



**Montgomery County Community College – For Immediate Release**

**Media Contact:**

Diane VanDyke, Director of Strategic Communications  
[dvandyke@mc3.edu](mailto:dvandyke@mc3.edu) /610-704-4786 (cell)

Eric Devlin, Public Relations and Communications Manager  
[edevlin@mc3.edu](mailto:edevlin@mc3.edu) / 267-318-3563 (cell)

**Mustangs eSports team wins Rocket League national championship**

*Overwatch team places second in national final*

**December 14, 2023, Blue Bell/Pottstown, Pa.**— Before a crowd of more than 50 people watching inside College Hall on Blue Bell Campus, the Montgomery County Community College (MCCC) [Mustangs](#) eSports Rocket League team capped an undefeated season with a win in the online National Junior Collegiate Athletic Association Esports ([NJCAA](#)) championship. The 4-3 victory Friday, Dec. 8, was over the Wolfpack of Madison Community College, from Madison, Wis.

Additionally, the Mustangs Overwatch team placed second in its national final in a 3-2 loss to the Tigers of Marshalltown Community College, from Marshalltown, Iowa, Wednesday, Dec. 6. The Overwatch team went undefeated during the regular season.

MCCC Director of Athletics and Campus Recreation Kelly Dunbar congratulated both teams on their success.

“I’m really proud of the athletes,” she said. “Being a student-athlete is tough between balancing academics and competition. Both teams did a tremendous job this season.”

The Mustangs eSports program is the Athletics eighth collegiate sport and its first all-gender team. The Mustangs eSports team members compete against colleges nationally as part of the National Association of Collegiate Esports ([NACE](#)), which is composed of more than 170 member schools with more than 5,000 student-athletes. The Mustangs also compete as part of the National Junior College Athletic Association Esports (NJCAA), composed of more than 60 two-year colleges from across the country.

The esports program began at MCCC in the spring of 2020 and has grown from 13 student-athletes playing Rocket League, to the program now offering six video games titles including Valorant, Hearthstone, League of Legends, Overwatch, Rocket League, and Super Smash Bros. Ultimate and 85 student-athletes currently listed on the Mustangs eSports roster.

Rocket League student-athletes Joe Romano, of Blue Bell, Anthony Bodenstein, of Norristown, and Ethan Peyton, of North Wales, called winning the national title surreal.

“I keep expecting it to hit me, but it doesn’t feel real,” said Romano, a 2022 Wissahickon High School graduate.

“It feels amazing, said Bodenstein, who graduated from Emmaus High School in 2023. “It feels great.”

“It feels really good,” said Peyton, a 2022 North Penn High School graduate. “We definitely trained and practiced hard. We were ready for anything. We were flawless in the league’s regular season, and in the playoffs, we came ready to win.”

Romano and Bodenstein also played together previously on the soccer field this past season for the Mustangs as goalies. They built on that camaraderie to help with their play in Rocket League, which is similar to soccer but involves the use of vehicles to shoot a ball into a net.

“I got to meet and know Anthony before esports season,” said Romano. “I found out what kind of person he was. Sports is a great way to bring people together. In soccer, it was unfortunate we didn’t go to nationals. But Anthony said, ‘If we can’t win it all in real soccer, let’s win it in car soccer.’”

The experience playing soccer and esports at the same time helped Bodenstein to make friends as a first-year student.

“Coming into to the soccer season, I was nervous and shy. I didn’t know anybody. I didn’t grow up around Montco,” he said. “Joe and Ethan knew each other. I drifted towards Joe because he had a Rocket League sweatshirt, so I knew he liked the game too. He welcomed me with open arms. It boosted my confidence in soccer and esports because I already made a friend early in the year. Playing two sports is a lot of fun. It kept me busy. I don’t like sitting around doing nothing. It kept my plate filled. It was a good first semester here at Montco.”

Dunbar congratulated Mustangs eSports Program Coordinator Jace Winders for all of the success he’s accomplished in his first semester with the team.

“We have record numbers and competed for two national championships,” said Dunbar. “He’s done an outstanding job.”

Both the Rocket League and Overwatch teams had tremendous seasons, said Winders, and he was incredibly proud of their performances.

“With Rocket League, none of the games were close by any means,” he said. “They took care of business and reaped the reward of that in the national championship. With Overwatch, I am proud of the way they performed. They faced tough competition. It’s the best of the best of esports from a community college level. It was a cool experience for them.

“Overall, I’m super proud of both teams. Both had to go through adversity. From the playoffs, to playing for a new esports coordinator and assistant coaches, to balancing school life and performing at such a high level. Credit to the students for being able to balance life and still be on the grind.”

Winders’ players said he’s done an incredible job as a first semester program coordinator.

“Jace is incredible,” said Romano. “He’s putting in the work with events in front of a crowd. New outreach, new games, new computers— it’s been really great.”

“Honestly, Jace is everything someone would want in a coach,” said Peyton. “He’s a friend of the guys. We look at him as one of the guys. He’s easy to talk to and get feedback. Like Joe said, he’s setting up things. He pushes things to the next level compared to last year. Like the atmosphere, the general attitude. He’s kind to everyone. It makes you want to get there early, rather than on time or show up late.”

Bodenstein appreciated the way Winders made time to get to know his players and help them feel comfortable.

“He’s amazing,” he said. “This being my first semester here, he helped me be more comfortable in the program, have a good time and do my best. I can’t wait for many more semesters to come.”

The success the Rocket League achieved during the fall semester can be attributed to a variety of reasons, said Winders.

“Hats off to students, first of all,” he said. “It’s easy to win with talented students willing to improve. Also, the coaching staff. Assistant Coach of Esports Matthew Cauto took three players and made them into a cohesive unit. It’s not just one person or role. The whole program came together to make it happen.”

Romano agreed. He said Cauto was instrumental to the team’s success and kept players motivated in situations where things weren’t always going their way.

“You can’t have a good team without a good coach,” he said. “A lot of times if we were down a goal or a game in a series, he could help us turn it around, forget about the game, ground us and remember the game plan. He was good at keeping us focused on the basics. It was not too complicated. He was really good at making us feel comfortable at being ourselves versus trying to conform to a standard or something we’re not. It’s a big reason for our success. All three of us found our niche on the field in a team environment and the support system was excellent at helping us flourish.”

Winders gave a special mention to Dunbar for her support and guidance this season.

“She’s been such a big supporter of the esports program at Montco,” he said. “We would never have been able to reach this level of success without her. A lot of credit to her in addition to everyone else in the program.”

In addition to the players and coaching staff, Winders gave special mention to student Jacob Saltzburg, who handles the production team and broadcasts the games for a live audience.

“He’s helped break viewership records on our Twitch channel,” said Winders. “He’s hosted live streams and in-person events. It’s so much different to hear a crowd versus playing online. It adds a level of hype. This is the championship. He’s really put in quite a bit of work, almost as much as the students and coaches.”

The players appreciated Saltzburg’s efforts too.

“Being able to come home and see my parents watching the goals I scored builds confidence and makes me want to come back and be a better player,” said Romano. “It’s not just me being able to see our wins. It’s my friends and family. Shout out to him. He does a really good job.”

Following the great success this season, Winders said he already has his eye on the future.

“It’s a big team effort and huge program win,” he said. “I’m excited to continue that in the spring.”

For more information about Mustang Athletics, visit the Athletics website at [mustangsathletics.com](http://mustangsathletics.com).

Written by Eric Devlin

### **Photo captions:**

Photo 1: The Rocket League Mustangs eSports team composed of student-athletes Joe Romano, Anthony Bodenstein and Ethan Peyton won the National Junior College Athletic Association Esports national championship in a 4-3 victory Friday, Dec. 8 over Madison Community College from Madison, Wis. Photo by Talia McLeod

Photo 2: The Overwatch Mustangs eSports team, composed of student-athletes Salvatore Sutera, Aidan Phelan, Christopher Ernst, Gerald Guignard and Donte Crump, placed second in the National Junior College Athletic Association Esports national championship final against Marshalltown Community College from Marshalltown, Iowa. Photo by Talia McLeod

### **About Mustangs Athletics**

Montgomery County Community College athletic teams compete in the National Junior College Athletic Association at the Division III intercollegiate level. MCCC places the highest priority on the overall quality of the educational and athletic experiences and looks to compete for national championships each year. MCCC Athletics competes in women’s volleyball, soccer, and basketball and men’s soccer, basketball and baseball. MCCC offers two all-gender athletic opportunities in cheerleading (non-competitive) and esports (Hearthstone, League of Legends, Overwatch, Rocket League, Super Smash Brothers Ultimate and Valorant). For more information, contact MCCC Director of Athletics and Campus Recreation Kelly Dunbar at [kdunbar@mc3.edu](mailto:kdunbar@mc3.edu).

### **About Montgomery County Community College**

Since 1964, Montgomery County Community College has grown with the community to meet the evolving educational needs of Montgomery County. The College’s comprehensive curriculum includes more than 100 associate degree and certificate programs, as well as customized workforce training and certifications. Students enjoy the flexibility of learning at the College’s thriving campuses in Blue Bell and Pottstown and online.

As an Achieving the Dream Leader College of Distinction, the institution is positioned at the vanguard of national efforts to remove barriers to access, improve learning outcomes, and increase completion for all students. The College also is recognized regionally and nationally for its sustainability leadership, work with military veterans, community service and service-learning opportunities, and use of classroom technology. For seven years, MCCC has been named one of the Most Promising Places to Work in Community Colleges in the nation by the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development for

its commitment to diversity through inclusive learning and work environments, student and staff recruitment and retention practices, and meaningful community service and engagement opportunities. For more information, visit <https://www.mc3.edu>.