

# South Korea's T1 win record fourth League of Legends world title

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South Korea's T1 defeated Weibo Gaming of China to win the League of Legends world championship.

South Korean powerhouse T1 swept aside China's Weibo Gaming on Sunday to clinch a record fourth League of Legends world

championship, widely considered the Super Bowl of e-sports.

T1 won three straight games in the best-of-five final at the Gocheok Sky Dome stadium in Seoul, roared on by a capacity crowd of 18,000.

Legions of fans descended on Seoul for the final of the League of Legends world championship, which has rapidly grown since the first edition in 2011 into one of the crown jewels of the billion-dollar global e-sports industry.

Fireworks went off as T1 members lifted the trophy, bouncing in a huddle as the crowd chanted "T1! T1! T1!"

"More than anything, I am very grateful that I was able to play in front of so many people," said T1's Faker, a superstar gamer hailed as the Michael Jordan of e-sports.

Faker, whose real name is Lee Sang-hyeok, has now won a record four world titles and, aged 27, is also the oldest player to clinch the biggest prize in League of Legends.

He has celebrity status in gaming-mad South Korea, and gets a rockstar reception at public appearances.

The victory marked a dominant run at the world championship for T1, who were looking to bounce back after losing in the final in San Francisco last year.



The League of Legends world final was played before a capacity crowd at Seoul's Gocheok Sky Dome.

"It feels unreal right now, it feels like a dream," said T1's Keria, whose real name is Ryu Min-seok.

The crowd, including many dressed as characters from League of Legends, witnessed a glitzy ceremony before the final that included a performance by K-pop stars NewJeans.

## **'My voice is gone'**

Tickets for the final at the Sky Dome, which usually hosts baseball

games, sold out in 10 minutes when they were made available in August, according to League of Legends maker Riot Games.

Thousands also gathered at a fan zone set up in central Seoul to watch the match, which was also screened live at more than 40 cinemas across South Korea.

In Beijing, hundreds of fans attended a viewing party at the Communication University of China.

"Watching the competition with so many at school, it feels really great," student Pang Jian, a Weibo Gaming supporter, told AFP. "I've shouted so much that my voice is gone.



Hundreds gathered for a viewing party in Beijing for the League of Legends world championship final.



Many fans dressed as League of Legends characters for the world championship final in Seoul.



Thousands gathered at a viewing party for the League of Legends world final in central Seoul.

Viewing parties were also held in Vietnam.

"I am a fan of Faker... he is my idol," 26-year-old Nguyen Minh Duc told AFP at a sports complex in Hanoi where 2,000 fans watched the final.

"Seeing T1 become the champions today is wonderful."

League of Legends involves two teams with five players each competing in a battleground where the goal is to destroy the opponent's base.

It is the most watched e-sport in the world, with tens of millions tuning in to livestreams from competitions every year.

Britain will host the 2024 world championship, with the final at The O2 Arena in London, Riot Games announced on Sunday.

E-sports are forecast to reach an audience of nearly 1.4 billion by 2025, according to a report last year by industry research firm Newzoo.

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