MCCC Introduces New
Mustangs *eSports* Program

Montgomery County Community College recently launched its new coed athletic program – Mustangs eSports. Starting this spring, student-athletes will be competing at MCCC's Mustangs eSports pavilions at both its West Campus in Pottstown and Central Campus in Blue Bell.

eSports, or electronic sports, is a form of competitive multiplayer video gaming in which teams compete against each other in single games or tournament events.

MCCC's Mustangs eSports involves much more than playing video games, said MCCC's eSports Coordinator and Coach Ryan Plummer, who describes the many benefits of the program.

"A major benefit of Mustangs eSports is that it will bring together students who have a shared passion, and it will encourage them to communicate with each other as they work together developing their strategy and resolving conflicts," Plummer said. "Through practice and competition, they will learn to work well as a team. All of these skills will help them succeed in the classroom and in their careers."

Similar to MCCC's other varsity sports, Mustangs eSports has eligibility requirements. Student-athletes must be enrolled in one of MCCC's academic programs, take a minimum of 12 credits per semester, maintain a grade point average of 2.0 or higher and pass a physical exam.

"At MCCC, the e in Mustangs eSports stands for everyone," said Kelly Dunbar, MCCC's Director of Athletics and Campus Recreation. "On our campuses, we foster an all-inclusive environment where everyone feels they belong. eSports provides an opportunity for all students to participate on a varsity team."

Montgomery County Community College's Mustangs eSports Coordinator Ryan Plummer (left) and Director of Athletics and Campus Recreation Kelly Dunbar (standing, right) coach student-athletes during a practice round of Rocket League.

MCCC's eSports will open the door for other possibilities, including the potential expansion of academic programs, particularly in the technology field, and integrated learning opportunities with community and industry partners.

Student-athletes started practicing last fall. Practices start with some basic stretches, and then Coach Plummer reviews different techniques and strategies to improve their skills and performance. As part of practice, student-athletes also spend time exercising to increase their endurance and eye-hand coordination.

For the first season, Mustangs eSports student-athletes will be playing and competing in Rocket League tournaments. Rocket League is a game similar to soccer, only it uses cars instead of players and the game involves two teams of four players each.

While video gaming has been around for decades, eSports has been quickly gaining popularity in recent years, especially on college campuses. When the National Association of Collegiate eSports (NACE), the governing body of eSports, started in 2016, there were six founding member colleges and universities. Now, only three years later, there are more than 150 members, including MCCC, and over 3,000 student-athlete members.

Worldwide more than 380 million people watched eSports in 2018, and there are over 165 million eSports enthusiasts, spanning North America, Europe, China and South Korea, according to Newzoo, a leading global provider of games and eSports analytics.

The eSports industry is flourishing in the Philadelphia region. In September 2019, Comcast Spectator and The Cordish Companies broke ground for a $50 million, 60,000-square-foot eSports Fusion Arena in the South Philadelphia Sports Complex. The new arena is expected to open in 2021.

eSports is not only profitable for the industry, but also for the players. Earlier this year, 16-year-old Kyle "Bugha" Giersdorf of Pottsgrove won $3 million when he became the Fortnite world champion.

For more information about MCCC's Mustangs eSports team, contact Ryan Plummer at rplummer@mc3.edu or call 215-619-7440.

Montgomery County Community College's eSports Mustangs are exercising as part of practice to increase endurance and eye-hand coordination.

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