

All for Games and Games for All: Local esports league proves popular



Gamers compete for their rank. Photo Bobby Forand

Gaming for All (G4A!) is an electronic sporting (esports) event service and league that has been holding events at local RI bars since June 2021. Dedicated competitors play each other in a pro-style environment that allows for warm-ups and free-play before competitive play starts. Prizes are given to the top-ranking players. All tournaments and leagues are free to enter, which gives gamers of all skill levels incentive to participate.

“G4A! events are the place to be for players that want to learn, improve, and/or exhibit their competitive skills in a positive, encouraging environment,” start-up owner **Marc DiMartino** excitedly says about his venture. “Spectators can enjoy watching exciting matches, usually on a big display visible from the comfort of their own table.”

DiMartino is a gamer who grew frustrated with the lack of appealing options for competitive play. Most events were paid entry, unorganized or held at dreary locations. He set out to create an authentic competitive esports experience that encourages healthy competition and a fun night out. As the vocalist

for long-running local punk band The Paraplegics, he has plenty of experience organizing and executing events.

DiMartino started with low-production but quality tournaments at Proclamation in Warwick and Pizza J in Providence as a hobby/side-gig. Gamers caught wind of the free, high-quality experiences and started checking out the events. Word spread, friends were made and participation continued to grow, leading DiMartino to reach out to other bar and brewery owners.

The G4A! community has rapidly grown to over 50 players each month. There are drop-ins and dedicated players that participate in the weekly events at Revival Foodworks and Brewery (Sundays) and Moniker Brewery (Tuesdays). The G4A!'s active social media accounts on Facebook and Instagram give participants updates, events and pictures from previous events. Their community Discord lets members chat, play each other online, pre-register for events and keep track of their standings.

Super Smash Bros Ultimate (SSBU) on Nintendo Switch is the game commonly used for tournaments and league play. DiMartino says that games are ultimately decided by the community and SSBU is the popular choice: It's simple to learn but presents opportunities to become skillful quickly because the controls are the same for each character.

"Our most valuable asset is by far our awesome community: a dedicated group of players and fans who turn out week after week to climb the ladder and increase their rank, as well as the many dedicated fans who enjoy exploring RI's diverse dining and brewery experiences with us and seeing who will end up on top of the rankings," DiMartino says when boasting about the GFA! community. "People who attend our events will enjoy the atmosphere and offerings of our dedicated venues and ... will get to know our established and welcoming community; no one leaves without making at least one new friend, if not way more."

To celebrate its one-year anniversary in June, G4A! is having an invitational tournament that will have a sizable cash prize. There will be qualifier tournaments during the months of April and May to determine which 16 players will earn spots.

"I have to admit that running esports tournaments is a lot of fun and is very gratifying," DiMartino says. "Building an outstanding and positive community is an experience unlike any other, and while I might not pocket as much money as I have working other jobs, nothing can match the satisfaction of seeing our community grow in number, and our members grow as individuals."

Learn more about Gaming for All on their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/G4AEvents>