



Fellows Broadsheet

The Institute of Hospitality Fellows Broadsheet is a thought-leadership article written by a member of our esteemed College of Fellows. Celebrating the wealth of professionalism, knowledge and expertise within our diverse, worldwide hospitality family. The Fellows Broadsheet is published exclusively for members.

Welcoming Esports: Hospitality's Next Big Guest

Chester King FIH has been a member of the Institute's College of Fellows since 2021.

With a distinguished hospitality pedigree as owner of multi-award-winning golf and country club Stoke Park (England), from 1989 to 2021, he is currently CEO of International Hospitals Group (IHG), President (volunteer) of the British Esports Federation, Vice-President (volunteer) of the

European Esports Federation and Chairman of ESPORTS Global.

In the latest Fellows Broadsheet, Chester looks at 'Welcoming Esports: Hospitality's Next Big Guest.' Looking at how to create new avenues for hospitality services, and how venues such as the National Esports Performance Campus are paving the way for the future of esports hospitality.





A new category for Hospitality

In recent years, esports and competitive gaming have emerged as a cultural and economic phenomenon with millions of spectators, players, and teams around the world. But beyond the massive arenas, live streams, and competitive scenes, there lies a unique opportunity for the hospitality sector to tap into an unsaturated market.

Esports and the competitive gaming market

Globally, the industry is projected to grow to over \$1.8 billion by 2025, with millions of viewers tuning in for major tournaments like the League of Legends World Championship and The International Dota 2.

In 2022 the UK played host to the inaugural Commonwealth Esports Championships, with multiple teams from the Commonwealth converging on the International Convention Centre in Birmingham.

In 2023, The Olympic Esports Week in Singapore was a watershed moment for competitive gaming, with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) formally recognising the potential of esports, highlighting the growing convergence between traditional sports and esports on a global stage.

Beyond the Olympics, other key tournaments have reinforced esports' place in the world of competitive entertainment; the European Games Esports Championships, the annual Global Esports Games, organised by the Global Esports Federation, and the Esports World Cup, with a prize of over \$60 million, which has this year highlighted Saudi Arabia's growing role as a premier esports' destination.

These events highlight not only the global reach of competitive gaming but also the increasing investments and infrastructure being poured into esports, further cementing its status now as a mainstream international sport and entertainment ecosystem.

Hospitality and Esports: A Natural Synergy

For global hotels, convention centres, and event venues, there is a growing demand for event space hire for reoccurring esports tournaments, bootcamps and gaming related experiences. With team and spectator accommodation and hospitality related services presenting a new 'hospitality' niche to capitalise on.

But it's more than just providing a bed for the night. Hotels and venues that recognise the needs of esports travellers are tailoring their services to enhance the guest experience, offering gaming suites, LAN (local area network) setups, or even dedicated in-house esports lounges.

This personalised approach provides opportunities for hotels to position themselves as the 'go to' destination for esports teams and enthusiasts.





Adapting to Esports: What the Hospitality Sector Needs to Know

The key to capitalising on the esports market lies in understanding the unique demands and preferences of this dynamic audience.

Top tips to meet the needs of the esports sector

- **Esports-specific facilities:** Offer gaming-specific services, such as high-speed internet, rapid response IT support, dedicated gaming rooms, or LAN areas for teams to train
- **Group bookings for teams:** Esports teams travel with coaching staff, analysts, and content creators, making it necessary to offer flexible group booking options. Providing meal plans and fitness amenities tailored to the needs of professional players can enhance the appeal
- **Event support:** Convention centres and large hotels can partner with esports organisers to host mid and large-scale tournaments. Offering in house event support for streaming setups, IT requirements, and content production
- **Experiential add-ons:** Beyond accommodation, esports fans and enthusiasts are looking for entertainment and experiences. Hotels can offer esports viewing lounges, gaming setups in dedicated rooms, or bespoke packages that complement specific esports events

By adapting to the unique needs of this sector, hospitality providers can create a highly specialised service that keeps esports teams and fans returning time and again.

Pioneering projects in Esports Hospitality

Venues around the world are already capitalising on this emerging trend in esports. In Las Vegas, several hotels have integrated esports arenas, such as the HyperX Esports Arena at the Luxor, drawing in a steady flow of gamers and spectators. These venues aren't just for tournaments, they offer daily access to casual gamers, blending hospitality with gaming culture.

One of the most compelling examples of how esports and hospitality are working seamlessly together is the National Esports Performance Campus (NEPC) in Sunderland, England. Operated by the British Esports Federation, the national body for esports in the United Kingdom, it demonstrates how forward-thinking venues can carve out a niche in this rapidly growing sector.

The 45,000 square ft. campus represents a significant investment in the future of competitive gaming, combining the heritage of Grade II-listed buildings with cutting-edge technology. These three storey residences are not just accommodation but purpose-built training environments where professional esports athletes can live, train and collaborate. With expansion plans in the pipeline, the NEPC will become a global hub tailored to attract and nurture future esports talent.

With spaces for both professional teams and esports enthusiasts, the NEPC has already played training host to Team Falcons, winners of the 2024 Esports World Cup.

The future

As esports continues to grow, its relationship with the hospitality sector will significantly deepen.

Beyond hotels and event venues, the future will see dedicated esports resorts, where gaming enthusiasts travel for immersive experiences, blending luxury hospitality with high-tech gaming amenities.

Hotels that offer tailored packages, access to gaming lounges, state-of-the-art technology, and direct links to major esports events, will likely lead the market.

Additionally, hospitality professionals could develop partnerships with esports organisations to create loyalty programmes, or fan experiences tied to competitions.

Looking ahead, esports will be the driver for a whole new type of hospitality experience, one that caters to a digitally savvy, entertainment driven audience.

For hospitality providers willing to invest in the infrastructure and services required to meet this demand, the potential rewards are vast.

Conclusion

The hospitality sector has a long pedigree of adapting to new trends, and now has a unique opportunity to tap into these growing esports market; one that's poised for exponential growth.

As global events grow and teams and fans continue to travel across the globe, the need for specialised accommodation, services, and experiences will only increase.

Hotels, venues, and event organisers that recognise and seize this opportunity and adapt their offerings will find themselves at the forefront of this new hospitality frontier.

Esports isn't just the future of entertainment; it's the next big guest of the hospitality sector.





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About the author

Chester King FIH is the co-owner of the International Group of companies, a fourth generation, private family business founded in the UK.

He became CEO of the International Hospitals Group (IHG) in 2021. A business which has delivered over 480 healthcare projects in over 55 countries, working with the UK Export Finance, 105 NHS Trusts, The United Nations, the World Bank, and 24 national governments and private clients.

He has a diverse and extensive background in business, sports, esports, healthcare and hospitality, founding the Bobby Moore Club at Wembley Stadium, was a board member of the Jaguar Academy of Sport and owned and operated the multi-award-winning golf and country club Stoke Park (England) for 27 years. A property which has been used as the backdrop for many famous Hollywood and British movies and high-profile music concerts.

He is currently President (volunteer) of the British Esports Federation, Vice-President (volunteer) of the Global Esports Federation, Vice-President (volunteer) of the European Esports Federation and Chairman of ESPORTS Global.

Chester is passionate about promoting and developing esports in the UK and across the world and has been a Fellow of the Institute of Hospitality for nearly four years.



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References

League of Legends

The International Dota 2

HyperX Esports Arena

National Esports Performance Campus

European Esports Federation