



GameStart Asia wraps up its second edition on a high note

16 November 2015, Singapore – The second chapter of Southeast Asia’s premier game convention closed on Sunday evening after seeing over 17,000 visitors pass through the doors of Suntec City Convention Centre Hall 401 and 402. This year, the event was larger and held over three days instead of two, with the addition of a Business Conference and VIP Day on Friday 13 November. The halls were then opened to the public on Saturday and Sunday.

GameStart organiser Elicia Lee said, "The atmosphere was really great at the show this year. I think the crowd appreciated the fact that the show was a lot bigger, with more room to move around, and of course more games, demo booths, merchandise and activities both on the stage and off."

The inaugural GameStart conference was supported by WDA and covered multi-faceted topics relevant to game developers such as nurturing talent, access to government support, bringing the game to market and protecting intellectual property. Attendees heard from industry insiders such as keynote speaker Hugues Ricour from Ubisoft, Albert Lim from Games Solution Centre - a MDA and NYP collaboration that helps incubate local game developers - as well as an insightful panel with Mike Ross from Twitch, Mark Julio from Mad Catz and Louis Vigil from Splitmedia Labs on how eSports and live streaming are changing the dynamics of gaming.

Eager for loot

The first two gamers started queuing to get into the halls at 10.15pm on Friday night, playing games through the night to pass the time. "It's all part of the thrill of preparing for GameStart," said one of them. "Exhaustion is something I can put aside for now!" The first 500 ticket holders to enter the halls were entitled to random loot bags containing swag such as Mad Catz S.T.R.I.K.E TE Keyboards, Armaggeddon Avatar Pro 9 Headsets, console and PC games.

Once the doors opened, enthusiastic gamers formed queues to be the first in Singapore to experience the *Star Wars*™: Battle Pod™ and Sony’s Playstation VR headset peripheral, which featured genres ranging from horror demo **Kitchen** to nerd fantasy **Summer Lesson** to fully showcase the technology’s potential capabilities. Also seeing constant swarms were the Bandai booth, **Street Fighter 5** and Witching Hour’s **Masquerada** demo booths.

"The Battle Pod was brought in on a whim, and to be honest, we didn't know what the response would be like," said Yonk, Founder of Geek Culture, who were responsible for bringing in the popular arcade machine. "Then we had folks with lightsabers drop by. And Star Wars fans who re-queued to have their experience recorded. But it wasn't until we had a full size BB-8 and several members of the 501st descend upon our booth on Sunday, that we realised that in some way, every attendee at GameStart came together to help celebrate a love for video games and pop culture. We just happened to be a part of something bigger."

Large crowds gathered around the main stage to watch the **Hearthstone** and **Tom Clancy’s Rainbow Six Siege** showmatches, as well as highly entertaining sessions with the producers of **Just Cause 3**, **Gundam** and **Gravity Rush**. **Capcom’s** Yoshinori Ono and Tomoaki Ayano, who was dressed as **Street Fighter** character Chunli, drew the largest audience, and some lucky people walked away with PS4s and other prizes.

Performing together for the first time in Singapore, established musicians Norihiko Hibino, best known for 'Snake Eater', **Metal Gear Solid 3's** main theme, and AYAKI, together known as Gentle Love, treated the crowd to their innovative arrangements of popular video game music on saxophone and piano.

Merchandise from Blizzard, fan art from the Liongeeks booth, t-shirts from Xmashed Gear and socks specially designed for the show by Freshly Pressed were snapped up and visitors watched live sculpting demos of **Street Fighter** Character Ryu and GameStart mascot Alyse at the Kinetiquettes booth.

"GameStart is a success once again and we are really satisfied and pleased with the result the show has achieved. Alone we can achieve so little, together we can do so much. We hope to see more publishers participating next year and look forward to be here again," said Rainel Tan, General Manager at BANDAI NAMCO Entertainment Asia, whose booth saw many waiting to try their hands at games such as Just Cause 3 and Naruto Shippuden Ultimate Ninja Storm.

Everyone's a winner

Throughout the weekend, event visitors had plenty of opportunities to win prizes, with the individual exhibitors conducting competitions and giveaways throughout the day, such as Blizzard raining items down from their two-storey booth. All ticket holders are also entitled to enter the GameStart lucky draw with fantastic prizes from Obutto, Razer, Armageddon, Secret Lab and more.

One of the event's most ardent supporters – Darren - celebrated his birthday at the event on Sunday with his parents and friends, and was presented with gifts from the event organisers and Sony PlayStation. "We are nothing without our supporters," said Elicia. "GameStart is all about the community and we're thrilled that Darren decided to celebrate his special day with the team and everyone else who was there."

Competitive Gaming

eSports played a more significant role in this year's event, a reflection of its status as a fast-growing industry. The SEA Starcraft 2 Legacy of the Void Beta Anniversary Tournament Grand Finals saw Blysk from Singapore beat EnDerr from the Philippines in a thrilling finale, and on Sunday, Korean Street Fighter player Poongko emerged victorious at the Capcom Pro Tour Asia Finals, with a large and enthusiastic crowd cheering him on.

The Xtr3me3 Champions Cup 2015 was by the far the biggest FIFA tournament in South East Asia to date. "The turnout was very strong and it was good to see everyone working hard and determined to win the grand prize of \$2000," said Phirkhan aka Xtr3me3. "FIFA is a soccer game, an international sport watched by people all around the world, and we want to show the world that virtual soccer is as fun and as tough as reality soccer."

Event visitors enjoyed a visual treat as the cosplayers were out in full force to vie for a coveted spot on the cosplay runway showcase. The three guest cosplayers Johnny (Junker's Cosplay) from the US, Tuna from Korea and Karin (Acanthastar Cosplay) also from the US, spent Saturday combing the show floor to select the best dressed to return the following day to participate in the showcase. Each judge then picked their favourite from the 18 shortlisted participants on the final day. The three guests also had meet-and-greet sessions with their fans at the Neo Tokyo Project booth.

“We are truly grateful to all our exhibitors, partners and sponsors for their support, and especially to everyone who attended GameStart 2015,” said Elicia. With the feedback that we have gathered from you, we promise to make next year’s event even better!”

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