

## Wales. Golf. Madrid. Esports. In that order? Gareth Bale Sets Up a New Esports Team

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Last year, Sports Shorts reported on the [opportunities for football clubs](#) looking to get involved in the world of esports. Recent news indicates that other footballing stakeholders are also alive to these opportunities; earlier this month Real Madrid and Wales star [Gareth Bale launched a new esports team called 'Ellevens Esports'](#). Bale co-founded the new venture with 38 Entertainment, a specialist esports and entertainment company.

Ellevens' first competitive action came at the FIFA eClub World Cup, where the organisation entered a three-person team. It was a promising debut, with [Ellevens coming second](#) in the tournament, suggesting there is more to come from them in future FIFA events.

Bale's involvement, and the riff on his shirt number which gives Ellevens its name, might suggest that this organisation is focused purely on football video games. That is an impression which Larry Cohen and Jonathan Kark (co-founders of 38 Entertainment) are keen to dispel. Cohen and Kark have [ambitions](#) to be "*one of the most competitive sides in the esports industry*" with the intention of expanding into other titles, such as Counter-Strike: Global Offensive and Rocket League, in the future. Diversification is a sensible strategy for esports teams. Not all esports fans are followers of traditional sports and so branching out into non-sporting titles is a means of cultivating supporters from a variety of backgrounds.

A key goal for Ellevens will be bringing brands on board as sponsors. Bale's reputation could help Ellevens to achieve this aim. While non-endemic sponsors are becoming increasingly prevalent in the esports sector, Bale's involvement may help to sell more hesitant brands on the idea of investing in esports. In the short-term, this is arguably the area where the crossover between traditional sports and esports can be most valuable, by encouraging non-endemic brands to become involved in esports.

Bale is not the first footballer to invest in esports. French international [Antoine Griezmann](#) has his own esports brand, as does Italian international [Alessio Romagnoli](#). It seems likely that esports will continue to attract professional footballers who will see the sector as a means of adding value to their personal brands. For footballers coming towards the end of their playing careers, they may see their involvement in esports as a possible second career. Late last year, Bale was accused of being [more committed to golf than Real Madrid](#), a notion which gained further traction after he was pictured at a

Wales game with a banner that stated “*Wales. Golf. Madrid. In that Order*”. Where esports ranks on Gareth Bale’s (and other footballers’) list of priorities remains to be seen, but initial impressions certainly indicate that Bale is taking esports seriously.

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