
THE BUSINESS OF ESPORTS

2019

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Whatever your feelings on esports as 'sport', it is an undeniable fact that in our digital world esports is here to stay. A catch all term for all competitive gaming, esports has developed into one of the fastest growing sectors in sports. The development of the genre has seen lots of game titles and developers licence their own esports, with tournaments throughout the year giving most games a seasonal feel.

With sponsors flocking to support teams, tournaments and even individual players, the financial backing that the sport enjoys can only be matched by a handful of traditional sports. With the media rights market maturing and events moving away from generic venues into purpose built, fan orientated stadiums, the esports world is moving into a new era.

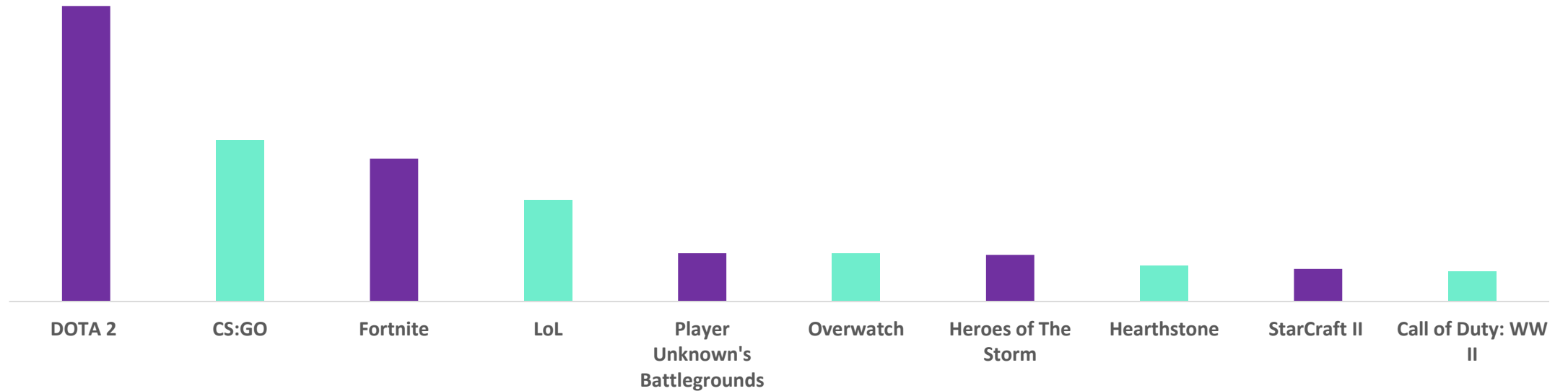
While traditional sports are desperate for approval from the likes of the IOC, esports has no such concerns. Consistently reaching a younger demographic irrespective of sex and gender, esports has access to a younger demographic, making it very appealing to brands as a means of engaging with a hyper-engaged audience. With the most popular titles having an element of violence, IOC acceptance may be a long time coming but with viewers watching over 350m hours of coverage across just 10 tournaments in 2018, the potential of esports has yet to be realised in any meaningful way.

In this report, Sportcal Sponsorship takes a look at the biggest tournaments, the most popular teams and the hottest players to best understand the esports landscape.



Major Esports Tournaments

2018 Biggest Total Prize Pools (\$)



The collective prize pools for some of the biggest titles are a significant indicator as to the growth of esports. Throughout the course of the 2018, over \$40m was available to teams and players playing Dota 2 with the biggest prize pool coming at the end of year tournament, The International.

Across all the titles highlighted, over \$131m in prize money was on offer throughout 2018, highlighting the ecosystem in which esports operates to be in rude health. This also highlights the levels of engagement from fans and players alike – the prize money available for Dota 2 was raised through player buy in, meaning that the game has generated this vast prize money through it's own community as opposed to relying on sponsors or media deals.





Biggest LoL Tournament in 2018 – LoL World Championship 2018 – \$6,450,000 Prize Pool

Major Sponsors –



Biggest Overwatch Tournament in 2018 – Overwatch League Inaugural Season – \$3,500,000 Prize Pool

Major Sponsors –





Biggest CS:GO Tournament in 2018 – *FACEIT Major London 2018* – \$1,000,000 Prize Pool

Major Sponsors –



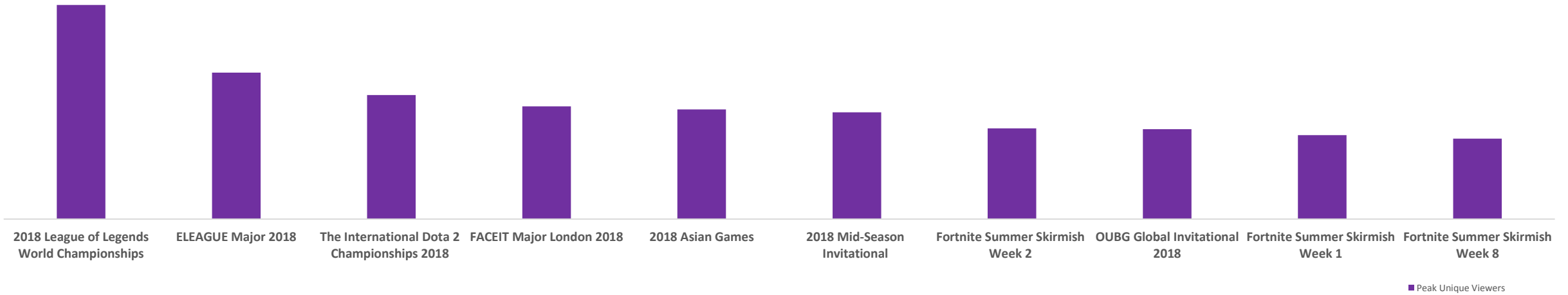
Biggest Rainbow Six Siege Tournament in 2018 – *Six Invitational 2019* – \$2,000,000 Prize Pool

Major Sponsors –

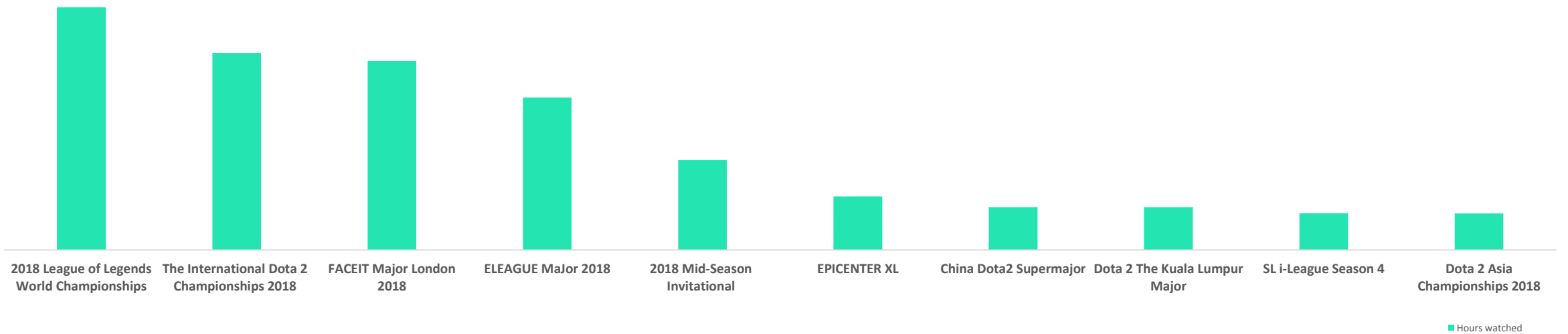


Most Popular esports tournaments

Most popular esports tournaments* (Peak Viewers)



Most popular esports tournaments (Hours watched)



*Source: eschart.com