

Computer Games Become Korean Obsession

Contributed by Tom McGregor
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The Financial Times reports on the growing fascination of computer games for South Koreans. Cable channels broadcast e-game matches live-on-air. Contestants will sit behind a computer playing Starcraft on stages at large stadiums in front of thousands of screaming fans.

Lee Yun-yeol, famous for wearing track jumpsuits during his computer game matches, has a legion of female groupies.

As reported by the FT, "in the world's most wired country, computer gaming has become mainstream and 'pro-gamers' are treated like pop stars and come armed with ultra-trendy hairstyles, lucrative sponsorship deals, burly bodyguards, and groupies."

Recently, Mr. Lee participated in the Pro-League 2007 All-Star Championships at Seoul Stadium and battled against Chung Tae-ran. Even though he guaranteed victory before his match, he eventually lost to his opponent. Nonetheless, Mr. Lee still has a \$750,000, three-year sponsorship contract with Samsung.

Mr. Lee didn't lose his confidence from the defeat. He told FT, "I'm going to become the best player in the world. When people hear the word pro-gamer, I want them to think of me." tmcgregordallas@yahoo.com