Overwatch League™ Set to Kick Off 2019 Season with Eight New Teams from Asia, Europe, and North America

February 14, 2019

The 2019 season gets underway on Feb. 14 with a full slate of games, including a Grand Finals rematch between the Philadelphia Fusion and the defending champion London Spitfire

New broadcast partners and enhanced viewing technology via the Overwatch League Twitch All-Access Pass and multi-view Command Center will elevate the fan viewing experience

IRVINE, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Feb. 14, 2019-- The Overwatch League™ returns to action today for the official start of the 2019 season. This season, 20 teams will compete for the league championship and a share of the US $5 million prize pool. The world's first major global esports league with city-based teams will be even more fan-friendly, with more ways to watch via enhanced viewing technology through the Twitch All-Access Pass program, expanded broadcast and digital distribution, and a brand-new online shop loaded with team and player merchandise.

"We've added eight new teams and nearly 100 new players to the Overwatch League, and we're really excited to see the influx of new talent and to see how teams approach the daunting task of winning the league championship," said Nate Nanzer, Overwatch League commissioner. "Look for the quality of play to rise as the league continues to get even more competitive. The talents of our extraordinary players are going to be on display for the world to see. Come watch with the best of us!"

The opening week of matches will feature all 20 teams in action and will include a rematch of the 2018 Grand Finals showdown between the Philadelphia Fusion and defending champion London Spitfire, as well as the debuts of all eight new Overwatch League teams. The full slate of matches includes:

Thursday, Feb. 14

- Philadelphia Fusion vs. London Spitfire, 4 p.m. PST
- New York Excelsior vs. Boston Uprising, 5:30 p.m. PST
- Seoul Dynasty vs. Los Angeles Gladiators, 7 p.m. PST
- Shanghai Dragons vs. Hangzhou Spark, 8:30 p.m. PST

Friday, Feb. 15

- Toronto Defiant vs. Houston Outlaws, 4 p.m. PST
- Atlanta Reign vs. Florida Mayhem, 5:30 p.m. PST
- Dallas Fuel vs. San Francisco Shock, 7 p.m. PST
- Chengdu Hunters vs. Guangzhou Charge, 8:30 p.m. PST

Saturday, Feb. 16

- London Spitfire vs. Paris Eternal, 12 p.m. PST
- Washington Justice vs. New York Excelsior, 1:30 p.m. PST
- Los Angeles Valiant vs. Hangzhou Spark, 3 p.m. PST
- Vancouver Titans vs. Shanghai Dragons, 4:30 p.m. PST

Sunday, Feb. 17

- Houston Outlaws vs. Boston Uprising, 12 p.m. PST
- Philadelphia Fusion vs. Atlanta Reign, 1:30 p.m. PST
- San Francisco Shock vs. Los Angeles Gladiators, 3 p.m. PST
- Seoul Dynasty vs. Dallas Fuel, 4:30 p.m. PST

Fans will be able to watch Overwatch League matches in a number of ways and in additional locations for 2019. Linear and digital broadcast platforms

include:

- **Overwatch League**: All matches will be available on overwatchleague.com and the Overwatch League app, MLG.com and the MLG app (excluding matches on Saturday, Sunday, and other days which are exclusive to Twitch), Blizzard Battle.net, and Overwatch game-client viewers.
- **Twitch**: All 2019 Overwatch League matches will be available on Twitch platforms, including Twitch.tv, the Twitch mobile app, and Twitch apps on game consoles and TV devices. Working together with Twitch, the Overwatch League just launched a new and improved All-Access Pass membership. This year, All-Access passholders can customize their match-viewing experience with the multi-view Command Center, represent their favorite players with gear and skins, and engage more directly with Overwatch League players and the fan community.
- **Twitter**: Will host livestreaming of daily Watchpoint shows immediately before and after the match schedule on match days, as well as a selection of Overwatch League clips from live matches.
- **China**: All matches will be available on overwatchleague.cn and the Overwatch League app. Zhanqi.tv, NetEase CC, Bilibili, and Huya and will air matches on their respective branded platforms.
- **France**: Mediawan will show league highlights on the Mangas Network.
- **Germany**: Sport1 will air live matches on Esports1 and league highlights on Sport1.
- **North America**: All 2019 regular-season Overwatch League matches will be available to watch on the ESPN app. Three matches per week will air on Disney XD: the final match of each Thursday, which begins at 8:30 p.m. PST, as well as the first two matches each Sunday, which begin at noon and 1:30 p.m. PST. Select matches also will air on ABC and ESPN2. The Stage 1 and 2 Playoffs and the All-Star Game will air on ABC. ESPN2 will carry the Stage 3 Finals.

"We set a new bar last season in standing up the first major global city-based esports league," said Pete Vlastelica, president and CEO of Activision Blizzard Esports Leagues. "This season, we're going to raise the bar again with a focus on fan affinity, making it even easier for the Overwatch League community to watch how they want and where they want."

The majority of Overwatch League matches will be played at Blizzard Arena Los Angeles this season, but during the regular season, the league will be on the road for the 2019 Homestand Weekends. Homestand Weekend events, where home teams will officially host the matches, are scheduled for Dallas, Atlanta, and Los Angeles as follows:

- **April 27–28**: The Dallas Fuel will host the Chengdu Hunters, Hangzhou Spark, Houston Outlaws, London Spitfire, Los Angeles Valiant, Paris Eternal, and Seoul Dynasty at the Allen Event Center in Allen, Texas.
- **July 6–7**: The Atlanta Reign will host the Florida Mayhem, Guangzhou Charge, New York Excelsior, Philadelphia Fusion, Shanghai Dragons, Toronto Defiant, and Washington Justice.
- **August 24–25**: The Los Angeles Valiant will host the Atlanta Reign, Boston Uprising, Dallas Fuel, Hangzhou Spark, Los Angeles Gladiators, New York Excelsior, San Francisco Shock, Shanghai Dragons, and Vancouver Titans at The Novo by Microsoft at L.A. Live in Los Angeles, Calif.

The prize pool for the 2019 season is now $5 million—up from $3.5 million in 2018—and will be allocated to teams based on playoff success:

- **The Stage Playoffs** will be held for Stage 1, 2, and 3. Eight teams will qualify, including the two division leaders in that stage, along with the next six teams in the stage standings regardless of division. The Stage Playoffs prize pool includes $200K for the winner, $100K for the runner-up, $50K each for the third- and fourth-place teams, and $25K each for fifth through eighth place.
- **The Season Playoffs** will feature an expanded field in 2019. For the postseason, the two division winners along with the next best four teams by record, regardless of division, will automatically qualify. Two additional teams will qualify through a play-in tournament between the seventh- through 12th-place teams. Those final eight teams will compete for the league championship in a double-elimination bracket. The Season Playoffs prize pool includes $1.1M for the league champion, $600K for the runner-up, $450K for third place, $350K for fourth place, $300K each for the fifth- and sixth-place teams, and $200K each for the seventh- and eighth-place teams.

Additional details for the 2019 season include:

- **All-Stars**: The 2019 Overwatch League All-Star event will be held between Stages 2 and 3, a change from the 2018 season when the event concluded the season.
- **Overwatch League Shop**: Fans will have upgraded shopping options this season by virtue of the league's new licensing deal with Fanatics. The recently relaunched Overwatch League shop—shop.overwatchleague.com —is loaded with official jerseys, T-shirts, pants, hats, signed merchandise, and other team-specific collectibles.

- **State Farm**®: Last week the Overwatch League revealed its top-level 2019 brand sponsors, including Coca-Cola, Toyota, HP, Intel, and T-Mobile. Today, we're announcing State Farm as the official North American insurance provider of the Overwatch League as part of a multi-year sponsorship.

Additional details—including dates, locations, and broadcast availability—about Homestand Weekends, All-Stars, Season Playoffs, and the Grand Finals will be announced at a later date.

About the Overwatch League™

The Overwatch League™ is the first major global professional esports league with city-based teams across Asia, Europe, and North America. Overwatch® was created by globally acclaimed publisher Blizzard Entertainment (a division of Activision Blizzard—NASDAQ: ATVI), whose iconic franchises have helped lay the foundations and push the boundaries of professional esports over the last 15 years. The latest addition to Blizzard's stable of twenty-two #1 games,[1] Overwatch was built from the ground up for online competition, with memorable characters and fast-paced action designed for the most engaging gameplay and spectator experiences. To learn more about the Overwatch League, visit www.overwatchleague.com.

About Blizzard Entertainment, Inc.

Best known for blockbuster hits including World of Warcraft®, Hearthstone®, Overwatch®, the Warcraft®, StarCraft®, and Diablo® franchises, and the multi-franchise Heroes of the Storm®, Blizzard Entertainment, Inc. (https://www.blizzard.com), a division of Activision Blizzard (NASDAQ: ATVI), is a premier developer and publisher of entertainment software renowned for creating some of the industry's most critically acclaimed games. Blizzard Entertainment's track record includes twenty-two #1 games* and multiple Game of the Year awards. The company's online gaming service, Blizzard Battle.net®, is one of the largest online-gaming services in the world, with millions of active players.

*Sales and/or downloads, based on internal company records and reports from key distribution partners.

About Activision Blizzard Esports Leagues

Activision Blizzard Esports Leagues (ABEL) is responsible for the development and operation of premier Activision Blizzard professional gaming properties including the Overwatch League™ and the Call of Duty® World League, as well as the commercialization of the entire Blizzard Esports portfolio. Launched in 2017, the Overwatch League is the world's first major global esports league with city-based teams, with 20 teams across Asia, Europe, and North America. In 2019, the Call of Duty World League Presented by PlayStation®4 will deliver five vs. five team play featuring Call of Duty®: Black Ops 4. It is ABEL's vision to be the most innovative, scalable, and valuable developer of global competitive entertainment.

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[1] Sales and/or downloads, based on internal company records and reports from key distribution partners.

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