

Why inviting teams to the Valorant Champions Tour ruins the competitive scene

All you need is *that* golden ticket.



Credit: Riot Games

When Riot Games announced the [30 partnered teams](#) competing in this year's Valorant Champions Tour, it was met with its fair share of criticism. It raised fans' eyebrows, lamenting on unfair representation, Riot Games' opaque and vague selection process, especially when their favourite teams didn't make the cut.

It omitted several of the VCT's staples in years prior, like Optic Gaming and G2, and has even pushed some organisations like Rise, Dignitas, beastcoast and Akrew to disband their rosters and leave Valorant altogether, leaving many pros orgless and stranded.

According to Riot Games, the selection process was "incredibly competitive", and involved "written applications, in-depth interviews, and financial reviews that spanned months".

While we do understand how it has the potential to revolutionise the Valorant competitive ecosystem, here are three reasons on why we think it doesn't work.

Based on selection, rather than merit



Credit: Riot Games

In a statement regarding the partnership selection process, Riot Games said that a team's past competitive experience was not a key consideration in their decision. They instead focused on an organisation's ability to create the most compelling VCT for fans in the future.

This was arguably one of the key factors in the omission of Champions 2022 runner-up OpTic from this year's VCT. Despite being one of the most consistent teams for the whole of last year – attaining a top three finish at every international LAN they've participated in, results didn't matter. It broke up their star roster, featuring the likes of Valorant phenom Jacob "yay" Whiteaker.

For players who have been tirelessly working towards the game's biggest prize, it comes as a sudden blow when you hear that your organisation will no longer be part of Valorant – another obstacle in the tough journeys many pros already face. Just ask Diondre "YaBoiDre" Bond and Jason "neptune"

Tran, who were originally part of [New York Fury's now defunct Valorant roster](#). Making matters worse – being told the news hours before a pro match, leaving a sour taste for those eagerly following their journey in the MEL Premiership S3 last July.

Unequal region representation



Credit: Riot Games

This year VCT sees 10 teams in each of the international leagues, which are split into three regions: EMEA (most of Europe), Americas, and the Pacific.

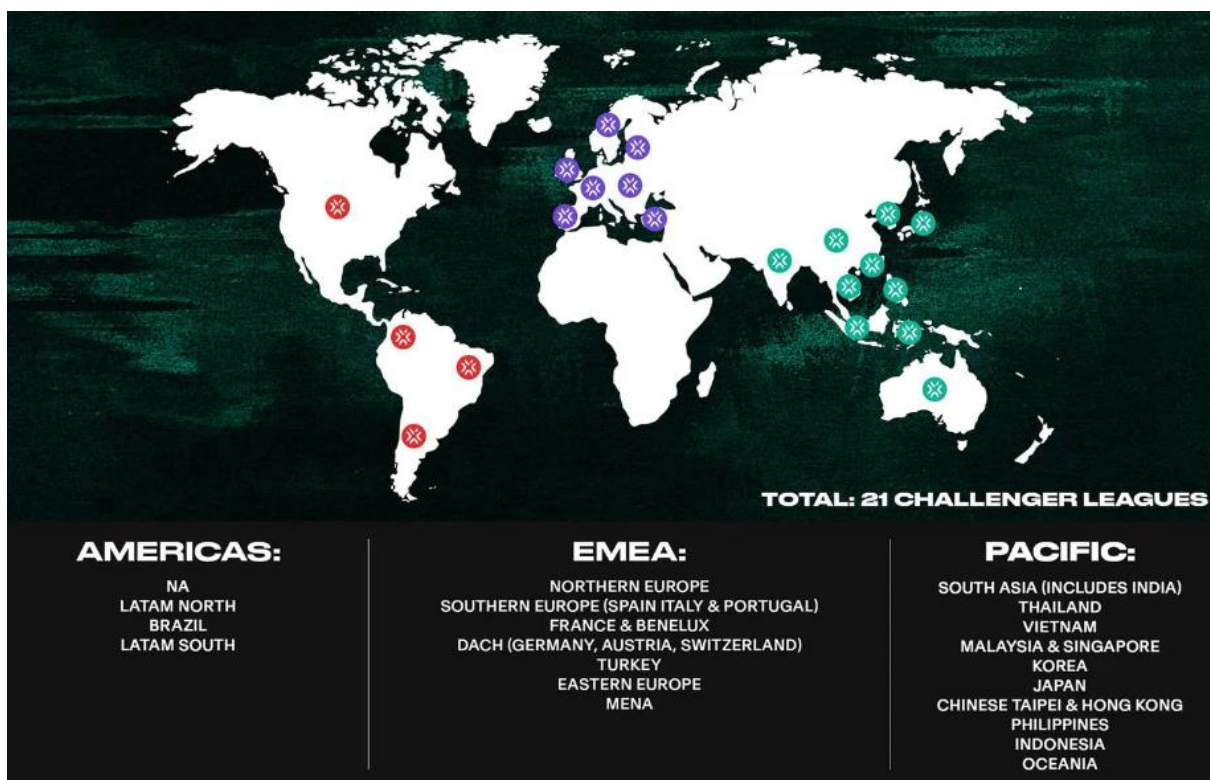
While the list of teams selected in each league come from different countries, condensing them into regions as a whole has led to a smaller representation of certain Valorant-rich continents. For the Americas, five of the organisations selected come from North America, with the entire South America and Caribbean having to fight for the remaining five places. In the future as NA gets more

exposure and airtime, you might risk losing the representation of LATAM and Brazilian teams at bigger events – setting a gloomy precedence for what could happen.

Even though promoted teams don't stay in their leagues permanently, a two-year stint for them makes it harder to knock partnered teams off their respective perches.

Moving forward, we think that Riot Games should tweak the number of spots available in each international league each year, decided based on the overall performance of teams within a region (including regional and domestic leagues). This way, it ensures that teams that perform well and prove their worth do get a better shot at the show – TLDR: equity.

Gruelling ladder climb



Credit: Riot Games

Featuring a whopping 21 Challengers leagues this year, each will begin with open qualifiers, culminating in a playoffs tournament to crown a winner for each league. But the road doesn't stop here. Each of the winning teams will take part in the all-new Challengers Ascension series, a season-

ending competition where teams battle for what they came here for - a spot in their region's international leagues. This makes it incredibly arduous and difficult for non-partnered teams to make it to the top, as they are all fighting for that single coveted seat.

It doesn't help that they could be coming up against established household organisations like G2, who didn't make the cut for EMEA's International league. In theory, this gives smaller teams the chance of climbing all the way to the top. In practice – David must deal with Goliath, or probably multiple Goliaths – before even dreaming about the summit.

This year's season kicks off on [26 January, in Korea](#). With much of the community hanging on the fence, only time will tell if competitive Valorant is heading towards the right direction.