

Phygital Games of the Future Daniel Soriano 10.04.2025

## Race heats up to host 2028–2030 Games of the Future

### Astana: Next stop on phygital's upward journey

By Daniel Soriano Abu Dhabi, UAE [Monday, 5 January 2026](#)

**While talking to Alibek Khasenov, head of the official delivery authority responsible for organising the Games of the Future 2026, and Nis Hatt, CEO of Phygital International, Inside The Games found out more details about the event's next edition in Kazakhstan**

Abu Dhabi lit up the phygital sports scoreboard last week with a cocktail of high-speed tech and fierce competition, yet even before the echo of the finale faded, the conversation already drifted towards the next stop, some 6,000 kilometres to the north-east of the emirate. In the corridors of ADNEC, all eyes were on 2025, but one name kept surfacing alongside it, Astana 2026. As GOTF 2025 came to a close, following a week of competition that delivered quality, intent and polish in equal measure, the handover was quietly being prepared in the background. Between delegations and giant screens, two voices, that of the global organisers and that of the next host, began sketching out what comes next: a tournament intent on growing without losing its balance, and a city determined to turn its modern skyline into lived experience.

Here, the future is not framed as an abstract promise, but as a logistical blueprint. New venues, qualifying events of steadily rising standard, and an as-yet-unexplored culture eager to transcend expectations and surprise visiting fans. The shift from Abu Dhabi to Astana can be summed up in a few phrases from the main protagonists. From 'magnificent show' to 'work in full swing,' with a shared ambition running through both, to make phygital sport recognisable, repeatable and, above all, something people truly live.

The last edition began in the capital of the small Gulf nation with the momentum of a project defined by convergence, real-world sport and digital skill forming a single competitive language. After an arts-driven Opening Ceremony and the Phygital Sports Summit on the eve of the Games, the institutional narrative pivoted towards the next chapter. In an interview conducted by Inside The Games as the outstanding Emirati showcase approached its conclusion, Khasenov, head of the delivery authority for the 2026 rendezvous, and Hatt, chief of Phygital International, traced the line of continuity between the two hubs, absorbing lessons, fine-tuning formats and widening the reach of a community which, as the Danish executive pointed out, already stretches across more than 115 countries.



Alibek Khasenov, Head of the official delivery authority for GOTF 2026. (Ig: @alibek86)

# The Games of the Future 2026: Dates and Disciplines Confirmed for Astana



The world's leading next-generation sports tournament heads to Astana from 29 July to 9 August 2026, bringing together elite athletes and gamers to compete across groundbreaking hybrid disciplines.

Home > News in Brief > Events > Multi-sport > Global

# Bids welcomed for Games of the Future

**SportBusiness Staff**

April 10, 2026



Phygital International has opened the host city bid process for the 2028, 2029 and 2030 editions of the Games of the Future, a multi-sport event combining physical and digital competition.

Interested cities are required to submit a letter of intent by August 1, with further requirements and timelines to be shared as the process progresses.

The 2025 Games of the Future were held in Abu Dhabi and attracted 40,000-plus on-site spectators. This year, the event will head to Astana in Kazakhstan.

A shortlist of countries, including Brazil, Serbia and Uzbekistan, are in contention to host the 2027 edition. Host cities are selected through a competitive international process and assessed against criteria including infrastructure readiness, delivery capability, digital innovation, legacy planning and community engagement.

# Phygital sports: Nis Hatt and the revolution that merges physical sport with the digital ecosystem

From Abu Dhabi to Kazakhstan, Spain is positioning itself as a powerhouse in the Games of the Future with teams like Los Troncos FC

- Iker Casillas sees Piqué's banner against Arbeloa before anyone else: a chuckle and "you have to be..."
- Gerard Piqué's provocation of Arbeloa after placing a banner on Gran Vía: "We're not that well-known"



▲Nis Hatt, CEO of Phygital International Phygital International / Phygital International

## TECHNOLOGY

## The sport of phygital has just taken an unexpected leap. Its governing body is now using blockchain for governance.

The World Phygital Community launched a blockchain-based governance system during the Games of the Future 2025. The goal is not technological, but structural: to create transparent rules before hybrid sports scale globally.

BY MARTÍN NICOLÁS PAROLARI

PUBLISHED ON JANUARY 28, 2026, 12:06 PM ET

READING TIME: 4 MINUTES



For decades, the sport was organized using the same tools: printed statutes, closed ballots, and hierarchies that were difficult to change. But [the rise of phygital sport](#)—where competition takes place both on the field and in the digital environment—began to reveal a deepening divide.

How do you regulate a sport that belongs neither entirely to the physical world nor to the virtual world?

[The World Phygital Community \(WPC\)](#), the governing body of the [phygital movement](#) globally, decided not to adapt old structures. Instead, it opted to build a new one from the ground up: a digital governance system based on [blockchain technology](#).

Phygital Games of the Future Daniel Soriano 10.04.2028

## Race heats up to host 2028-2030 Games of the Future



Mexico Quezales celebrating the Phygital Football championship conquered in the 2025 Abu Dhabi GOTF. PHYGITAL INTERNATIONAL

Phygital International, the contest's global promoter, announced this week that the application window for host cities is now open, inviting them to play a leading role in the future of sport as the movement continues to expand worldwide.

With Astana confirmed, the 2027 host city forecast to be finalised before long, and several options already being weighed, the bidding process has now officially opened for the 2028, 2029 and 2030 editions of the Games of the Future, the world's leading phygital sporting event. Blending immersive digital gameplay with physical competition in real-world arenas, the Games of the Future present themselves as a global platform designed to reconnect the digital generation with physical activity and organised sport.

At their core lies the concept of phygital disciplines, hybrid formats that narrow the divide between virtual and traditional sport, encouraging young audiences to step away from screens and into active participation, while fostering long-term engagement with healthy and dynamic lifestyles.

For prospective host cities, the event is framed as a strategic instrument, since it promises to reinforce grassroots and elite sporting ecosystems alike, stimulate youth participation in physical activity and promote public health. Simultaneously, the Games act as a catalyst for innovation, integrating advanced technologies, digital platforms and next-generation entertainment formats.

In doing so, host cities are positioned at the confluence of sport, technology and youth culture, a nexus increasingly central to contemporary urban identity. In its official communication, Phygital International invites cities and organisations to enter a competitive international selection process to stage one of the fastest-growing global sporting properties.

# Host City Bids Open for The Games Of The Future 2028 to 2030



1 of 3 | Phygital Football winners at GOTF 2025

Published 5:11 PM GMT+4, April 9, 2026

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Phygital International opens host city bidding, inviting cities to take a leading role in the future of sport as phygital competition continues to grow worldwide.

Click here to watch the [video](#)

TTW (Travel and Tour World)



Home » Kazakhstan Travel News » Kazakhstan Launches Games of the Future 2026 Countdown as Astana Prepares for Global Phygital Sports Revolution, New Update

## Kazakhstan Launches Games of the Future 2026 Countdown as Astana Prepares for Global Phygital Sports Revolution, New Update

Published on April 27, 2026 By: **Tuhin Sarkar**



Kazakhstan has officially begun the final countdown to Games of the Future 2026, positioning Astana as a global hub for phygital sports innovation, with over 900 participants, 50 countries, and a multi-million-dollar prize pool driving the future of sport and technology convergence.

Kazakhstan launches Games of the Future 2026 countdown. Astana prepares. Games of the Future 2026 begins. Kazakhstan leads. Astana rises. Countdown accelerates. Future sports explode. Read now.

Kazakhstan launches Games of the Future 2026 countdown, and Kazakhstan drives Games of the Future 2026 momentum forward as Astana prepares for Games of the Future 2026 impact with global attention rising rapidly.

Moreover, Kazakhstan accelerates innovation, and Astana positions itself as the future sports capital while the Games of the Future 2026 countdown builds urgency, builds scale, and builds unmatched global curiosity. Therefore, Travel And Tour World urges readers to explore how Kazakhstan, Games of the Future 2026, and Astana reshape sport, reshape technology, and redefine competition through bold moves, strategic timing, and powerful global positioning.

**What makes Games of the Future 2026 a defining global sports milestone?**

WBOC



## Final qualifiers for the Games of the Future 2026 set for Astana this June



*Phyigital Contenders 2026 Astana will bring together elite teams from across the globe, all competing for the final spots at the world's most innovative sporting event where physical sport meets competitive gaming.*

Taking place from 10–15 June 2026, the tournament will feature leading teams across Phyigital Football, Phyigital Basketball and Phyigital Dancing, all aiming to secure qualification to the Games of the Future 2026 (GOTF 2026), where they will compete for global glory and a share of over US\$4 million prize pool.

With qualification on the line and only a limited number of slots available, Astana will host some of the most intense and competitive matchups seen across the phyigital calendar to date. Teams arriving have already proven themselves across the Phyigital Origins and Phyigital Rivals regional circuits, but only a select few will progress to compete on the global stage at the Games of the Future 2026 this summer, raising the stakes across every match and performance.

Across all three disciplines, teams will compete in the Games of the Future's signature phyigital format, combining digital gameplay with live physical performance into a single competitive structure.



## The phygital has already chosen its first qualifiers for 2026. The rest will have to fight to survive in the Contenders tournament.

The official WPC ranking is no longer just a list: it now defines who goes directly to the Games of the Future 2026 and who will have to face the most intense stage of the circuit. With Contenders on the horizon, the road to Astana has become much more interesting to follow.



There's something different about the phygital these days, and it has less to do with the teams than with the system itself. For quite some time, the rankings were used to position oneself, to know who was better or worse off within the circuit. They were useful, but not decisive.

That changed.

With the publication of the official World Phygital Community ranking for the 2025/26 season , positions ceased to be merely a reference point and became a kind of verdict. Now they truly matter, because they determine who qualifies directly for the Games of the Future 2026 ... and who remains in a zone where everything is still up in the air.

**The cut is simple... and that's where things get interesting.**



## Have you heard of fijital? It's a sport in which gamers also have to go to the field



Nikola Momcilovic | 26/04/26 | 15:35 | Reading: about 3 min.



2 < 0

After the ceremonial opening that turned Bar into a global hub of technology, [the Montenegro Future Festival](#) became a platform for presenting the most modern sports disciplines of today. During the media day, **Dan Merkley**, who is at the head of the **WPC** organization, explained in detail the concept of **fijital sports** as a response to the modern challenges of the digital age. This competition format is not just a passing trend but a **profound transformation** that requires players to be equally effective in the virtual simulator and on the real sports arena. The essence of fijital lies in **the hybrid model**, where teams first play a match in a digital environment, and then immediately go out on the field to finish what they started with a physical game, while the points from both segments are added to the final score.

Understanding this concept goes far beyond mere entertainment as it fundamentally changes the paradigm of what it means to be a professional athlete in the twenty-first century. As pointed out by **Dan Merkley**, physical sports directly solves the problem of **physical inactivity** that is often associated with gaming because it forces young people to develop fitness along with fast cognitive reflexes. Through this model, traditional athletes get the opportunity to improve their **digital literacy and strategic thinking**, while gamers have to get out of the



## The 2026 Astana Phygital eSports Tournament will bring together top teams from around the world.

(Global TMT, April 16, 2026) Phygital International recently announced the full list of participating teams and athletes for Phygital Contenders 2026 Astana. The tournament will be held from June 10th to 15th, 2026, bringing together top teams from Phygital Football, Phygital Basketball, and Phygital Dancing. Each team will strive to qualify for The Games of the Future (GOTF 2026) and compete for global honors and a prize pool exceeding \$4 million.



Alongside announcing the lineup for Phygital Contenders 2026 Astana, the first teams participating in The Games of the Future (GOTF) Phygital Shooter project

“HADO” demonstrates its establishment as a competitive sport at a future-oriented international sports competition – A report from “the Games of the Future 2025” held in Abu Dhabi

HADO, which was held as a physical x digital competition, is looking ahead to its development for the next “the Games of the Future 2026” based on the competition model demonstrated at this tournament





# 100 Days to Go: Astana Prepares to Host Games of the Future 2026

*Momentum builds as the world's leading phygital sports event returns for 2026, uniting sport, gaming and entertainment through global competition, industry collaboration and a city-wide programme.*

20 April 2026

**Dubai, UAE, 20 April 2026:** With 100 days to go, anticipation is building for the Games of the Future 2026 (GOTF 2026), set to take place in Astana, Kazakhstan this summer. Positioned at the intersection of sport, gaming and entertainment, the event will once again bring together a global community of athletes, industry leaders and innovators and shaping the next generation of competition.

From 29 July to 9 August, Astana will be transformed into a multi-venue stage for the Games of the Future 2026, as more than 900 participants from over 50 countries compete across eight disciplines spanning phygital sport and leading esports titles. Across four state-of-the-art venues, athletes will compete for a multi-million US dollar prize pool, delivering a global showcase of competition. Designed as an integrated, multi-format event, the Games of the Future



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Articles

## Dota 2 returns to the future of gaming in 2026 with a prize pool of one million US dollars.

The best teams in the world will compete for global glory.

🗨️ March 27, 2026 • Ayman Al-Yaghshi 🌐

The Games of the Future (GOTF) is bringing one of the most popular esports titles back to the global stage, with the return of Dota 2 to the Games of the Future 2026 in Astana confirmed, further cementing the event's growing status as a major event on the international sports and esports calendar.

The world's best Dota 2 teams will compete head-to-head from July 31 to August 5, 2026, for a prize of one million US dollars.

The main stage matches will be held at the Jaxelk Oshkemberov Martial Arts Palace, one of Astana's premier international competition venues. This state-of-the-art complex boasts a 5,000-seat arena built to host world-class sporting events, providing a platform for one of the most anticipated esports competitions of the Future Games 2026.

Dota 2 made an unforgettable impression at the GOTF 2025 in Abu Dhabi, where the underdog team, Win, stunned the audience with a flawless performance throughout the tournament, remaining undefeated. In a historic final, they secured a resounding 2-0 victory over Dota 2 legends, Vikings, becoming the first team to be crowned GOTF 2025 champions.

in [Business](#), [Gameplay](#), [Gaming Culture](#)

# Dota 2 returns to The Games of the Future esports event

by Dean Takahashi · March 24, 2026 · 2 min





Africa African Esports Country Esports Opinion Global Esports

# Dota 2 Returns to the Games of the Future for 2026 with US\$1M Prize Pool

esportsafricanews 1 month ago



Home > Events

# Fatal Fury: City of the Wolves Joins Games of the Future 2026 With \$500,000 Prize Pool

MMA and Digital Combat Merge for Half-Million Dollar Stakes

April 14, 2026 in [Events](#), [Global](#) Reading Time: 2 mins read

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# Fatal Fury: City of the Wolves Resmi Jadi Game Phygital Fighting di GOTF 2026

07 Apr 2026, 16:00 WIB

Valya Annisya



Sumber: Games of the Future

The point is

SWIH

Like this, brother

- Fatal Fury: City of the Wolves is officially the main game for the Phygital Fighting discipline at the Games of the Future 2026, strengthening the legendary franchise's position in the world of fighting competitions.
- The Phygital Fighting competition will be held on August 7-8, 2026, at the Qazaqstan Athletics Sports Complex with a hybrid format combining digital and physical combat and a total prize pool of US\$500,000.
- The collaboration between GOTF and SNK was welcomed positively, considered a strategic move to strengthen the position of phygital sports on the global stage and bring new innovations to the gaming industry.



## How phygital sport is shaping the future of sport in Africa



By Brian Mwenje

🕒 March 09, 2026 10:13 (EAT)



Africa's youthful population, growing digital access, and deep sporting culture are positioning the continent as a natural home for the rise of phygital sport.

According to Dan Merkley, Chairperson and Managing Director of the World Phygital Community (WPC), the continent already reflects the behavior that phygital competition formalizes. Phygital sport blends digital gaming and physical competition, with athletes competing in both stages and the combined results determining the winner.

In disciplines such as Phygital Football, players first face off on a console before immediately taking the contest onto a real pitch. Performance in both formats counts equally, demanding athletes who can adapt between digital strategy and physical execution.

## TECHNOLOGY

**Sport is entering a phase where control and physical performance are equally important. The World Physigital Community, largely responsible for this, believes we are no longer talking about a trend, but the birth of a new global discipline.**

Dan Merkley, president and CEO of the World Physigital Community, discusses the current state of phygital in an exclusive interview with Gizmodo: an ecosystem that has moved beyond the curiosity phase and is now trying to establish itself as a competitive structure with its own identity.



© World Physigital Community.

BY MARTÍN NICOLÁS PAROLARI

PUBLISHED ON APRIL 2, 2026, 04:31 ET

READING TIME 12 MINUTES

## The phygital no longer behaves like a novelty



Dan Merkley was present at the Phygital Rivals event held in Spain. © World Physigital Community.

During its early years, phygital existed in an ambiguous space: eye-catching enough to attract attention, but still too new to be interpreted using the same categories as traditional sports or esports. Today, according to Dan Merkley, that stage is beginning to fade.

“Phygital is no longer just a curiosity between competitive gaming and physical activity,” argues the leader of the World Physigital Community, which in recent months has seen its ecosystem expand its network to 119 members in 115 countries, a sign that the format is entering a more structured and less experimental phase.

# El Comercio

## Copa Phygital Perú: influencers y deportistas competirán por el título este sábado

La competencia se realizará en el Complejo Deportivo Vistamar en San Miguel.



La competencia que fusiona lo digital con lo físico tiene su primera edición en Perú este sábado 28 de febrero en las instalaciones del **Complejo Deportivo Vistamar en San Miguel** donde influencers, artistas y deportistas demostrarán sus habilidades en esta nueva modalidad de competencia que ya es un éxito en países europeos y en medio oriente, así cómo en **Brasil, Argentina y Guatemala**.

Los exfutbolistas **Luis "Cuto" Guadalupe** y **Juan Manuel "Loco" Vargas**, estarán a cargo del play de honor como embajadores **Phygital Perú**, organización que tiene el aval y respaldo de **World Phygital Community y Games of the Future**, entes reguladores del movimiento Phygital a nivel mundial.

Los exfutbolistas como **Raziel García, Jesús Rabanal, Anderson Cueto, Carlos Orejuela**, entre otros, estarán en competencia. Así cómo también los comediantes **Joseph "el cojo" Argumedo, Joao Adriano** y el artista urbano **Rafaell Cocoa**, haciendo así de este evento deportivo diferente y novedoso para el país.



SPORTS > OFFSIDE

## Phyigital Football: a tournament that combines physical and digital football skills arrives in Peru in February

The event will take place on February 28th at the Vistamar Sports Complex in San Miguel and will feature the presence of footballers Luis 'Cuto' Guadalupe and Juan Manuel 'Loco' Vargas



Phyigital Football combines the best of physical sports and competitive video games. (Photo: Press Release)



Por: SPORTS EDITORIAL STAFF

01/28/2026, 01:36 pm | Updated 01/29/2026, 01:37 pm

**[Phyigital Peru](#)** , an organization supported by Games of the Future and the World Phyigital Community, officially announces its inaugural Phyigital Football event in the country, marking the beginning of a new era in [digital sports](#) and entertainment .

# Phyigital Rivals Valencia: this is the future of hybrid sport in Spain

Juan Anguix, CEO of Phyigital Games Spain, and Dan Merkley, president of the World Phyigital Community, explain why phyigital is "the future" and how Valencia is leading its takeoff in Spain.

- [Valencia Basket will represent Spain at the Games of the Future 2026](#)



## Bernis welcomed the Jujuy team that will compete in the national Phygital Football qualification.

REDACCIONUNO – JANUARY 21, 2026 NO COMMENTS 3 MINS READ



Jujuy al día ® – The Vice Governor and President of the Jujuy Legislature, Alberto Bernis, received the delegation of the Phygital Football Team, which will represent the province in the Argentine Phygital Cup: Rivals Edition, a national qualifying stage that will be played on January 24 and 25 in Buenos Aires.

The meeting aimed to support and recognize the young athletes from Jujuy who will compete at the national level with international potential, within the framework of the Legislature's institutional support for new disciplines that integrate physical activity and technology.

It is worth noting that this will be the first time Jujuy has fielded an official Phygital Football team, making it the only province outside of Buenos Aires to participate in this national phase that will determine the Argentine representative for the Games of the Future 2026, to be held in Astana, Kazakhstan, where an international prize of \$500,000 will be at stake.

The delegation was headed by Luis Raúl Pérez, the Phygital ambassador for Jujuy, along with sports officials, physical trainers, and players from the provincial team. Also participating were Leonardo Federico, Guillermo Nassif, physical trainer Federico Rodríguez, and players Dylan Calisaya, Maximiliano Lamas, and Samuel Fernández, among others.

In this context, Pérez expressed his gratitude for "the Vice Governor's continued support of young people and new disciplines," which allows them to "realize their dreams." "Young people are leading the way, and this support is key to that," he added.

"Jujuy will be a protagonist in a national competition that opens the door to a world championship," he highlighted.

In turn, Calisaya expressed his gratitude for the opportunity and support provided, stating that "we will go with a winning mentality to represent Jujuy in the best way."

# They hope to take advantage of the home field

Today, the qualifications for Phygital Basketball will be held in Bar, and last year's winner, the G-Unit team, is also considered the favorite this year...

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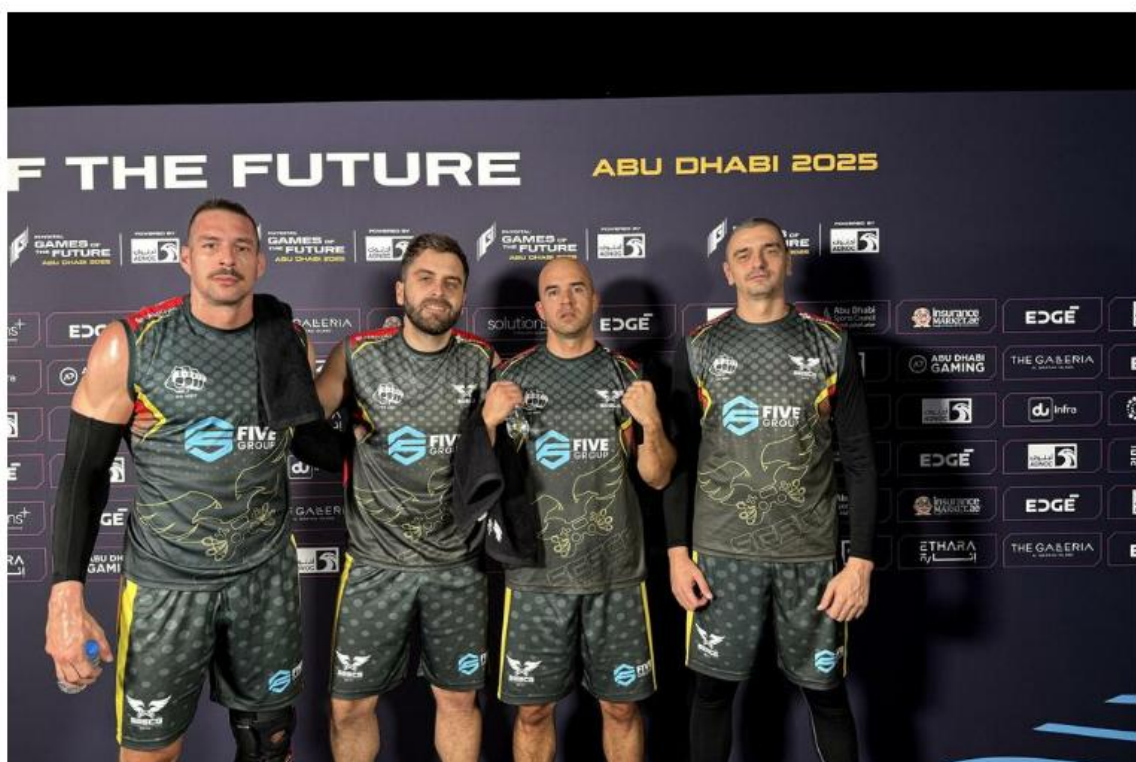


Photo: Private archive

MV Marija Vasic

28.02.2026. 06:44h

The qualifications for the World Cup in Kazakhstan in the phygital format are entering an increasingly exciting phase. After the tournaments have already been played in Phygital Football, where the KMF Titograd team celebrated, and Phygital Shooter, in which the title was defended by last year's winners and fourth place finishers from the Games of the Future in Abu Dhabi, the EndFastPlease team, attention is now moving to the basketball court.

## The future of sport: Jujuy Phygital, among the eight best teams in Argentina

"Phygital," a sport gaining popularity in Jujuy, is an emerging category where athletes must master both their bodies and technology. By Luis Pérez\*



Eduardo Sánchez

February 3, 2026, 3:44 PM



The future of sport: Jujuy Phygital, among the eight best teams in Argentina ( Via Jujuy )



**T**his weekend, Saturday January 31st and Sunday February 1st, the **first youth phygital team from Jujuy** made history by participating in the **Argentine Phygital Cup "Rivals Edition"** , organized by the **Argentine Association of Electronic Sports and Video Games (DEVA)** and held in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires.



## The Ghana Esports Federation successfully organized the 2nd edition of Phygital Football

🌐 **delsoka** ⌚ February 17, 2026 ⏱ 2 minutes read 💬 0



Spread the love



The Ghana Esports Federation successfully organized the 2nd edition of Phygital Football on 14-15 February 2026 at the University of Ghana.

A total of 16 Phygital Football teams from across Ghana competed in an electrifying showdown to determine the ultimate champion.



## Phygital Rivals Valencia: this is the future of hybrid sport in Spain

The Story of Miguel Poblet • 2 week(s) • 3-minute read



Phygital Rivals Valencia: this is the future of hybrid sport in Spain

**Valencia** has marked the official debut of **hybrid sports in Spain, with tournaments in football, basketball, shooter and dancing** that qualify for the Games of the Future 2026. **Juan Anguix, CEO of Phygital Games Spain, and Dan Merkley, president of the World Phygital Community**, met at the Polytechnic University of Valencia, where this format combined video games and a physical court to revolutionize competition.

Anguix discovered phygital at Kazan 2023, where his team won the basketball tournament. "I loved the idea; it's the perfect blend of traditional sports and esports, something that could be the future," explains the CEO, who comes from both worlds and saw Spain as the ideal location. "Valencia is my city, the best in the world to live in for two consecutive years. We have football, basketball, top-notch facilities, great weather, delicious food, and strategic partners," he elaborates on the choice of the Polytechnic University of Valencia as the venue. Initial feedback from clubs and universities was mixed, but after the trials, "everyone wants to come back: we promised 16 teams per discipline, and they're thrilled. Even university teams are aiming to qualify for Astana."



Digital phase of Phygital Basketball in Valencia

© Phygital Games Spain



March 12, 2026, 8:10 AM · #By the way

## The date of the Future Games in Astana has been announced.

198

Write to the author



Illustration from the Games of the Future Facebook page

### The total prize fund will be \$4.75 million.

The 2026 Future Games will be held in Astana from July 29 to August 9, according to the competition's official [website](#).

"All eyes will be on Astana, where the world's best athletes, using physical and digital technologies, will gather," the statement said.

More than 900 athletes are expected to participate. The competition will take place at Barys Arena, Beeline Arena, the Kazakhstan Sports Complex, the Alau Ice Palace, and the Zhaksylyk Ushkempirov Martial Arts Palace.

Athletes will compete in eight disciplines: phygital football, phygital basketball, phygital shooters, phygital dancing, phygital martial arts, MOBA Mobile, MOBA PC, and Battle Royale.

The total prize fund will be \$4.75 million.

The Future Games is a high-tech, international tournament. The first Games were held in Kazan in 2024 and were attended by Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. The most recent Future Games were held in Abu Dhabi in December 2025.

The Future Games is a large-scale sporting event at the intersection of sports, science, and technology, a synergy of traditional and digital sports. Each of them embodies the concept of "phygital" (physical + digital), combining physical culture with esports or VR/AR technology.

The Future Games were originally scheduled to be held in Kazakhstan's capital in 2025. However, they were postponed to 2026 due to flooding.



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2 \*\* Ammunition fell from a Russian fighter jet over Issyk-Kul - Kyrgyzstan's Defense Ministry

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## The "Phygital" revolution: Why is traditional sport invisible to new generations?



Ahead of the upcoming [Montenegro Future Festival \(MFF\)](#) in Bar, which will host the world's leading innovators, organizers have shared an exclusive insight into the vision of Markus Meyer, a man who is fundamentally changing the entertainment industry. As the leader of *Force of Disruption GmbH*, Meyer creates formats that blur the line between physical sports and gaming, heralding an era in which the viewer is no longer just an observer, but becomes the heart of the game itself.

• Through your work at *Force of Disruption GmbH*, Markus, you are shaping new formats at the intersection of sports, gaming and media. What do you see as the next big change in interactive entertainment?

The next change is the complete blurring of the line between observer and participant. For decades, entertainment was a matter of consumption – you watched, you clicked, you reacted. What's coming now is "fullstack" participation: people no longer follow the competition, they *are* the competition.

I have been following this evolution from the inside for over 20 years. I was among the first to introduce esports to European television – on *Sport1* we showed *League of Legends*, the Virtual Bundesliga and a 24/7 esports channel for the first time in this region. Back then, the challenge was to make digital competition understandable to a wide audience. Today, the challenge is fundamentally different: it is about how to merge digital and physical identities into a single competitive experience.

Through *Force of Disruption*, I have been connecting industry, retail and sports through gamification for a decade, advising brands such as ISPO, IAA Mobility, IFA and Gamescom. *THE TRCK GmbH* and *PULSE Series* were a logical step: to stop advising on convergence and build the infrastructure for it myself.



DEFEATED SERBIA AND MOROCCO

# The epicenter of gaming in Montenegro: the man from Osijek won the gold in the Tekken tournament, and the princess arrived...

Written by [Morana Cosic](#), Sunday, April 26, 2026 at 11:15 AM

Article reading: 3 min



Photo: Montenegro Future Festival (MFF)/Private album

- Phygital sport does not try to replicate traditional models, but develops as a new category in global sport. It is based on clubs, structured qualifiers and a global competition network. This model reflects the way people participate in competition today - combining digital and physical into a single experience. We are already seeing its success through events like the Games of the Future - he said and then added:

As the system evolves, phygital sports will stand alongside major events as part of a more diverse global sports ecosystem, with its own identity and growing audience.



UAE esports reaps rewards of strategic development. Image courtesy: WAM

SPORTS

## UAE esports reaps rewards of strategic development

Federation has successfully established a clear pathway from local competition to the global stage

HM, WAM (Emirates News Agency)

January 19, 2026



ABU DHABI: UAE esports is experiencing an unprecedented growth phase driven by the UAE Esports Federation's strategic vision, resulting in expanded participation and significant international success.

Moving forward, the Federation aims to build an integrated professional ecosystem to nurture national talent and align with the UAE's broader digital and creative economy goals.

A defining milestone was Abu Dhabi's hosting of the Games of the Future 2025 (GOTF 2025), which showcased the nation's ability to stage world-class events merging physical and digital "phygital" sports. The national team's participation in eight disciplines during the Games highlighted the success of recent development programs and enhanced technical readiness.

Recognising phygital sports as a central pillar of its future strategy, the UAE Esports Federation recently became the 100th member of the Global Phygital Network, further cementing the UAE's international standing.

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## Game of the Future 2025: When Esports Combines with Traditional Sports

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**The recently concluded Games of the Future 2025 event in Abu Dhabi has ushered in a new era for the esports industry and the booming wave of physical gaming.**

Brilliant lighting, cutting-edge technology, and a unique blend of traditional sports and the digital world – these are the elements that shaped the Games of the Future 2025, recently held at the ADNEC Centre in Abu Dhabi. More than just a typical esports tournament, this event became a comprehensive festival of physical sports – a new wave combining physical activity and digital technology.

Born as a solution to the declining interest of young people in traditional sports, coupled with the explosion of gaming, the International Physical Federation has boldly implemented a groundbreaking vision for the future through this flagship event.

