

# EA says FIFA mode with loot boxes is the 'cornerstone' of the franchise in leaked documents



Electronic Arts wants to push *FIFA* players to the *FIFA* Ultimate Team (FUT) mode, which lets people spend real-world money and in-game currency to buy loot boxes with virtual athletes, according to documents obtained by *CBC News*. Loot boxes, which typically offer random collections of virtual goods with the tantalizing (and often very small) chance of winning something that could give you an advantage in a game, can bring in piles of money for studios but have come under criticism for being linked to gambling.

You can read two of the documents *CBC News* had access to right here, which appear to be taken from an internal EA presentation. In one, EA says that “FUT is the cornerstone and we are doing everything we can to drive players there.” In another, one section, headlined “All roads lead to FUT,” says that teasers and targeted messaging will “drive excitement &

funnel players toward FUT from other modes.”

A separate document apparently referred to FIFA’s in-game currency as “grind currency,” according to *CBC News*. The publication says that the information was shared by a “gaming insider.”

Here was EA’s response to *CBC News* about the 54-page document – the studio says that the documents are being viewed without context:

*An EA spokesperson declined an interview request and wouldn’t comment on the document, which, he noted, was “marked privileged and confidential,” other than to say it is being “viewed without context” and that interpretations of what it says “are misinformed.” When asked to clarify, he did not respond.*

*“All EA games can be played without spending on in-game items, and the majority of players do not spend,” Charlie Fortescue said in a statement.*

And regarding the term “grind currency,” an EA spokesperson told *CBC News* that “‘grind currency’ is not a term we typically use.”

Loot boxes have been scrutinized for their links to gambling for years, and many publishers have shifted how they sell in-game items in response to criticisms. Epic Games removed blind draw loot boxes in *Fortnite*’s “Save the World” mode in 2019 and now allows players to see what’s inside them before purchase. Bungie removed paid loot boxes from *Destiny 2* in 2020. And EA removed in-game purchases from *Star Wars Battlefront 2* just hours before the game’s release in 2017, which would have let people buy a special currency that could be used to purchase loot boxes.

Months after the *Battlefront 2* controversy, EA’s former chief

design officer, Patrick Söderlund, vowed that EA would learn from mistakes and “be better.” But it seems that *FIFA*’s loot boxes in FUT have been valuable enough to EA that the studio will continue to push players toward the mode.

EA has not responded to a request for comment. If you know more about EA or other companies’ plans for loot boxes that you want to share with us, please send us a tip.

<https://www.theverge.com/2021/4/26/22403842/ea-documents-loot-boxes-fifa-cornerstone-cbc-news>