



Fighting Game Community Guide

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What are Fighting Games?

Fighting Games are a competitive, mainly 1 on 1 video game genre, where two fighters or teams are pitted against each other. The genre boomed in the early 1990s with the release of Street Fighter II. After dropping off in popularity in the early 2000s, the genre is back in full force and on its way as an esports mainstay. Games like Street Fighter V, Tekken 7 and Guilty Gear Strive are leading this esports movement. What makes the genre unique is that all information is focused on one screen: The active characters, time limit, health bar, special gauges and other information related to the current status are shown to both players. Thus all information is easily visible for players and spectators. Now you may think „Isn't that boring? That way there are no surprises!“ And the answer is a resounding „No“. Players can surprise with their combos, a row of attacks that the other player cannot interrupt, with their movement and actions in the game and with their character choices. No match plays out the same. What it actually results in, is a fair competition between both player. They have the same information available and have the same choices to make during the match. It is a pure test of skill, where small differences can a match one-sided or turn the tides in clutch moments.



Picture from Hessen Crash VIII. © HardEdge.org

Which games currently played? Do you use PC or console?

There is a great variety of games, due to their different play style and visuals. The most popular series at the moment are Street Fighter V, Tekken 7, Dragon Ball FighterZ, Super Smash Brothers, King of Fighters, Guilty Gear and BlazBlue. Publishers keep pushing their games with world championships that include local qualifier tournaments, which results in events becoming increasingly professional but still keeping their "grassroots" atmosphere. Currently offline tournaments are played mainly on PlayStation 4, as it is easier to set up and the console is small compared to a regular PC. The main reason is that it prevents driver issues when attending players use converters or exotic controllers. These can result in inputs overlapping or the controller not being able to function without downloading a driver from the internet. Online tournaments on the other hand usually are played on PC because of easier communication and better online play.

In general you only need very little hardware for fighting games:

One input lag-free monitor, one console or PC, one pair of speakers. That's it.

“Grassroots”? What does that mean?

It pretty much means that events and players are authentic and events are organized in cooperation with the game’s community. Everyone attending, no matter how skilled or experienced, attends the events because they love the genre. The players are very supportive and love when new people and companies help the genre grow.



Picture from Hessen Crash XVII. © HardEdge.org

So what do tournaments look like?

Tournaments are open for everyone to join. No matter if the player is the best in the world or a complete beginner, they play in the same tournament bracket for their game. This is what makes Fighting Games such a unique genre and results in up to multiple thousands of players that participate in a single game’s tournament! Of course there are also invitational tournaments, but the standard is open registration tournaments. And as people know how the game works, even after dropping out of the tournament they keep watching and get excited about great decision-making, combos and comebacks.



Picture from Hessen Crash XI. © HardEdge.org

Where do all the players come from?

The Fighting Game community is not as huge as League of Legends, DotA2 or Counter Strike, so people travel a lot. If there is a big event in Germany, most players will be German, but the best players from other countries will attend as well. So in the end you will have an international tournament bracket with the best players from various countries in the later rounds of the bracket. Even smaller German events attract players from France, Austria, Czech Republic, the United Kingdom, Luxembourg and other countries! This means that tournaments will promote a brand or player in all of Europe!

That sounds great! Do you have any data and notable events? How is the reach?

In general Fighting Games are the biggest in the United States of America and Asia, mainly Japan, South Korea and China. European events are growing though and not only increase in attendant numbers, but also viewer numbers.

Here you have a list of notable events around the world with attendant numbers:

Event Name	Location	Participants	Peak Viewers
EVO Japan 2020	Chiba, Japan	6.032	70.315
Evolution 2019	Las Vegas, USA	9.230	227.002
CEO 2019	Daytona Beach, USA	3.468	83.676
Evolution 2018	Las Vegas, USA	11.000+	255.927
CEO 2018	Daytona Beach, USA	3.787	40.800
Evolution Japan 2018	Tokyo, Japan	4.918	99.500
VSFighting 2019	Birmingham, England	888	48.665
Brussels Challenge 2019	Evere, Belgium	580	4.505
Hessen Crash XVIII 2019	Frankfurt/Main, Germany	110	-/-
VSFighting 2018	Birmingham, England	700	36.248
Brussels Challenge 2018	Evere, Belgium	330	-/-
Button Czech 2018	Prague, Czech Rep.	111	-/-
Dreamolition Derby V 2018	Munich, Germany	108	-/-
FFM Rumble 2016	Frankfurt/Main, Germany	250	-/-

Participans taken from smash.gg; Peak Viewers taken from escharts.com

Of course the reach is much greater than just attendants and viewer numbers summed up. Even a smaller event can generate a five digit reach on social media. Bigger events that host tournaments for publishers' world championships, have a reach in the six digit range, plus media coverage and player social media posts. Thus the reach of Fighting Game events is much bigger than the numbers suggest!