

Ranch student breaks ground for competitive Esports

Jack Stilwell, *Staff Reporter*



Nick Harris playing Rocket League. Esports members practice their games at home. *Photo courtesy of Tina Harris*

By 2021, Esports viewership will outgrow every professional American sports league, except for the NFL, according to a projection made by Syracuse University, and this growth has spread its reach to younger generations.

HR is quickly becoming a top spot for students wishing to play Esports competitively at the high school level, despite it being a relatively new program. One such student is Nick Harris, junior and president of the Esports club, who has already received a scholarship for his talents in Esports.

Harris was granted a partial scholarship to Kansas Wesleyan University (KWU) to play for their varsity Rocket League team. Rocket League is a vehicular soccer game. A little while back, Harris put in an application to a recruitment page for college sports, with his academic transcript and also highlights of his Rocket League matches. KWU contacted Harris later, telling him they wanted him on their Esports team.

Harris has been working very hard to achieve this. "It was certainly a huge grind. I've been playing Rocket League for two and a half years and I've just hit the highest rank," he said. "Usually when I'm not working or don't have any plans, I play for four to five hours a day."

Dennis Sierra, business teacher and head of Esports club, has seen how Nick has progressed within the club. Sierra said, "Nick has grown from a leadership standpoint. He's gone from just a really good gamer trying to get a scholarship for his particular skill set, to an organizer, and a teambuilder."

There are many ways to receive a scholarship for Esports.

Dylan Keoprasedh, sophomore at KWU, said, "I was recruited through an open game day on campus. While there, I was asked to try out later in the school's Esports arena." Keoprasedh received an email the next day saying that he made the team. Keoprasedh also said that admissions counselors are looking at high schools all over the country for talent.

With Esports taking off, Sierra and Harris have big plans for the future of the club. Sierra said, "Nick wants the club to grow after he's gone. He wants it to be a thriving organization, not just because of him but because it's a good organization."

Sierra also has goals

himself. He wants the team to have players in every game, and have at least one player in each game go to a competition. "We want to make sure that kids and parents understand that Esports is different from gaming club," Sierra said. "Esports is actually highly competitive. It put the sports in Esports."



Graphic by Michael de Guzman