

Twitch's new Squad Stream feature will let four creators go live in the same screen

Twitch today announced a new feature designed to help creators boost the profile of smaller streamers on the platform and to better collaborate with one another. The feature, called Squad Streams, will let up to four Twitch streamers go live simultaneously in one window, making it easier for viewers to watch the action from four different angles and giving bigger channels the opportunity not just to host smaller creators, but to share their screen with the audience, too.

The Squad Stream builds on existing discoverability features, like raiding and hosting, that have let large creators spotlight others by either sending a wave of viewers directly to their channel of choice or by directly mirroring someone else's stream so that it gets broadcasted to a larger follower and subscriber base. Twitch says the focus is to let "streamers actively team up with other creators to benefit everyone in a channel," according to Hubert Thieblot, Twitch's vice president of creator experience, who penned a Medium post on the new feature.

"Creators can join forces right from the dashboard, stream content they wouldn't normally stream, and grow their communities all at the same time," Thieblot adds. "Viewers get more angles on the action, a way to support more of their favorite streamers with ease, and a chance to chat with several great communities at once – or join a new one."

Twitch wants to make it easier for big channels to feature smaller creators

Twitch is advertising the feature as useful for everything

from tabletop streams to speedrunning sessions. But it's going to be most useful to the more mainstream sections of the Twitch audience that watch team-based battle arena and battle royale games like *Fortnite*, *Apex Legends*, and *League of Legends*.

Twitch isn't shying away from those clear use cases. In a series of promotional streams designed to show off the new feature, the company has enlisted popular streamers like former *CS:GO* pro Michael "Shroud" Grzesiek and Imane "Pokimane" Anys to illustrate how well it works for *Apex* and *League*, respectively. (Twitch is also highlighting more quirky streams involving "tarot card readings" and more casual gaming fare, like *The Sims 4* and *Sea of Thieves*.)

Image: Twitch

Yet it's clear Twitch doesn't want this to be just a feature for the top creators who play competitive shooters and titles with large e-sports fan bases, as it's also designed to help boost smaller creators with more niche interests. That said, it's going to take a little bit of time for Squad Streams to roll out to those types of creators. Twitch says it's starting the roll out with Partners, its top-tier creator platform, with Twitch Affiliates to follow.

That's mostly a logistical and technical issue, the company says. Because Squad Streams feature four windowed streams simultaneously, the company needs to adjust the video quality of various streams on the fly, a transcoding feature only available to Twitch Partners at the moment. "Most streamers stream in 720p or above, so without video quality options, the squad viewing experience can be taxing since it would display up to four 720p+ streams at once," Thieblot writes. "Our plan is to make Squad Stream available to Affiliates and all other streamers as we continue expanding our transcodes capacity."

<https://www.theverge.com/2019/3/27/18284560/twitch-squad-stream-discoverability-streamers-creators-go-live-together>