**NESC 2024: Asian Games athletes dominate DOTA 2 finals; advance to regional qualifiers for 16th World Esports Championships in Riyadh**

***CS-2 winners Gods Reign (Open) and Team CCL (Female) also qualify for regional qualifiers to be held in online and offline phases***

*eFootball champion Hemanth Kommu secures direct entry to global finals of WEC 2024*

**New Delhi, April 29, 2024:** India’s Asian Games 2022 athletes recorded a comprehensive victory in the final of the National Esports Championships (NESC) 2024 organized by Esports Federation of India (ESFI) to advance to the regional qualifiers for the 16th World Esports Championships (WEC), scheduled to take place in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Team Whoops, which included members that represented the nation at the Asian Games 2022 as well as won the bronze medal at the Commonwealth Esports Championships 2022, dominated the DOTA 2 competition which featured a total of seven teams.

The squad, led by captain Krish Gupta (Krish'-), along with Ketan Goyal (Evil-Ash), Manav Kunte (Mnz), Vishal Vernekar (HBK), Moin Ejaz (No\_Chanc3), and substitutes Darshan Bata (A35) and Dennis Shah (Donniz), were crowned champions after securing a commanding 46-8 win against Rogue Squad in the final.

With this win, Team Whoops has advanced to the regional qualifiers of DOTA 2 that are scheduled to take place online from June 26 to 30.

**Reflecting on their performance in the final, Team Whoops’ captain Krish Gupta expressed,** *“We are excited to represent Team India once again at the World Esports Championships. Special thanks to the team at ESFI for making this happen and thank you everyone for the support. We will make our country proud!”*

In addition to DOTA 2, NESC 2024 featured qualifiers for other titles such as Counter-Strike 2 (CS:2) across both open and female brackets, as well as eFootball.

The CS:2 Open category experienced intense competition amongst ten highly skilled teams such as Carnival Gaming, Marcos Gaming, and Grayfox. Ultimately, it was team Gods Reign led by skipper Bhavesh Sejwani (Bhavi) and consisting of Aakash Bose (Ph1NNN), Harsh Jain (f1redup), Rahul Banerjee (R2B2), Parijat Banerjee (reV3nnn), and Elvis Eric Soans (ELV1S), who emerged as the champions with a hard-fought 2-1 victory against True Rippers in the final.

Gods Reign, who became the first-ever Indian team to win the Southeast Asian Open Qualifier for the PGL Major Copenhagen 2024 earlier this year, will lock horns against other leading teams from Asia in the online regional qualifiers of CS:2 (Open) from July 1 to 4.

*“I am exhilarated to share that with sheer determination and teamwork we have become the championships of NESC 2024 CS2 and have earned the opportunity to represent India in the regional qualifiers of IESF WEC 2024! It's fantastic to see the team's efforts paying off, but we don't want to stop here. We will be using this opportunity to put Indian CS on the world map,”* **stated Bhavesh Sejwani, captain of Gods Reign.**

In the CS:2 Female category, Team CCL, featuring captain Swayambika Sachar (Sway), Dilraj Kaur Matharu (COCO), Aastha Nangia (Crackshot), Neha Sottany (Casper), Pragnya Spruha Sahoo, and Syeeda Tabassum defeated Team Purr-ple 3-1 in the final. The roster's star players, Sway, COCO, and Crackshot, were part of the team that won last year's NESC, making them the first female Counter-Strike athletes to represent India on the international stage.

Team CCL will be vying for a spot in the global finals of the WEC 2024 as they go head-to-head against other all-female CS:2 teams from the continent in the online regional qualifiers from July 3 to 6.

*“We are immensely proud to have emerged as champions at this year's NESC. This victory is not just a testament to our team's hard work and dedication, but also a crucial stepping stone as we advance our preparations for the WEC,”* **said Swayambika Sachar, captain of Team CCL.**

Similar to CS:2, the eFootball category witnessed high-voltage action amongst a total of 21 athletes including Charanjot Singh, who competed in EA Sports FC Online at the 19th Asian Games, and last year’s NESC champion Ibrahim Gulrez.

However, it was the veteran Hemanth Kommu (peshemak7) who claimed the title with a comfortable victory a 2-0 win against Abhishek Dhar (Abhishades) in the finale. Following this triumph, the IIT alumnus who also carried the national flag at the Global Esports Games 2023 in Riyadh last year, has sealed a direct spot in the global finals of the WEC.

*“Very happy and proud to win the national qualifier after losing it last year. It's good to see new players participating in the national qualifiers and doing well. It helps everyone in the community to grow. Now all focus is on the world championship. I will do my best to bring laurels to our country,”* **commented Hemanth Kommu.**

The WEC 2024, organized by the International Esports Federation (IESF), will feature 609 teams representing their countries across five gaming titles: Counter-Strike 2 (Open and Female), Dota 2, eFootball™, Mobile Legends: Bang Bang (Open and Female), and PUBG MOBILE. This premier tournament begins on November 11 and, for the first time, offers a substantial prize pool of $1 million, distributed among the top 8 teams in each game title and category.

The offline phase of the regional qualifiers for DOTA 2 and CS:2 (Open and female) will kick off on September 6.

*“Congratulations to all the champions of NESC 2024 on behalf of everyone at ESFI. I am confident that these skilled athletes will perform at the highest level and make the country proud on the international stage. We look forward to supporting our teams and ensuring they have the resources they need to excel at the regional finals,”* **noted Mr. Lokesh Suji, Director of Esports Federation of India & Vice President of the Asian Esports Federation (AESF).**

One of the country's top sports & Esports communication agencies, Artsmith-Concepts & Visions, will continue its support to the Esports Federation of India as their official communication partner.

The NESC 2024 witnessed a total participation of 135 athletes from all over the country.

**ENDS**

**About Esports Federation of India:**

The Esports Federation of India (ESFI) is a full member of the International Esports Federation (IESF), Global Esports Federation (GEF), and Asian Esports Federation (AESF). ESFI participated in Asian Games 2018, where Tirth Mehta got India’s first bronze in Esports (demonstration title), and in CWC 2022, where the Indian DOTA 2 team won the bronze medal.

ESFI sent the 15-member Indian contingent to participate in four titles – DOTA 2, League of Legends, Street Fighter V Champion Edition, and FIFA Online 4 for the Asian Games 2022 in Hangzhou where Esports made its debut as an official medal sport. The country’s League of Legends team achieved a historic fifth-placed finish at the prestigious tournament.

To promote, encourage, organize, educate, train, and control Esports in India and to provide facilities for training in Esports, build and sustain the Esports eco-system in India, not limiting to providing, conceptualizing, opening, managing, running, developing, facilitating, and promoting all areas of Esports and to provide all other possible and related forms of Esports.

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