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Esports Program to Host National Tournament

February 17, 2023

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — A national esports tournament organized by the Illinois Wesleyan University Esports Program on Feb. 25-26 will be the largest event of its kind hosted on campus, with more than \$2,000 in prizes.

The Polar Pummel Tournament will take place in the Young Main Lounge, Joslin Atrium and Turfler Room of the Memorial Center and will be streamed on [twitch.tv/iwuesports](https://www.twitch.tv/iwuesports). More than 100 attendees are expected, with eight universities participating. Seven students will compete on the IWU team.

“We wanted to host it in the center of campus to expose the larger campus community to what we do here in esports,” said Director of Esports Cora Kennedy. “We want to break the stereotype around gamers, especially in a competitive setting, and help the average student see just how much work, dedication and care goes into this from all of our students and staff.”

Players will compete in several games, including Super Smash Bros and Guilty Gear Strive. IWU has also invited high school teams and players to compete in order to gain an understanding of collegiate esports while introducing prospective recruits to the team. Details about registration, a schedule of events and more [is available here](#).

[Ranked among the top collegiate gaming programs in the country](#), the

IWU esports program caught the attention of Marc Talluto '94, who is the primary sponsor for the tournament. [As an entrepreneur](#) and fan of gaming, Talluto was interested in the growing field of esports and was eager to support the program.

“I'm intrigued by an esports tournament being played locally in person and streamed globally to a potential audience of millions. It's exciting to participate in any growing industry and also support students and the university,” said Talluto, who plans to attend and watch the competition in person.

Talluto also provided direction, theming and branding insight for the event — steps that Kennedy said are vital “as we look to make it multi-purpose as a competition, a recruiting event and a way to help the campus community better understand esports.”

Kennedy is confident in the IWU esports team's abilities. The team won the Fall 2022 National Esports Collegiate Conference (NECC) and placed third in the Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC). Fans can keep up with the IWU esports program on [Twitter](#).

This tournament and esports scholarship opportunities are made possible by the generosity of alumni and Illinois Wesleyan supporters. [The Esports Giving Circle](#) funds scholarships for talented players on the esports team, a program that offers a diverse environment for students to train, compete and pursue their passions.



The Illinois Wesleyan University Esports Program will host a national tournament Feb. 25-26 in the Memorial Center.