Overwatch LeagueTM and Fanatics Team up for Groundbreaking Retail, Licensing, and Ecommerce Deal

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Fanatics will become the official retail partner of the Overwatch League

The first-ever esports deal for Fanatics includes omnichannel retail and fan gear manufacturing rights

IRVINE & SAN MATEO, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Dec. 3, 2018-- The Overwatch League today announced a groundbreaking, multi-year deal with Fanatics, the global leader for licensed sports merchandise, which will provide the Overwatch League fanbase with an omnichannel retail experience along with a significantly expanded assortment of products. The agreement marks the first-ever foray into the rapidly expanding global esports industry for Fanatics and is the first of its kind between a major retailer and an official esports league.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20181203005191/en/

The deal is highlighted by Fanatics securing U.S. and international rights to produce Overwatch League jerseys, fan gear, headwear, and hard goods sold across all retail and wholesale channels. Under the new agreement, both parties also will work collaboratively to identify and secure additional world-class companies to grow the overall assortment of high-quality products available to fans. In addition, Fanatics will establish a new global ecommerce and mobile shopping platform and operate on-site retail for all league events.

“Our collaboration with Fanatics—the first between a major esports league and a global sports merchandising company—allows us to reach even more fans and to provide them with high-quality merchandise and a best-in-class retail experience where they can shop for all our great Overwatch League gear,” said Brandon Snow, chief revenue officer of Activision Blizzard Esports Leagues. “Fanatics has a proven track record of success with major sports brands and we’re excited to work with them in expanding this part of our business.”

Fanatics—utilizing an innovative vertical manufacturing model, combining extensive licensing rights with on-demand manufacturing and an agile supply chain—will design and quickly distribute high-quality Overwatch League fan gear across all categories, including merchandise for league events and championships.

“The demand for team gear during our inaugural season was very strong,” said Daniel Siegel, head of esports licensing for Blizzard Entertainment. “A significant number of fans—for regular-season matches at Blizzard Arena Los Angeles and at the Grand Finals in Brooklyn—showed up in jerseys to support their teams, and we’re thrilled to make it even easier for them to represent their favorite teams and players.”

“Esports has been on our radar for some time now and we are incredibly excited to mark our first deal with the best in the world in Activision Blizzard around their incredibly successful Overwatch League,” said Ross Tannenbaum, head of special projects for Fanatics. “Our omnichannel retail capabilities and real-time vertical manufacturing model will ensure that Overwatch League fans across the globe have unprecedented access to a wide assortment of merchandise to be able to show their passion and pride for the teams and players they love, whether shopping online, on their phone, or at one of many league events.”

The agreement between the Overwatch League and Fanatics will be implemented before the start of the 2019 Overwatch League season, which kicks off on February 14. At that time, Overwatch League gear will be available on a dedicated e-store and on select sites across Fanatics’ global network.

The new online storefronts will be the first to sell gear for the Overwatch League’s new expansion teams: Atlanta Reign, Chengdu Hunters, Guangzhou Charge, Hangzhou Spark, Paris Eternal, Toronto Defiant, Vancouver Titans, and the Washington Justice. Fanatics will operate on-site retail stores for all Overwatch League regular-season matches at Blizzard Arena Los Angeles and for other league events.

Further details about the official launch of the new Overwatch League ecommerce platform and the 2019 season will be announced at a later date.

About the Overwatch League™

The Overwatch League™ is the first major global professional esports league with city-based teams across Asia, Europe, and North America. Overwatch® was created by globally acclaimed publisher Blizzard Entertainment (a division of Activision Blizzard—Nasdaq: ATVI), whose iconic franchises have helped lay the foundations and push the boundaries of professional esports over the last 15 years. The latest addition to Blizzard’s stable of twenty-two #1 games,[1] Overwatch was built from the ground up for online competition, with memorable characters and fast-paced action designed for the most engaging gameplay and spectator experiences. To learn more about the Overwatch League, visit www.overwatchleague.com.

About Fanatics

As the global leader in licensed sports merchandise, Fanatics is changing the way fans purchase their favorite team apparel and jerseys through an innovative, tech-infused approach to making and selling fan gear in today’s on-demand culture. Operating multi-channel commerce for the world’s biggest sports brands, Fanatics offers the largest collection of timeless and timely merchandise whether shopping online, on your phone, in stores, in stadiums or on-site at the world’s biggest sporting events.

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[1] Sales and/or downloads, based on internal company records and reports from key distribution partners.

Cautionary Note Regarding Forward-looking Statements: Information in this press release that involves Blizzard Entertainment's expectations, plans, intentions or strategies regarding the future, including statements about the multi-year deal with Fanatics, the dates of the 2019 Overwatch League season, and the availability of Overwatch League gear, are forward-looking statements that are not facts and involve a number of risks and uncertainties. Factors that could cause Blizzard Entertainment's actual future results to differ materially from those expressed in the forward-looking statements set forth in this release include unanticipated product delays and other factors identified in the risk factors sections of Activision Blizzard's most recent annual report on Form 10-K and any subsequent quarterly reports on Form 10-Q. The forward-looking statements in this release are based upon information available to Blizzard Entertainment and Activision Blizzard as of the date of this release, and neither Blizzard Entertainment nor Activision Blizzard assumes any obligation to update any such forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements believed to be true when made may ultimately prove to be incorrect. These statements are not guarantees of the future performance of Blizzard Entertainment or Activision Blizzard and are subject to risks, uncertainties and other factors, some of which are beyond its control and may cause actual results to differ materially from current expectations.

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