

# First Olympic Esports Week kicks off

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The first-ever Olympic-organized Esports Week kicked off in Singapore on Thursday, but an IOC official said there is currently no plan to include video games in the Olympic program.

The International Olympic Committee officially recognized eSports as a sport in 2017 and has been in discussions with industry players about inclusion on the most prestigious stage.

ESports will be a medal sport for the first time at the upcoming Asian Games in Hangzhou.

The four-day event in Singapore is the "first step" in bringing the eSports community and the sports community together, Vincent Pereira, the IOC's Head of Virtual Sport told AFP.

Over 20,000 tickets have been issued, and 131 players are coming from 64 countries, he said.

But he said there is currently "no discussion about integrating real traditional eSports and video games into the Olympic program".

"I think today we are not at this stage, we are not thinking about it."

There is a possibility that "virtual active sports" such as cycling or taekwondo could be part of the Olympic program one day, he said.

"The opportunity of integrating virtual sports into the Olympic program is something that we have already discussed with some federations and the next opportunity could be LA (20)28, but for now we are exploring discussions."

Many in the [gaming community](#) were baffled that many of the most established gaming titles were not part of the event.

Instead of popular games such as the first-person shooter [game](#) "Counter-Strike" and "DOTA 2", a battle arena game, it features 10 simulated sports, among them archery, baseball, chess and taekwondo.

The shooting event will involve the globally loved "Fortnite", but in a version without its kill-or-be-killed "Battle Royale" mode.

Pereira ruled out the inclusion of first-person shooter games in future events as the promotion of violence goes against Olympic values.

"For us, there is the clear limitation that the first people shooting will never be integrated into our competition. We can understand that the perception can be different but we cannot have these games promoting Olympic values," he said.

For athletes competing in Singapore, the event was an opportunity to meet with some of their peers in person, after years of competing in virtual events.

"It's massive," said James Barnes, a 32-year-old cycling finalist from South Africa.

"I never thought that my cycling... would bring me to an event like this, of this caliber, so for me, it's a lifetime goal achieved," he added.

"It's really special for me because it's Olympics... it's really cool to be here," said Kaj de Bruin, an 18-year-old finalist from the Netherlands in the Gran Turismo racing event.

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