
Step-by-step guide to a successful stream management

A look behind the screens within the ESOC Media Team

A GUIDE CONCERNING ORGANIZING AND COORDINATING
LIVE STREAMS
(*ENGLISH VERSION*)

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TRANSLATED BY MR_BRAMBOY



FOREWORD

As a proud member of the ESOC Media Team since 2016, I have managed to fulfil a lot of tasks. These tasks have always interested me and even today they are extremely important and relevant. For three tournaments, I have managed the ESOC YouTube channel (ESOCTV), the ESOC social media accounts, coordinated the ESOCTV streams, and helped players with the scheduling of their series. The two tasks that we, Mr_Bramboy and myself, MCJim, plan to quit are perhaps the most important ones: planning the weekly streams and planning in casters, while making sure they are set up correctly. To me it feels good our successors will fulfil these two tasks from now on.

Thankfully, I haven't had to do everything myself. Myself, Bram (Mr_Bramboy), and Jerom formed the trio that worked on these tasks. This lasted from ESOC Winter 2015/2016 to ESOC Spring 2017. Before we started in the Media Team, we had already known each other for several years. This resulted in a very relaxed and fantastic relationship which I can recommend to everyone. For that, I would like to thank them! Bram especially, who took the time to translate this guide from Dutch to English. However, life goes on. Our workload in the real life has increased, while our motivation has decreased. For these reasons, we're looking for people who would like to replace us in these tasks. We hope that our successors will enjoy their time in the Media Team. The Media Team is the biggest event-related organization in the AoE3 community, which means this is the place to be if you're interested in AoE3 events in general. To help our successors, I wrote this guide based on my experiences!

INTRODUCTION

Live streams are extremely important during the tournament. The viewers want to know what is happening, preferably live. Thankfully, as you may be aware, we're able to livestream all content via Twitch. To make sure the ESOCCommunity channel (ESOCTV) is fed weekly content, we need people who are willing to dedicate themselves to the channel. It will require a lot of time, passion for the stream and AoE3, and the ability to spot small mistakes in order to deliver the highest quality stream as possible. The amount of people needed to work on these tasks depends on the size of the stream for that day. During the regular weekend stream, two to three people is ideal for ESOCCommunity's workload.

In the next chapters, we will discuss in detail how to deliver a great stream. We will also give a lot of tips and tricks to guarantee the best stream.

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STEP-BY-STEP TOWARDS A SUCCESSFUL STREAM MANAGEMENT

To create a high quality stream that suits everyone, it is vital to follow these four important steps illustrated down below.

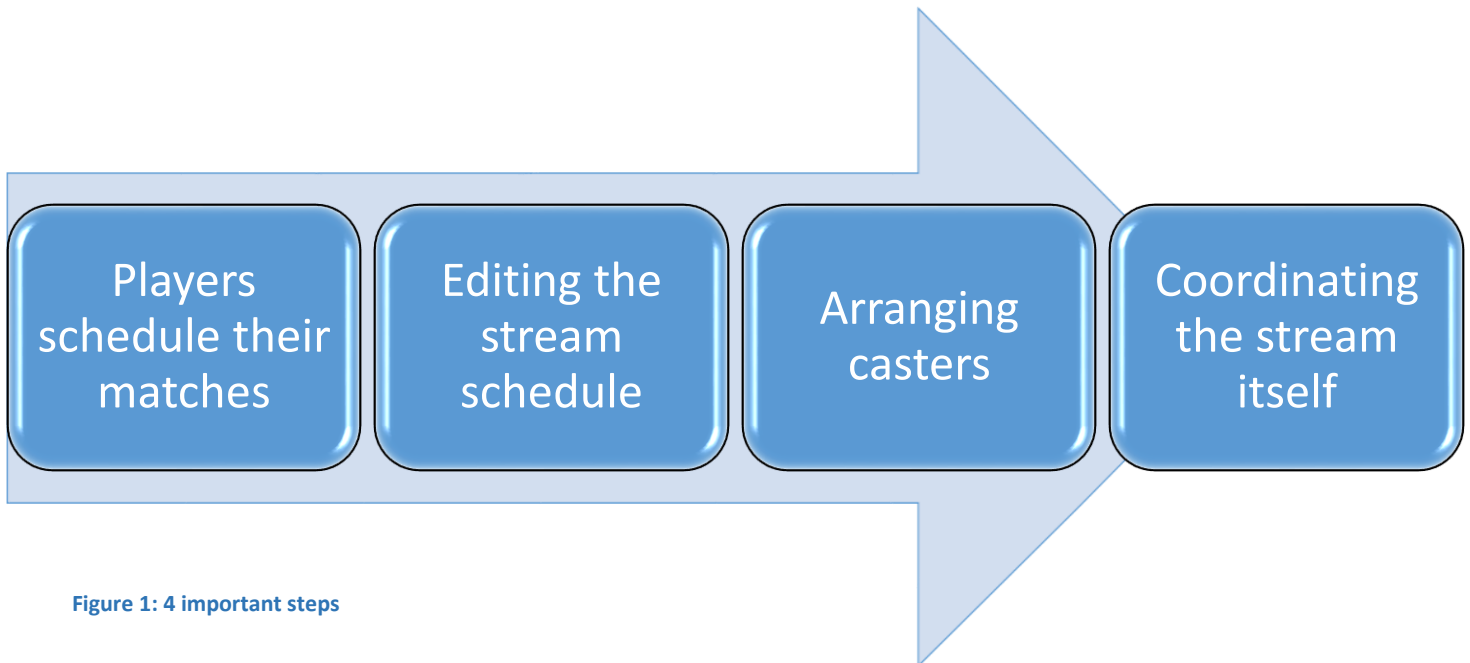


Figure 1: 4 important steps

PLAYERS SCHEDULE THEIR MATCHES

Scheduling the players is the first step. A team member creates the scheduling threads which players use to schedule in. See the example down below. This can be done manually, but there's also a tool that can make the threads automatically. It is important that the content of the thread is informative but as short as possible. You should use the template from the previous round and edit the content (namely the maps and dates). The less information you give, the more unclear which give you more work later on! So, good preparation is half the work!

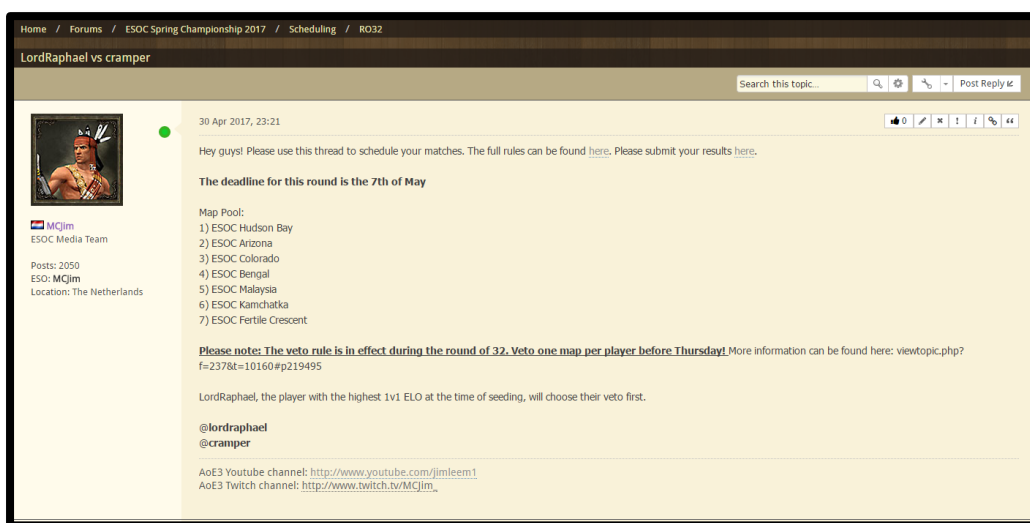


Figure 2: An example of a scheduling thread

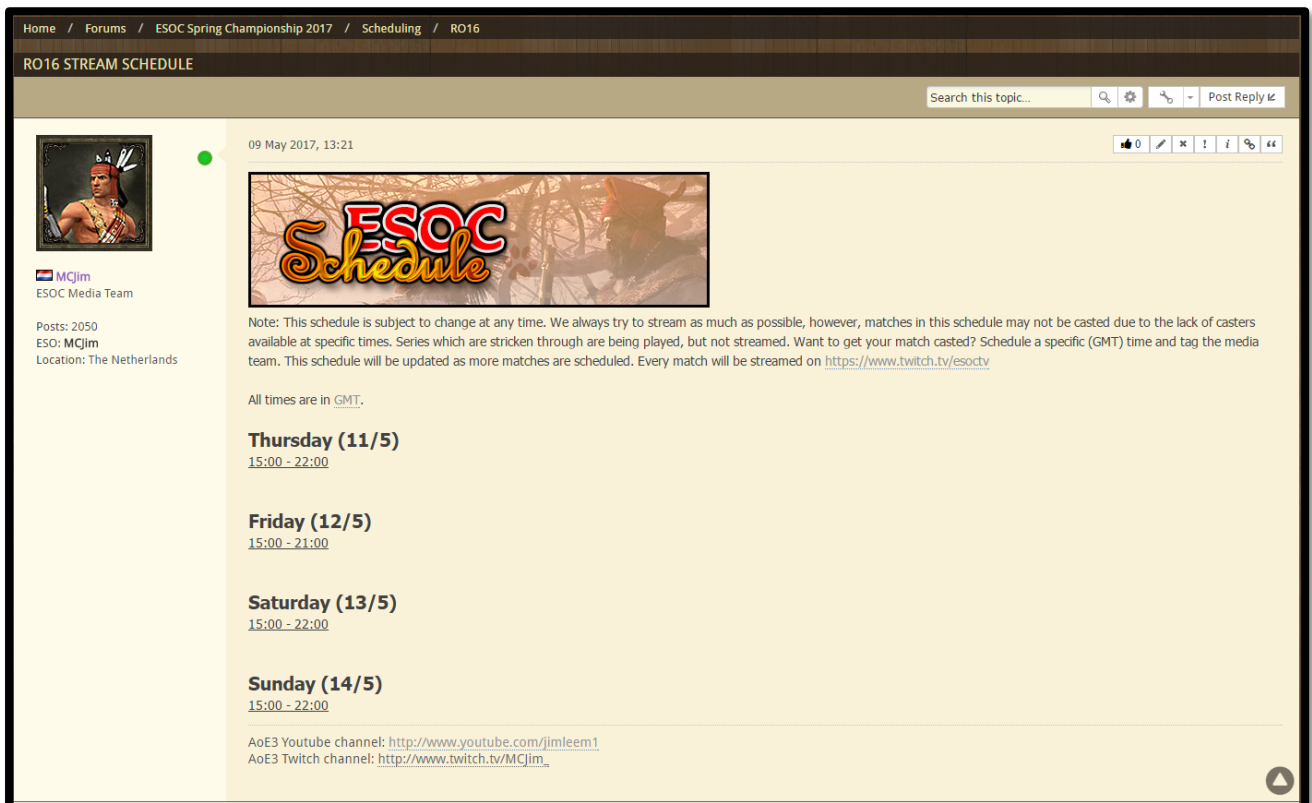
Scheduling threads include the following information:

- A link to the full rules
- A link to the results subforum/submitter
- The deadline
- The map pool
- If applicable, information regarding vetoes
 - The deadline
 - A link to the full veto rules.
 - The player who vetoes first
- Tagged players

It is important to keep a close eye on the scheduling threads. Often, players have to play within one or two weeks. Players often have questions about the rules, have trouble scheduling their games, or are experiencing interference from other forum posters. So, it's important to moderate the scheduling threads whenever it's necessary. Feel free to help players schedule their games if they don't show enough incentive to do it themselves. The top priority is to get the games played. The second priority is to have the games streamed, especially in the later stages of the tournament. In other words: If necessary, it's acceptable to not stream a series if scheduling proves troublesome.

EDITING THE STREAM SCHEDULE

As soon as a series is confirmed a time and date, we add this series to the stream schedule. An example of a stream schedule is illustrated in figure 3 and 4.





Home / Forums / ESOC Spring Championship 2017 / Scheduling / RO16

RO16 STREAM SCHEDULE

Search this topic... [Icons] Post Reply

09 May 2017, 13:21 [Icons]


MCJim
ESOC Media Team
Posts: 2050
ESO: MCJim
Location: The Netherlands



Note: This schedule is subject to change at any time. We always try to stream as much as possible, however, matches in this schedule may not be casted due to the lack of casters available at specific times. Series which are stricken through are being played, but not streamed. Want to get your match casted? Schedule a specific (GMT) time and tag the media team. This schedule will be updated as more matches are scheduled. Every match will be streamed on <https://www.twitch.tv/esoctv>

All times are in GMT.

Thursday (11/5)
15:00 - 22:00

Friday (12/5)
15:00 - 21:00

Saturday (13/5)
15:00 - 22:00

Sunday (14/5)
15:00 - 22:00

AoE3 Youtube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/jimleem1>
AoE3 Twitch channel: http://www.twitch.tv/MCJim_

Figure 3: A streaming schedule without information (yet)

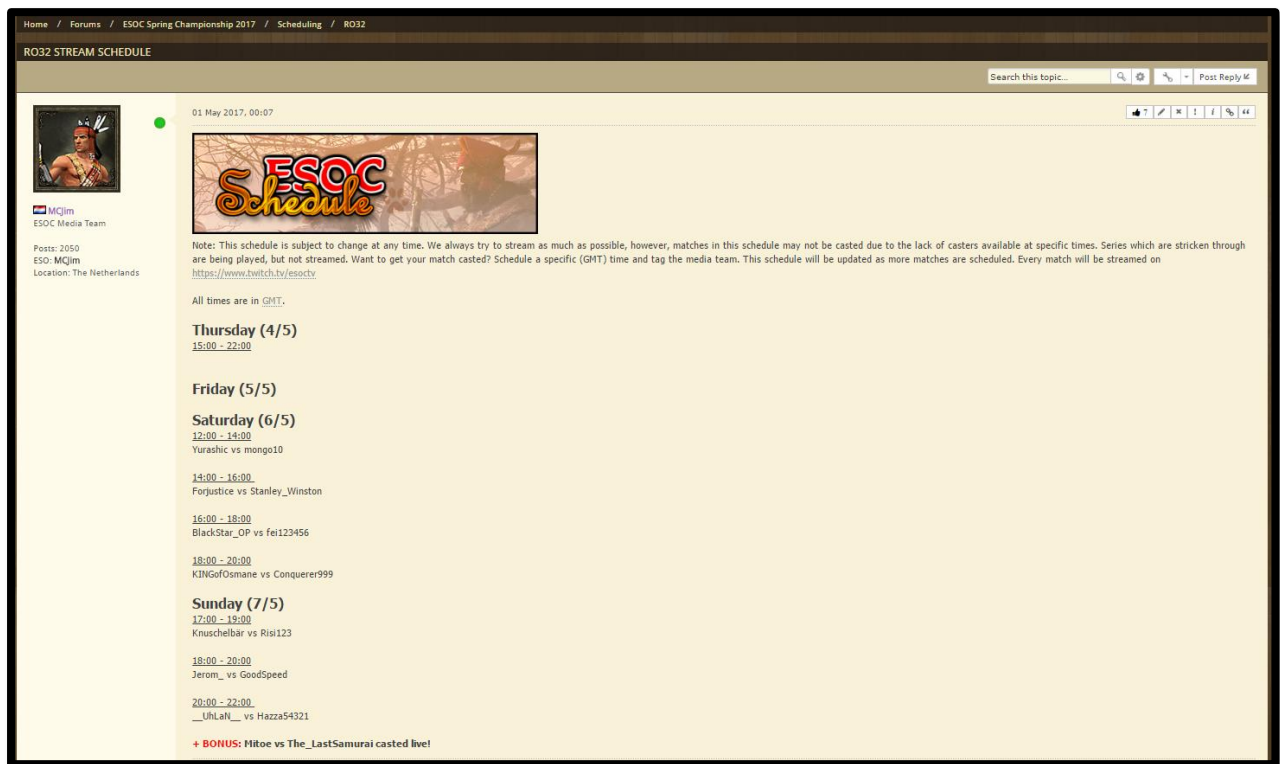


Figure 4: A streaming schedule with information

Just like in the scheduling threads, it is important that the stream schedule's content contains some information. You should copy the previous stream schedule and edit the times and dates to prevent mistakes. The stream schedule should contain the following:

- The stream schedule may be changed any minute.
- Series may not be casted due to a lack of available casters.
- Series will be added to the stream schedule if a media team member is tagged in the scheduling thread.
- A link to the Twitch account.
- Times should always be in GMT.
- Series should be sorted by day, starting time and ending.
- The players.

The stream schedule could contain additional information:

- A couple of interesting replays which may be casted any time.
- A bonus cast. (This is a live-cast recorded a while ago. This can be played as video on stream.)
- A talk show before the stream.
- Announcements.

Finally, it is important to keep a close eye on the scheduling threads. Players may not be able to play any more, and most of the times they don't tag a media team admin.

The stream schedule is created not only made for yourself, but also for the casters, players and, of course, the audience! It allows you to keep track of who's playing when and it allows the public to know when to tune into the stream. Make sure the stream schedule is formatted correctly and clearly. It leads to more viewers.

ARRANGING CASTERS

As soon as a few series are scheduled, it is time to schedule the casters for those series. Generally, you should start arranging and scheduling casters as soon as series are scheduled. It is wise to ask casters when they're available a week or so in advance. We advise you to start scheduling casters as soon as possible. This is both relaxing to you and the casters.

In general, a caster is considered popular if he or she:

- Speaks the official language (mostly English) fluently, without any noticeable accent
- Manages the stream as professional as possible
- Speaks at a normal volume and speed
- Has a lot of game knowledge
- Doesn't only describe, but also gives insights about what's happening
- Is enthusiastic

We divide our caster pool in two groups: streamers and non-streamers, or co-casters. The streamer's task is to live stream to Twitch, manage the overlay, sound, and microphone sound, while the co-caster's task is to help the streamer by using advice from the casting Discord and Twitch chat.

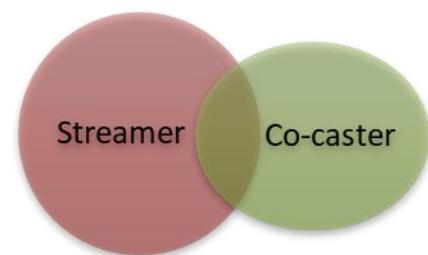


Figure 5: Distinction between a streamer and co-caster

COORDINATING THE STREAM ITSELF

This is the most difficult and time consuming task of them all. While coordinating the stream, it is very important that you have an eye for detail, can remain calm in stressful situations, can make decisions quickly which impact the casters and players and provides support for the casters and players. The streaming schedule that you or someone else made earlier is the footing of the stream. However, there are circumstances which will happen every now and then, such as players or casters not showing up. You can't really plan for every single thing, but you can expect the following:

- Technical difficulties during the stream
- A cancelled series
- A series which ends too early or too late

TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES DURING THE STREAM

Technical difficulties in the stream come in various forms. A good preparation means half the work. We encourage casters to prepare their stream before the stream starts, but some problems do often persist during the stream. The issues which we face the most are sound and/or microphone issues. To avoid these problems, casters are instructed to do a sound check before the stream. Once this has

been done, the stream may start. There already is an ESOC streaming/casting guide for casters which you should read at least once so you know how casters are instructed to work.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hzEiaD7g0sQzogiSWZrXD8qOjYnNsNnOqA4BmMjIzrE/>

This guide, specifically directed at casting, describes how to stream and how you should handle certain situations. We also provide a basic checklist for the streamer to ensure everything is set up correctly. In theory, no technical problems should ever arise, but unfortunately this is different in practice.

A CANCELLED SERIES

Sometimes, players don't show up because they forgot the time or because they don't feel like playing. This is impossible to avoid, of course, but there are a few things you can do to kill time while you try to find the player(s).

- Instruct casters to put on the overlay and mute the sound while you look for a solution.
- Instruct casters to put on the overlay, mute the sound and to wait for the next series.
- Keep track of all chats and hope for players to offer themselves.
- Look around for replays. It's smart to do this beforehand. *
- Try to stream the last or next series earlier.
- Ask players to play a showmatch.

*Keep in mind replays run extremely slow, are hard to cast, and the diehard audience will most likely already know the result. Go for it is a live match isn't possible.

A SERIES THAT ENDS TOO EARLY OR TOO LATE

A series that ends too early or too late is something that will most likely occur. Here too, it is important to fill up the gap. It can be chosen from the list above, but in this case these solutions are the most common:

- Try to stream the last or next series earlier.
- Ask players to play a showmatch.
- Instruct casters to put on the overlay, mute the sound and to wait for the next series.

In this case, it is often not a smart choice to put a (new) series in between. This is only possible if there is actually enough time for it.

TIPS FOR A GOOD STREAM

Sunday 18-21
GMT is a peak
time

Do a
soundcheck
beforehand

Only remove the
overlay when the
soundcheck is done
and the players are
ready

Use a correct
stream title

Do a lag test
beforehand

Mute your
Skype,
Discord, etc

Start the stream
30 minutes in
advance

Mute all sounds
and your
microphone when
the overlay is up

Make sure to
install the UI
(user interface)

Keep an eye on
messages from outside.
Leave this to the
cocaster otherwise

For a full list of tips, see the ESOC Casters Guide:

(<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hzEiaD7g0sQzogiSWZrXD8qOjYnNsNnOqA4BmMjlZrE/>)

Here are some additional explanations:

“Sunday 18-21 GMT is a peak time” – This is the time when most people are online and will likely watch a stream. Make good use of this time. The time is valid on each day of the week, however, Sunday is the peak day of the week. That means that on a peak day and peak time, a stream pulls even more viewers.

“Only remove the overlay when the soundcheck is done and the players are ready” – It is not professional if a soundcheck is done live during a stream. Also, waiting for players is not something

that is desired. Therefore, keep things that the viewers shouldn't see behind the scenes and turn on the overlay.

“Mute your Skype, Discord, etc” – A mistake that happens a lot. Often, casters leave on the sound on social media, which leads to a lot of notification sounds. It's not really professional and nobody is waiting for it. So, turn it off!

“Start the stream 30 minutes in advance” – Give viewers some time to turn on. Let the viewers know that the stream is starting by putting up a timer.

“Keep an eye on messages from outside. Leave this to the cocaster otherwise” – While streaming a lot of things can go wrong. It often happens that a streamer doesn't notice it at all, but the viewers do. Therefore, keep an eye on external messages. Otherwise, leave this task to the cocaster.

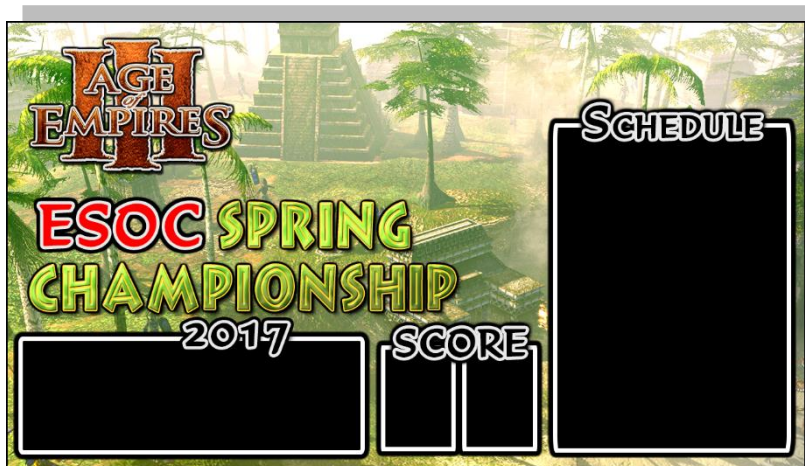


Figure 6: An example of a schedule without information (yet)

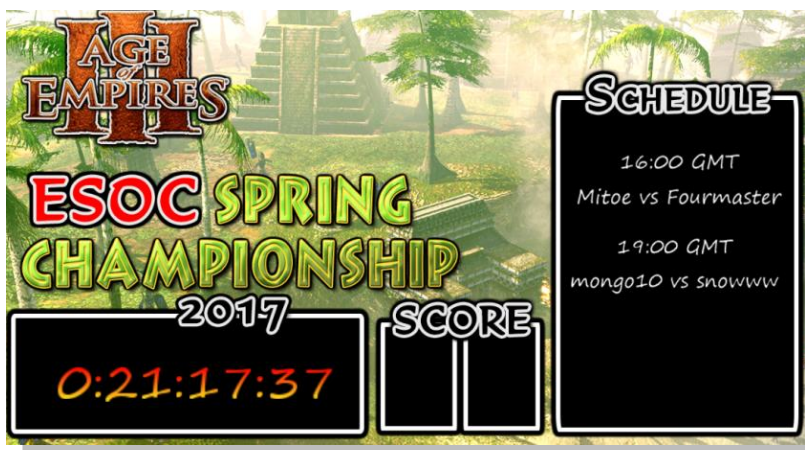


Figure 7: An example of a schedule with information

PREPARATIONS FOR A TOURNAMENT

It is very important that preparations are made before the tournament starts. Before a tournament starts, you have to go through the list of casters and decide who was active enough last tournament. Based on that, you create the authorized casters list. This is a list including casters that are allowed to stream on the Twitch channel only. You can add and remove the casters to a Discord or Skype group.

Most casters will be well aware of new tournaments, but do brief them before each tournament. Sending information like dates, guidelines and links to manuals is the best thing you can do. See the example down below. The message has the biggest effect when sending it to each caster individually.

Alright guys,

Again, welcome to the ESOC Casters pool! You guys are gonna make the difference, you guys are here to cover as much of the tournament as possible, managed by the ESOC Media Team! As you will probably know the *sign-ups will be closed the 26th*, and one week later it's time to start! The group stage will start *April the 3rd* and end *April the 16th*. We will handle the same system as we've used before.

During the tournament, we create the schedule and "distribute" casters. This mostly happens on availability and how much that caster was already featured. However, during the group stage anyone is free to cast any series! We prefer to catch/schedule with people so we can cast them live, but there will always be downtime. To fill this up, we'd like to ask you guys to pick some interesting replays (uploaded on ESOC) and to cast them. Please decide which series you're planning to cast before the start of the stream, so you can write it on the schedule-overlay.

We don't do unscheduled streams at all, so communication is needed. This Skype group will be our main communication platform. Try to cast as much as possible during weekends, as it will lead to more viewers. We do have a large pool of casters now, so we're looking forward to see as much being casted as possible! :D

Some global rules:

- Only authorized ESOC Casters are allowed to cast an ESOC tournament match.
- The stream can go live any day, but preferably during weekends.
- Streams should include a minimum of 2 series (this can either be a live cast or replay).
- Tournament games should be streamed on ESOC TV only. Please ask us if you want to stream it on your personal channel.

Thanks for your effort, I hope it will be a great tournament!

Some important links

Figure 8: Information for the casters

COMMUNICATION

MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

Since we have a lot of casters, it's important to use the right communication platforms. Highly recommended is Discord. Discord is similar to Skype, but it has many more possibilities in a group chat. This is beneficial to efficient communication. For example, it allows you to create separate text channels and you have more control over permissions. Different channels (chats) can be created within one server and group members can also get a certain "role". This allows you to use separate roles for people like for example in "caster" or "stream manager". It is also possible to mute certain channels so that you do not get disturbed by a lot of messages. Like Skype, Discord also has a mobile app that lets you handle business anywhere in the world!

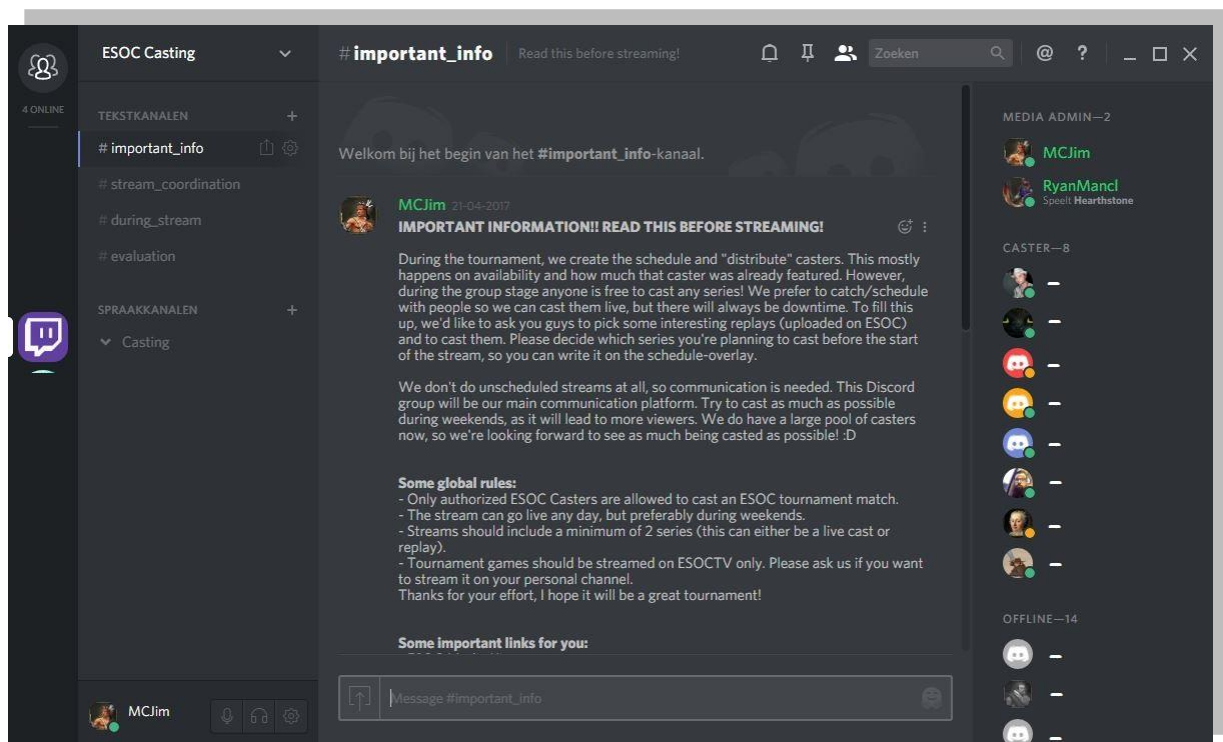


Figure 9: Example of a Discord server including all casters together

HOW TO COMMUNICATE

Depending on the caster, you can either send an informal or formal message. If you don't know someone or if you want a particular service of someone, it's better to go for the formal way. See the examples down below.

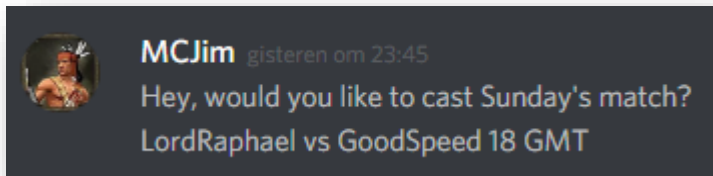


Figure 10: Example of a formal message

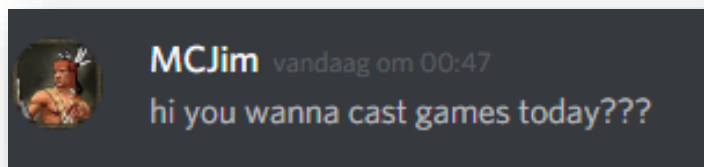


Figure 11: Example of an informal message

Often a message is sent as shown in figure 12. Some people do not even realize it. It's important to watch the way you approach people. You want them to do something for you!

EPILOGUE

This manual provided a view behind the scenes at the ESOC Media Team. Using the four steps, the entire process is described with regard to controlling streams. Try to remember the four steps to organizing a stream and try to use the tips regarding communication and streaming. We hope this guide has given you enough information to get started!

This manual has been compiled with care. If there are any questions or if you need help, contact MCJim or Mr_Bramboy, the writer and translator of this guide.

USEFUL LINKS

Profile MCJim - <http://eso-community.net/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=183>

Profile Mr_Bramboy - <http://eso-community.net/memberlist.php?mode=viewprofile&u=55>

ESOCommunity-site - <http://eso-community.net/>

ESOCTV Twitch - <https://www.twitch.tv/esoctv>

ESOCTV YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/ESOCommunitynetVideos>

ESOC Twitter - <https://twitter.com/esocommunity>

ESOC Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/ESOCommunity.net/>

ESOC Discord - <https://discordapp.com/invite/0khRaPfhrkTKPpye>

Discord download - <https://discordapp.com/apps>

ESOC Casters Guide -
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hzEiaD7g0sQzogiSWZrXD8qOjYnNsNnOqA4BmMjIzrE/>