

Why Rocket League could be the mainstream esports hit of the generation



Jake Tucker · PC · 18th July 2017



Psyonix's car-based kickabout Rocket League is two years old this month, and while most toddlers can't even string a sentence together, Rocket League has managed to mark itself out as one of the most promising esports of the generation.

Over those two years, Rocket League has picked up 33m players, with 1.6m of those coming back to play automotive kickball every single day. Meanwhile on Twitch, the game has had 35m total views, with viewers watching around 5,375 years of streams featuring goal-scoring cars.

On the events front, Psyonix's RLCS is still going strong after four seasons, and broadcasting outfit NBC and extreme sports company X Games have both announced big money tournaments in collaboration with event organiser Facit.

While it might not be as big a draw as esports' leading lights, Rocket League has several qualities that its more established rivals don't. As a result, it could well emerge as the sport with the biggest mainstream success.

Of course, you can never bank on a game becoming an esports, especially if the company doesn't have the benefit of millions of pounds to support it. If you're looking to publish or work with a game in the esports space, however, consider this one weird trick.

As it turns out, cars flying through the sky trying to hit a ball into a goal makes for a great spectator sport.

Jake Tucker, Esports Pro

Rocket League's key strength is the ease with which the casual viewer can understand it: it might be a game of cars, oversized balls and futuristic arenas, but strip that all back and it's a rules-light take on football, with the offside rule replaced by ridiculous aerial skillshots.

If I may be so bold, it's all the better for it. The offside rule is, let's be honest, bad – and as it turns out, cars flying through the sky trying to hit the ball into the goal makes for a great spectator sport.

Making your game easily comprehensible for first-time viewers is essential. While Dota 2 might have an ocean of depth, it's nearly impossible to convey to a non-player what's going on. Let's get technical here, too: Lich popping his Chain Frost ultimate too early in a teamfight and giving the enemy team time to split can lead to the other side winning, but you're not going to know that unless you're a regular viewer.

Want to know who's winning a game of Rocket League, on the other hand? Take a look at the score on the top of the screen.

Rocket League isn't the only game making big waves in esports right now, though, with another hot ticket being PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds. Despite being more complex than Rocket League, it still settles on a simple premise: survive longer than anyone else.

If you're looking to run tournaments for a competitive game, or perhaps sign up the next esports hit yourself, don't worry about the size of the team, or how much money you've got to push it – just make sure anyone can understand the game, and it's fun to watch.

The community will take care of the rest.

Jake Tucker is the editor of MCV's sister title [Esports Pro](#). His main memory of Rocket League is getting stomped by Ubisoft at a 'friendly' games industry tournament.

You can read more from Jake Tucker in [MCV's esports special](#).

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