

Even Olympic daredevils don't see video games in lineup

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Video game players compete against each other, at the Palais des Congres in Bordeaux during the eSports World Convention (ESWC) Summer edition, on July 2, 2017

Video games are exploding in popularity as a spectator sport, even joining the X Games lineup, but the daredevils of US freestyle skiing don't see them coming to the Olympics.

Freestyle champions spoke of evolutions and new tricks in their sport Tuesday at a preview event for next February's Pyeongchang Winter Olympics, but were lukewarm on the possibility of video games one day making the Games lineup.

"They have video games in the X Games now. Maybe one day you'll have Call of Duty or Halo in the Olympics," said slopestyle world champion McRae Williams.

"Hopefully it doesn't come down to that."

Slopestyle and halfpipe ski medals weren't among the original freestyle ski Olympic offerings with moguls and aerials in the 1990s, but made a major impact at the X Games over the years with skiers seeking new tricks and thrills.

"I never thought we would be here," said Williams. "You never know where the future is going."

Last year, the International Olympic Committee added baseball/softball, karate, sport climbing, skateboarding and surfing to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics lineup.

Major League Gaming staged a Call of Duty X Games event at Austin, Texas, in 2015 and people packed into the tent to watch and many more viewed the competition online.

"E-sports has been blowing up. Video games are huge. They are a hot topic right now," said Aaron Blunck, the reigning world halfpipe and X Games superpipe champion.

"The Olympics, we're designed to show off your athletic ability. I don't necessarily see it becoming an Olympic sport because it's not an all-out

athletic sport.

"But if it does, good for them."

Blunck likes what he has seen of a unique course set up that tests several freestyle ski skills, forcing aerial and mogul variations in discipline and technique to conquer all.

"Something like that would change the way we ski halfpipe," he said. "It would make you be diverse, show you the things you could do in the future."

For now, with physical limits near, the big new tricks could be found in style rather than greater heights or more spins before landing.

"Style and amplitude are something that's going to change the [game](#) for good," said Blunck. "Technique has been about pushing things to the limit. It's about style, the way you turn or spin on the grade."

David Wise, the reigning Olympic halfpipe champion and a three-time X Games superpipe champion, agreed, saying he was more about being a pioneer and seeking something new to perform, testing himself but with a showman's flair.

"I'm not going to say we've found the limit. In certain aspects, we have. In certain aspects we're not even close," he said. "It's about doing something unique, taking what's being done and making it your own."

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