



CVAL NA 2023 Operations Partner RFP

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Introduction

Riot Games (“Riot”) is a U.S. corporation and a leading esports, gaming, and technology company. Riot Games owns and operates the world’s largest esport title *League of Legends*. Riot Games was founded in 2006 by Brandon Beck and Marc Merrill with the intent to change the way video games are made and supported for players. We are headquartered in Los Angeles, CA, and employ more than 2,500 people in 23 offices across the globe.

Riot Games, the creators of League of Legends Esports, launched VALORANT Esports in 2021 and it has quickly developed into one of the fastest growing games in the world. Since its launch, VCT NA has exploded to become the second most-watched esports league in North America (behind only the LCS). Viewership tripled from Stage 1 to Stage 3 in 2021 proving the sky’s the limit for the next great global Esport.

Riot Games is looking for multiple operations partners to broadcast and operate one or more regional NA College VALORANT competitions.

College VALORANT

Riot wants to create a world where gamers are proud to be who they are, where gaming is a meaningful life pursuit. We want VALORANT to be a global sport that lasts for generations. The [Riot Scholastic Association of America](#) (RSAA) is one way we’re bringing that vision to life, and College VALORANT esports is one of the many ways that we want to make VALORANT as core to a player’s college experience as any other college sports team or club.

RSAA Values

These values inform the way we think about our college esports efforts. This is a complete list - everything we do should filter back to one (or more) of these values.

Students First

Competitors will always be students first, competitors second. Our programs are meant to improve and accompany a full-time college education. Participating should not detract from a student’s education, and all participants should be on the road to a degree.

Long-Term League Stability

Universities are some of the oldest institutions in North America. Our programs should demonstrate long-term commitment to college VALORANT health and stability for Riot, schools, students, and fans.

Competitive Integrity

At the end of the competition, all should feel confident that the best college team in North America won the College Championship. All phases of competition should be determined by team skill first and foremost.

Diversity & Inclusion

College VALORANT will be a safe space for participants of all backgrounds, identities, and expressions. We seek to elevate good behavior, prevent disruptive behavior, and eliminate barriers to entry.

Process Summary

Pitch decks due	August 1
Follow-up questions delivered to qualifying applicants	August 8
Follow up questions answers due	August 11
Partners selected	Circa August 29

College VALORANT Season Structure

College VALORANT (CVAL) will be composed of three tournament-style regional competitions over the course of the 2022-23 school year, culminating in a College VALORANT Championship event between the top teams in each region. Partners may be selected to run one or more competitions in one or more regions. Regional tournaments will be held concurrently, such that there is a unified tournament schedule that is consistent for all participating teams.

Regional competitions are based around VALORANT game servers. Teams may choose to enter one region at a time, regardless of their physical location.

Region	Primary Game Server	Time Zone
North	US Central (Illinois)	Central
East	US East (N. Virginia)	Eastern
South	US Central (Texas)	Central
West	US West (N. California)	Pacific

Riot may additionally choose a partner for the online phase of the CVAL Championship. Those details are TBD, but it will be structurally similar to the regional playoff brackets.

Riot will provide the competitive schedule, format, and all competitive structure to the provider. The provider will be responsible to execute the competition, uphold and enforce rules, and provide a streamed broadcast for at least the two final matches of each tournament.

Tournament Structure

- Phase 1 - Group Stage
 - 2 weeks in length
 - Round robin group stage
 - Best of 3 matches
 - 4 teams per group, max 32 groups (max 128 participants)
 - Teams seeded by player ranks, which organizer will access via the Riot API
 - The winning team from each group advance
- Phase 2 - Mixed elimination
 - 4 weeks in length
 - Top 32 teams seeded by group number in elimination bracket
 - Best of 3 matches
 - Two rounds of single elimination (Rounds of 32 & 16)

- Double elimination starting at top 8
- No bracket reset for finals

Event Dates

All dates are subject to change at the sole discretion of Riot Games

- Fall Tournament
 - Registration: 9/9 - 10/7
 - Round Robin: 10/24 - 11/6
 - Single Elimination: 11/12 - 11/13
 - Double Elimination: 11/19 - 12/12
 - *No matches to be scheduled over Thanksgiving weekend*
- Winter Tournament
 - Registration: 11/28 - 1/6
 - Round Robin: 1/16 - 1/29
 - Single Elimination: 2/4 - 2/5
 - Double Elimination: 2/11 - 2/26
- Spring Tournament
 - Registration: 1/23 - 2/27
 - Round Robin: 3/13 - 3/26
 - Single Elimination: 4/1 - 4/2
 - Double Elimination: 4/15 - 4/30
 - *No matches to be scheduled over Easter weekend*
- CVAL Championship Online Rounds
 - Single Elimination: 5/6 - 5/7
 - Double Elimination: 5/13 - 5/21

Partner Role & Responsibilities

- Tournament Operations
 - Facilitating play of all matches, including scheduling, lobby creation, and live support
 - Understanding and applying the league rules, with consultation from Riot as needed
 - Tracking and publishing game, team, and player statistics
 - Logging roster history for all teams over the course of the competition
 - Distributing and collecting release forms and demographic surveys to all participants
 - Gathering and securely storing personal and academic information of all rostered players

- Staffing on-call tournament administrators and match referees during competition times
- Tournament Platform

Riot will have a central platform partner to serve as the single source of truth for the season. A partner may choose to use their own platform, but will be responsible to share tournament information with the central platform partner to ensure all information on the central platform is correct and up-to-date.

- Posting all match schedules, tournament brackets, participant lists, past results, and team rosters
- Match chat functionality to allow for competitors to directly communicate
- Integrated rescheduling between match opponents (participants can agree on a rescheduled match time and have it automatically reflected on the online schedule)
- Mid-competition roster management (add/drop players, change team managers)
- Team and player registration
- Integration with Riot API to automatically verify player accounts and ranks
- Updating and sharing results with Riot's central platform partner
- Communication
 - Regular check-ins with Riot to ask and answer questions, report on common issues, and share the overall status of the league
 - Regular communication with third party CVAL web hub provider to share all relevant competition data after each round
 - Active monitoring of the partner's respective tournament channels in the central CVAL Discord community to respond to participant questions and feedback
- Live broadcast of Loser's Finals and Winner's Finals matches
 - Additional broadcast coverage is welcome, but not required and will not be incorporated into cost

Riot-Provided Support

- Images / Graphics
 - Tournament logos
 - Broadcast graphics packages
 - Any required sponsor assets
- Social / Marketing Promotion
 - Announcement of partnership on Riot platforms
 - Article on Riot Games website
 - Dedicated Riot point of contact for support
- Operations
 - League Operations on call for assistance with rulings and messaging
 - Tournament and season rules
 - Anti-cheat checks

Broadcast Product Expectations

Riot reserves the right to approve any and all broadcast elements, including broadcast platform or channel, on-air talent, and assets.

- Broadcast-specific deliverables including writing up descriptions, thumbnails and chat commands
- The produced content shall also be recorded and be made available as video-on-demand on Riot channels no later than 24 hours after the live broadcast.
- Broadcast channels must be chat moderated by the partner during the broadcasts.
- Minimum broadcast product expectations include:
 - At least two on-air talents casting the matches are required for broadcast including an analyst
 - Preference is 1 host and 2 analysts
 - Every broadcast segment must contain digital assets to inform viewers about the current match, the players, teams, current standings and allow for advertising brand placement
 - At least one experienced tactical FPS observer needs to control the VALORANT in-game camera
 - Overdelivery on the minimum viable broadcast product is welcome but not required
 - Countdown clock starts minimum 30 minutes before the start of the show content
 - Implementing a broadcast delay may be required, and it is the responsibility of the broadcast partner to implement before the feed is sent to streaming platforms
- Partners are not obligated to have Teams and Players at the same physical location, such as a studio or other LAN environment, for any of the products available for pitching in this RFP.
- Broadcasts and VODs must not be behind any kind of paywall for any of the products available for pitching in this RFP.

Business Development Guidelines

- Presenting Partner Rights & Category Exclusivity
 - Presenting partner category will be exclusive to Riot for all events
 - Riot will be the exclusive partner rights holder for the Season. Riot may unlock specific categories and will work with the TO on a defined timeline for those category blocks, but Riot does retain approval rights on any TO partner.
- Content from previous events may be used by future broadcasters to assist with storytelling
 - Later broadcasters should make an effort to include all partner markings from previous broadcasts when referencing this footage

- Future usage of footage and/or qualifier callouts should not be an element of sales to partners, as such references cannot be guaranteed
- Partners in the following categories are restricted:
 - Any video game, video game console, or video game developer or publisher
 - Prescription or non-“over-the-counter” drugs
 - Firearms, handguns, ammunition, or peripherals
 - Pornography or pornographic products
 - Tobacco, tobacco products, or paraphernalia
 - Alcohol products (including non-alcoholic beverages marketed by alcohol companies) or other intoxicants the sale or use of which is regulated by applicable law
 - Government or Federal Agencies (including armed services, military, etc)
 - Sellers or marketplaces of virtual items known to be counterfeit or illegal sellers thereof, or who are otherwise in breach of the VALORANT Game Terms of Use
 - Businesses engaged in gambling, wagering, bookmaking, or sports or esports betting, including fantasy sports or esports
 - Political campaigns or political action committees
 - Charities that endorse particular religious or political positions, or are not reputable (by way of example, Red Cross, Stand-Up to Cancer and other similar mainstream charities would be considered reputable)
 - Cryptocurrencies or cryptocurrency exchanges

Technical Specifications Across All Broadcast Products

Broadcast partner shall ensure that all broadcasts, or re-broadcasts, of VALORANT esports gameplay conducted by such ecosystem partner meets the following quality bars for every language stream:

- Minimum Video Requirements
 - Broadcast Codec: H.264 Main Profile
 - Frame Rate & Resolution: 1080p & 50/60 FPS required
 - Bitrate min: 6000 kbps
 - Must have 360p, 480p and 720p transcodes available for viewers
 - Platform transcoding enabled by default
 - Provider must meet platform requirements to enable transcoding
- Minimum Audio Requirements
 - Bitrate: 128 kbps
 - Codec: AAC-LC
 - Format: Stereo 48kHz
- Network
 - Stable high speed network connection with adequate bandwidth to accommodate all streams without compromise

- Redundant network connection
- Utility Outage Resiliency
 - (UPS) Battery Backup for all transmission hardware, including network devices
- Ability to manage, and to create if necessary, broadcast graphics to cover any graphics requirements not provided by Riot
- Where specified in the above sections, equipment to play out video assets and replays.
- Equipment to run live, on-air graphics, including but not limited to:
 - Agent select overlay
 - Complete in-game overlay
 - Commercial Break
 - Lower-thirds for talents, teams, players, guests, etc.
 - Graphics needed for sponsor integration
- Makeup required for all onsite on-air talent
- Professional and respectful conduct towards participating team, players, Riot Games, organizations and advertising ecosystem partners
- Where studios are in use, studio design should incorporate VAL branding and predefined requirements for including ecosystem partner and Riot logos, potentially also high-level sponsor integration.

Proposal Requirements

The Proposal needs to include at least:

- Company management summary, including company representatives authorized to enter into binding contracts, including signing the Proposal
 - Description of the project team, including key contact persons (names, positions)
- Proposed staff list for most of the competition and broadcast outcomes. If possible, indicative examples of previous events/shows as well as proposal of the staff participating, per position/role
- How do you plan to market the events to drive engagement and increasing participation?
 - Please list your capabilities suitable for events marketing, such as on-air talent promotion, press releases
- Experience in live event organization and operation, content production and broadcasting industries, including any relevant esports experience
- Information regarding any potential conflict of interest in entering into an agreement with Riot, for e.g., working for other esports properties at the same time as required for provision of Services
- How will the user-journey of participating players and teams look like? Please describe your platform / website / app solution that players and teams will use
 - Where do they register?
 - How do they know who to play against?

- How are they able to get in touch with the tournament admins?
 - Any additional features offered
- Which regions or time slots you prefer to operate, and why
- Any additional information, concepts or other documents that potential ecosystem partners consider relevant

Selection Process

Riot will review all proposals internally. Riot may request additional information, declarations, or explanations individually with each potential partner at any time during the process. Riot may invite potential ecosystem partners for a further discussion and presentation to the Riot team.

Proposals will be initially evaluated on the basis of a number of factors, including without limitation:

- Overall Proposal suitability: proposed solution(s) must meet the scope and needs included herein and be presented in a clear and organized manner
- Solid understanding of context, vision and challenges
- Organizational experience
- Project team
- On-air talent and community engagement
- Technical capabilities and experience

Contact Information

Please direct all correspondence about this project to Matt Nausha <mnausha@riotgames.com>, J.T. Vandebree <jvandenbree@riotgames.com>, and John Gallagher <john.gallagher@riotgames.com>.