

Winter GameFest Returns to UC San Diego in its 11th Year



Photos by Erik Jepsen/UC San Diego Publications

Since its inception in 2005, the UC San Diego Winter GameFest has brought thousands of gaming enthusiasts to campus to battle it out in the fest's myriad competitions. The largest student-run gaming festival on the West Coast, the Winter GameFest has evolved from a simple gaming tournament into a two-day celebration of entertainment and technology organized by UC San Diego's Sixth College Technology Committee and other student organizations on campus, including Triton Gaming. The GameFest returned to campus this year in its 11th iteration.

“My favorite thing about Winter GameFest is how much bigger it becomes every year,” said Grason Caldwell, this year’s Technology Committee director and fourth year undergraduate. “There’s a huge gaming population at UC San Diego, and this is a great chance for students to have fun and win some glory and prizes.”



A highly anticipated tradition, the GameFest breaks a record number of attendees every year. In its first year, the GameFest had no more than 50 attendees. This year, nearly 3,500 people joined in on games, prizes, sponsors and fun. While the GameFest targets university students, admission is open to everyone.

The non-profit event features the latest video game equipment and technology, mirroring Sixth College’s theme of culture, art and technology. This year’s festival brought plenty of new attractions, such as old-school arcade machines, including Pac Man and Dance Dance Revolution, and the 2nd San Diego Melee Arcadian tournament. GameFest attendees also enjoyed a greater presence of university tech clubs, industry professional panels and several new booths. Attendees took part in their favorite traditional attractions as well, including the League of Legends and Super Smash Bros. tournaments.



Sixth College student and fourth year undergraduate Dylan Thweatt attended the fest and participated in the Super Smash Bros. tournament for the WiiU console. “What I enjoy most about the GameFest is the tournament atmosphere,” Thweatt said, “Because my roommates don’t play, I typically have to play online to play with other people, so this gave me a chance to play in person.”

As part of a new initiative by Sixth College, this year’s GameFest put a greater emphasis on women in gaming. In partnership with the San Diego International Game Developers Association and the UC San Diego Video Game Development Club, the event featured a Women in Game Development panel. The tech committee also provided beginner-friendly games as well as games that appealed to a wider population—rather than just offering eSports

games that are typically associated with male players—in an effort to encourage more female players to attend.

According to members of the tech committee, the Winter GameFest yearns to “demystify the video gaming culture, on top of providing a friendly, social, and tech-oriented atmosphere for everybody to enjoy.” Whether people came as spectators or competitors, or students or non-students, the GameFest offered something for everyone to enjoy.



Students interested in joining the Sixth College tech committee can attend meetings on Mondays at 8 p.m. at The Lodge located near the Sixth College apartments. For more information, visit wintergamefest.org.