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# Boyle County esports

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## Esports can help develop soft skills

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By Matt McCarty  
Staff writer

Boyle County sophomore Gabe Skelton used to compete on the school swim team. After he stopped doing that, he was looking for another extracurricular activity.

When he heard Kentucky was adding esports as a sanctioned sport, he and senior Kat Lark organized a petition to create a team.

“All the other sports really didn’t work for me so I kind of had to find another

route,” Skelton said. “Once this opportunity came up, I really tried to take hold of it.”

Skelton and Lark were two of 16 Boyle County students to compete in esports’ Season Zero. The team has grown to 27 members this spring. Of those, 11 compete in other sports.

“Students are always changing, their interests are always evolving to different things, branching off into other things, and it’s important for schools to really connect with their students in the ways the students really need them to connect to,” Skelton said.



Lark (pictured at left), who is also on the school’s bowling team, said esports provides

opportunities for students like her who would “probably be chilling at home playing video games” instead of sitting in the student section at a football game.

“It gives us a chance to come together and hang out with each other and actually feel comfortable in our own space,” she said. “Game-wise, it’s more strategic so it may not be physical, but it is mental on all of us. We’re strategizing and actually getting teamwork and learning all these skills we’re going to need to know in the future.

“We specifically work on teamwork and communication and listening with other people and then the actual game itself teaches us how to multi-task better and see things from a different point of view and different surroundings,” Lark added. “So, it may not help us with school work, but it helps you in those soft skills you’re going to need to know in real life.”

Sophomore Trey Gordon, who also competes in pole vault on the track team, said esports forces students to think critically and work others, two skills that will help in the classroom.

“If you’re learning about a game you’ve got to know every in and out of a character to know why they’re good or why they’re bad,” he said, noting that students have to communicate and strategize with their teammates during the game. “A lot of times the school will say, ‘You’ve got to do group presentations,’ so you can actually work with some of your partners and say, ‘All right, this is a good idea, but this is how we can improve it.’”

In addition to the skills they need in high school, the students say that esports may lead to opportunities after graduation.

“There’s really an untapped market for scholarships in esports because it’s becoming much more of a bigger competition as more and more schools hop on the bandwagon,” Skelton said.

**Related article:**

[Kentucky among first to offer esports](#)

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