

# **OCU Overwatch 2 National Championship: SUCCESS Built on Community and Inclusivity**

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Main tank, counter dive, death ball, hit-scan, and full hold. These terms may appear to be nonsensical jargon for someone who does not play Overwatch 2 or has never won an Esports national championship. This verbiage for the Oklahoma City University Esports team is the common tongue, as the Stars took home last year's national championship in Overwatch 2.

In the spring season of 2024, the OCU esports team won its second national championship since 2022.

OCU competes in the National Esports Collegiate Championships, or NECC. In the Midwest Division of the NECC, OCU faces multiple NCAA Division I schools, including Oklahoma University and Texas Tech.

Josie Wells, a member of the OCU Esports team, recalled what it felt like to win a national championship.

“Winning a National Championship felt amazing, to say the least!” Wells added, “We had a lot of odds stacked against us when it came to the other teams we went against.”

So, how does a university level up to the point of winning multiple national championships in a three-year window? For starters, it begins with a leader.

The Stars are led by Head Coach Connor Knudsen, who was hired in 2022 to help launch the Esports program into successful stardom. The coach's message to his team is that they are more than an Esports roster. They are an inclusive, respectful, and safe community for their teammates and all who enter the Starcade.

When speaking to *The Campus* recently, coach Knudsen expounded on the essential foundational blocks he uses to build his program.

“Esports, for me, has always been a place where barriers can be broken down, and there can be something for everyone.”

Unfortunately, on the other hand, toxicity can arise from enmity or hostility in the online gaming sphere. Knudsen commented on the importance of combating that specific trope of negativity– “I think we have to fight against that actively. Because if we don’t, it will find a way to creep into the program.”

Helping strengthen the bond of family and positive impact fostered by the OCU Esports team is the intermeshing of their community with the Oklahoma City community.

The Stars partner very closely with SISU Youth Services, a local non-profit organization that focuses on helping youth in the area who are either unhoused or facing extremely adverse life circumstances.

Coach Knudsen added, “It’s important for me to work with SISU here because I want our students to understand the privilege in their situation and always to be mindful of it.”

Once per semester, the OCU Esports team hosts and organizes a drive to collect items of need for SISU, which they will then put into the hands and lives of the children they serve.

Not only does Knudsen help collect necessary items for the organization, but prioritizes being the fun partner who helps bring light and joy to the youth involved with SISU. On the table in his office, Coach Knudsen had multiple Nintendo Switch consoles, games, and accessories that were being donated to the new gaming room at SISU.

The upcoming horizon for Knudsen’s team is a bright one. Moving forward, the process is one of refinement and

maintenance rather than overhauling. With sturdy foundational pillars in place, the OCU Esports team will be looking to remain competitive.

Passion, growth, community, honor, and fun are the five pillars that have brought OCU Esports to a championship level of excellence.

Preseason action begins on Sep. 11, the first step in the team's journey to another championship in 2024-25. The regular season begins the following week. The Stars' path of excellence will be captured on their Instagram, [@ocuesports](#).