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New Xbox Live Tournaments Platform is for developers, players and esports leagues

Tournaments as easy as matchmaking

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The Xbox Live Tournaments Platform will allow developers to create their own game tournaments powered by Xbox Live, Jason Ronald, head of Xbox Advanced Technology Group said in unveiling the new program at a GDC 2016 panel today.

Like Xbox Live's built-in matchmaking capabilities on console and Windows PC, the Xbox Live Tournaments Platform is designed to make tournaments easy for developers to integrate into games. Microsoft's ambitions go beyond developers, though: Ronald announced partnerships with esports networks ESL and FaceIt, who will stage their tournaments using the platform.

Ronald said the Xbox Live Tournaments Platform was built with more than just esports players and leagues in mind. Chad Gibson, group program manager at Xbox Live, used *Rocket League* as the backdrop to explain how he wants to use the Xbox Live Tournaments Platform.

"I'm a huge *Rocket League* player, but I'm not amazing," Gibson told Polygon. "I would love to play a tournament with my friends. I would love to be able to say, 'Hey, guys. This Friday, why don't the eight of us play a single elimination, one-on-one tournament and see who wins?'"

Gibson also said that tournaments could work cooperatively. In *Tom Clancy's The Division*, he imagined a scenario where entering with a friend could allow them to be more competitive and climb leaderboards they couldn't climb on their own.

On the developers' end, Gibson said, Xbox Live Tournaments Platform will allow games to integrate with the service in much the same way that games already integrate with multiplayer though Xbox Live. Microsoft will handle things like arbitration, registration, queuing and notifications. The aim is to make it easy to add tournaments to a game. Then, Gibson said, developers can choose how tournaments work in their games.

A preview software development kit is available today, and Ronald said that Microsoft plans to release the final version later this year.