

FACEIT Exec on ECS Season 3, the Battle for Exclusivity in CS:GO, and Vegas Gambling

INTERVIEW // CS:GO // By Dustin Steiner // 2mo ago



The third season of Faceit and Twitch's Esports Championship Series is already underway with the Development League, ECS's way for up and coming teams to qualify for the regular season.

Thus, it was a great time for us to check in with Michele Attisani, co-founder and CBO of FACEIT to learn about the new season, the battle for exclusivity in *CS:GO*, gambling, as well as some lingering questions about which teams will be in the upcoming season of ECS after roster drama.

What do you think is the biggest thing *CS:GO* fans should be looking forward to this season with the ECS?

2016 for us was mostly about setting up a completely new system to esports with the ECS. Most of the teams and players are fully committed for the upcoming seasons. Our focus will be on the product itself and creating an entertaining and engaging viewership for the community, much like the FACEIT League back in 2014-2015 with lots of community orientated topics on our shows.

We have also been gathering feedback from the community, players, press and our partners and we have a really good idea of what we did well and where we need to improve. This season, we are putting even more focus on making the experience for player and fans our priority, so fans can not only look forward to the best teams in the world playing the best matches, but we are dedicated to making the viewing experience in the main league and our live finals a thoroughly fun experience for everyone.

What are your thoughts on the battle for exclusivity in *CS:GO*, and how has ECS looked to more fairly compensate players?

Our personal approach has always been that we do not endorse pressure for exclusivity because we feel that a monopoly in the industry can only cause a decrease in quality. Competition drives us to make better quality, more fun shows, treat players and teams better and provide fans with a much better experience. The ECS structure is always being evaluated on how we can best provide kickback on our revenues to teams and players. Last year was widely successful in doing this, but we are working on better ways to measure team's involvement and player treatment to better distribute fairly.

If you could change one thing about the *CS:GO* space, what would it be and why?

2016 and 2017 so far have already seen many improvements we would like to see progress. Such things include organizers working together on scheduling to spread the workload for the players more over the year and ensuring there are not too many large live events in a short timespan. We also see better communication between us, teams and players, which is key to make all parties satisfied. It'll be our main goal to continue working on communication with everyone and maintaining transparency.

We also believe more leagues and organizers should move toward revenue sharing with teams and players, similar to what ECS is doing. Increasing the prize pool to attract teams is might sound great, but in the long run, it could be quite destructive and a system of payment that rewards regular playing and supports players over long periods of time is much better for stability. The seasonal prize pool of the ECS is US\$750,000 but with additional fees, we're paying about US \$1.5M a season.

The *CS:GO* space has changed rapidly over the past few months and seems to be growing even faster than ever. What do you think are the biggest reasons for this success?

This game is on a whole other level of excitement and skill. It is, to some extent, the perfect FPS title. On top of that the way that Valve approaches support of the game but also how they are hands off in allowing organizers to innovate and develop the scene results in this beautiful explosion of growth around the game.

Do you see the growth of legal gambling in the United States through Las Vegas books like [William Hill](#) as being a positive thing for the *CS:GO* ecosystem?

Gambling accompanies almost every competition in the world. But the worry, especially for this sort of industry, is the lack of protection of younger fans that may be tempted to gamble by less reputable companies. With established books entering the esports scene, we're confident that legal gambling with strict rules and regulations to protect users will be enforced and result in a positive experience for the community. That includes measures that prohibit players competing in the ECS from betting on league matches.

What is the plan for the teams that currently do not have rosters, such as Team Solo Mid and Dignitas?

We have discussed this within the ECS Governing Committee, which consists of League, Team and Player representatives. In order to maintain stability and integrity for the League, the approach is to have any team qualify through the development league, as SK Gaming did last season, and avoid any external influence.

We have proven that if a team truly deserves to be in the ECS they will be able to make it back in. In the case of teams that hold the spot but do not have a roster, they have a period in which they must submit a roster which can compete within the league or they will drop from the league and an extra qualification slot becomes available.