PRESS RELEASE

King Edward VI crowned Regional Champions in first student esports tournament

8 March 2018 Having battled it out at the regional qualifiers yesterday, King Edward VI School came out on top in Staffordshire. Now the team prepares to compete in the Grand Final of the Digital Schoolhouse Esports Tournament, which is both a competitive gaming and careers education event taking place during the London Games Festival.

Students from King Edward VI, based Stratford-upon-Avon, joined four other teams from schools across the UK in Staffordshire, using Blizzard's popular game, Overwatch, to compete for the coveted prize of Regional Champion. It was a close call between them and students from Walsall's Shire Oak School, but ultimately it was King Edward VI's Team KES: Battle Bards that was victorious.

Hosted by Staffordshire University, which recently announced the launch of the UK's first esports degree, the event was also a chance for students to take in the university's facilities and equipment available.

Students Patrick (Year 12, team captain), Cameron (Year 12), Sam (Year 11), Reuben (Year 9) and James (Year 12, shoutcaster) were thrilled with their team's excellent result.

James (Year 12) said: "Competing at the regional qualifiers has been an exhilarating experience. It's far more challenging and tense than I was expecting but it was really exciting to chat to pro gamers and casters, too. They gave great advice and their inspirational team talks and speeches gave us inspiration to keep going.

"I think I can speak for them team when I say that we are really proud to be heading to London for the Grand Final – but that we're going to need to practice more!"

This event ran in parallel to three other regional qualifiers that took place this week across the country, and KES: Battle Bards now joins the winners from each to battle it out head-to-head at the Grand Final, taking place at Gfinity's London arena, 11 April 2018.

Organised by Digital Schoolhouse, the education programme run by the games industry trade body, Ukie, and powered by PlayStation, the tournament will allow students from King Edward VI to meet professionals in a variety of roles within the sector, promoting the importance of computing skills and the wealth of careers available in games.

With powerful sponsors behind the initiative and this event in particular, students and spectators will be given the chance to hear from PlayStation, SEGA, Blizzard, ESL Esports, Warwickshire County Council, XMA-Viglen and Creative Assembly, about why they are getting involved.

Richard Barfoot, the Digital Schoolhouse lead at King Edward VI said: "All organising of the tournament was conducted by Year 12 and 13s. We also had over 50 participants trialled overall, making this the most competitive school sports team! Overwatch proved to be a popular game with all competitors and James did a great job of commentating on the competition as shoutcaster.

"We've worked really hard during the regional qualifiers heats – hopefully Team KES: Battle Bards will be bringing the trophy home from the Grand Final too!"

Shahneila Saeed, programme director for Digital Schoolhouse, said: "King Edward VI has been a Digital Schoolhouse since September 2017, so this will be its first year entering the tournament. KES: Battle Bards has done well to get to the top of the regional qualifiers in Staffordshire, but there's more stiff competition to come at the Grand Final in London!

"It'll be a great chance for students to network, improve their teambuilding and problem-solving skills and learn more about the many careers available within the games industry. And we have some great sponsors behind us to share their expert knowledge!"

To register interest in becoming a Digital Schoolhouse, please complete the application: https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/6CBPBR7

For more information about the next esports Tournament, visit www.digitalschoolhouse.org.uk

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