

NRG Sells Rocket League Team Naming Rights to The General

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NRG Esports has sold the naming rights to its Rocket League team to The General Insurance in what the sides say is a first-of-its-kind partnership in North America.

The deal is being announced this morning and will see its team that competes in the Rocket League Championship Series, currently just called NRG, change its name to The General NRG for all future competitive and non-competitive events. Financial terms were unreleased, but SBJ Esports previously reported that NRG was asking six figures annually as part of a multi-year deal.

Assets include new jerseys that will be The General branded, as well as The General having presenting rights around the team's "The Grid" broadcasts, which are weekly streams where teams that compete in the RLCS produce their own specialized feed for their fans.

Shaquille O'Neal is an investor in NRG and a longtime endorser of The General, and the sides are crediting him with helping spark the idea that led to the deal. SBJ first reported in July last year that NRG was shopping naming rights to its Rocket League team.

Kale Sligh, VP/marketing for The General, told SBJ that the company bought the deal because it is refreshing its brand, looking to get into gaming and saw a connection between its auto insurance products and the Rocket League game, which is cars playing soccer. NRG's Rocket League team is one of the most successful historically in North America, having won the World Championship in 2019 and 2021.

"We over-index in gaming (in terms of its customer base), so we had always kind of kept our ear to the ground on opportunities in gaming, and for a couple years we didn't have many opportunities, but Shaq obviously has a partnership with NRG," Sligh explained. "That kind of brought the idea up and then I met with (NRG President Brett Lautenbach) and got to know about the team, the dominance of the NRG team, and obviously there's something there with car insurance and cars. ... A lot of synergy."

The deal starts immediately and the new jerseys will first be seen during the RLCS Season X regional event of the Spring Split. The sides say they are in planning on further fan-focused activations.

The General does do some work with agencies on its marketing including IdeaQuest, which helped set up the deal.

Sligh said The General's key performance indicators for this deal will be brand impressions and brand consideration. He said it has already started doing consumer research with gamers heading into the deal to see where it stands as a benchmark to compare to as the deal goes on.

"The connection from Shaquille to The General made this such a natural fit," Lautenbach said. "Then talking to the folks over there and their vision, level of involvement and how collaborative they were, it was a no-brainer for us to really set course on this and find a way to bring it to life."

