N°: 19

By Lodi GAMING



CALL OF DUTY'S NEXT CHALLENGE IS KNOWING WHEN TO LEAVE

From screens to experiences: Xbox expands Its franchise strategy

An LFL pause raises bigger questions about player pathways

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SUMMARY

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PRÉSIDENT ARRISSALA SA : HASSAN SENTISSI EL IDRISSI
DIRECTEUR DE PUBLICATION : ADNANE BENCHAKROUN

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CALL OF DUTY'S NEXT CHALLENGE IS KNOWING WHEN TO LEAVE

Call of Duty has detailed the progression systems behind Modern Warfare 4's DMZ, ahead of early access scheduled for October 20. The extraction mode asks players to balance exploration, combat and valuable loot against one uncomfortable question: is another fight worth risking the journey home?

Three Dates, Different Access Conditions

Winning a firefight is not necessarily the same as winning a deployment. That distinction sits at the heart of the DMZ experience described in Call of Duty's October 9 briefing: enter a dangerous environment, pursue objectives, collect equipment and extract with the rewards.

The publisher lists three separate milestones for Modern Warfare 4. Campaign early access is scheduled for October 16, followed by DMZ early access on October 20 and the game's launch on October 23. Early access applies to eligible digital preorders of the Standard or Vault editions, rather than automatically covering every purchase.

The announcement lists Xbox Series X|S, Xbox on PC, PlayStation 5, Battle.net, Steam and Nintendo Switch 2. It also warns that platform availability, start dates and actual playing time may change. Those qualifications matter more than a promotional countdown, particularly for players checking access across different storefronts.

DMZ's attraction is the tension between ambition and survival. Players can explore alone or in squads, fight computer-controlled enemies and rival players, gather resources and complete objectives. Extraction is the step that turns a successful expedition into something they can carry forward.

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FROM SCREENS TO EXPERIENCES: XBOX EXPANDS ITS FRANCHISE STRATEGY

Xbox has announced XP, a division dedicated to extending its franchises beyond games. Led by Kayleen Walters, the initiative brings films, merchandise, partnerships and physical experiences into one structure, and raises a bigger question about what gaming brands are becoming.

Franchises Become Entertainment Worlds

Xbox wants its franchises to reach people even when they are not holding a controller. In an October 8 announcement, the company introduced XP, a division focused on experiences beyond the games themselves, with Kayleen Walters moving from Mojang to become its president.

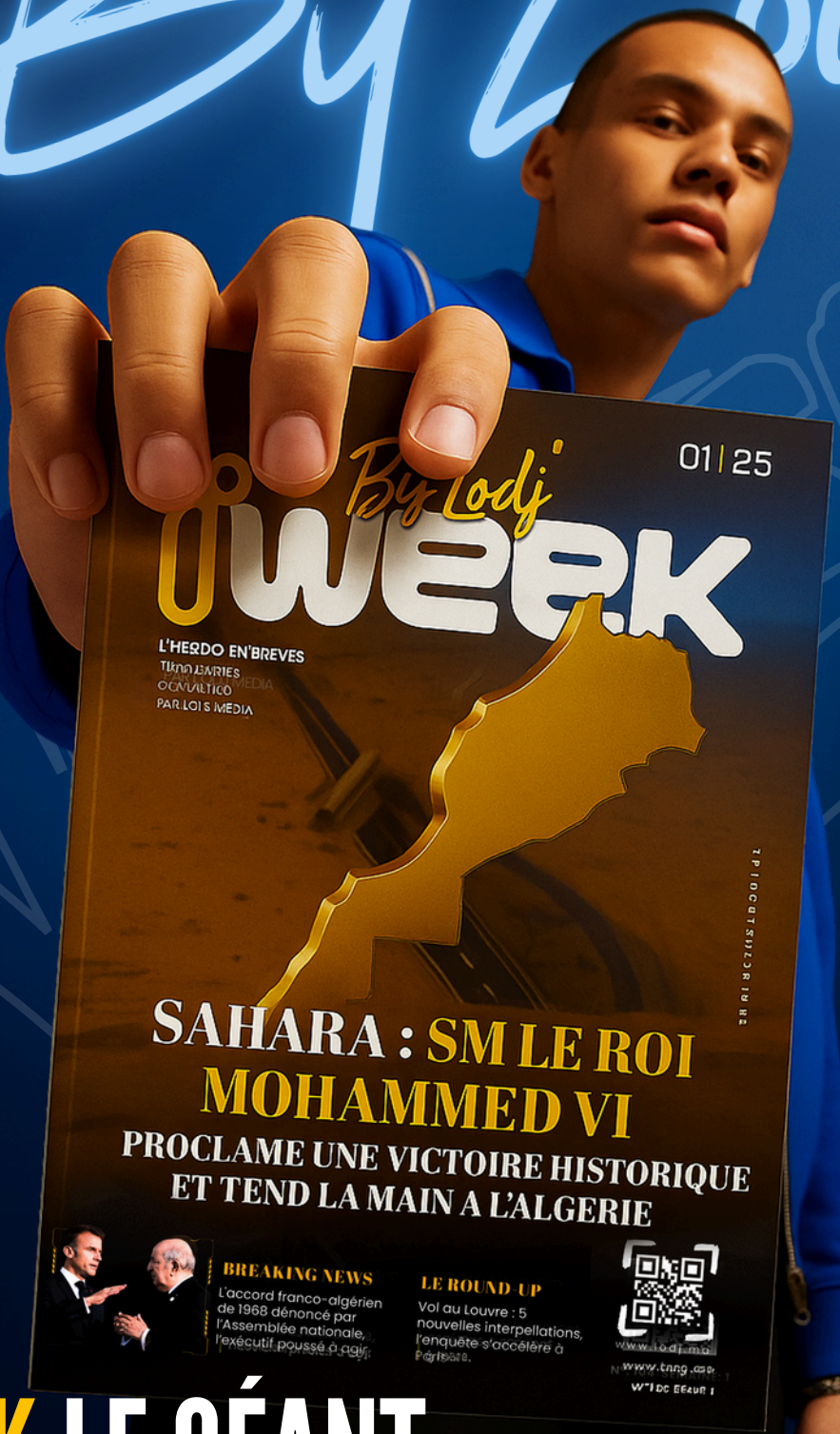
The announcement also names Maria Angelidou-Smith as the incoming CEO of Mojang and Minecraft. Together, the appointments signal an organisational change, not simply another licensing deal attached to a familiar character.

XP takes its name from experience points, the progression currency familiar to players. Its remit covers four areas: Xbox Pictures for film and television, Xbox Products for licensing and merchandise, Xbox Partnerships for sponsors and brands, and Xbox Places for events and location-based experiences.

That last category includes theme parks and other physical attractions. However, a stated investment area is not the same as a confirmed attraction, opening date or location. The announcement should not be read as evidence that an Xbox destination is coming to any particular country.

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AN LFL PAUSE RAISES BIGGER QUESTIONS ABOUT PLAYER PATHWAYS



Team Vitality is pausing its participation in France's League of Legends competition and closing Vitality.Bee, according to Esports Insider's reporting. The organisation describes the decision as a pause, not a permanent departure, but it adds to uncertainty around an important competitive development pathway.

A pause with immediate consequences

An esports organisation can pause its plans. A player's career is harder to put on hold. That is the tension behind Team Vitality's reported decision to suspend its LFL activities and close Vitality.Bee, a team that has competed in the Ligue Française de League of Legends since its launch in 2019.

Esports Insider's October 11 report dates Vitality's announcement to October 9 and says the organisation describes the move as a pause rather than a permanent withdrawal. That distinction matters: the closure of the current operation should not be presented as proof that Vitality will never return.

Nevertheless, the immediate development comes amid other departures. The same report says Ici Japon Corp Esport announced on October 7 that it would cease operations at the end of 2026. Joblife had already ended its League of Legends division in September.

These are separate organisational decisions. Their proximity raises questions about the competition's stability, but it does not establish that every team is leaving for the same reason. Financial pressures, strategic choices and league uncertainty should not be collapsed into one explanation without supporting evidence.

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OCTOBER'S GAME PASS LINEUP PUTS DISCOVERY BESIDE BLOCKBUSTERS

Xbox's October Game Pass update places Battlefield 6 alongside games with very different ambitions, from a reflective road trip to dungeon exploration. The lineup illustrates the appeal of subscription discovery, while reminding players that dates, plans, platforms and regional availability still determine what they can actually play.

Catalogue Access Is Not Ownership

A familiar blockbuster may draw players into a subscription. A less familiar game may give them a reason to explore it. Xbox's October 7 Game Pass announcement brings those two functions together, mixing established franchises with experiences that would otherwise compete for attention individually.

According to Xbox Wire, Echo Weaver and Forever Ago joined on October 8, with access listed for Game Pass Ultimate and PC Game Pass. Neon Abyss 2 arrived the same day and is also listed for Game Pass Premium.

The next group is scheduled for October 13. It includes Battlefield 6, Deep Dish Dungeon and Valor Mortis, all listed for Ultimate and PC Game Pass. Xbox identifies the latter two as day-one additions; Battlefield 6 should not be described as a new release simply because it enters the catalogue.

More additions follow on October 15, including Bluey's Happy Snaps and Chained Beasts. Beyond These Stars is scheduled for October 16, with PC specified as its platform. These distinctions are essential: appearing in one announcement does not mean every game supports every device or subscription tier.

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GLEN SCHOFIELD CHALLENGES GAMING'S AI SAVINGS STORY



Veteran developer Glen Schofield has questioned the idea that AI is the strongest answer to rising game-development costs. His October 8 GamesIndustry.biz interview brings creative decision-making back into a debate often dominated by promises of faster production.

Faster tasks do not guarantee cheaper projects

Making one task faster does not necessarily make a game cheaper. In an October 8 interview with GamesIndustry.biz, Glen Schofield argues that creative decisions can currently offer greater savings than AI. It is a pointed contribution to the debate, but not a measured verdict on every tool or studio.

Schofield brings a long development career to that argument. His work includes senior roles connected to Call of Duty, Dead Space and The Callisto Protocol, as well as leadership at Sledgehammer Games and Striking Distance Studios. He announced his retirement earlier in 2026 and is now concentrating on art.

That experience gives his perspective weight. It does not turn an interview into an industry-wide productivity study. The reporting available here does not establish a comparative figure showing how much money AI saves, or fails to save, across different types of game production.

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POKÉMON'S COLLECTING RITUAL ROLLS INTO SKATE CULTURE

Santa Cruz's reported Pokémon TCG skateboard collection brings card-inspired artwork and surprise packaging into skate culture. The crossover shows how the appeal of collecting can travel beyond cards, but uncertain contents and potential resale hype deserve as much attention as the designs.

The Surprise Becomes Part of the Product

The familiar Pokémon collecting moment is moving beyond the booster pack. PokéBeach reported on October 6 that Santa Cruz Skateboards is preparing a Pokémon Trading Card Game collection for October 17, bringing card-inspired graphics onto boards and accompanying apparel.

The reported range includes 30 Pokémon card designs and three boards described as secret rares. The launch follows an earlier tease, making the October reveal the new development rather than the first indication that a collaboration was coming.

Its cultural hook is straightforward: artwork associated with a trading card becomes something that can be displayed, collected or connected to skate identity. Pokémon already bridges games, animation and collecting. A skateboard adds another way for fans to express that connection.

The packaging is part of the appeal. According to the reported details, boards come in opaque bags, meaning the design is hidden before opening. This is a blind-bag format: the buyer selects the product category without knowing the exact version inside.

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GAME OF THE WEEK



Resident Evil 2: Deluxe Edition
Coming Oct 16, 2026

An unprecedented biological disaster that strikes Raccoon City drags rookie police officer Leon S. Kennedy and Claire Redfield, a college student who has come to town to visit her brother, into a tragedy unlike any they've ever faced. Amid this extreme situation where the living dead devour humans, will the two of them manage to survive?

QUICKIES

BY LODJ

Yandex Recovers to Beat Spirit in BLAST Slam VIII Final



Team Yandex won the BLAST Slam VIII grand final with a 3–1 victory over Team Spirit, Esports Insider reported in an article updated on October 12. Spirit won the opening game, but Yandex recovered to take the next three. The reversal turned an early disadvantage into a decisive series win.

The report highlights contributions from Ammar "ATF" Assaf and Alimzhan "Watson" Islambekov during the comeback. It also describes the result as Yandex's second consecutive major tournament title at the start of the 2026–2027 Dota 2 season.



Rockbeasts adds Mercer and Riegel ahead of January release

Rockbeasts has announced Matthew Mercer and Sam Riegel as additions to its voice cast, alongside a January 2027 release window. The news appeared on PlayStation Blog on October 8. Both performers are associated with Critical Role, the tabletop entertainment project that has built an audience around character performance and collaborative storytelling.

Their involvement provides a natural bridge between tabletop fandom and video games. However, the casting should not be expanded into a claim that the entire Critical Role organisation endorses or co-produces Rockbeasts.

Rainbow Six Mobile shutdown reports leave key questions open



Rainbow Six Mobile is reportedly heading for closure in January 2027, according to coverage from GamesIndustry.biz, Techloy and GameSpot. The reports do not agree on the precise date. GamesIndustry.biz and Techloy identify January 15, while the accessible GameSpot search listing gives January 16. Without a primary notice clarifying the timing and time zone, neither date should be presented here as definitive.

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CYBERPUNK'S REPORTED PARAMOUNT DEAL MOVES NIGHT CITY TOWARDS CINEMA



Paramount Pictures is developing a live-action film set in the Cyberpunk 2077 universe, according to Reuters reporting published on October 9. The reported project opens another route for the franchise beyond games, although its story, cast and release timetable remain unverified in the material reviewed.

Adapting a World Is Different From Retelling a Game

Night City may be heading towards a new kind of screen. Reuters reported on October 9 that Paramount Pictures is developing a live-action film set in the universe of CD Projekt Red's Cyberpunk 2077. GamesIndustry.biz also lists reporting describing Paramount's involvement and CD Projekt Red's co-production role.

That is a significant reported development, but the available evidence needs careful framing. The accessible material supports the existence of reporting about a film project. It does not provide a primary announcement, a verified production schedule or enough detail to describe the project as ready to shoot.

Nor does a film set in the Cyberpunk universe necessarily mean a direct retelling of the game. The wording leaves room for a different story within the setting. No plot, protagonist, casting decision or release date should be inferred from the franchise name.

For fans, that distinction can prevent expectations from racing ahead of the project. A recognisable world may provide atmosphere, themes and visual identity without reproducing a player's campaign. Whether that is the creative approach here remains unknown.

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