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Halo World Championship comes to Seattle

Sean Campbell, Volunteer Reporter

From Oct. 21 through Oct. 23, the Seattle Convention Center hosted the Halo World Championship. The event saw professional esports teams from all over the globe competing for a combined \$1 million in prizes. The event marked the end of the first season of the popular video game “Halo Infinite.”

The event put on by Microsoft was attended by hundreds of fans, contenders and contributors. Bright colorful lights, loud music and the sound of excited spectators filled the convention space. The event also showcased different opportunities outside of the competition including cosplay contests, panels, games and other events for fans of the Halo franchise.



Natalie Schorr

“This event has been way improved from before,” Micah Bandy, an attendee at the Championship, said. “It’s a great time for both casual and competitive players.”

The final rounds of the event had viewers rooting for both teams on the edge of their seats, chanting and hoping for their favorite team to bring home the win. The championship match between OpTic gaming out of Texas and Cloud9 gaming out of California ended in a 4-1 victory for OpTic. This was OpTic’s first world championship Halo win.

After their victory Tommy ‘Lucid’ Wilson, a player for OpTic gaming stated, “I’m so proud of the team right now, we did it.”

With OpTic as the newly crowned champions, they took home the grand prize of \$400,000. Runners up, Cloud9, came in second claiming \$220,000. Native Red gaming took third place and was awarded with \$110,000.

Halo fans were able to meet not just characters from the games, but also the developers who have been with the franchise since its inception in 2001. Actors Steve Downes and Jen Taylor, the voices of Master Chief and Cortana were special guests at the championship.

“Esports are all online for the most part, and games like Halo have been around for 20 years,” Parker Winchester, the content director for Spacestation Gaming said. “The people here have made friends over those 20 years, so having these events in person makes a cool opportunity for the community and fanbase to come together.”

Outside of gaming, an overarching theme to the event was including Halo fans and players from all walks of life and all different levels of interest. 343 Industries, the team behind the development of Halo, wants to foster four core values: hope, heroism, wonder and community.

"This event is very welcoming, fun and exciting," Nate Church, an attendee at the championship and long time fan of Halo, said. "If you want to talk to the developers, I don't feel intimidated by them. They make everyone feel included and are overall having a good time."

The format of the tournament was 16 teams split into four groups of four. The top three teams from each group of four moved onto the championship bracket. The championship bracket required teams to defeat their opponent in a best of five bout. The two best teams then competed for the top spot in a best of seven.

The original game "Halo: Combat Evolved" came out in 2001, was nominated for multiple awards and won game of the year in 2001. It spawned an entire generation of games that still remain popular 21 years later. In total there are 16 games, 20 books and many other different forms of media within the Halo universe. If the popularity of the championship series is any indication, Halo has a long way left to go.



An attendee of the Halo World Championship tests out radio quality while playing the game in the Dolby Audio booth. (Sean Campbell)



Michael Schorr, forge lead designer at 343 Industries, talks on the side stage about new changes to the forge game mechanics. /Sean Campbell