

# Invictus Gaming is victorious

## LEAGUE OF LEGENDS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS COME TO CLOSE

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Another World Championship has come to a close, and another champion has raised the Summoner's Cup in victory. This year, Chinese representative Invictus Gaming proved too strong for western hopefuls, claiming victory in a crushing final match against European representatives Fnatic.

This year's League of Legends World Championship saw upset after upset, setting up one of the most exciting knockout stages since the earliest days of professional League of Legends.

Coming out of a turbulent group stage, the first major phase of the World's tournament, two tournament favorites remained. Kt Rolster, the first seed from Korea, was thought to be one of the strongest contenders coming out of groups with a 5-1 record. Despite this and Korea's historical dominance throughout World's history, Invictus Gaming was able to defeat them in a bloody 3-2 victory.

The other tournament favorite, Chinese powerhouse Royal Never Give Up featuring the star talent of Jian 'Uzi' Zi-Hao, was widely considered to be one of the best League of Legends players in the world. Despite this, they fared little better in their quarterfinals match versus European representatives G2 Esports. Once

again fighting through five full games, they were able to dethrone Royal Never Give Up in a shocking upset.

"I finally reached to semifinals," said Kim 'Wadid' Bae-in, G2 Esports support, in a post-game interview. "I'm not sure is it true, like, is it real actually? We did it. I'm so happy."

In an equally shocking game, the sole remaining North American representatives in the quarterfinals, Cloud9, were able to defeat the final Korean representatives Afreeca Freecs 3-0. This marked the first time since 2013, the first year Korea was invited to participate in the tournament, that a Korean team would not reach the semifinals.

The match would also mark the first time a North American team would reach the semifinals since 2011. The win was a continuation of Cloud9's incredible rise to dominance which began months before during the summer split of the NA LCS.

In the final best of five of the World's quarterfinals, European representative Fnatic defeated Edward Gaming, another Chinese team, 3-1. This marked an unprecedented time for the World's Championship. Historically, western teams had struggled to find success at World's, unable to gain ground on their Asian

counterparts. This year, however, would see only a single Asian team, Invictus Gaming, reach the semifinals with the other three spots filled by western teams.

The first semifinal match featured Invictus Gaming against G2 Esports. Though they fought valiantly against their Chinese opponents, G2 Esports would fall to Invictus Gaming 3-0, locking in the first finals representative and keeping China's hope of a World's victory alive.

The second match saw the showdown of two of the west's most prominent teams. Fnatic, one of League of Legends oldest professional teams as well as season one's World's victor, was pitted against Cloud9.

"This is the best opportunity that NA has ever had and maybe will ever have," said Eric 'Licorice' Ritchie, Cloud9's top laner. "If there's ever a year for NA to make finals it's this one."

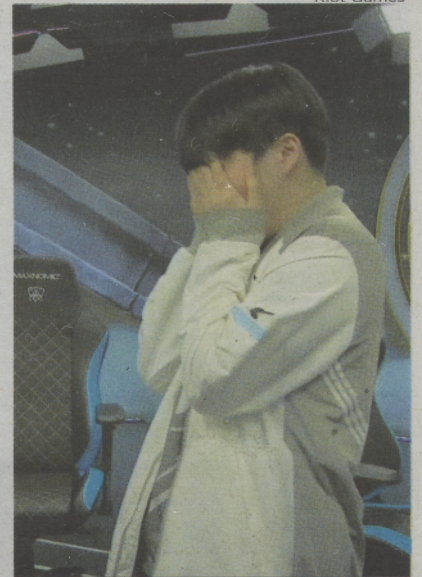
Though Cloud9 had previously shown an unheard-of strength considering the youth of their roster, they were unable to find footing against Fnatic.

Though known for the solo lane strength of Ritchie and Nicolaj 'Jensen' Jensen, they were no match for their Fnatic counterparts, with especially strong performances from Fnatic mid laner Rasmus 'Caps' Winther and Mads 'Broxah' Brock-Pedersen securing them a 3-0 win.

With the two final teams ready to face off, only one last set of three games was left to determine who would walk away with the prize.

The moment was especially important for Invictus Gaming. Though they represented China as the region's second seed and featuring the talents of mid-laner Song 'Rookie' Eui-jin, who many considered to be the best mid-laner in the world, many believed that their weaknesses as a team would prove too great to earn them a World's title. Though they had grown enormously even throughout the tournament itself, Fnatic was still seen as the favorite.

These doubts were quickly put to rest. Throughout the best of five, Invictus Gaming tore through their



The win was particularly meaningful for mid-laner Song 'Rookie' Eui-jin, the veteran player of Invictus Gaming, who had previously struggled to find success on the international stage.

opponents. Kang 'TheShy' Seung-lok and jungler Gao 'Ning' Zhen-Ning were the standouts, though attack damage carry Yu 'JackeyLove' Wen-Bo also performed admirably.

Smashing Fnatic in a 3-0 series, the Chinese team more than proved themselves worthy of raising the Summoner Cup, marking the first time a Chinese team would have that honor.

Speaking through a translator in a postgame interview, Zhen-Ning said, "He's super happy about the fact that he actually proved himself, that he's the best jungler in the world. He was an AD Carry player and then switched to the jungle position and was always trying to prove [himself], but with this trophy right now, it is a statement."

For those returning home in defeat, the only thing left to do is to look towards next year. The stakes will be especially high for North American teams, as, with Invictus Gaming's victory this year, North America is the only major region left that has not claimed a World's victory.

Will 2019 be the year the summoner's cup finally finds a home in North America? Only time will tell.



Invictus Gaming raises the Summoner's Cup, the prize for victory at the World Championship. Despite the region's dominance at other international events, this year marked the first time a Chinese team was able to take the Cup home.