companies, like our partner Riot Games, offer exciting career opportunities across the entire business and creative spectrum.



### Gateway to other fields

The gaming industry intersects with other large, thriving industries like entertainment and technology. Familiarity with the gaming ecosystem and esports landscape builds a student's knowledge-base for what's possible and where a career can take them.



### Team values

Esports players learn values like teamwork, discipline, and hard work (practicing isn't always easy). They also learn to take direction from coaches, humility, and how to win and lose with grace.



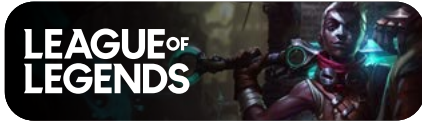
### Health and well-being

Esports players have a sense of belonging and purpose on a team, just like athletes of other sports. Gamers also consider being in a clan or esports team a second family. They forge friendships that go beyond gaming. Many of these students don't excel in traditional sports and gaming opens up a world to others who are just like them.



# What are the games like?

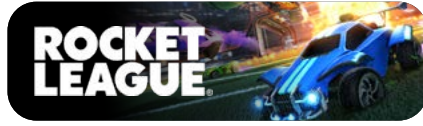
Our esports games are all age-appropriate popular games in a variety of genres such as fantasy, action, car racing, and football. Students can play games on PC and Consoles. Here are some of the games we feature:



## League of Legends

COMPLEXITY: 🔥🔥🔥🔥🔥

Two teams of five heroes battle for control of Summoner's Rift. It's exciting and tactical, like galaxy-brain chess.



## Rocket League

COMPLEXITY: 🔥🔥🔥🔥🔥

Two teams of three players control cars in an arena for a game of soccer. Soccer with cars.



## SMITE

COMPLEXITY: 🔥🔥🔥🔥🔥

A free-to-play online game developed by Titan Forge Games and published by Hi-Rez Studios. It features a large pool of playable characters from ancient mythology who engage in session-based team combat.



## Super Smash Bros. Ultimate

COMPLEXITY: 🔥🔥🔥🔥🔥

1v1 fighting matches featuring Nintendo iconic characters (Mario, Donkey Kong, Bowser, and more!). To win, a player must knock their opponent out of the ring using specific abilities, grit, and button mashing!



## Splatoon

COMPLEXITY: 🔥🔥🔥🔥🔥

Teams of 4 'inklings' compete head-to-head in various ink-splattering modes. From covering the level with the most ink to king-of-the-hill style tower control, players must work together to accomplish a shared goal.



## Madden NFL 21

COMPLEXITY: 🔥🔥🔥🔥🔥

Players compete as NFL teams from the NFL's 2021 season. Players set the play and control individual players in an attempt to score the most points for their team. The game follows the rules of American football.



## FIFA 21

COMPLEXITY: 🔥🔥🔥🔥🔥

Players compete as soccer teams from the FIFA 2021 season. Players control individual players in an attempt to score the most points for their team. The game follows the rules of professional soccer.

# 02

## GETTING STARTED

**PlayVS** is the platform and people that power high school esports leagues. We handle matchmaking, scheduling, logistics, stats — everything — so you can focus on your students.



### We handle Player and Coach verification

During registration, PlayVS verifies that coaches belong to their schools and, after this verification, coaches verify players. Players can then link their PlayVS account to their gaming accounts (ex. using their gamertag in League of Legends). Coaches and players can enroll in seasonal leagues, view upcoming matches, set rosters, and connect with other teams.

PlayVS has served nearly 9,000 high schools since 2018, almost half the number of high school football teams!

### We set up the Leagues - Rules and all

The PlayVS platform handles skill based matchmaking and match results for select games. We also have a team of league managers who help with match rulings and handle disputes that may arise during the heat of competition.

We also structure competitions, and create and maintain rulebooks for each of our competition titles

### What you need

🔥 All you need are computers, players and a coach. Our services and platform provide everything else your esports program needs, including the games themselves.

🔥 You don't need expertise — just passionate students, as well as a willing coach.

# LET'S GET READY TO COMPETE!



## Sign up on PlayVS and Schedule a Consultation

The PlayVS staff is composed of former high school teachers, administrators, and IT directors who can help answer any questions you may have regarding esports. Whether you are starting a program from scratch, or have been playing for years, we're here to help!

1. Visit [PlayVS.com](https://playvs.com) to create an account. No commitment necessary.
2. Provide a school email and contact information.
3. [Schedule a call with a PlayVS representative. We recommend you invite key stakeholders to join the call: Administrators, Athletic Directors, Coaches, and the IT Department.](#)



## Get Your Administration's Initial Approval

Principals and Athletic Directors can help ensure that esports are recognized, funded and promoted on campus, along with other activities and sports. Working with our Super Coaches, we developed a presentation that will help guide you through the entire conversation with your administrator.

1. Meet with your admin and provide justification for an esports program.
2. Designate a place and time to compete. ([Presentation for Admin](#))
3. Check school calendars for schedule conflicts.



## Connect with Your IT Department

Your IT department can verify which games can run on your school computers. Alternatively, players can bring their own equipment as long as a reliable internet connection is available.

1. Give your IT department the [PlayVS Hardware-Network Specifications and Game Download Instructions](#). Work with your IT department to confirm your school meets the necessary requirements for successful game days.
2. Provide the school's IP public address to PlayVS in the settings section of your Coach Dashboard.
3. Unblock the games in the internet filter and firewall. Our whitelists are provided in our Hardware-Network Specifications.
4. Download and install games. Check out our Hardware-Network Specification list for necessary game and computer specs.
5. Account for weekly game updates throughout the season. Our Game Day Protocol recommends opening game clients at least one hour prior to match time to ensure the latest update gets installed.





**Tip:** Give your season schedule to the IT department to ensure that network maintenance does not interfere with game days.



## Determine Your Program's Capacity

There are three main factors that will help you start and scale your esports program: student preferences, IT capabilities, and coach availability. Here are the steps for each:

1. Hold an interest meeting to determine how many teams you will be able to form and for which games. League of Legends and SMITE require 5 starting players. Splatoon 2 requires 4 starting players. Rocket League and Super Smash Bros. Ultimate each require a starting team of 3 players. Madden NFL 21 and FIFA 21 require a single player per team.

**Tip:** Have a computer ready so students can quickly sign up on [PlayVS.com](https://playvs.com).

2. Assess computers or consoles that can run each game (determined from your IT department). Keep in mind that you can have multiple teams within the same esports, so the number of computers or consoles is your biggest limiting factor.
3. Find out the number of coaches interested and their availability. Coaches must be present at all PlayVS matches, including rescheduled matches. Consider adding an assistant coach for additional teams and esports.



## Share your program with your Administrator and confirm any additional needs

Now that you've connected with your students and IT, it's time to confirm your final program with the powers that be. Every school is different, but this is your opportunity to make sure the program has all budgetary needs met and that you'll be able to promote your program through [morning announcements](#) and on the school's calendar.

Now is the time to secure any equipment you may need. Details for each game can be found in the "Games" section of the Coach's handbook.





## Make sure your students' game accounts are connected

Players must connect their game accounts in order to compete. Connected game accounts ensure matches run smoothly – with the connected accounts, PlayVS can verify match results, generate match links, and provide you with support throughout the season.

Game	What account you need to connect?	Required to play?	Benefits
 League of Legends	League of Legends	Yes	Unlock Champions, Automatically report match results, Show in-game information
 SMITE	SMITE	Yes	Show in-game information, Show match stats
 Super Smash Bros. Ultimate	Nintendo	Yes	Confirms your player for competition
 Rocket League	Epic Games (PC) or Xbox Live or PlayStation Network depending on the platform you're playing on	Yes	Automatically report match results, Show in-game information
 Madden NFL 21 FIFA 21	PlayStation Network	Yes	Confirms your player for competition
 Splatoon 2	Nintendo	Yes	Confirms your player for competition
 Discord	Discord	Optional	Get Access to our PlayVS chat rooms

### How to connect your accounts:

1. Click the PlayVS logo in the upper right
2. Scroll down and click the connect for the respective account you need to connect
3. Follow the prompts to connect your account

 [Watch a video on how to connect accounts](#)



**Important:** Only players can connect their game accounts. We recommend running through this process during your first practice to make sure your students are set up correctly.



## ENROLLING YOUR TEAM, IN 5 EASY STEPS

# 1

### Verify Players

Log into the PlayVS app. Players that need to be verified will appear at the top of your dashboard. Simply verify the students from your school by clicking 'Verify'. You can also invite players using the dashboard.

# 2

### Create Teams

You have your program plan, now let's build out your teams. Click the 'Create Teams' button in the top nav bar. Select your game, name your team, and click 'Create Team'.

# 3

### Add Players

Let's add players to your team. Simply click 'Add Player', select the player you want to add, and click 'Add Player'. Rinse and repeat until all of your teams are set up!

# 4

### Enroll Players & Teams

Now, head over to the 'Manage Teams' page. Click 'Begin Enrollment' to enroll your players and teams for the upcoming season.

# 5

### Confirm Enrollment

Select all teams and substitutes you want to enroll, then click 'Complete' to confirm.



For a complete guide to enrollment [click here](#).

## HOLD UP!

You're technically RTP, (That's "Ready to Participate,") but we recommend a couple of additional steps to get the most out of PlayVS and your first season with us.

# 03

# BUILDING YOUR SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM

## Building Your Program

Holding practices, events, and tryouts are good next steps for building your program.

### Practice makes perfect

Now that your team is set up and enrolled for the season, let's get some practical experience with friendly matches using the scrimmage feature.

1. Compete on PlayVS in [a Scrimmage](#)
2. Run tryouts ([See our recommendations](#))

## A week in the life of a PlayVS Coach

We recommend coaches hold at least one practice a week. Practice is the perfect time for you to connect with your students, for them to connect with each other, and for you to get comfortable with the games your teams play.

We've put together an overview [Practice Guide](#) to walk you through what we recommend. **Here are the key components:**

- a. Team meeting:** Establish expectations and structure for your practice.
- b. Warm Up:** Like traditional sports, warming up the body is essential for esports players to prevent injury.
- c. Scrimmage**
- d. Cool Down:** As the practice winds down, provide a time for reflection



**Tip:** Don't forget to update your profile and show your school spirit! Complete school profile and add a school logo.

## Example

# League of Legends Weekly Schedule

Time	Monday Practice Schedule	Tuesday Game Day	Wednesday Practice Schedule	Thursday Off	Friday Practice Schedule
3:30 - 4:00	Team Meeting and check patch updates Warm-up and stretch	Warm-up and stretch Review picks/bans and strategies	Team Meeting and check patch updates Warm-up and stretch	Off	Team Meeting and check patch updates Warm-up and stretch
4:00 - 4:30	Review professional footage for new strategies	Game 1 Starts	Review previous match footage	Off	Scrim
4:30 - 5:00	Scrim	Review and rework plan	Scout and Plan strategies	Off	Review scrim and adjust strategies
5:00 - 5:30	Review scrim and adjust strategies	Game 2 Starts	Scrim	Off	Scrim
5:30 - 5:45	Scrim with new strategies		Review scrim and adjust strategies	Off	Review scrim and adjust strategies
5:45 - 6:00	Reflect - plus/delta of match Team Building Activity	Reflect - plus/delta of match	Reflect - plus/delta of match Team Building Activity	Off	Reflect - plus/delta of match Team Building Activity
6:00 - 6:15	Go home	Go home	Go home	Off	Go home

## Preview of Gameday

The flow is slightly different for each game, but the general flow goes like this.



### Prep

*(1 hour before your scheduled match)*

1. Reach out to the opponent's coach via the PlayVS Coach Discord server.
2. Update the patch for the game by logging into the game.
3. Give your IT department a heads up and have them on standby if any technical issues come up during matches.

### Set up the match

1. Confirm whether or not you are the Home team. As the home team you'll need to set up the match.
2. Create and join the game lobby or use the game link generated by PlayVS.

### Play!

1. Compete.
2. Screenshot the match results.
3. Rinse and repeat!
4. The top teams record and analyze each match. We recommend you do this with your teams every practice. We found [a great guide](#) to help you get started.

### Report the results

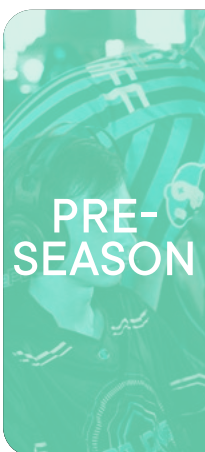
1. Some games automatically report, for those that are manually reported, [enter match results](#) on PlayVS.com. The table on page 15 shows which games are manual and which ones are automatic.

**Tip:** Check out the Gameday Protocol in the Games section for a very detailed guide for every game we support.

# 04

## SEASON OVERVIEW

### Fall



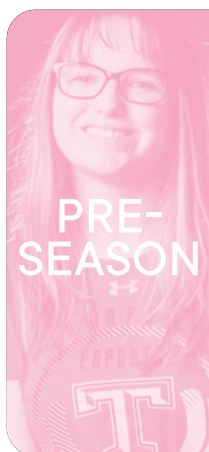
PRE-  
SEASON

REGULAR  
SEASON



POST-  
SEASON

### Spring



PRE-  
SEASON

REGULAR  
SEASON



POST-  
SEASON

### Special Events



PLAYVS CUP










JULY JAM

[CLICK HERE TO SEE THE SCHEDULE](#)



# PlayVS Featured Games

							
Game	League of Legends	SMITE	Rocket League	FIFA 21	Madden NFL 21	Super Smash Bros. Ultimate	Splatoon 2
Format	Two consecutive games (set-of-two)	Two consecutive games (set-of-two)	Up to five consecutive games (best-of-five)	Three consecutive games (set-of-three)	Three consecutive games (set-of-three)	3, best of 3 sets played in 1on1s between both sides' players.	Up to five consecutive games (set-of-five)
Matchday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Tuesday	Thursday	Wednesday	Tuesday
Game Guides	<a href="https://plyvs.com/LOLGuide">https://plyvs.com/LOLGuide</a>	<a href="https://plyvs.com/SMITEGuide">https://plyvs.com/SMITEGuide</a>	<a href="https://plyvs.com/RLGuide">https://plyvs.com/RLGuide</a>	<a href="https://plyvs.com/FIFAGuide">https://plyvs.com/FIFAGuide</a>	<a href="https://plyvs.com/MaddenGuide">https://plyvs.com/MaddenGuide</a>	<a href="https://plyvs.com/SSBUGuide">https://plyvs.com/SSBUGuide</a>	<a href="https://plyvs.com/SplatoonGuide">https://plyvs.com/SplatoonGuide</a>
Gameday Protocol	<a href="https://plyvs.com/LOLGDP">https://plyvs.com/LOLGDP</a>	<a href="https://plyvs.com/SMITEGDP">https://plyvs.com/SMITEGDP</a>	<a href="https://plyvs.com/RLGDP">https://plyvs.com/RLGDP</a>	<a href="https://plyvs.com/FIFAGDP">https://plyvs.com/FIFAGDP</a>	<a href="https://plyvs.com/MaddenGDP">https://plyvs.com/MaddenGDP</a>	<a href="https://plyvs.com/SSBUGDP">https://plyvs.com/SSBUGDP</a>	<a href="https://plyvs.com/SplatoonGDP">https://plyvs.com/SplatoonGDP</a>
# of Players per team	5	5	3	1	1	3	4
Substitutes allowed?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Hardware needed	1 per player/ 5 PCs or Macs per team	1 per player/ 5 PCs per team	1 PC/PS4/ Xbox with two controllers per team; Recommended one player per PC or Console	1 x PS4 per team	1 x PS4 per team	1 x Switch with 3 controllers	4x Switches with joycons
Auto/ Manual Match Reporting	Auto	Auto/Manual	Auto, unless a private match lobby is used	Manual	Manual	Manual	Manual

# 05

# LEVEL UP YOUR PROGRAM

## Good Job, Coach!

Congratulations on bringing esports to your school! We spoke with dozens of coaches and discovered two easy things that helped them to get the most out of their esports program.

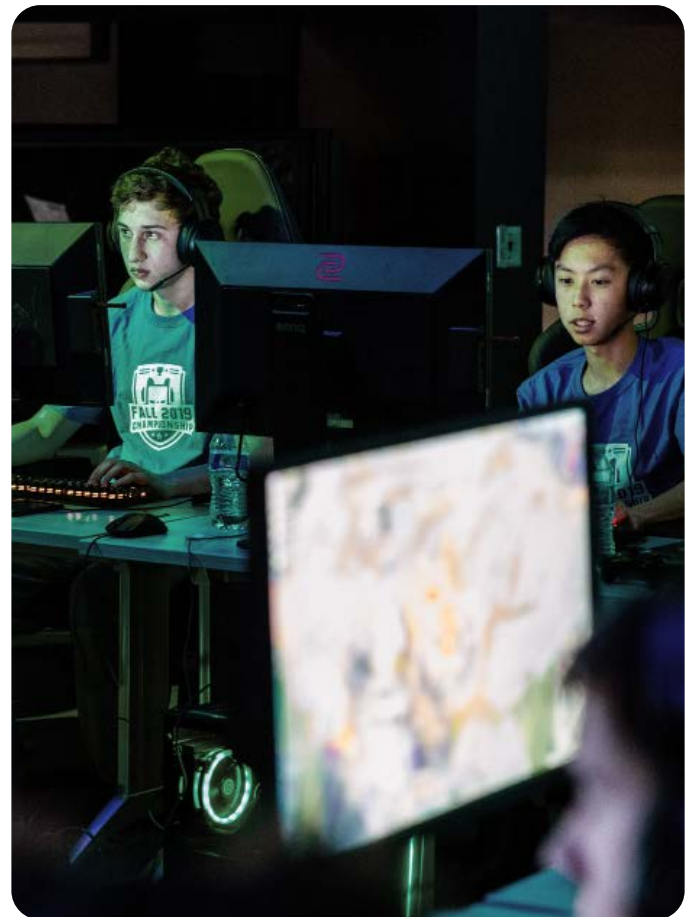
### #1 Supercharge your esports knowledge with our Coach Chat webinars

We host regular conversations with PlayVS Super Coaches, veteran esports coaches that go above and beyond for their players. We cover everything from getting your computer lab ready, to game strategies to improve your team's chances at a championship title.

The best thing? You can watch them on your own time. [View our upcoming webinars and watch on-demand.](#)

## Consider Adding Student Leadership

- 🔥 **Team Captains:** Most likely your players are the esports experts, let them lead. Team captains can help organize practice, set up for match day, or come up with scenarios/strategies for that next match.
- 🔥 **Designers:** From jerseys to your team's logo, your students can use those digital design skills to make your team stand out.



- 🔥 **Broadcasters:** Part of the fun of esports is the live commentary. With a few extras you can quickly turn one of your computers into an all-in-one live streaming studio. Many professional esports announcers started as players!

# 06

# QUICK REFERENCE

## What is esports?

Esports takes video gaming to another level with organized competitive gameplay between 2 teams, governed by a strict set of rules and guidelines.



## Esports in Education

Esports requires a tremendous amount of critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity from players to achieve and sustain success. With easy access and a low cost to entry, esports reaches beyond traditional sports to create an all-inclusive environment that breaks barriers.

## Esports Benefits

1. Sense of Community
2. Character Development
3. Scholarship Opportunities
4. Embodies ISTE Standards
5. Increased Achievement
6. STEM Engagement

## Logical Career Paths

For students, esports provides the perfect entryway to the booming video game industry. Gaming companies, like our partner Riot Games, offer exciting career opportunities across the entire business and creative spectrum.

## Scholastic Benefits

Engaged students perform better in school. Esports has the unique ability to appeal to and engage a wider audience. For many of our players, esports is the first time they've participated in a coached, athletic activity.

## The Collegiate Path

Collegiate esports is exploding. That translates into tens of millions of dollars in scholarships every year. Every season, more and more high-performing players on our platform get snapped up by top collegiate esports programs.

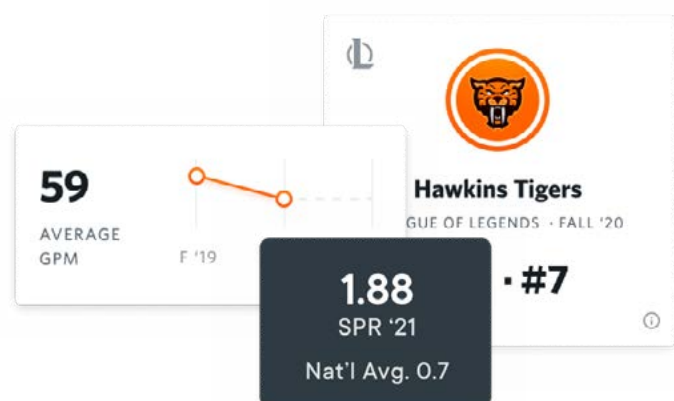
## Beyond Esports

The gaming industry intersects with other large, thriving industries like entertainment and technology. Familiarity with the gaming ecosystem and esports landscape builds a student's knowledge-base for what's possible and where a career can take them.

# Why PlayVS?

## Easy Implementation

PlayVS manages the schedules, displays team and player stats, and provides premium support for coaches. Coaches can add and arrange players to build optimal lineups. Similar to traditional sports, PlayVS holds a Fall and Spring season during the school year.

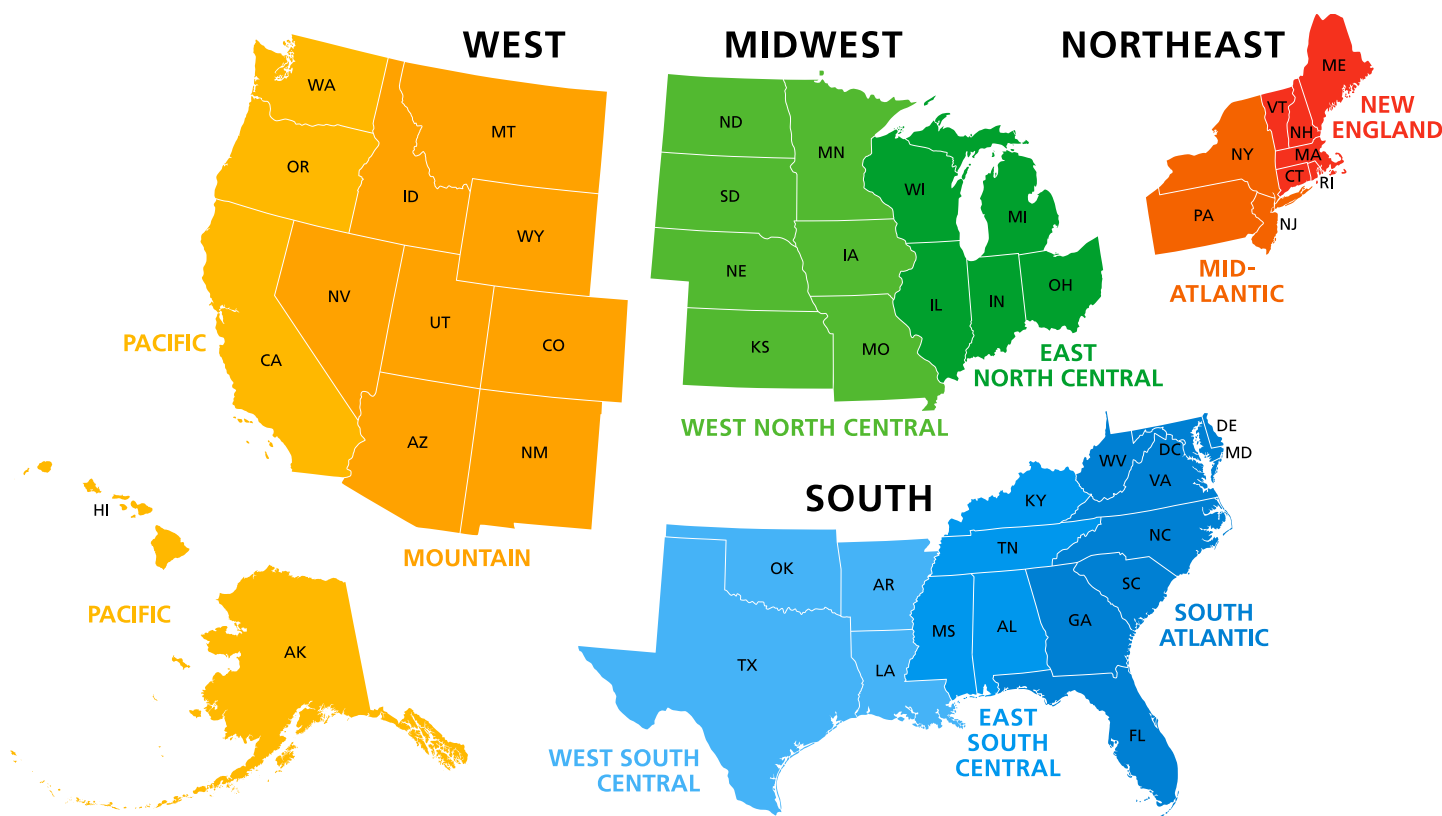


## PlayVS League Features

1. PlayVS and NFHS support
2. Fall and Spring seasons
3. Weekly matches played after school
4. Multiple teams per esports
5. State rankings
6. Single-elimination playoffs
7. No travel - all matches are on campus
8. No additional equipment - computer labs or libraries already have the equipment needed to participate

# State and Regional Leagues

There are two types of leagues that schools may compete in. In states where PlayVS has a partnership with the athletic or activity association, member schools will compete in their respective state league. In all non-partner states, schools will compete in regional leagues.



## State Leagues

State leagues are made up of teams across your state from other schools that are members of the athletic or activity association. Schools can enroll an unlimited number of teams in their state leagues, but only the two best teams in each game will advance to the postseason.

## Exceptions

The exception to this is if there is not enough enrollment to support a state league in a state we are partnered with an association in. The minimum number of teams needed for a viable and healthy league is 20. If a state league does not have 20 teams enrolled by the start of the season, all teams will be moved into the regional league and notified of the change before the first match of the season.

## Regional Leagues

Regional leagues are made up of schools in the same time zone in the United States and Canada where we are not currently partnered with a state association. Schools can enroll an unlimited number of teams in the regional leagues and will compete towards a PlayVS league championship at the end of the season.

## Substitutions

You can have players from your Regional league teams play up, until week 5 of the regular season, but you cannot have State league players play down. Additionally, all other substitution rules still apply. This means you cannot have your varsity team play in both Regional and State in the same week. We also expect coaches to be as upfront and honest with their opponents about the substitutions as possible. If you need to move a player up from Regional to Varsity for a week to cover for a student who is ill, shoot your peer an email and let them know ahead of time

**Can I create more than one State team?**

Yes. Schools can create and enroll an unlimited number of teams in the state league, however only the top two teams per game can qualify for the playoffs.

**Why do I only see State League teams when I enroll my teams?**

Our enrollment system has had a number of changes to match the new leagues. If you are in a state with State League support you will need to fill out or update your State League enrollment and then click on the Continue button in the bottom right of the webpage to move on to the Regional Enrollment page.

**How do I know if my state is regional or state?**

<http://help.playvs.com/en/articles/4919182-regional-and-state-league-rosters>

**Do esports players have to meet high school eligibility requirements to participate?**

Players do have to maintain academic eligibility to participate in esports, just as they would for traditional sports.





## Getting support from Parents

Many parents are either skeptical or unaware of esports at the high school level. Host a parent night to educate them about it. Set up machines to showcase the games. Include a time to go over the benefits, expectations, and FAQs for your new program.

Have handouts ready for parents, including our [Parent Guide](#), [Parent Night Handout](#), and [Permission Slip](#).

Once parents understand the benefits to esports, most become supportive of the program. You may even have some wanting to participate.

Opportunities for parent involvement include:

1. Stream matches for live remote viewing
2. Fundraising support
3. Provide match-day snacks
4. Analyze pro games with their player
5. Monitor chats or social media
6. Discuss learnings from each match including the social-emotional impact of working in a team to achieve success.

## PlayVS Matchday Quick Reference

- ☛ [Forfeit Guide](#)
- ☛ [Entering Match Results](#)
- ☛ [Setting up Discord](#)
- ☛ [Rescheduling](#)
- ☛ [Substitutions](#)
- ☛ [Reporting Concerns](#)



### PlayVS Jersey Logo Guidelines

Deck out your team with branded merch! [Order team jerseys from Champion here](#).  
Download our [Brand Kit](#) and follow our [Jersey Logo Guidelines here](#).