

The rise of senior gamers



<https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/videos/20231031105907621/>

The popularity of e-sports continues to boom worldwide and not just among the younger set. Seniors are increasingly getting in on the game. We head to a regional town in Japan that is betting on gaming to energize the community.

In this popular puzzle game, players must quickly clear 4 or more blocks of the same color to get ahead. So, who's gaming? Well, this older set who regularly get together at a local community center.

We shout out "I lost!" or "I won!" It's good because you can destress.

Over 50% of this town consists of residents who are 65 or older, so 3 years go the local government began promoting e-sports to nurture well-being and help stave off dementia.

I introduced to community leaders the idea of incorporating e-sports into their activities.

76 years old Miyazaki Tazuko is one of the towns ace players. After retiring in 2019, she became hooked and now practices gaming almost 2 hours every day.

I want to improve. It all comes down to practice.

She even made this board to hone her technique.

This is called the stairs pattern. When you drop this, it's one. Then drop this and it's, two, three, four, and five chains that you can create.

She's off to a tournament in a near-by city. 16 gamers are participating in this all-age match. In the first

round, Miyazaki plays against a person who was inspired by her grandchild to take up e-sports. Miyazaki starts out by strategically stacking the blocks. Then the pattern technique “stairs” is unleashed, sending out many chains that crush the opponent, so round one concludes in her favor.

I was able to nail the “stairs.”

After the tournament in which she was defeated in the second round, she and her friends gather to review their performance.

If you drop this, look, you can get one, two, three, four chains.

The desire to master e-sports knows no boundaries. They’re bringing older people together and energizing communities.

Source: (NHK World News)

Now discuss the questions with a partner.

1. Have you ever played videogames? Have you ever played a game included in e-sports? Do you think they can be considered sports? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think e-sports are good or bad for seniors?
3. Can you think of any other activities to help fight off dementia?
4. Do you think e-sports should be included in the Olympics?
5. The senior gamer made a physical board to better understand the game. Can you think of any other digital things that could be better understood with a physical version?