

# Esports emerging as a career pathway



LAURYN LONGACRE/THE STANDARD-JOURNAL

From left, Warrior Run High School students Braden Beachel, Carter McCormick, Dryden Beachel and Ty Magargle go head-to-head with Danville during the Semi-Finals at the third annual Central Susquehanna Esports League (CSEL) Face-to-Face Rocket League Tournament.

**BY LAURYN LONGACRE**  
THE STANDARD-JOURNAL

MILTON — The stakes were high on the digital field Thursday as Esports teams from school districts across the region went head-to-head in a Rocket League tournament, while also delving into the STEM field.

The third annual Central Susquehanna Esports League (CSEL) Face-to-Face Rocket League Tournament was held at the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (CSIU) headquarters in Milton.

Six Esports teams from the Berwick, Danville, Shamokin, Shikellamy, Selinsgrove and Warrior Run school districts competed in a double-elimination Rocket League tournament, while also gaining insight into the Esports career field.

“We call it scholastic Esports because we try to talk about careers that are available in Esports, not only gaming,” said CSIU STEM Education Consultant Colleen Epler-Ruths. “Writing, producing events like this (tournament), the information technology (IT) that goes behind it.”

During the event, nearly 30 students were educated on shout casting (or commentating), logo design and marketing.

“There’s an entire job market in Esports, so it’s a career pathway,” Epler-Ruths said. “They get an opportunity to see our check guys that are doing all this hard work... to watch our shout-caster doing the broadcasting live... also to interact with other kids of

# Esports

FROM PAGE A1

like minds.

“It just takes away the chords and brings the kids face-to-face with each other so they get to meet kids that they’ve played (Esports with) for the last six or eight weeks,” Epler-Ruths added.

She said the highlight of the tournament day was working alongside the Esports coaches. Educators from most participating school districts donned their school colors to raise the spirits for the event, as they supported their respective teams.

Warrior Run High School’s Kyle Brady, library media specialist and Esports coach, said his school’s team has been involved for three years

and is doing “phenomenal.”

“Every year the kids are really engaged with it,” he said. “This is a way for them to connect with peers they usually wouldn’t be connecting with. So frequently, you have maybe a football player that is playing with maybe the wallflower of the school... and it’s really neat to see the dynamics of a team and how they really flourish with each other because they build their own camaraderie right throughout the season. That’s really what makes it very special.”

During the tournament, the Warrior Run team really “took to” the shout-casting aspect and the advanced personal computer (PC) systems they were able to play on, Brady said.

Not all students have the same opportunity to play on high-speed PC systems as they can range from hundreds of dollars to thousands, at the highest in cost. Since Rocket League is a multi-platform free game, students are able to play on older computers, Nintendo Switches, Playstation or Xbox consoles.

“They get so excited to be able to see the best equipment possible, so that’s really a neat experience because everybody comes from different backgrounds,” Brady said. “This allows them to unite a little bit.”

Carter McCormick and Braden Beachel, both Warrior Run freshmen, said the tournament was a fun way to bond with peers who share

similar interests.

Although some students found the tournament to be a great way to have fun with one of their favorite games, others said they found solace in Esports.

Shamokin Area High School senior Aron Jones said he has spent most of his life gaming.

“It gets my mind off of different things (that are) happening in my life, and it helps me pursue them,” Jones said.

“The best part about this is that there are many skills that are being used that are important to the school setting. So first and foremost, they have to be problem solvers. Not only within the game, but they have to be insanely good at commu-

nication... because they’re collaborating with their teammates,” Brady said. “Whenever you combine all of this together, you realize, ‘wow, this is really important to them.’”

Students were also given a presentation from Harrisburg University’s Lynzie Wagaman, who graduated with a degree in Esports Management in 2023.

“Esports was a fully supported sport here on (Harrisburg University’s) campus, it’s actually our only varsity sport and we have students from across the world... and all of them come here as student-athletes,” Wagaman said.

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