

In 2018 the IOC and the Global Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF) hosted an Esports Forum in Lausanne. The purpose of this Summit was to build a joint understanding and platform for future engagement between various stakeholders of the Olympic Movement and the esports gaming industries and the esports community.

This article addresses the potential of esports at the Olympic Games by having a gender perspective. The research question is: *What gender dilemmas and challenges of equality does IOCs strategy for the inclusion of esports in the Olympics entail?* The article uses an explorative analytical approach based on two sources of data: 1) video recordings of the Esports Forum in 2018 and 2) press releases following the IOCs 8th Summit in 2019.

Discussions highlight how the IOC sees great potential for incorporating esports into the sports movements. However, the strategy only includes games simulating sports, and not games deemed “too violent”, thus excluding several popular esports games. Moreover, the IOC argues for increased technological development were the sports games needs to become physically more demanding. However, this creates a paradox. A unique aspect of having esports as a potential new Olympic branch is the possibility of having male and female esports athletes competing against each other on more equal terms for the same medals. Gender equity is one of IOCs basic sports political values, and a criterion for the admission of new sports. Concluding, the strategy implemented by IOC might delimit the potential for equality that esports games provide.