

The Growing Presence of Smash and Esports

Introduction

Attention Material: Jab, Up-Tilt, Grab, Down Throw, F-Smash. This is just a sample of some of the jargon you might be familiar with if you know the game Super Smash Bros. Smash events are coming back in a big way with the rapid growth of eSports, or professional video games, and the wildly popular new installment in the series: Super Smash Bros. Ultimate.

Thesis Statement: Super Smash Bros. is helping pave the way for esports recognition and has been and will continue to be a catalyst for creating and growing friendships for competitive and casual players alike.

Preview Statement: To illustrate this, I will be referencing a recent major Smash tournament that took place in Oakland, CA while the Super Bowl was inching along, called Genesis.

Although it was the biggest Smash Ultimate tournament to date, I'm also going to focus a little bit on a more dated, but still popular iteration of the game that was present at Genesis 6, Super Smash Bros. Melee, and why Smash, and esports in general, deserve more attention.

(Transitional Statement: Super Smash Bros. Melee was released in 2001, meaning it would be a legal adult in the US this year.)

Body

1. It might be old, but the Melee scene is still strong.
 - a. It is still touted as the most competitive and most technical game in the series.
 - b. It is also the fastest game in the series with a lot of quick characters and move inputs.
 - c. That makes it fun to watch high level players duke it out, though it can be confusing at times to comprehend what's happening.

(Transition Statement: Comparing the action of Smash tournaments to traditional sports, it isn't clear why they don't have a bigger following.)

2. Smash is a fast-paced, high-intensity game, which is common in popular spectator sports.
 - a. In an interview done by *The Tartan*, the official student newspaper of Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh on Feb. 10, 2019, Nolan Freda, a Pittsburgh University student said, “[Smash] is [comparable] to tennis, with moments of extended action leading to a small victory for one side.”
 - b. Also important to take into account is that, for many esports, commercial breaks are few and far in between.

(Transition Statement: From viewing parties to traditional parties, there's never an inappropriate time for Smash.)

3. Super Smash Bros. is arguably one of the best party game series out there, rivaling Mario Party and Mario Kart.
 - a. As I hinted at, Smash Ultimate is a great competitive game, but it is also a fantastic party game.
 - b. Players can even get competitive in a casual setting without needing to be a professional.

(Transition into Conclusion: As Genesis is one of many Smash tournaments, this is one of many speeches we must get through today, so I'll start wrapping it up.)

Conclusion

Summary Statement: If Genesis 6 has shown us anything about Smash, it's that Smash has what it takes to be a huge spectator spectacle, with its variety of popular versions, fast pace and high intensity, but doesn't fall short in its goals to be a great party game either.

Concluding Remarks: I know I personally am excited to see how Smash and esports continue to grow and impact communities here and across the globe, in fact, maybe I'll get to play some Smash with some of you at some point.

Reference

Benusa, M. (2019, Feb 10). Genesis 6 grand finals and the super bowl. University Wire

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Chris Mathis

Professor Beach

COM 2129 / Section 03

Discussion Questions

- What do you think of esports and its growing following and how it compares to traditional sports?
- Why do you think esports looked at differently from traditional sports?
- Can you point out any ways that smash or esports have impacted relationships or communities around you?