Competitive

In general there are two kinds of mind settings for gaming, competitive and casual. Competitive takes rankings and skill increase more serious, up to the point, where it is not simply competitive any longer but also professional gaming (for a living). This also implies a more work-like approach to gaming, including training and critical self-assessment on a daily basis. Competitive play is driven by a play-to-win mentality. Players tend to use strategies that are less forgiving for opponents, which is not to be confused with unfair play. In fact, professional or semi-professional players tend to not turn to such measures (mostly because they don't have to, as they will likely win against an amateur anyways and as many "lame" tactics have strong drawbacks). While this may seem to be not much fun, it actually depends on the mindset of a player. Some players simply thrive on the challenge and competition, while others may place more emphasis on cooperational play or do not practice gaming that seriously. Expecially the time factor can keep a player from pursuing a more competitive approach to a game.

Usually competitive play is carried or driven by some sort of ranking ("ladder"), that can even be globally recorded. Depending on the game type this might be simple frag counts, kills-deaths-ratios or more sophisticated scoring concepts such an Elo score. In turn, there are also games, that implement automatic match making, that factor in the aspect of fair matching. Two players (or teams) are placed against each other by their ranking, trying to keep the skill difference of both factions roughly equal. This avoids the problem of players being outmatched, which could give a sense of an unfair situation, which is generally unacceptable even in competitive play.

Competitive play does not necessarily require human opponents in the same match. There are other forms of competitive play, such as high score ranking or speed-running.

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