MCSR Ranked Playoffs Season 9 - Viewership Report

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0 Foreword and Introduction

0.1 The Minecraft Speedrunning (MCSR) community has been experiencing exponential growth since Summer 2025. With two seasons of Tubbo's Midoffs, Lewis Fulham Invitational (LFI) and various bracket tournaments featuring players of varying calibres, categories and demographic groups (Girloffs by Molly, Slayoffs by Mousey, Scuffed% by Tessa and Five, Goldoffs by Shahheet), there is little doubt that MCSR is poised for a grand entry onto the Esports scene.

0.2 The MCSR Census project was created in response to the need for systematic opinion surveying and engagement tracking of the MCSR community, especially in the contexts of tracking community trends and informing content creation strategy. It achieved remarkable success in 2025 with 1,250 responses, ~151,000 data points and 6 written Technical and Thematic Reports. A community of practice was also set up, in the form of the MCSR Census Updates ("MCU") server, where members discussed statistics-related issues and promoted their own projects.

0.3 This server was the backdrop of the Playoffs Viewership Tracking sub-project - we had been tracking viewership numbers on-and-off since Playoffs Season 7, but with limited scope (Day 4 of S7 and S8) and coverage (less than 15 channels tracked). After the figures for Season 9's Last Chance Qualifiers (LCQ) broke the viewership record set in Season 7 (16,665 VS ~12,500), we realised the potential for Season 9 Playoffs to reach many more people than before, a belief that was reinforced by top streamer (and Coal I Ranked grinder) Ludwig Ahgren's commitment to co-stream all 4 days of the bracket. Thanks to our dedicated volunteer developers and trackers, we have successfully tracked the viewership figures for all 4 days of S9 Playoffs, which this report will present and analyze.

0.4 Detailed viewership statistics can be publicly accessed at PVT GRAPHING.

0.5 A graphical viewership summary can be publicly accessed at Playoffs Viewership Graphs (Complete).pdf.

1 Key Statistics

1.1 No matter how one looks at this season's viewership statistics, the rapid growth of MCSR Ranked Playoffs is evident. The **S7 and S8 peaks were surpassed almost effortlessly** in the first minutes of all 4 days, which, even without considering the boost from Ludwig viewers, is indicative of a burgeoning MCSR audience.

1.2 The daily concurrent viewership figures are as follows **(all times in ET)**:

- Day 1 peaked at **60,686** viewers, **5.20 times** that of Season 8's peak.
  The weighted average viewership for Day 1 (11:00 - 16:00) was **45,945**.
  Data was called every minute between 11:00-12:45, with an average of 35,903.
  Data was called every 3 minutes after 12:45, with an average of 51,353.
- Day 2 peaked at **51,262** viewers, **falling 15.5%** day-on-day.
  The average viewership for Day 2 (11:00 - 16:15) was **40,870**.
- Day 3 peaked at **57,425** viewers, **rising 12.0%** day-on-day.
  The average viewership for Day 3 (11:00 - 15:30) was **42,805**.
- Day 4 peaked (provisionally) at **63,156** viewers, **rising 10.0%** day-on-day and **breaking the viewership record set on Day 1 by 4.1%**.
  The average viewership for Day 4 (11:00 - 15:45) was **49,059**.

NB *YouTube tracking was inconsistent due to API call limits. Failed calls take the average of the last 5 successful calls. YouTube tracking started late on Days 1 (11:26), 2 (12:09) and 4 (11:34). Data before these times could not be reliably estimated.*

1.3 The channel tracking data are as follows:

- Day 1 tracked **22 channels**, 20 on Twitch and 2 on YouTube.
- Day 2 tracked **28 channels**, 26 on Twitch and 2 on YouTube.
- Day 3 tracked **26 channels**, 24 on Twitch and 2 on YouTube.
- Day 4 tracked **28 channels**, 26 on Twitch and 2 on YouTube.

NB *A number of YouTube/TikTok co-streamers could not be tracked. They are estimated to account for approximately 1-2% of the total viewership.*

1.4 MCSR "organic" viewers, denoting MCSR resident viewers not watching from Ludwig's Twitch or YouTube channels, reached new peaks in this season of MCSR Ranked Playoffs as well. Most notably, **Day 4 reached 28,757 "organic" viewers**, up 72.6% from LCQ figures (16,665). This signifies a strong growth in viewers watching Minecraft speedrunners and suggests that Playoffs has encouraged a trickle-down of viewership from large co-streamers to community creators, expanding their communities and developing their audiences.

1.5 "Organic" viewer data is as follows:

- Day 1 saw an average of **17,358** organic viewers (**37.8%** of the total average and **up 4.2%** from the LCQ peak), with a peak of **20,463**.
- Day 2 saw an average of **15,429** organic viewers (**37.8%** of the total average and **down 11.1%** day-on-day), with a peak of **18,081**.
- Day 3 saw an average of **17,408** organic viewers (**43.1%** of the total average and **up 12.8%** day-on-day), with a peak of **22,374**.
- Day 4 saw an average of **24,101** organic viewers (**49.1%** of the total average and **up 38.4%** day-on-day), with a peak of **28,757**.

1.6 Detailed viewership statistics can be publicly accessed at PVT GRAPHING.

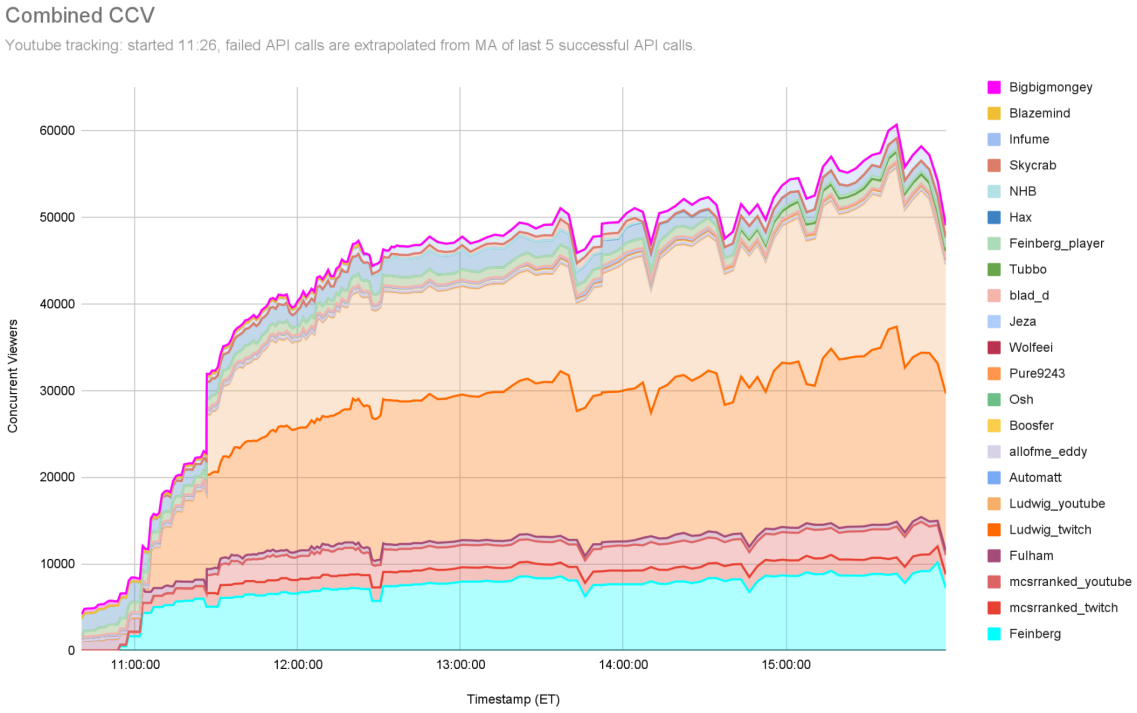


Figure 1 Combined CCV Figures for Day 1 (10 January 2026) of Playoffs S9

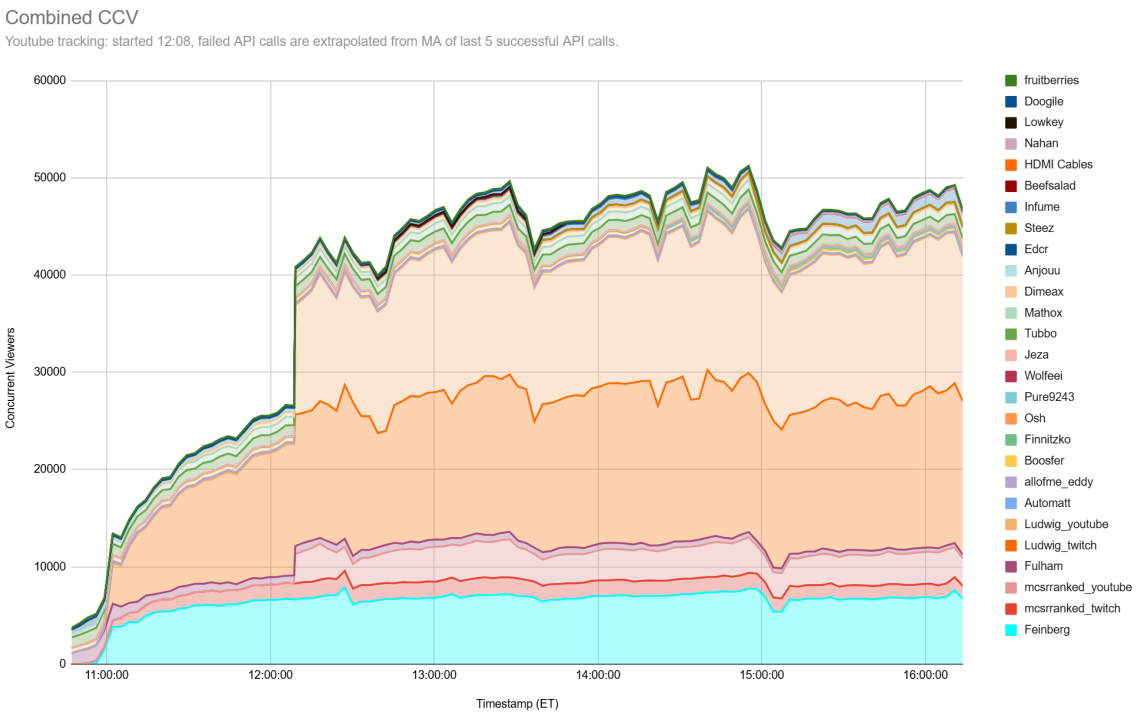


Figure 2 Combined CCV Figures for Day 2 (11 January 2026) of Playoffs S9

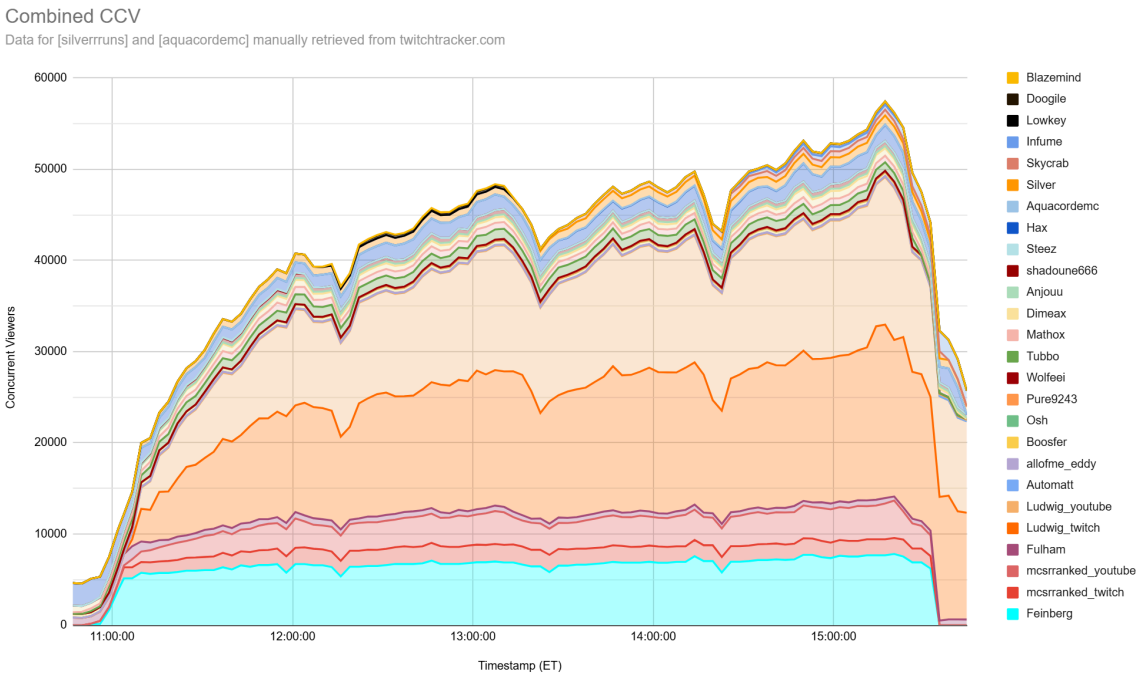


Figure 3 Combined CCV Figures for Day 3 (17 January 2026) of Playoffs S9

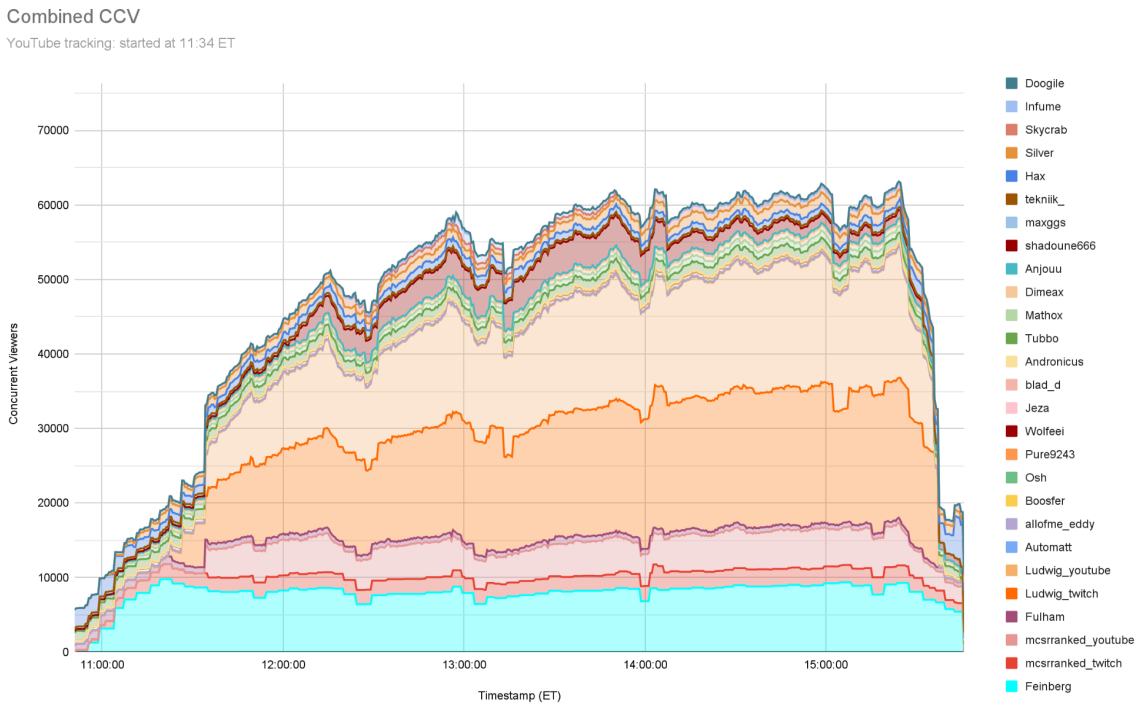
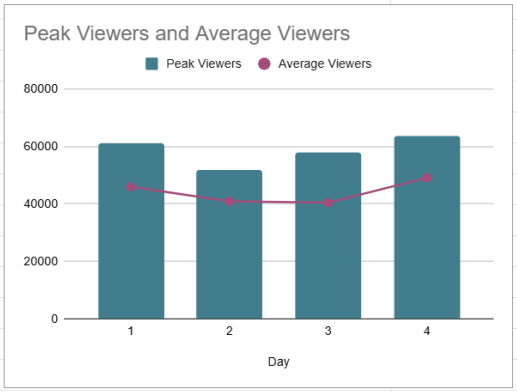


Figure 4 Combined CCV Figures for Day 4 (18 January 2026) of Playoffs S9

Day	1	2	3	4
Date	2026.01.10	2026.01.11	2026.01.17	2026.01.18
Start time (ET)	*11:00*	*11:00*	*11:00*	*11:00*
End time (ET)	*16:00*	*16:15*	*15:30*	*15:45*
Duration	5.00	5.25	4.50	4.75
Unique Viewers (Reach) on main stream	51186	74716	39020	46309
Peak Viewers	60686	51262	57425	63156
Peak Time	15:40	14:55	15:17	15:24
Average Viewers	45945	40870	40421	49059
MCSR Organics (Peak)	20463	18081	22374	28757
MCSR Organics (Avg.)	17358	15429	17408	24101
Ludwig viewers at peak	40928 (67.4%)	33181 (64.7%)	35192 (61.3%)	36283 (57.4%)
Organic Avg./Total Avg.	37.78%	37.75%	43.07%	49.13%



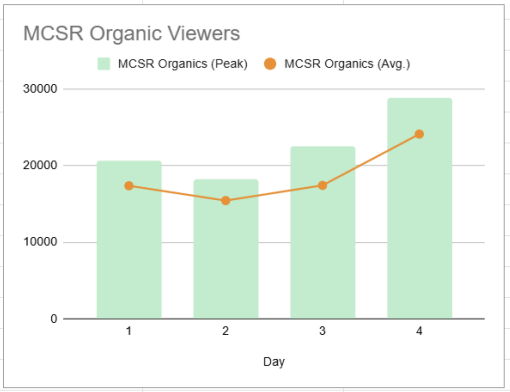


Figure 5 Detailed viewer figures for all 4 days of Playoffs S9

2 Peaks, Dips and Trends

2.1 Despite viewership of all 4 days of the Season 9 bracket rising steadily throughout the day, occasional dips were seen, usually when there was no active match on screen. This was a very competitive season, with 9 of 16 sets going to the tiebreaker seed, 6 of which were in the first round of the bracket. Coupled with the reduction in allotted time for each set, intermission time was reduced, there were fewer "plain" countdowns, and the pacing of media segments, analysis/"yapping" segments and actual gameplay segments was more balanced and intentional. These efforts were rewarded with impressively high retention rates recorded for the surge in average viewership, with most dips being small in magnitude and recovering fashionably quickly.

2.2 Most media segments were situated during dips, but **nonetheless achieved their purpose of retaining interest**. For instance, the conclusion of Doogile/Blazemind

had caused a 12.1% dip in viewers between 13:15 and 13:22 of Day 3, but the Ghasketball media segment signified the start of a steady recovery, from 41,255 to 44,631 viewers over the course of 12 minutes (8.2%). This suggests that interactive or competitive media segments may be particularly conducive to keeping audience members engaged, especially if they showcase inter-creator dynamics, or make references to other well-known MCYT communities like Hermitcraft.

2.3 Notable dips in viewership are as follows **(all times in ET)**:

Day | Time of dip	**Extent of dip and recovery**	**Event overlapping w/ dip**
Day 1 | 12:22-12:28	47,303 → 44,547 (5.83%) Recovery: 12:31 (63.4%)	After Bigbigmongey vs. Blazemind series, Blazemind interview
Day 1 | 13:36-13:42	51,046 → 45,882 (10.12%) Recovery: 13:52 (65.5%)	After Silverrruns vs. Skycrab series, Skycrab interview
Day 1 | 14:31-14:37	52,323 → 47,551 (9.12%) Recovery: 14:43 (83.2%)	After Aquacorde vs. NHB series, Aquacorde interview
Day 2 | 12:27-12:39	43,905 → 39,997 (8.90%) Recovery: 12:45 (Full)	Intermission before Doogile vs. HDMI, series introduction and HDMI player introduction
Day 2 | 13:27-13:36	49,691 → 42,708 (14.05%) Recovery: 13:45 (37.7%)	After Doogile vs. HDMI series, Doogile interview and intermission
Day 2 | 14:55-15:07	51,262 → 42,840 (16.43%) Recovery: 15:22 (46.2%)	Infume post-match interview, intermission and Nahan vs. Lowkey series introduction
Day 3 | 12:13-12:16	39,604 → 37,150 (6.20%) Recovery: 12:22 (Full)	After Hackingnoises interview, post-match commentary
Day 3 | 13:15-13:22	46,914 → 41,255 (12.06%) Recovery: 13:37 (Full)	After Doogile vs. Blazemind series to the start of Ghasketball
Day 3 | 14:13-14:22	49,736 → 43,192 (13.16%) Recovery: 14:31 (Full)	After Aquacorde vs. Skycrab series, post-match commentary

Day 4 | 12:15-12:28	51,184 → 45,557 (10.99%) Recovery: 12:34 (Full)	After Hackingnoises vs. Skycrab series, Hackingnoises interview
Day 4 | 12:57-13:14	59,017 → 50,794 (13.93%) Recovery: 13:31 (Full)	After Infume vs. Doogile series to NADDY's stats segment
Day 4 | 13:50-13:59	61,295 → 56,980 (7.04%) Recovery: 14:03 (Full)	After Infume vs. Skycrab series
Day 4 | 14:58-15:05	62,864 → 56,622 (9.93%) Recovery: 15:09 (49.3%)	Fulham analysis segment after Hackingnoises vs. Doogile seed four

Table 1 Summary of viewership dips across all 4 days of S9 Ranked Playoffs

2.4 Aside from the aforementioned dips, viewership for all 4 days seemed to exhibit some common patterns: an initial surge to around the 40,000 viewer mark during the first hour, then inching slightly upwards with dips and recoveries of decreasing rate. The ratio of Ludwig viewers to non-Ludwig viewers stayed about the same except for Day 4, which saw a marked increase in the proportion of MCSR resident viewers, potentially due to the enhanced number of watchparties and co-streamers. Day 4 also seemed to plateau at about 60,000 to 62,000 viewers, a potential indicator that viewership was approaching the "total accessible market" at this point in time - colloquially, "everyone who would tap in is already tapped in".

2.5 If records are to continue being broken in the future, MCSR-endemic creators will have to attract and convert viewers from other MCYT or general Twitch spaces into MCSR enjoyers, gradually reducing our dependence on external attention and bolstering core audience bases. This data is also valuable in estimations of total community size so as to project the reach of media, fanwork and community-based studies, like the yearly MCSR Census.

3 The Future of MCSR Ranked

3.1 What does this mean in the greater context of MCSR?

3.1.1 A few takeaways are clear from these 2 weekends:

- By all metrics, the MCSR community is receiving more attention than ever and is thriving with an influx of newcomers hoping to learn about the speedgame and/or its community culture.
- MCSR Ranked is growing exponentially in viewership, production value and "buzz", resembling the "high growth" stage in the business lifecycle
- Esports seems to be the obvious next step for MCSR, as evidenced by recent collaborations with communities possessing established Esports scenes, MCSR Ranked's rapid evolution in UI (user interfaces), UX (user experience) and game-balancing measures, as well as large-scale events being lined up for the community both in-person and virtually.

3.1.2 MCSR is no longer solely the niche, singleplayer speedgame it used to be. It has blossomed into a diverse, multifaceted subsect of the Minecraft community, with the game's interactive, dynamic and unpredictable nature on full display. **If MCYT were a continent, MCSR would have integrated itself as a province, with MCSR Ranked as its citadel, and its many categories and projects flourishing as lively fora and agora.** To keep it this way, we must stay unstoppable in both form and spirit.

3.1.3 When asked to envision MCSR in 3 to 5 years' time, respondents of the MCSR Census were divided, slightly favouring the continued thriving of the community (net score 0.039). However, with all that has happened since then (July-August 2026), optimism in the community's future is bound to have increased.

3.1.4 Respondents' visions of MCSR also shed some light on where we can develop our competencies. For instance, we could leverage our status as the **first speedrunning Esport** to be featured alongside more traditionally competitive

"Versus" games like Smash and Geoguessr, tapping the first-mover advantages of brand recognition (i.e. synonymity of MCSR with the term "Speedrunning Esports") and networking at both community and organisational levels. Placing **an emphasis on live events** also brings new sponsors, enlarged prize pools and wider exposure. **Diversification into non-Any% categories** like All Advancements, albeit requiring more conditioning and setup, was also mentioned as a potential development, with DoyPingu and Oxidiot's GDQ Hotfix duel a good litmus test for its feasibility.

Moving MCSR into the Esports spotlight, in the LAN event context

3.1.5 In the wake of LFI and the success of Playoffs S9, how doable are Ranked-affiliated LAN events? The answer is contingent on many factors, including event duration, event backdrop, geographical proximity and the global geopolitical climate. Of course, community variables also play a part here, with everything from runner pool to tournament infrastructure to sponsor interest having potential impact on such events.

3.1.6 An intercomparison between IRL MCSR meetups, notably various TwitchCons, MCMC (July 2023) and LFI (November 2025), shows that in 2025, both the total viewership and accessible viewership of IRL events have leapfrogged logarithmically thanks to LFI, and have the potential to rise further with the first-ever Ranked-affiliated LAN slated for April 2026. There is a prospect for more star-studded/content-packed MCSR meetups (similar in nature to PACE conventions in the past, or Archiethon in the Celeste community), which could further harness the power of supporting venue features. These include artist alleys, meet-and-greets and dedicated spaces tailored to the community, where event-goers may organise their own side events/projects, much like Andronicus' 32-player-1-controller video project (Andronicus, 2025), or simply converse amongst one another in a comfortable environment. Of course, the availability of side events like the LFAFC v. BFC football match at TwitchCon Rotterdam 2025 also factors into attendee motivation, especially if they expect familiar faces on the field or bleachers.

Event	TwitchCons (Various)	MCMC (2023)	LFI (2025)
Date	2022 - 2025 (multiple)	10 July, 2023	22 November, 2025
Location	Rotterdam, NL Amsterdam, NL San Diego, USA Las Vegas, USA	Cologne, DE	Bournemouth, UK
Viewership	N/A	190 (Peak) 121 (Average)	3011 (Peak) 2140 (Average)
Attendance	5 digits total, 20-50 MCSR	~60 MCSR	~150 MCSR
Core event	MCC/BW watchparty	8-player SE Bracket	8-player SE Bracket
Peripheral events	Minigolf, Bowling, Bar-crawls, Football (Soccer) and Basketball matches	Assorted hangouts (probably incl. bar crawls)	Assorted hangouts (incl. bar crawls, karaoke)
Supporting features at venue	TwitchCon main event; MC/non-MC panels	Uncertain	Merch stand (jerseys, posters); Art, nametags and meet-and-greets with/by community members

Table 2 Summary of notable IRL events with significant MCSR attendances

3.2 Is the growth of MCSR opportunistic?

3.2.1 MCSR is no stranger to riding brief, explosive waves of popularity; attention from significantly more popular content creators (e.g. the xQc–Forsen rivalry) has previously created similar viewership spikes. In addition to the rapid audience growth, the MCSR Ranked mod has reaped the benefits this time, with Ludwig's recent forays into Ranked speedrunning preceding surges in both concurrent matches (24-hour moving average: 178.25 on 3 Dec 2025 → 451.58 on 31 Dec 2025, **+153.3%**) and games played (13,063 on 3 Dec 2025 → 33,369 on 31 Dec 2025, **+155.4%**). The majority of this increased attention will most likely be temporary. Not everyone who started playing in this period will stick around, and the eventual drop-off from our current numbers is expected, though nonetheless unfortunate.

3.2.2 Fluctuations in community size and exposure have been well internalised within MCSR community members. In the 2025 Census, 49.0% of 996 respondents agreed, to varying extents, that MCSR was "oscillating" in nature (in terms of exposure, vibes or viewership), while only 28.8% disagreed (ortho, 2026). However, the opportunities we are being presented with summate to much more than simply another high in viewership - but an opportunity to craft a legacy for MCSR in the halls of Esports fame, to mark an X on the map of competitive gaming that we can call Home.

3.2.3 In management theory, a resource-based view is oft-used to evaluate the competitive advantages of a firm. Resources and capabilities spawn core competencies, which become sustainable competitive advantages if they are i) valuable, ii) rare, iii) inimitable and iv) well-organised. Some areas of MCSR have reacted to the recent surge in popularity in ways that suggest an intent to capitalize; MCSR Ranked Playoffs is perhaps the most overt instance, with Couriway offering media training to all Playoffs participants and casters, content creators starting to produce more edited highlights instead of simply uncropped stream footage, the emergence of "lovewatching"/"hatewatching" and joint-community tournaments

with Geoguessr (Coordinate Cup) and Mario speedrunning (Mariocraft). MCSR content inherently possesses the gifts of skillset scarcity and inimitability - if we continue our outreach to generate content in collaboration with other communities like SMPs, and sharpen our skills at event coordination and content strategy, there is a strong argument that we can shape our events and content into a sustainable competitive advantage, reaching new heights and tapping more audience sectors than ever.

4 References

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Title credits to the programmers, co-authors, proofreaders and Playoffs viewership tracking assistants for Seasons 8 and 9 are in no particular order.

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