



## **WISE Ventures Esports rebrands as Version1 and unveils VALORANT roster**

*The new team competes as Version1 in Riot Games' 5v5 VALORANT Champions Tour*

*Visit Version1's new website [version1.gg](https://version1.gg)*

**Eagan, Minn. February 9, 2021 --** Today, the Minnesota-based esports organization known as WISE Ventures Esports is announcing its official rebrand to [Version1](https://version1.gg) and the addition of a professional VALORANT team, the third team it's added since the company's founding in July 2019.

The new team is competing in the first season of the [VALORANT](https://www.riotgames.com/en/valorant-champions-tour) Champions Tour. VALORANT, developed and published by [Riot Games](https://www.riotgames.com/), is a multiplayer, tactical first-person shooter game. The character-based, five-versus-five game is free to play and has quickly grown popular since its release in June 2020. According to [data from Stream Hatchet](https://www.streamhatchet.com/), since September 2020, total hours watched of the game across all major live streaming platforms has increased 39 percent and its average viewer count is at more than 82,000. In January 2021, VALORANT was the 14th most popular category across all live streaming platforms based on hours watched.

"With Riot Games at the helm, we're confident VALORANT will thrive as an esports just as League of Legends has over the past several years," says Jonathan Wilf, ownership partner and president of Version1.

### **Unifying as Version1**

Like Version1's Rocket League team, the VALORANT roster will compete under the parent organization name, Version1, as will future teams. Version1, which is owned by the Wilf family and Gary Vaynerchuk, also operates [Minnesota Røkk](https://www.rokk.com/) of the [Call of Duty League](https://www.callofduty.com/league). The addition of a VALORANT roster marks the second time in seven months Version1 has expanded into a new title. In August 2020, it added a team in the North American division of Rocket League Championship Series X.

"The timing is right to align our organizational initiatives under the Version1 brand. With three competitive esports teams and plans ahead for continued growth and diversification of our content, we've reached an important milestone," says Brett Diamond, chief operating officer of Version1. "Support from fans of Røkk and Version1 has been amazing, and we look forward to continuing to build our fan community nationally and here in Minnesota."

Just as it's built an enthusiastic fan base among gamers, VALORANT is attracting elite talent as an esports, drawing pros from other competitive leagues, including Counter-Strike: Global Offensive and Overwatch League. As players migrate, esports organizations are taking notice. Version1 joins 100Thieves, Andbox, Team Envy and Evil Geniuses, among others, in establishing a team in Riot Games' VALORANT Champions Tour.

## Building the roster

In addition to top VALORANT players, the field of free agents includes professionals established in other esports whose technique translates to VALORANT after mastering other shooter games. Version1's VALORANT roster includes:

- **Anthony “Vanity” Malaspina** recently transitioned to professional VALORANT following a successful career competing in Counter-Strike with Chaos Esports Club. He is Version1's team captain and the in-game leader; his most notable agents are Brimstone and Omen. Vanity won five events with Chaos, including the Intel Extreme Masters XV - Beijing Online: North America after defeating Triumph Gaming in Grand Finals, 3-1.
- **Jordan “Zellsis” Montemurro** is a former Counter-Strike professional who transitioned to VALORANT after competing with teams including Singularity, Lazarus and Cloud9. Zellsis is a duelist and flex on the Version1 squad. His most notable agents are Phoenix, Reyna and Sage.
- **Keven “PLAYER1” Champagne** joins Version1 in the role of the sentinel donning agents like Cypher and Killjoy. PLAYER1 previously competed on a star-studded Gen.G roster alongside Effys during the VALORANT Beta. PLAYER1 has seen early success in VALORANT, placing first five times, most notably at the T1 x Nerd Street Gamers Invitational and the Nerd Street Gamers - Open #2.
- **Loic “Effys” Sauvageau** joins in the support and flex role using agents including Sove and Breach. Before Version1, he competed alongside PLAYER1 at Gen.G where he earned multiple first place finishes.
- **Erik “Penny” Penny** is an up and comer in competitive VALORANT who joins Version1 as a duelist using agents like Phoenix, Reyna and Jett. He competed in Counter-Strike previously and took second place in the Intel Extreme Masters XV - Beijing Online: North America against Triumph Gaming.
- **Ian “Immi” Harding** joins Version1 as the team's head coach. Previously, Immi coached NRG and Singularity in Counter-Strike and prior to that played professionally for Endpoint. His notable wins include the iBUYPOWER Invitational - Spring 2018 with NRG and the ESL Premiership - Summer 2019 with Endpoint.

Prior to this announcement, the Version1 team competed in qualifiers in January and February for VALORANT Champions Tour as team NeverDone, which is the tagline of the new parent company.

## The rebrand to Version1

After establishing Minnesota Røkkkr's fan base over the past year and a half, WISE Ventures Esports – which was always a temporary parent company name – looked to unify under a permanent brand identity to streamline operations and facilitate continued growth.

The name Version1 is both symbolic and a practical reflection of the young organization's philosophy and work ethic. Even as a relative newcomer in the space, the ownership, leadership and staff at Version1 have demonstrated a commitment to esports for the long term. Since day

one, Version1 has proactively pursued opportunities to establish its brand and take on new challenges to continue to build on its foundation.

Since it was founded, Version1 has expanded its social following to nearly 160,000 across all platforms. It has hosted Warzone tournaments featuring the world's top streamers and professionals; organized in-person watch parties for local Røkkkr fans and transitioned to virtual events in Discord to safely gather during the pandemic. In January 2020, Røkkkr hosted the first-ever Call of Duty League live event, welcoming 10,000 attendees, all 12 Call of Duty League teams and dozens of media to the Armory in Minneapolis for Call of Duty League Launch Weekend.

Version1 has grown to a staff of over 20 employees, ranging from professionals in esports, brand strategy, communications, marketing, creative, business operations and partnerships sales. Future growth plans include signing content creators and streamers and expanding Version1's content and production capabilities.

Since July 2019, the company has established a significant milestone: bringing the first-ever multi-property esports organization to Minnesota. Today's announcement demonstrates Version1's commitment to expand its fanbase nationally and beyond as its three teams compete on a global stage.

The Version1 headquarters and state-of-the-art training facility is in Eagan, Minnesota on the Viking Lakes campus, adjacent to the Twin Cities Orthopedic Performance Center where the Minnesota Vikings practice and train, and down the road from the new Omni Viking Lakes Hotel.

*For more information about Version1's story, its teams and staff and to purchase and pre-order new team merchandise, visit the newly-launched website, created in partnership with the Minneapolis-based agency [Folklore Digital](#), at [version1.gg](#).*

*Follow our organization @version1gg on all channels. Follow Minnesota Røkkkr on all platforms as @ROKKR or @rokkkr\_mn.*

### **About Version1**

Version1 is a multi-property esports organization headquartered in Eagan, Minnesota. We are proudly owned by Minnesota Vikings owners the Wilf family and entrepreneur and investor Gary Vaynerchuk. Our teams include [Minnesota Røkkkr](#) in the [Call of Duty League](#) and Version1 in Psyonix's [Rocket League Championship Series X](#) and Riot Games' [VALORANT Champions Tour](#). To find more information about the organization, its staff and teams, career opportunities and to purchase merchandise, visit [version1.gg](#).

### **MEDIA CONTACT**

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