Counter-Strike pros agree to safety protocols so they can return to LAN competition

Counter-Strike players could be returning to in-person competition soon thanks to a new agreement on safety protocols. The *Counter-Strike* Professional Players' Association announced a new series of protocols, created in conjunction with two major tournament organizers – the ESL and DreamHack – that could see players return to LAN tournaments early this year.

"The players are eager to play LAN events again, but only if it can be done in a safe and responsible manner based on clear protocols approved by the players," Mads Øland, CEO of the CSPPA, said in a statement. "With this protocol now in place, we move one step closer towards returning to LAN."

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According to the announcement, the protocols were created in part after observing how player unions in the NBA, NFL, and elsewhere adapted to competing amid the pandemic. The announcement includes what appears to be a fairly straightforward list of rules on testing, travel, creating controlled environments, and ensuring plans are in place in case players do test positive for COVID. The CSPPA also says that these protocols will be updated "on an ongoing basis" as the situation changes and depending on the country in which the event takes place.

Last year, most esports leagues – including those for *League of Legends*, *Call of Duty*, and *Overwatch* – quickly shifted from in-person events to online competitions. *Counter-Strike* is one

of the first to outline safety protocols for a return to LAN events, in large part because few other esports have player-driven associations to look out for their best interests.

In a separate announcement, the ESL said that it plans to host the majority of its *CS:GO* events in controlled studio environments without an audience present. “Our expected return to regular live events with audiences is slated for November, however the general guidance may change depending on how local and global guidelines change throughout the year,” the organization says. The first major ESL competition of the year will be IEM Katowice, which will be held online starting February 16th.

Elsewhere in esports, *League of Legends* competitions across the world are already underway, while the *Call of Duty* League plans to kick off next month, and the *Overwatch* League is due to begin in April. Epic also recently unveiled its plans for competitive *Fortnite* this year, including a prize pool of $20 million.

https://www.theverge.com/2021/1/21/22242331/counter-strike-csgo-pros-lan-tournaments-covid-safety