



THE OLYMPIC
> STUDIES
CENTRE

International Olympic Case Study Competition

“Esports and the Olympic Movement”

Background, Context and
Tasks

2021/2022 Competition
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1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Olympic Games are the biggest event on Earth. No other event brings so many elite athletes and nations together, no other event attracts so much television viewership worldwide.

What few people know is that when Baron Pierre de Coubertin, a French educationalist, established the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Olympic Games in 1894, his vision was for the Olympic Games to promote the educational and social values of sport in society and ultimately help foster understanding, respect and peace between nations. He was convinced that the character of the young could be critically developed through the individual experience of sporting activity and extended from there to life as a whole. The Olympic Games and the Olympic athletes should hence encourage citizens across all age groups and social classes to engage in sport in their leisure time.

The [Olympic Charter](#), which governs the responsibilities, actions and operations of the IOC, the Olympic Movement and its organisations, which include International Sports Federations (IFs), National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and the Organising Committees for the Olympic Games (OCOGs), states in this regard: “***The goal of the Olympic Movement is to contribute to building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport practised in accordance with Olympism and its values.***” It also defines the Fundamental Principles of Olympism as “a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example, social responsibility and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles”.

From the first edition of the modern Olympic Games in Athens in 1896, the size of the Olympic programme has grown from 43 events in 9 sports to more than 300 events (339 events) in 33 sports in Tokyo (in 2021), bringing more than 10,500 athletes together from 206 NOCs at the Olympic Summer Games and around 3,000 athletes in 109 events in 7 sports at the Olympic Winter Games in Beijing in 2022.

In order to remain attractive and relevant for future generations, the IOC and the IFs continually review and adjust the Olympic sports programme. While doing this, the challenge is to stay true to the above-mentioned core principles and find a right balance between traditional sports and newer sports and disciplines. In recent years, the programme has evolved, welcoming sports that are more urban, more youthful and more female. This trend is underlined by the inclusion of sports such as skateboarding, sport climbing and breaking in the sports programme.

2. ESPORTS AND GAMING AND THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT

Digital, international and flexible, esports and gaming have experienced exponential growth in recent years and are hence gaining increased attention from the media, sports and technology industries, as well as the international sporting community. Being aware of this global phenomenon, the IOC and the IFs are of course asking themselves the critical question about what opportunities and threats this phenomenon means for them and how they need to develop virtual versions of their sport to be able to engage new and young audiences.

2020, the first year of the COVID pandemic, saw a 75 per cent increase in gaming usage and 30 per cent increase in the number of gamers. At this time, several IFs were already organising physical esports competitions and championships, and a large percentage of IFs are currently working on or planning to launch physical or non-physical esports projects in the coming years. Virtual sports are also among the plans of future hosts for the Olympic Games.

When referring to this topic, it is important to note the difference between, on the one hand, the two forms of virtual sports and, on the other hand, video gaming. There are both physical (such as cycling) and non-physical forms of virtual sports (such as football), while video gaming includes both competitive gaming (such as *League of Legends*) and casual gaming (such as *Super Mario*).

In its most recent strategic paper, [Olympic Agenda 2020+5](#), the IOC encourages in recommendation 9, “the development of virtual sports and further engage with video gaming communities”. The main objectives being to:

- leverage the growing popularity of virtual sport to promote the Olympic Movement, Olympic values, sports participation and grow direct relations with young people
- strengthen the roles and responsibilities of IFs in establishing virtual and simulated forms of sports as a discipline within their regulations and strategies
- launch unique Olympic products and experiences through virtual and simulated forms of sports, in support of the IOC’s digital engagement strategy
- consider the addition of physical virtual sports in the Olympic programme in cooperation with the respective IFs
- support local partnerships between sport and video gaming communities to encourage young people to engage in physical activity and with the Olympic Movement
- make available Olympic athlete-related online programmes and digital tools to the competitive video gaming community to support their physical and mental well-being.

On 22. April 2021, the IOC announced that it will be partnering with five International Sports Federations (IFs) and game publishers to produce the Olympic Virtual Series (OVS), the first-ever, Olympic-licensed event for physical and non-physical virtual sports. The OVS will be launched on 13. May and run through to 23. June 2021. Find the details [here](#).

3. THE CASE STUDY CHALLENGE – “ESPORTS AND THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT”

Fully understanding today’s young people’s affinity with video games and digital entertainment, the IOC and the IFs are interested in creating unique Olympic products and experiences through virtual forms of sport and growing direct engagement with these new audiences. The IFs are hence interested in developing virtual forms of their sports to put forward to the IOC for consideration and decision for the Olympic programme of future Olympic Games.

As a consulting company, you are asked to develop an integrated strategical and operational business case for an IF (the Federation will be chosen by you according to the success of Task 1) to explore new market opportunities in physical and non-physical esports to further engage with young people. The experiences should contribute to the positive perception and value of the IF’s brands.

In order to respect the Olympic ideals and principals, which is a core interest of the IOC, your consultancy is challenged with developing methodologies to promote the educational values of sport and the Olympic Games (pursuit of excellence, joy of effort, fair play, respect for others) in the experiences and promote physical activity as part of their solutions.

4. ROUND 1 TASK

The International Federation (IF) aims to appoint an agency capable of delivering a solution which will meet the objective to **develop an integrated strategic and operational plan in physical and non-physical esports to further engage with young people which has a potential to be included in the Olympic programme.**

For this and as a first step, the IF launches a tender process which consists of the following two stages and to which your company is requested to respond.

TASK 1A - TENDER SUBMISSION

The tender includes a questionnaire (see below) to which participants need to respond in full.

- **Tender Questionnaire**

- 1. Company Background and Information**

- Submit a copy of your company legal form, size, foundation and contact details;
- Confirm the approximate value per annum of your largest single contract;
- Submit an organisation chart illustrating your company ownership structure, including relevant parent companies, and/or consortium partners;
- Attach CVs detailing relevant experience for all 'key individuals' named in the above organogram;
- Provide example references of services that you have supplied to the IOC, IFs, esports organisations and/or companies, including an explanation about what the project was and when.

- 2. Commercial Submission**

- Submit your commercial proposal.
- The budget for this project is approx. USD 80,000. If more budget were to become available, outline how you could enhance the study further.
- Provide details in a table format showing the different levels of resource working on the project, rate per level and number of hours/days, plus a detailed breakdown of any further fees.
- Propose a suitable payment schedule.

Note that, whilst it is acknowledged that an appointment would represent a marketing opportunity for the successful agency, it should be assumed that any subsequent agreement will be subject to a non-disclosure clause preventing parties from announcing their appointment or using the Olympic Games, IOC, IF names, images or marks in any communication.

Requests for further information in relation to the above should be submitted to us [*to your professor*] in accordance with the “Dates, timing and deliverables” chapter below. Such questions will be considered commercially sensitive and so responses will not be shared with other agencies.

TASK 1B - PRESENTATIONS

Once the deadline for submissions has passed, all tenders submitted within the required timescale will be assessed and the agencies will be invited for presentation.

• Presentations

Among all agencies presenting, the best five agencies will be picked to work with the IFs with a special focus on their particular sports.

After submitting your application (task 1a) you will have to deliver a presentation (task 1b). In your presentation you shall try to convince the IF to engage you as a consulting agency.

Besides presenting your consultancy, you also have to demonstrate that you have enough expertise for this project and practical experience which you may show through reference projects.

As requested in the tender questionnaire, the IFs also want to know which of your employees are on the project team and what qualifications they have. [*For the purpose of this case study competition, you are allowed to add 10 years to your own professional career.*]

DATES, TIMING AND DELIVERABLES

- The written documents and answers to the questionnaire shall be max. five pages and the CVs of your project team one to two pages per employee.
- Written documents have to be delivered by a date to be determined by your professor.
- Presentations are held on a date to be determined, either live or digitally [*your professor will send you further information*].
- Each agency has five minutes for the presentation followed by questions from the International Federation [*played by your professor*].
- Fill out the table below to select the IF that you prefer to work with for the next two rounds of this case study competition. The team with the best performance in round one has the first choice, the second-best team has the second choice, and so on. Thus, good results in the first round means a good start for the next rounds. [*You will need to submit the form digitally to your professor by the date he/she will determine*].

Rank your
5 preferred
IFs (1-5)

FIE	International Fencing Federation
FISA	World Rowing
IGF	International Golf Federation
ISU	International Skating Union
ITTF	International Table Tennis Federation
UCI	Union Cycliste Internationale
UIPM	International Modern Pentathlon Union
IBU	International Biathlon Union

Note to students:

- Remember that this is a hypothetical case study and neither the IOC nor the International Federations may be contacted for this competition. Doing so may result in disqualification from the tender process.

5. ROUND 2 TASK

Your agency shall develop a SWOT analysis for your IF on esports to help it to decide on the direction of development. Include physical esports and/or non-physical esports in your analysis. Consider also a potential format the esport may have (e.g. cycling on an ergometer, connected to other cyclists). It is very important that the format and your assessment of the esport reflect their potential to promote the Olympic values, engage a worldwide young audience and their potential fit for a future Olympic programme. Please reflect on and advise the IF as to what format they should further investigate.

DATES, TIMING AND DELIVERABLES

- The written documents must provide the rationale you used for your SWOT analysis, the argumentation for your suggested format (max. three pages).
- Written documents have to be delivered by a date to be determined by your professor.
- The presentation will be held on a date to be communicated by your professor. It will be online, as you will present in front of your own class and the other university class and the professor with whom you have been matched.
- Each agency has five minutes for the presentation, which will be followed by questions from the IF for which you are consulting [*which is played by your professor and the professor from the matched university*].

6. ROUND 3 TASK

Your agency shall develop a new “phygital” game and format that promote physical activity and the Olympic values of Excellence, Respect and Friendship. You should develop a practical idea, which is less about technology and programming, but more about the format and features of the sport (a little more detailed than in task 2).

In addition, you shall also develop a business and an operational plan explaining how you envision promoting the new game, especially via social media. These plans shall include the main objectives of your proposal, the main actions to respond to these objectives, a timetable and a cost calculation.

To develop the operational plan and business plan, the IF gives you USD 1 million.

DATES, TIMING AND DELIVERABLES

- The written documents shall explain the new “phygital” game and format (one page) as well as the business plan for the social media campaign (max. three pages).
- Written documents have to be delivered by a date to be communicated by your professor.
- The online presentation will be held on a date to be communicated by your professor.
- Each agency has seven minutes to deliver the presentation, followed by questions from the IF for which you are consulting [*questions by your professor and the professor from the matched university*].

7. ROUND 4 TASK

Lausanne, 21 February 2022

Dear Consulting Team,

We are very satisfied with your work on the **new phygital sport/discipline/event** and format you have developed for our International Federation. **It promotes physical activity and the Olympic values.** We have also already started implementing the social media strategy that you have developed for us. The money spent is having an effect and is raising interest in the new format, which is great.

We now ask you to develop a **competition design**. In other words, how should the **qualification system and competitions be organised, and which competition format should be considered for the Olympic experience?** Note that, if needed, you can adapt the format presented in task 3.

In terms of the overarching competition design principles you need to take into account, there are two key strategic objectives:

- 1) The competition design needs to serve as an effective vehicle to develop the sport worldwide, by allowing lower-ranked players and developing countries the opportunity to participate in a higher level of competition. It should also continue promoting physical activity and the Olympic values.
- 2) The competition needs to serve as an effective vehicle to allow the strongest candidates to take part in the final stages of the competition, in order to deliver a compelling, well-balanced, but also universal competition that will be attractive to young spectators and to broadcasters, as well as delivering the champion. This will involve technical considerations of how to design a competition with an appropriate level of competitive balance, in both the qualifying and the Olympic tournament, making use of mechanisms such as pre-qualifying tournaments, athlete seeding (e.g., strongest ranked athletes joining the tournament at later stages), etc.

Consider and justify your decision for a **"mass participation model"**, an **"elite model"** or even a **"hybrid model"**.

In order to ensure that the new phygital sport/discipline/event and its competition design can be considered as an Olympic experience, take into consideration the recommendations included in Olympic Agenda 2020+5.

DATES, TIMING AND DELIVERABLES

- The written documents must provide a good overview of how the competition design works, how it promotes physical activity and the Olympic values, and how it is related to Olympic Agenda 2020+5 (max. 3 pages).
- The written documents must be sent in English to cs_competition@uni-mainz.de by 4 March, 2022.
- You will present to the members of our IF Executive Board (i.e. the jury, composed of professors from universities not competing in this semi-final).
- Each agency has 10 minutes of presentation time, of which at least three minutes must be used to once more explain the new phygital sport/discipline/event. Then there will be a maximum of five minutes of questions from the International Federation for which you are consulting.
- The presentation will be on 7 March 2022, via Zoom (link to be sent in due course). Semi-final 1 will be held from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. CET and semi-final 2 from 1.30 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. CET.

8. ROUND 5 TASK

Lausanne, 7 March 2022

Dear Consulting Team,

We were very pleased with your competition design, including the qualification system from a national level to an Olympic experience.

Our interest is now in maximising follower/spectator engagement with our new phygital sport/discipline/event. Fans that follow the competitions are potentially also future participants in both our traditional sport and our new phygital sport/discipline/event (both as leisure and competitive athletes), and are ultimately potential followers/spectators of all our events. The new phygital offer thus opens up new opportunities for engagement with new spectators and followers.

You are tasked with developing a strategy aimed at maximising follower and spectator engagement. The strategy should also consider a segmentation of different groups and the tools you will use to engage them (e.g. esports, gamification, technology and traditional marketing initiatives).

We are particularly interested to see how you propose to engage young people and promote the Olympic values.

DATES, TIMING AND DELIVERABLES

- The written documents must include:
 - o 1 page about the phygital sport/discipline/event you developed previously
 - o 1 page about the competition design (qualification and Olympic format) you proposed for the semi-finals
 - o 2 pages on your follower and spectator engagement strategy
- Written documents must be sent in English to cs_competition@uni-mainz.de by 19 March, 2022.
- You will present to our consultants – a working group from our IF (which is a jury composed of international experts).
- Each agency will have 10 minutes of presentation time, of which at least three minutes must be used to once again explain the new phygital sport/discipline/event and the overall competition design to the experts of our working group. Then there will be a maximum of five minutes of questions from the expert group.
- The presentation will be on 23 March 2022, via Zoom. The link will be sent to you in due course.
- The presentation time will in principle be from 12 to 4 p.m. CET, but this will be confirmed with the final programme.