

# NFL model adopted by new videogame league

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Esports adopt league co-ownership, just like traditional pro sports



Fans shake hands with players at the ESL Gaming world championship, which will compete with Twitch's new league

Esports are becoming more like traditional professional sports as the industry's popularity and revenue continue to skyrocket.

Amazon.com Inc.'s **AMZN, +1.67%** Twitch, a social streaming platform for watching professional esports, announced a new partnership with competitive gaming platform FACEIT on Wednesday to launch the first professional esports league to offer teams co-ownership.



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Co-ownership is a model that is used [by other professional sports leagues](#) that gives teams more control over their own events, while giving them a portion of ticket, merchandise and, in some cases, broadcast revenue. In a similar model, the National Football League, the most profitable pro-sports league in the U.S., shares certain centrally-generated revenue with teams, such as shirt sales and broadcast fees. In the Twitch and FACEIT case, league operators will also pay for team travel, accommodation, concierge services, lounges and parties.

The league operators and esports teams will work together to set player codes and rules as well, such as determining a "strict code of conduct" for player treatment and payments. The team representatives will be given seats on the league's governing committee to help make decisions related to regulatory framework and players' welfare, such as holiday time off.

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"Players and teams are the heart of the esports community and deserve the opportunity to reap the rewards of their hard work and dedication to grow esports into a mainstream phenomenon," said Michele Attisani, co-founder of FACEIT.



The initiative, dubbed the Esports Championship Series, will be anchored by the league ECS- Counter-Strike, which will consist of 20 teams, half from North America and half from Europe. The league will kick off later Wednesday morning with a pre-show and \$3.5 million payout. The championship series, to be shown exclusively on Twitch, will compete with similar leagues operated by Activision Blizzard and Electronic Sports League.

The news comes as Amazon's Twitch continues to position itself at the center of the industry's massive growth. Last week, it [launched a league](#) for the popular iOS esports game "Vainglory." This deal gives it the ability to help shape the framework of the industry at an early stage.

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"We've listened to what the teams and players are looking for, which is to have a bigger voice in the movement," said Stuart Saw, Director of Esports Strategy at Twitch. "This will mark a significant and welcome change to the sport, and will lead to a wider impact across the industry."

Esports remain a small portion of Amazon's total revenue. The company generated revenue of \$107 billion in fiscal 2015, with a vast majority of sales coming from its enterprise cloud business, Amazon Prime memberships and e-commerce.

Shares of Amazon rose 0.9% to \$591.26 in morning trade. They are down 6.5% over the last three months, versus a 4% gain for the S&P 500.