

# TEAMS<sup>®</sup>

## CONFERENCE + EXPO

### First eSportsTravel Summit at TEAM '17 Featured Unique Track of Programming

**Highlights included a look at producing e-sports events; the impact of virtual reality, artificial intelligence and augmented reality on sporting events; and a case study of the NBA 2K League**

The eSportsTravel Summit was a first-of-its-kind look at the explosive growth of e-sports and the impact this new breed of event is having on venues, destinations and the travel industry. Sponsored by Sports Anaheim, the eSportsTravel Summit was held in conjunction with the TEAMS '17 Conference & Expo, October 30–November 2, in Orlando. TEAMS is the world's largest gathering of sports-event organizers.

While video games have been around for more than 40 years, a transformation is occurring in the video-gaming space that will elevate the players above the games. Live events are becoming the ultimate forum for skill and achievement for players. And spectators are flocking to the live events because of their interest in the games and the rising prominence of the players. It is this transformation that is creating many new opportunities, including record levels of investment in e-sports teams and the development of e-sports specific venues.



"We secured an impressive presenter roster for this innovative summit," said Timothy Schneider, founder and chairman of the Sports Division of Northstar Travel Group, which publishes *SportsTravel* magazine and organizes the TEAMS Conference & Expo. "By attending the eSportsTravel Summit at TEAMS '17, venues, destinations, event organizers and sports organizations began to understand how to leverage the e-sports phenomenon to further their business development," said Schneider.

The eSportsTravel Summit began with "eSports vs. Traditional Sports: Similarities and Differences in Event Production and Operations" on October 31. With e-sports events filling venues from Madison Square Garden in New York to Staples Center in Los Angeles, the session focussed on the unique considerations of e-sports events in the areas of venue selection, accommodations, security and merchandising. The session was moderated by Nathan Lindberg of Twitch and included Ryan DeVos of the Orlando Magic, Brian Mirakian of Populus and Lisa Neshanian of Esports Now Inc.

The eSportsTravel Summit also featured a session titled "The Digitalization of Sports: How AI, AR, VR and eSports Will Affect Your Events." Part of one of the TEAMS Conference Super Sessions, the panel discussion was held on November 1 and provided sports-industry professionals with insights into how artificial intelligence, augmented reality, virtual reality, facial recognition and e-sports will transform the sports-event industry. The session was moderated by *SportsTravel's* Jason Gewirtz and included Rahat Ahmed of TrinityVR, Manny Anekal of The Next Level, Scott Gutterman of the PGA Tour, Tobias Sherman of Foundry IV and Peter Trepp of FaceFirst.

The eSportsTravel Summit concluded on the afternoon of November 1 with an educational session that examined the launch of the NBA 2K League, which the NBA sees as a platform for the engagement of the next generation of sports fans. The session was presented by The Next Level, the leading eSports business industry media company, and was moderated by Manny Anekal, founder and CEO of The Next Level. Presenters included Josh Barney of the Utah Jazz, Ted Dalton of the Boston Celtics, Alex Martins of the Orlando Magic, Grant Paranjape of Monumental Sports & Entertainment and Aaron Ryan of the NBA 2K League.

The eSportsTravel Summit will be held again in conjunction with TEAMS '18, October 1–4 in Louisville. For more information about TEAMS '18, call (877) 577-3700 or visit [TEAMSconference.com](http://TEAMSconference.com).

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