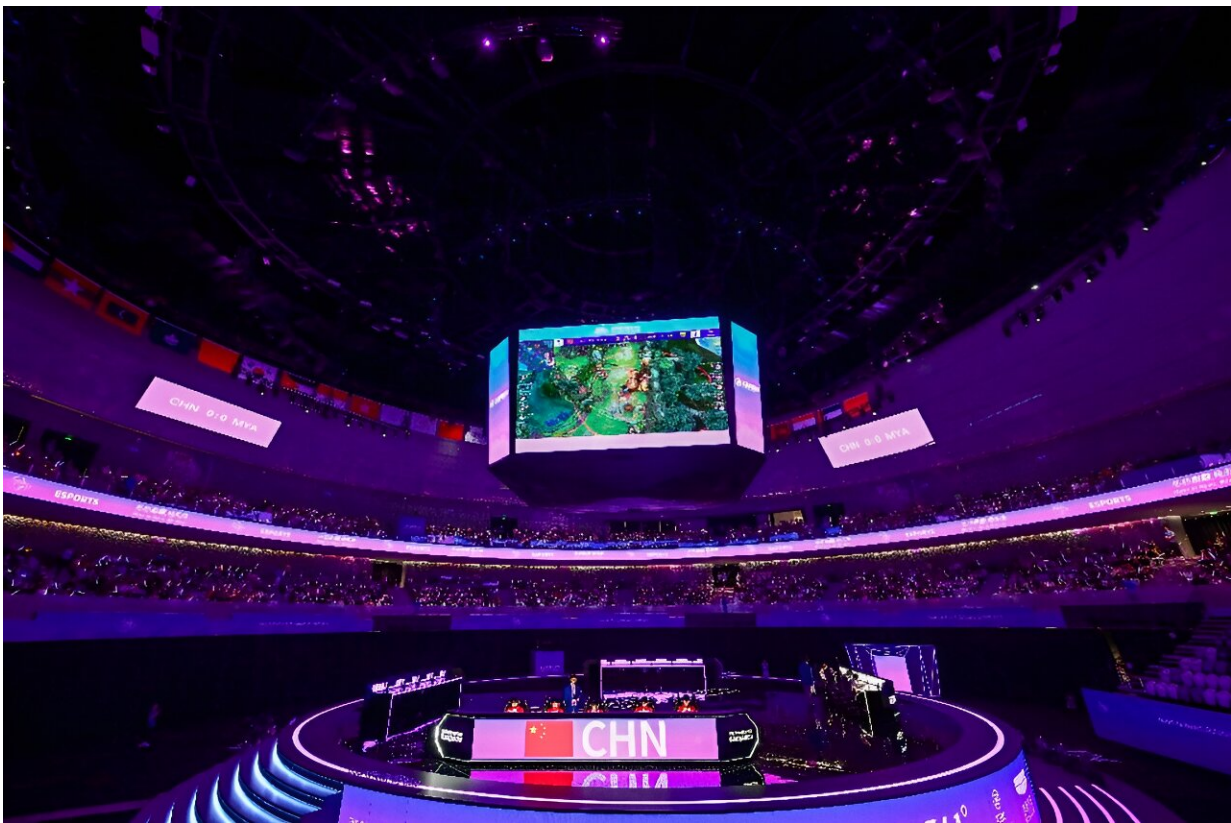


Desperate eSports fans in ticket-grabbing frenzy at Asian Games

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ESports have been a smash-hit at the Asian Games.

ESports tickets costing up to \$137 are like gold dust at the Asian Games with desperate fans signing up multiple times through a lottery system in hope of seeing their gaming heroes live.

For the unlucky ones, they have instead waited outside the gates of the futuristic-looking Hangzhou Esports Center, craning their necks to look inside the official Games buses passing through.

ESports is making its debut as a medal event in the Chinese city, seen as a major step towards the Olympics one day, with renowned gamers such as South Korea's Lee "Faker" Sang-hyeok in action.

Medals are up for grabs in seven gaming titles, including Arena of Valor, League of Legends and EA Sports FC Online.

Underlining just how popular it is, eSports is the only competition at the Games where [tickets](#) were allocated through an initial online lottery, before being opened up last week for direct purchase.

Tickets run up to 1,000 yuan (\$137), making eSports one of the most expensive events to watch at the Asiad.

"Getting tickets for this eSports competition was quite intense," said Xu Kezhen, a 20-year-old fan at the swish venue.

"I had to try five or six times before finally getting one. Everyone wants to come and support the Chinese team and their favorite players, so there is a rush to grab the tickets and show their support."

The hassle and expense did not deter Zhao Xiaohan, who signed up for all possible lotteries before eventually winning a prized spot.

"It felt like quite a challenge to secure the ticket and luck played a role as well," Zhao, 23, said.

Another lucky spectator, Jiang Xinyou, 29, said, "I really wanted to see the Chinese team play but I wasn't able to get tickets for those matches."

Those who made it inside the 4,500-capacity arena waved lightsticks and cheered as two-dimensional "heroes" fought onscreen, controlled by athletes furiously swiping on their phone screens.

Games organizers, who have not said how many tickets they are releasing in total, require spectators to register their identification documents when buying tickets and show them when entering the venue in an effort to prevent scalping.

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