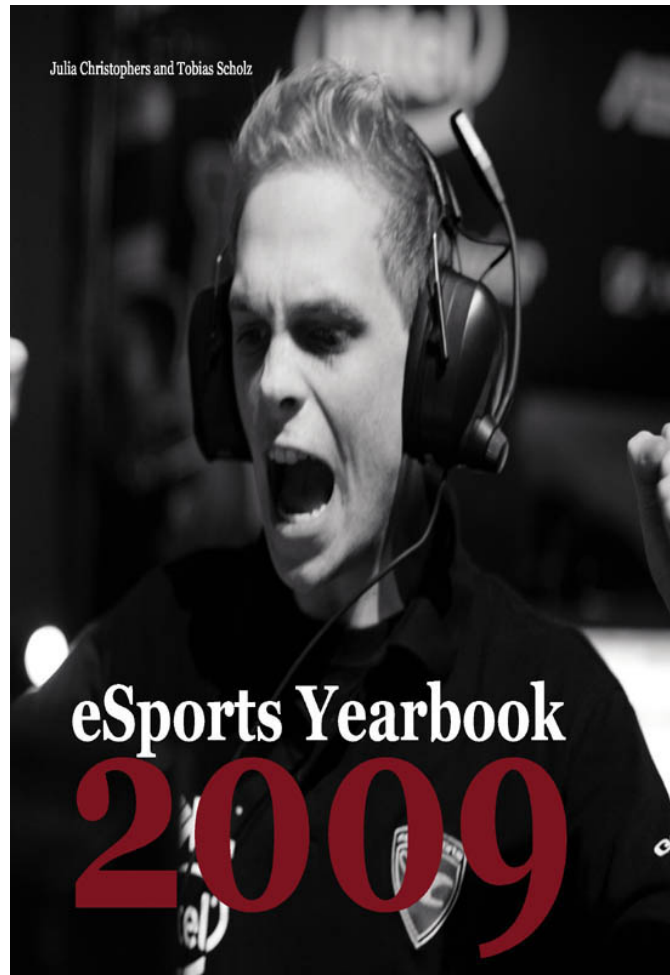


Julia Christophers and Tobias Scholz



eSports Yearbook 2009

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Books on Demand



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„Beauty, grace and friendship are often where people
do not expect it.“

Julia Christophers

„It's not important where you are from, how good you are at the moment, and how old you are: if you have a dedication and desire to work hard, everything is possible.“

Wiktor Wojtas

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Preface

eSports has become an important part of all our lives, and if you are holding this book in your hand, you have the same dedication to this sport as we have. We always had the idea of publishing stories about eSports; that was the reason why we both spent time working as journalists in this field.

However some things need time and so after over ten years participating in video games, LANs and other eSport events, there was a chance to publish such an incredible book. A book with interesting stories from even more interesting people, with pictures showing the great emotions in eSport.

We hope you like this book, and hope we gave eSports a face.

Thank you,

Julia Christophers and Tobias Scholz

eSport - A New Word

by **Jean-Christophe Arnaud**

The eSport term (build around the words “sport” and “electronic” – electronic sport –) first appeared when it was time to give a name to the practice of Video Games in a competitive way.

eSport is an activity daily practiced by million gamers around the globe. Real Sport discipline for some, hobby for some others, debate is hard. Can we consider the video game activity as a sports activity, like soccer, dance or horse riding? Or eSport is more close to Chess, Billiard or Archery?

In eSport, there are habits among the Champions and the best international teams. The first is Training, that high level players are practicing daily, regularly and very seriously. You need also reflexes and cold-blood, in order to quickly react to any given situation. But of course, without intelligence, reflexes are nothing. You have to be able to anticipate the tactics and strategies of your opponents in order to give the proper answer. For some disciplines, you also have to learn teamwork, to elaborate strategies and tactics...

Last but not least, you need passion, because without passion, no activity can pretend to be a Sport. It is passion that allows you to surpass yourself, to come back to the score when everything seems lost, and that pleases you when you launch your favorite game or when you watch the highlights of the eSport scene.

Passion, training, reflex, intelligence and teamwork... if it's not sport, it really has its taste!

But who has never heard on radio, seen on TV or read in a newspaper that video games do harm? There is a well known cliché: a gamer, male, young, anti-social, confined in his room night and day, playing on his computer and creating himself a world that will slightly cut him off from reality. Verdict of such documentaries is often irrevocable; Video games are leading to desocialisation. Even suicide or murder, if they want more audience.

Often, in conversations, our interlocutors are giving us as an example for those poor youths, who are friendless and have difficulties at school in order to edict a general conclusion about video games and eSport. It is a classical mistake and its mainly the fault of the medias with its quest of sensationalism, usually unaware of what our passion is and how it is being practiced.

When someone gives me these arguments, I always give these two facts as an example:

«A man who voluntarily took the Highways in the wrong direction to provoke a deadly accident»

«Michael Schumacher, who has been a World Champion seven times during his career»

These two examples are both important. Common point is that these two persons were driving a vehicle. But in the first example, the story is about a true moron, and the second is about a great champion. In fact, you will agree that these two examples have finally nothing in common. It is the same thing for eSport. You cannot compare the previous young, anti-social boy to an authentic international eSport champion like Johnathan «Fatality» Wendel. You will see, people will understand. And if they don't want to get it, put a mouse in their hands and play against them for a while... scoring 15 to nothing is always good time!

„Passion, training, reflex,
intelligence and teamwork... if
it's not sport, it really has it's
taste!“

Jean-Christophe Arnaud

Why Coaches Would Improve eSports

by **Frank Fields**

Fans and players alike will often tell us journalists both individually and collectively that we have no idea what we're talking about. One of the most popular ways to go about criticizing our profession is to say something to the effect of: "You couldn't even get close to beating them. STFU." You're right. Many journalists would never get close to defeating top professionals in any eSports game. While I agree that in order to understand a subject matter you have to have partaken in it, it is not necessary to have been one of the all time greats to have knowledge in the field or to accurately critique its players. My ability to beat them in the game does not bear any effect on my ability to properly critique their play.

Mike Krzyzewski, also known as 'Coach K' is known as one of the greatest Basketball Coaches in all of history at any level, and many call him the best sports coach of all time. He has taken Duke Basketball to postseason play in 25 of his 28 years coaching the team and is the winningest active coach in NCAA Tournament play with a 70-21 record (76.9%). He has won 11 ACC Championships, been to 10 Final Fours, and won 3 NCAA Tournament National Championships. He recently lead USA Basketball to an Olympic Gold medal in which the team won every game (8-0) and no game finished within 10 points. Mike Krzyzewski never won any individual

or team award as a player. He never played a single game in the NBA or international competition.

Wayne Gretzky, 'The Great One', is known to many as the greatest Hockey player to ever live. He won 4 Stanley Cup championships and 9 MVPs. He is still the only player to score 200 points in one season, he accomplished this 4 times, including 13 seasons of 100 points or more. He had the waiting period for the Hockey Hall of Fame waived and was inducted immediately following his retirement. He is known as a disaster as a coach, with an overall record 143-161, never making the playoffs.

It is traditional in professional sports that the greatest players do not make the greatest coaches. I may not be able to beat Xiaofeng 'Sky' Li in Human mirror, but I can tell him when he made a mistake by forgetting to scout against Yaws which cost him the opening match in World Cyber Games 2009. I can tell him that expanding against an aggressive Human mirror player at early Tier 2 is extremely risky and a risk he doesn't need to take when he has both superior micro and macro.

Just as coaches in sports do not need physical ability to manage players, I do not need superior micro to coach a player or team. Like a professional sports coach all I need is my intellect and skills of observation, management and motivation. Many people would ask, "Why would a pro like Sky ever listen to a 'nobody' like you?" Perhaps I should give you another history lesson.

Doug Collins is and was beloved in Chicago and was the head coach of the Chicago Bulls in the late 1980s. Who was Doug Collins star player? Michael Jordan. By this time Michael Jordan was already a premier player in the NBA, but under Doug Collins, the Chicago Bulls failed to win an NBA championship. At this time, Jordan and the Bulls were overshadowed by Larry Bird's Celtics, Isiah Thomas's Pistons and Magic Johnson's Lakers by virtue of the championships and individual awards each of them won.

Doug Collins was replaced by Phil Jackson, who was his assistant coach at the time. Doug Collins was an accomplished NBA professional and a good player, while Phil Jackson was at best, a good substitute player when he played in the NBA. Why would Michael Jordan listen to Phil Jackson? Oops.

Though they lost in his first year of coaching, while Michael Jordan played for Phil Jackson they won six NBA championships, three in a row twice. Perhaps the only reason they did not win eight consecutive is Jordan's temporary 2 year retirement to play baseball. Phil Jackson now is the most decorated coach in NBA history with 10 NBA championships. Once Michael Jordan, Scottie Pippen and other members of the Chicago Bulls put aside their egos and listened to Phil Jackson's counsel, the team was able to improve dramatically. Sometimes a 'nobody' is a genius in disguise.

If you recall, in the very early days of competitive World of Warcraft 3v3, Team Pandemic went to a World Series of Video Games event in China and brought a coach to help them in between games and to help them prepare for their matchups. The professionalism this team had is still miles ahead of many teams now that just trash talk opponents and argue among themselves. Of course Pandemic won this tournament and they dominated the early days of WoW competition. Would they have won without a coach? Perhaps so, in fact probably. But did it hurt? No.

I know it helped me when I played an eSport where the need for a coach is extremely high. There is no greater need for a coach in eSports than in DOTA, where teams disband over conflicts based on single games or a series where one player with an inflated ego will blame one or other players for errors made in games. Partially because of undisciplined and egotistical players, Check-Six went through 27 different players, and despite the roster changes the team continued to perform consistently. One particular team of Check-Six

came to its end due to player ego problems between JollyJoker and MikeJones who would habitually blame other players for shortcomings of the team when in reality, neither player was particularly strong.

Coaching does exist in eSports to some extent through very attentive managers, but this isn't always the case. Sometimes managers will seldom watch their players' practice games and other times in match play will offer little insight at all. Let us be clear about something, in every competition, every competitor makes a mistake at one point during a game. No one ever plays perfectly. If a coach is doing his job right, he should keep track of every mistake and every positive play that both players and teams are responsible for. Managing and coaching are not necessarily mutually inclusive and the research that is to be done on other teams and players often would be too time intensive for one person to manage. The closest players I have ever seen to coaches in DOTA are Jacob 'Maelk' Toft-Andersen and Andre 'Hit0mi' Semmler. They had a field vision for the game unlike any other, and often times both would actually act as coaches in scrimmages. I recall Hitomi transforming many players that only knew how to farm into complete players with map awareness and situational instinct that they lacked previously. While we played for Check-Six with one another, the effects of his coaching was evident as we improved beyond what any team normally could in such a short time with players that no one would recognize otherwise (Zuna, Kokoro, Naz, Hitomi, myself).

**„One of the few true coaches in
American eSports.“**

Frank Fields