



# ELIZABETH FORWARD SCHOOL DISTRICT



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For Immediate Release

## New EFMS eSports Program holding “Ice Bowl” to find the school’s best Madden Football player



**December 11, 2024: ELIZABETH, PA --** Earlier this fall, Elizabeth Forward Middle School Students threw their talents and thumbs into the competitive world of eSports.

To date, the team has been involved in several rocket league tournaments and has been busy learning the ropes along with their sponsor, Mr. Ryan Lee.

“The matches have been going well,” Mr. Lee said. “The Rocket League season just ended, the Division 1 team went 3-2 and Division 2 went 3-3. We should be hopefully starting playoffs soon.”

EFMS Assistant Principal, Dr. Anthony Popowitz said the idea of a middle school team (there is already one at the high school level) materialized over the summer. They contacted a vendor, renovated a space and got right into competitions.

“Students are learning how competitive this field is” Dr. Popowitz said. “While they have played well, they realize they have more work to do to win tournaments.”

The school's first Rocket League team has eight members. But what Lee realized is that there are dozens of students interested in playing competitive Madden Football matches. That's why this Monday, Dec. 16, EFMS eSports is sponsoring a Madden "Ice Bowl" Tournament to find out who is the best player throughout the school.

Lee said 35 students have shown interest in the tournament and 28 have officially signed up so far. The name Ice Bowl is appropriate because all of the games will be played under snowy conditions.



"The snow games give us a fun and festive atmosphere," Lee said. "The purpose of the tournament is to find out who is the best player in the school."

Many students are interested in joining a Madden eSports team, but Popowitz said there aren't any leagues in the region or the state for middle school. Lee says he has been looking around at potential leagues but says he needs to know what kind of competition EFMS would have to offer.

"I would like to know who the best is in case one ever arises," Lee said. "I have been looking into some league, but I have to know who the best is first, so this is a tryout mixed in with a fun day of games."

eSports teams have been a fixture at High schools for a while. Creating an eSports program in middle school offers students an engaging and inclusive way to build essential skills while enhancing academic and personal development. Students passionate about gaming often show increased motivation, better attendance, and greater school engagement. Unlike traditional sports, eSports welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities, fostering a supportive environment where they can connect and belong.

eSports promotes teamwork, leadership, and communication as students collaborate, strategize, and adapt during competitive play. Players take on roles like team captains and strategists, developing leadership and cooperation skills while learning how to handle both wins and setbacks with sportsmanship and resilience.

Academically, eSports connects with subjects like math, science, and language arts through activities that involve problem-solving, critical thinking, and decision-making. It

also builds technological literacy by introducing students to computers, software, and STEM fields like coding and graphic design, sparking interest in tech-driven careers.

The career potential in eSports is growing, with opportunities in game development, streaming, marketing, and event management. Many colleges offer eSports scholarships, giving skilled players a path to academic and professional success.

Additionally, eSports supports mental well-being by offering a positive outlet for stress while teaching perseverance and goal-setting. Its global reach also helps students connect with peers worldwide, fostering cultural awareness and digital communication skills.