Justification

Layout of the code of conduct

I tried to make the code of conduct as easy as possible to navigate and read by creating a numerical system along with subheadings to organize the code of conduct. I split the sections up by who they were governing and then had multiple points in each subheading for each code. I took inspiration from Riot Games' code of conduct which spans across VALORANT, League of Legends, Team Fight Tactics, and their other IPs. They follow the same numerical system for their “code of ethics” by organizing the code of conduct with headings for each group targeted I have made it as clear as I can which rules apply to whom so there is no confusion for each group.

**Focuses on the code of conduct.**

My focus for the code of conduct was reducing discrimination, improving the mental health of players and coaches, and cracking down on drug abuse in esports. The ways that I went about making my code of conduct target these areas is by having harsher rules on each, some rules may have been different from how other codes of conduct have gone about this in the past but by doing so I believe that it will have a greater impact going forward and deter others from breaking the code of conduct.

**Doping in esports**

I wanted to have stricter rules on drugs compared to the relaxed rules of late within esports, for example, VALORANTS' “EMEA 2022 season official rules” do not have a section on doping in their tournaments at all. This creates an unfair environment and drugs need to be taken just as seriously as they are in mainstream sporting events. Doping has been on the rise in esports since its inception in the late 1970s, the most popular example of this is in Counter-Strike: Global Offensive where Cloud9 admitted that their entire team was on Adderall for the duration of their game in ESL One Katowice. In response to cloud9 being called out for their use of Adderall during the game, Kory Friesen in an interview with Mohan Govindasamy stated that “everyone does Adderall”, Friesen adds, “yeah,” before saying, “and you can hear it in the comms right?” Matt Kamen (2015). A professional player stating that everyone is on Adderall in professional leagues just goes to show the relaxed rules on doping in esports now.

A focus of my doping statements in the code of conduct is also on nicotine. Nicotine is a widespread drug that has limited regulations in sports and esports but is classed as one of the most preventable death tolls, “on current consumption patterns, about 400 million adults worldwide will be killed by smoking between 2010 and 2050” Jha, P (2011) and all these deaths will be from a man-made controlled substance that could have been prevented if we never started smoking as a society. “Smoking was considerably influenced by having seen a best friend, father, sibling, and favorite movie star smoke” Shubhadeep Das et al (2011) with this evidence having a younger audience seeing their favorite professional players use nicotine products will influence them to do so themselves, with my code of conduct not allowing the public to see players smoking I hope to avoid this.

**Gender discrimination in sport**

Gender discrimination in traditional mainstream sports is a commonly known theme, the men's and women’s leagues have been divided due to the physical deviations between men and women where men are biologically taller and stronger by nature giving them a competitive edge in sports, this is shown in the Olympics by results that show that the gender gap in Olympic sports performance has been stable since 1983 (Valérie Thibault et al, June 1st, 2010). These suggest that women’s performances at the high level will never match those of men**.** I believe that the biological divide in mainstream sports between men and women is not valid in esports as esports is not as bodily dependent as mainstream sports where physical attributions make more of a difference, I argue that esports is more a game of the mind and lacking physical attributes are more common as they are not as important in esports where there isn’t as much movement and activity as sports. “Esports athletes displayed significantly less activity and poor body composition, which are all correlated with potential health issues and risk of injury.” Joanne DiFrancisco-Donoghue et al (23rd July 2020) This shows that the physical attributes of a person has little effect no esports athletes if they are below average and do not try to improve themselves when we know that esports players will practice their game sense and aim to get an edge but won’t train their bodies for the advantage.

**Time Limiter**

“Gaming disorder means a person struggles to control how often they play video games which can be up to fourteen hours a day or more” NHS (28th March 2023) Gaming disorder has become a recognized and treatable disorder as of 2018, is 18-24 and I believe that having the option to limit how much time you can spend on a game will entice people to reduce the time they are playing. Having a time limiter is also good for younger children whose parents can then set a time limiter for them to prevent early gaming disorders and decrease screen time.

**Gambling**

For gambling I have told game publishers to have the option to limit gambling just like limiting time spent on the game, I took inspiration from PokerStars VR which had the option to disable play for set times in the menu, once you have chosen the time to disable gambling your account, there is no way to get it back without waiting out the time. I believe that this is the perfect way to stop gambling alongside having a limit of £1000 per day which prevents overspending and extreme gambling addiction. This also serves the purpose of stopping high amounts of unauthorized transactions.

**In-game purchases**

I have chosen to have a security feature for online purchases due to the unauthorized spending of money on parents’ accounts in multiple games, this can cause multiple lawsuits and money to be accidentally spent that can ruin lives. “The company received tens of thousands of complaints from parents about their kid’s unauthorized in-app purchases. Most notably, one kid spent $2,600 on in-app purchases for the game “Tap Pet Hotel.” Alexandria White (14th November 2023).

**Working hours for players and coaches**

The working hours for players and coaches have been restricted in my code of conduct. “Given that agents in our sample work on average 4.6 effective hours per day, this shows that the call center environment is demanding and that fatigue sets in early.” Marion Collewet, Jan Sauermann (August 2017). After reading this reference I chose to have required breaks after 6 hours but optional before the 6-hour mark, so players don’t get too fatigued while playing.

**Bugs and exploits**

I decided for bugs that any left in the game for over 2 patches are allowed in the game as I believe there is confusion in some events where it's confused on what bugs are and isn’t allowed. Specifically in VALORANT the Spycam Cypher uses can be placed in areas that it wasn’t intended to gain an advantage but it isn’t always clear if it is a bug or not until after the game “According to Riot, the exploit wasn’t obvious during the tournament itself and the opposing team hadn’t reported it, which is why tournament officials allowed the match to proceed” Aashir Ahmed (4th December 2021), This kind of confusion does not help anyone and I believe by having the 2 patch rule will make clear what bugs are allowed and disallowed at events.

**Hardware checks**

Hardware checks are common practice in esports as players can get hacks on their mouse, this can be done in a few ways. “The researchers took apart the mouse, soldered three wires to its circuit board to gain access to the microprocessor, rewrote its embedded software, and added the payload.” William Turton (1st of August 2017) In this example, William and Stanley demonstrated how it is possible to add code to a mouse and use it to cheat in tournaments, by checking players' hardware before the games this can be easily prevented. Another way of cheating using hardware is by having macros on the hardware using software such as Razer Synapse, this software is commonly used to change settings on the mouse, but it can also be used to add custom macros that give players an unfair advantage that ruins competitive integrity. “The cheating was discovered when player Atún was able to teleport several character clones at the same time, a move impossible to pull off without a pre-programmed macro” Rob LeFebvre (26th June 2018), The player justified this macro by stating that “Atún uses the Synapse mouse with a "manual configuration to be able to have a better use of hardware." This is clearly in breach of a macroing code, and the player got kicked from the finals for using said cheats. This is another situation that can be avoided by using hardware checks and disallowing software on the LAN computers.

**Punishments**

For punishments, I chose to have fines and bans be the most common forms of punishment for my code of conduct. Although I had some firm punishments, I chose to have the option to leave punishments up to the decision of my organization so I could choose the severity based on the situation, this has been adopted by other organizations, such as riot games in VCT Game Changers; “Per Game Changers Rules and Regulations, teams who have been found violating the competitive integrity of a match will receive a match forfeit. Riot announced a full investigation will be launched into the matter.” Jeremy Gan (6th October 2023).

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