

EA Sports and FIFA end partnership, both eye new video games

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FIFA President Gianni Infantino speaks during an interview conducted with The Associated Press in Doha, Qatar, March 29, 2022. Infantino said migrant workers gain pride from hard work when he was questioned on Monday, May 2, 2022, about workers suffering in Qatar while building World Cup infrastructure. Credit: AP Photo/Lujain Jo, File

Electronic Arts will stop making its hugely successful FIFA video game in its current name, marking a split in one of soccer's most successful and lucrative partnerships after the sides failed to strike a new licensing deal.

Instead, the California company said Tuesday that EA Sports FC will be introduced from 2023 after it creates the final game in partnership with FIFA later this year.

Licensing rights for the game earn FIFA about \$150 million annually—the single biggest commercial earner in its expected \$7 billion total revenue from 2019-2022—though FIFA struck a defiant tone in a statement published hours after the announcement of losing that income.

FIFA promised a "number of new non-simulation games (that) are already under production" and will launch ahead of the 2022 World Cup that kicks off in Qatar in November.

FIFA said it plans to create a "new gaming model" and cited the recent launch of its streaming service FIFA+.

"I can assure you that the only authentic, real game that has the FIFA name will be the best one available for gamers and football fans," FIFA president Gianni Infantino said in the statement.

EA has been producing a FIFA game for nearly 30 years and its fond association with tens of millions of gamers worldwide helped the Zurich-based organization's brand when it was tarnished amid a wave of arrests of soccer officials in 2015.

For generations of young people, FIFA has means a video game rather than a sports institution.

Though EA Sports FC will be unable to include FIFA content including the World Cup, it retains licensing deals with prime soccer competitions including the English Premier League and the UEFA-organized Champions League.

The [EA announcement](#) showed the strength of those partnerships with warm comments from executives from the Premier League, UEFA and Spain's La Liga while a coordinated [release of tweets](#) posted by dozens of soccer clubs used the slogan "We're In The Club" to align with the EA Sports FC brand.

"We're thankful for our many years of great partnership with FIFA," EA CEO Andrew Wilson said. "The future of global football is very bright, and fandom around the world has never been stronger."

Wilson promised "even more innovative and authentic experiences to the growing football audience" while its soon-to-be rival FIFA spoke of creating "new, interactive experiences to fans across the globe."

"The interactive gaming and e-sports sector is on a path of unrivaled growth and diversification," Infantino said. "FIFA's strategy is to ensure we can make the most of all future options and ensure a wide range of products and opportunities for gamers, fans, member associations and partners."

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