



A rapidly growing new kind of entertainment culture

# From fun and games to fierce competition: Taking hold of the wildly popular esports business through *Street Fighter*

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Joined Capcom after producing social games and holding management positions. Now aims to integrate esports business strategy and event operations to promote the development of an ecosystem in esports.

## Following overseas, we look to establish an ecosystem for esports in Japan with *Street Fighter*

As a leader in esports, it is the current mission of our eSports Business Division to build out an ecosystem leveraging our versus fighting game title *Street Fighter*.

An ecosystem is a framework in which all stakeholders can broadly coexist and prosper in terms of management and services. For example, we envision a system like professional baseball and soccer, in which esports grows as a business and where professional players, teams, leagues, management and operations organizations, sponsors, distribution and broadcasting media, fans, and spectators can all enjoy and benefit from esports. In North America, such a system has begun to take hold, and in 2018 the global market grew to 90 billion yen, but the esports market in Japan is still in an early growth phase. Capcom is taking the lead in establishing this system, hoping to give esports in Japan a boost and expand even further globally.

## Realizing early on games had potential as a sport, Capcom made it fun for spectators from the start

Capcom has been holding tournaments for the enjoyment of watching as well as playing games since before “esports” was a word or even a concept. The players who won the national qualifying rounds of the *Street Fighter II* tournament in 1992 battled for the title of Japan’s No. 1 player at Ryogoku Kokugikan.

It was really the enthusiasm of the many overseas fans that ignited the flame beneath *Street Fighter* as an esports. In 2013,

the Capcom Cup was first held in North America, and each year thereafter it grew in popularity, boosted by brilliant stage production, live coverage, and video distribution of the intense player battles.





A new form of entertainment, the market for esports is rapidly growing, with the domestic market reaching 4.83 billion yen

2018 was known as “year one” for esports in Japan. The Japan eSports Union (JeSU) was established creating a framework to promote esports systematically as an industry. The market has entered a new phase with the introduction of professional players and corporate teams, as well as esports clubs being recognized as high school club activities.



Capcom's esports timeline

**1991**  
Held *Street Fighter II* tournament

**2009**  
Held *Street Fighter IV* events

**2013**  
Started the Capcom Cup

**2014**  
Started the Capcom Pro Tour

**2018**  
JeSU-certified pro licensing introduced

**2019**  
Started the Street Fighter League

**First a national pastime that unites players across the country, then a sport that captivates the world**

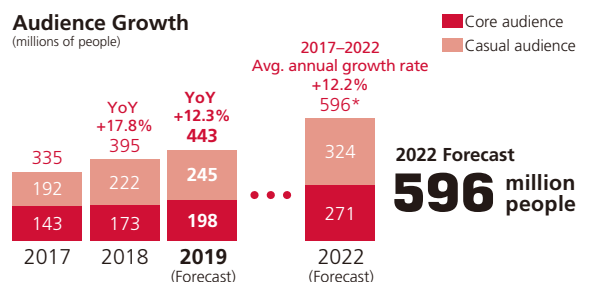
Currently, we hold events both domestically and overseas for professional and amateur players. As part of this, Street Fighter League: College-JP 2019, at the university level, and Rookie's Caravan 2019, held in six cities around the country, are gateways to our premier league in Japan, Street Fighter League: Pro-JP. We believe that these tournaments serve to discover talented players and will lead to the launch of local professional teams, driving the popularity of esports from a regional level.

Another advantage of esports is that factors such as age or physical disabilities can be overcome. At a tournament held in the U.S. during spring 2019, the winning team had a member who was unable to use his arms and legs, and instead used a special controller operated with his tongue.

There is still much to be done, but the management team is passionate about their support of this business. As we explore the potential of esports in North America, Europe, Japan and the Asian region, the day we hold an esports event on a global scale is not far off.

**Fun to watch: the growth of esports spectators**

With the spread of the internet, global viewership is expected to grow from approximately 300 million people in 2017 to roughly 600 million people in 2022, with a double-digit annual growth rate over the five years. Casual viewers account for more than half of all viewers, and it is expected that watching esports as entertainment will become a common phenomenon.



\* Source: ©Newzoo 2019 Global Esports Market Report, June 2019