CASE STUDY

Esports:
The next big thing at
University of Jamestown

Esports aren't the future…

they're the present.

ABOUT

The University of Jamestown (North Dakota) esports program is a member of the National Association of Collegiate Esports (NACE). They kicked off their first season of competitive play at the start of the fall 2017 semester. The team is led by Chris Hoke, Technical Director, and Josh Knutson, the team's Head Coach.

The driving force for wanting to start an Esports program was a popular objective: Recruitment.

"In esports, the administration saw the potential of a program that could tap into pool of students who may not otherwise consider the University of Jamestown as a destination to further their education," says Christopher Hoke, CIO and Technical Director of esports at University of Jamestown. "UJ saw the explosion of esports happening on the national and global scene and wanted to be on the forefront of that movement in the collegiate space."

THE CHALLENGE

The largest challenge UJ faced when starting an esports program was finding the right technology and systems for their needs. The University of Jamestown was looking for systems that could not only meet the performance demands of an esports team, but also have maintenance agreements in place for future repairs to happen quickly and seamlessly.

"Working with Gravity Gaming has been top notch. We could never have gotten that great of customer service, creative customization options, or help with creating team jerseys from a big chain company."
- Josh Knutson

THE SOLUTION

A number of factors were instrumental in UJ choosing Gravity Gaming as their systems provider for esports:

Maintenance and Service – "We needed peace of mind to know that we would have a great support system to rely on if there were ever any issues. Gravity Gaming gave us that peace of mind," says Chris Hoke. Having an extended parts warranty was only one piece of the puzzle. Knowing they could get support from real people who not only understand PCs - but are also gamers at heart - just a phone call away was an additional value that made Gravity Gaming stand out.

Customized Computer Systems – Not only was the University of Jamestown able to get computers that would meet the performance expectations, but Gravity Gaming worked with UJ to customize the rigs and add school colors/ LED lights and branding with custom logo etching.

Team Jerseys – Gravity Gaming helped with the creation and purchasing of team esports jerseys, which is another bonus.

THE BENEFITS

Esports has great potential to be a powerful recruitment tool. Being able to tell potential students that are passionate about gaming that esports is real and growing – and that students can receive scholarships to play - has been very beneficial. Because esports is on the rise globally, and programs have relatively low operating costs, recruiting new students to your university that might not be coming otherwise is now an option. Overall, the skills and learning opportunities for those student athletes are invaluable. In the end, higher education is aimed at doing what is best for the students, and having an esports team is an addition that experience.

The students drawn to esports tend to choose majors that require logic and mathematical skills. The students' experience in gaming helps develop those skills and creates an interest in careers in those areas. More than half of the UJ esports team is pursuing STEM-related degrees.

THE FUTURE

The collegiate esports scene is growing at a dramatic rate, but is still in the infancy of having true college competition that is governed by a larger organization. In the next few years, as UJ's program becomes more established, people will see the incredible opportunity, making recruitment for the esports team easier. "Hopefully we get to a point where students are coming to UJ to be on the team, but also students want to come to UJ to be a supporter of our team, even if they don't necessarily play for us," Knutson says.

Collegiate esports is off to a great start and will only keep growing and expanding. The University of Jamestown is one of the first 20 varsity programs in the country involved with the National Association of Collegiate esports. That governing body, NAC esports, is doing great things to add schools to their membership, which means more competition, which will lead to more resources to advance student athletes.

"With great partners like Gravity Gaming helping us on the hardware side of things, we have a ton of opportunity to make a mark in the upper Midwest as one of the premier teams."

About Gravity Gaming

Gravity Gaming is a brand dedicated to PC Gaming created by ByteSpeed (*www.bytespeed.com*), a leading nationwide provider of custom-built computer hardware since 1999. We've combined our passion for PC gaming with our 19 years of computer industry experience to create Gravity Gaming.

Gravity Gaming systems are built and supported in the USA, at our headquarters in Moorhead, MN. Our goal is to bring users the ultimate gaming experience through our high performance hardware, as well as outstanding customer service and support.

At Gravity Gaming, we understand the importance of building a solid gaming rig for ultimate performance and reliability. That's why we use only the highest quality components. Our team of gaming experts then assemble and test your machine before it ships to you. We guarantee high quality, performance-driven machines you will be proud to own.

Learn more at: www.gravitygaming.com

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