



The club gained in popularity after only a few years on campus. Photo by Kyle Wills/The Jambar

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ESports, a rapidly growing competitive video game niche, made its way to Youngstown State University in 2019. It's no surprise YSU's Frost Penguins eSports club gained success since officially registering as a club sport.

The team was named the Youngstown State University Club Sport of the Year for 2019-2020. Justin Jones, junior information technology major and Frost Penguins president, said the award was an honor.

"It means a lot given we're brand new basically, or at least took off two years ago. Now that we're on campus, it means people are interested in our games and our eSports in general," he said. "At the end of the day, it feels good."

Frost Penguin is the largest club sport at YSU, with the total number of members of Frost Penguins currently just under 200. The club is looking to grow even larger.

"COVID is actually bad for a lot of people, but for us I feel like it'll boost us past 200, 250, maybe 300 [members], if we're lucky," Jones said. "I feel like we can really use this experience to gather up the people who can't compete in football or basketball or whoever has this interest."

The club normally hosts several tournaments throughout the year. One of their largest is a Super Smash Bros. tournament, but with COVID-19 restrictions limiting in-person gatherings the game requires, they're unable to hold the event this year. Instead, they're working around restrictions with online games that don't require players to compete in person.

"In the fall, our League of Legends preseason will kick off and that's one of our bigger events," he said. "Smash Bros. was our biggest on campus, but that can't happen right now because people can't meet in person."

Kaitlyn Cochenour, a freshman marketing major, serves as treasurer of the club. She said this is the perfect time for

people to join.

"ESports is actually really good for [social distancing]. It's actually the best club for it because most of it is online-based and most of the tournaments, competitions and practices are all online anyway," she said. "We continue to add games. Anyone who wants to add a new game to the system, we can. We continue to be competitive."

Though the club holds tournaments, there are opportunities for more casual players to get involved.

"A lot of people like competitive games, some people don't like competitive games and we have both of them," Jones said. "We actually had our own Minecraft server. We just have a ton of possibilities to get together with people and join and have fun."

To join Frost Penguins, visit frostpenguins.org or contact club sports for more information.