

Esports player

Play a video game competitively for prize money or a team salary. Only a few dozen Canadians make a living.

TYPICAL INCOME

\$0

a year, varies widely

INCOME RANGE

\$0 to \$150k

most to the successful few

TIME TO QUALIFY

2 to 6 years

after high school

DEMAND

Limited

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Your bedroom, a team house or practice facility in the US, arenas for big events

How you get there

- 1 Reach the top of ranked play** Years, often from age 12 to 16
 Canadians play on North American servers, so you compete with the whole continent for a scout's attention.
- 2 Join amateur teams and online tournaments** 1 to 3 years
 Play with a fixed team, learn communication and roles, and build a record people can look up.
- 3 Get noticed by a second-tier team** 1 to 2 years
 Development leagues and academy teams. Pay is low or nothing, but this is where top teams scout.
- 4 Sign with a top-league team** Often age 18 to 21
 Riot's top Valorant leagues require players to be 18. Most top North American teams are based in the United States.
- 5 Plan the exit** A career of about 3 to 6 years
 Most pros stop competing in their mid-twenties and move to streaming, coaching or work in the industry.

Pros and cons

- + You get paid to play the game you love, if you make it
- + Travel, crowds and a real fan base
- + Streaming can turn a short career into a longer one
- Only a few dozen Canadians make a living from it
- Careers usually end in the mid-twenties
- Usually means moving to the United States

Good to know

A Canadian study found the age gamers slow down

Researchers at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia studied 3,305 StarCraft II players aged 16 to 44. In-game response speed began to decline at about age 24.

\$1.68 billion, shared very unevenly

Esports Earnings has tracked about US\$1.68 billion in prize money across about 134,000 players and 653 games. The top player alone, a Dota 2 pro from Denmark, has won about US\$7.2 million.

Optional boosts

A top ladder rank held for months. A role and a champion or agent pool. Clear communication in English. A clean record.

Where these numbers come from

Esports Earnings: prize money totals by player, game and country
 Esports Earnings: top Canadian players by prize money, 2025
 Thompson, Blair and Henrey (2014), Over the Hill at 24, PLOS ONE (Simon Fraser University)
 Ontario Tech Student Union: esports scholarships for Ontario Tech students

Numbers checked October 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/esports-player>



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