

SUNY Potsdam Starts Esports in 2019



Left to Right: Joel Daley, Chris Falcon, Thomas Harper, and Josh D'Angelo. Not pictured: Jimmy Thai

Starting in the Fall 2019-2020 academic year, SUNY Potsdam will officially support intercollegiate Esports as a club sport. We will compete in the East Coast Athletic Conference (ECAC) with other collegiate club and varsity teams, including both online competitions, as well as on-site championship events. The current lineup of games includes *Overwatch*, *League of Legends*, *FIFA*, *Super Smash Bros Ultimate*, *Hearthstone*, and *Fortnite*. New games are under consideration, including *Rainbow Siege* and *Rocket League*. The ECAC started supporting Esports in 2017-2018, with 12 colleges participating in the first year. In 2018-2019 that number expanded to 25 schools, and in 2019-2020, that number is expected to climb to 60-65 teams, mostly from the Northeast region of the United States. Other options for collegiate Esports includes NACE (the National Association of Collegiate Esports), Blizzard's TESPAA (Texas Esports Association), and Riot Games College League of Legends. Potsdam Esports will be a club sport housed within the Student Government Association's Video Gaming Club (PVGC), with a possible move to varsity status in the future.

Dr. Anthony Betrus will serve as the Esports director, with player-captains assigned to each team. The SUNY Potsdam League of Legends five-person team was the first college-sponsored Esports team to compete in a match on March 28, 2019. The match was a friendly scrimmage against Siena college, to help them prepare for the 2018-2019 ECAC championship weekend, held March 29th and 30th at the Hudson Valley Gamercon in the Albany Capital Center. The SUNY Potsdam LOL team consisted of PVGC club president and team captain Chris Falcon, a graphic art major and sophomore; Joel Daley, a communications major and member of the track team; Josh D'Angelo, a computer science/business major and member of the track team, Thomas Harper, a freshman graphic design major; and Jimmy Thai, an undecided sophomore. The match was a best of 3, played on the Summoner's Rift map. The first game was a back and forth affair that finally tipped for Siena. The second was similar, with a close early game followed by a strong mid-game from Siena, ultimately decided by a 5 on 5 mid-map battle. All-in-all it

was a good showing from the rookie team in their first outing, competing well with a seasoned team ramping up for their playoff weekend. Additional scrimmages will follow in the Spring 2019 semester, in preparation for competitive Fall and Spring seasons next academic year.