

Unglamorous eSports

A Mount & Blade: Warband Case Study

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GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE™ EUROPE
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Definitions

- “eSports” denotes a meaning to gameplay
- Amateur - it ain't a living



Goals of This Talk

- Present the value of amateur competitive gaming for developers and in general
- Provide practical advice and example on the behaviour of amateur competitive communities and how to benefit from them

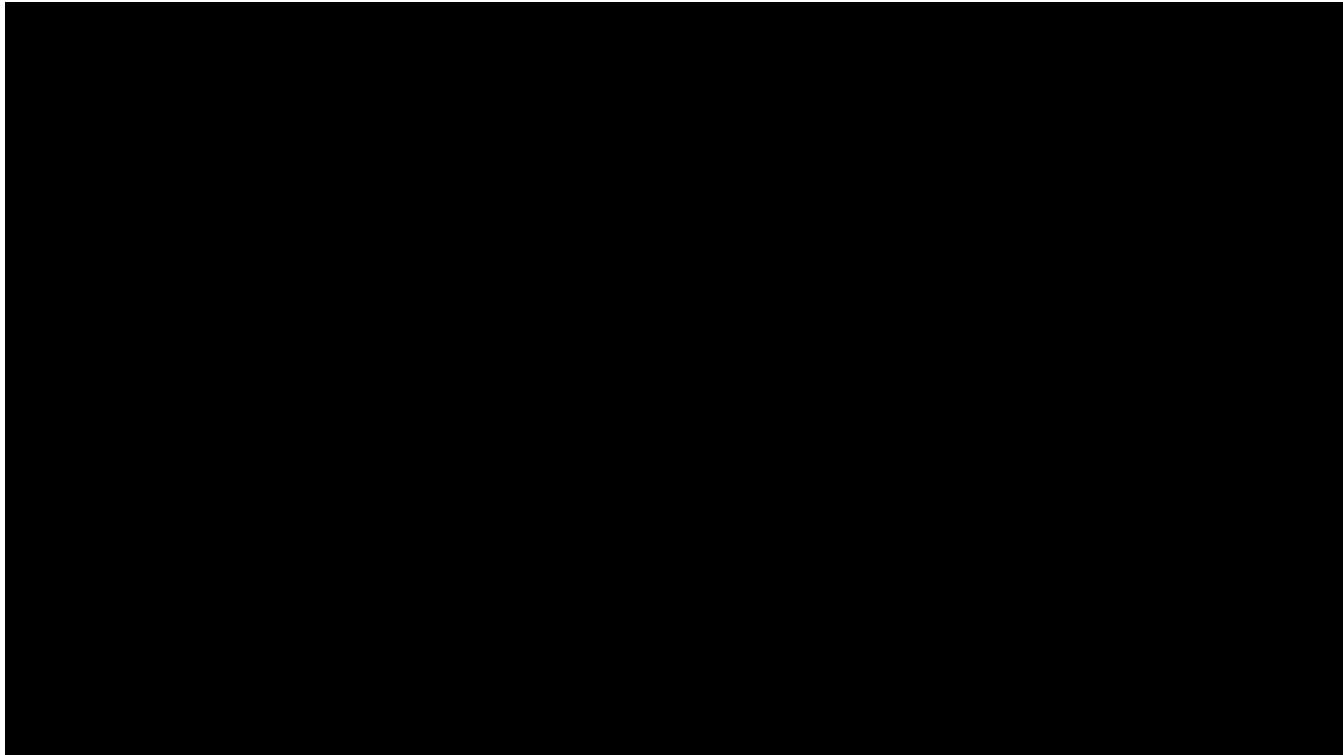


History of Competitive Warband



An eSporting Endeavour?







Beta

- 6 months *long*
- Clans formed early
- Clans fought instinctively
- Active development encouraged activity



Nations Cup 2010

- Lack of foresight leads to failure
- Unfinished tournament
- Unkept promises leave bitter memories

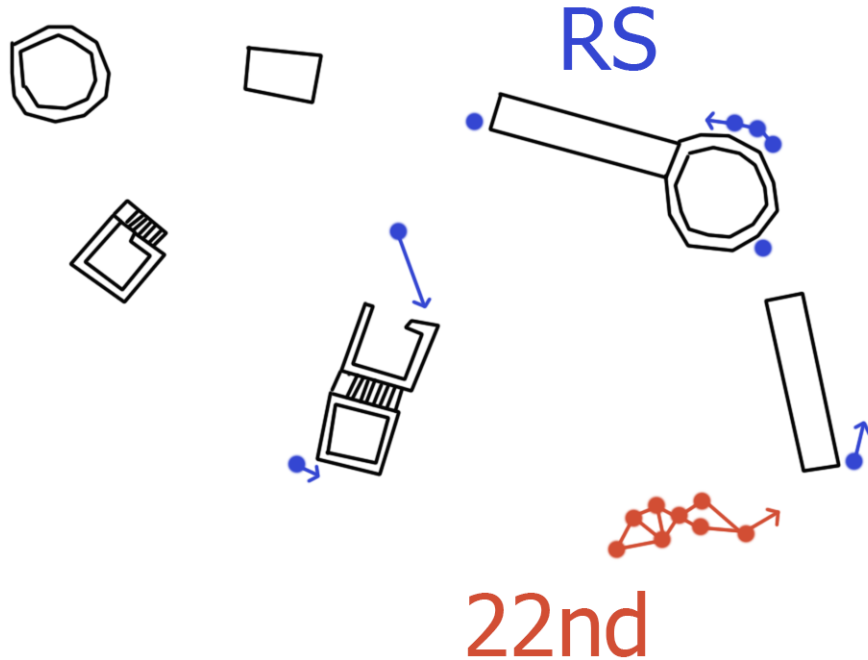


22nd Battalion vs Runaway Scorpions

- Major clashes known throughout scene
- Isolated community led to unique game approach



Crossfire and Retreat Tactics





Nations Cup 2011 - Presentation

NATIONS CUP 2011 - BRACKET -

After 21 teams signed up, instead of the expected 20, the format of the tournament became somewhat more complex. There will be two group stages (3 groups of 7, with 4 qualifying from each group and then 4 groups of 3, with 2 qualifying from each group). We decided this was the fairest way possible to arrange the tournament but it does mean that, the tournament will be 11 games long, for the finalists, instead of 7. The exact schedule is still being formulated but we are expecting the tournament to last for up to 50 days.

Here is the prototype visual bracket for the tournament. The groups are final, so you now know who you will face in the first stage, which is set to begin on the 20th of March. NOTE: I will probably make a more technical bracket but I thought that a wall chart styled bracket might get people pumped! (Printable version coming, for the hardcore ☺)

Group 1:						Group 2:						Group 3:								
Team	P	W	D	L	Points	Rounds (+/-)	Team	P	W	D	L	Points	Rounds (+/-)	Team	P	W	D	L	Points	Rounds (+/-)
Czech Republic	6	5	1	-	16	+71	Turkey	6	6	-	-	18	+76	Poland	6	6	-	-	18	+80
United Kingdom	6	4	2	-	14	+41	Sweden	6	5	-	1	15	+57	Italy	6	5	-	1	15	+41
USA	6	4	-	2	12	+39	Russia	6	4	-	2	9	+41	France	6	4	-	2	12	+53
Spain	6	3	1	2	10	+5	BeNe	6	3	-	3	9	+19	Ukraine	6	3	-	3	9	+45
Austria & Switzerland	6	2	-	4	6	-13	Finland	6	2	-	4	6	-28	Canada	6	2	-	4	6	-11
Portugal	6	1	-	5	3	-30	Germany	6	1	-	5	3	-49	Romania & Moldova	6	1	-	5	3	-78
Norway	6	-	-	6	0	-114	Hungary	6	-	-	5	0	-116	Denmark & Iceland	6	-	-	6	0	-120

Spoiler: Matchlog (1st Stage) (click to show/hide)

Group A:							Group B:							Group C:						
Team	P	W	D	L	Points	Rounds (+/-)	Team	P	W	D	L	Points	Rounds (+/-)	Team	P	W	D	L	Points	Rounds (+/-)
Ukraine	2	2	-	-	6	+10	France	2	2	-	-	6	+29	Poland	2	2	-	-	6	+10
Czech Republic	2	1	-	1	3	+1	Turkey	2	1	-	1	3	-3	USA	2	-	1	1	0	-4
Sweden	2	-	-	2	0	-11	Spain	2	-	-	2	0	-26	BeNe	2	-	1	1	0	-6
Group D:																				
Team	P	W	D	L	Points	Rounds (+/-)														
Russia ^)	2	2	-	-	6	+7														
Italy	2	1	-	1	3	+13														
United Kingdom	2	-	-	2	0	-20														



European Native League

- User content adds longevity (maps)
- Smaller team size = less barrier to entry



Streaming and Playing Professional

- Twitch and Twitter - eSports cornerstones
- Watchability is important
- Extra shows and coverage promote involvement



In Game Screen





Splash Screen

#WarbandECS

GRAND FINAL

MAFIKMOBS

GAME SERVERS

MB.tv

STAGE: PRESTREAM - START 19:00

FREELANCERS Vs **APIS EUROPAE**

Best of 16

MAP 1 (2 x 4 ROUND SETS)

SAN'DI'BOUSH

FACTIONS:

SETS:

VAEGIRS Vs SWADIA

FREELANCERS - APIS EUROPAE

APIS EUROPAE - FREELANCERS

MAP 2 (2 x 4 ROUND SETS)

FIELD BY THE RIVER

FACTIONS:

SETS:

NORDS Vs RHODOKS

FREELANCERS - APIS EUROPAE

APIS EUROPAE - FREELANCERS

CASTER

@AeroTrewent

@Wolfpack_Purzel

@CoolGamingBro

Ehombre

CHANNEL

MBtvReplay

MB_tv

no music playing

SCHEDULE

[ECS2] Freelancers vs Apis Europae

19:02

BST



Extra Shows

The screenshot shows a Twitch stream interface for a game called "HORSE & SWORD". The stream is hosted by MB.tv. Four participants are visible in video windows: Frank Elliott (@captainlust), LeRoux (@LeRouxTheBee), Watly (@WatlyWB), and Tardet (@Tardet_RNGD). The central part of the screen displays a game menu with "DEADLINES" and "SCHEDULING" tabs. The "SCHEDULING" tab is active, showing a match between "Smulky 07:06, 10:00BST" and "Endh Rabals". The match is set for "Sunday 07:06, 10:00BST". The "MAPS & FACTIONS" section shows "HORDS" and "SABRANOS" factions. The "WATLY" logo is visible in the bottom left corner. The stream has a progress bar at the bottom showing 33:41 / 1:00:08.

HORSE & SWORD

MB.tv

Frank Elliott | @captainlust

LeRoux | @LeRouxTheBee

Watly | @WatlyWB

Tardet | @Tardet_RNGD

@TeamRazer

#WarbandECS

GS | @gameservers_com

M | @MarkModsServers

DEADLINES

SCHEDULING: 00:00:00 - MATCH: 00:00:00

MAPS & FACTIONS:

HORDS **SABRANOS**

Smulky 07:06, 10:00BST

Endh Rabals

Sunday 07:06, 10:00BST

WATLY

33:41 / 1:00:08



Status Report

- Higher viewership than ever
- End of doomsday threads
- Steady growth in participation
- Players thinking maturely



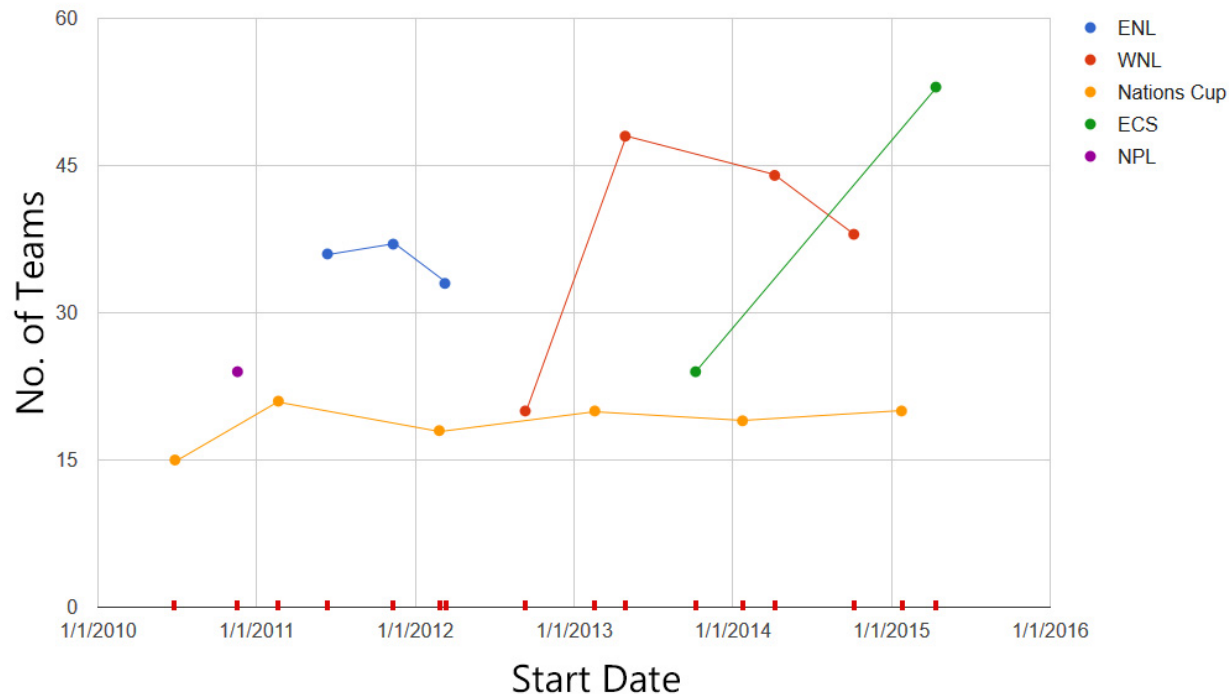
Warband Steam Players - Jul 30th to now



source: steamcharts.com



Number of Teams in Major Tournaments





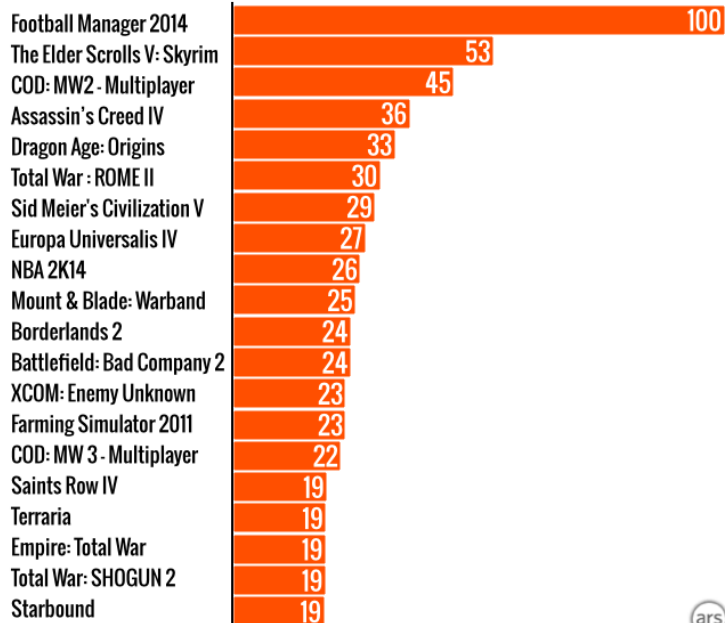
Why Unglamorous?



Play Time

MOST PLAYED GAMES ON STEAM

Median number of hours per owner since March 2009 (>50K owners)



source: Ars Technica



Player Benefits

- Online communities are fun and enriching
- Share experiences with people from around the world
- Learn languages
- Big Fish



Getting Sold

- Crucial experience
- Justifies time invested



Direct Advice



Direct Advice pt. 1

- Make multiplayer (duh)
- Use your time efficiently - provide tools
- Can your players *play*?
- Have a score



Direct Advice pt. 2

- Monitor the situation
- Contact members of the community
- Reduce barriers to entry into competitive play
- Listen



Thanks!