



CULTSCALE PRESENTS

FEATURE DOCUMENTARY

DRY BONES

Created by Maroun Najm

mar 2026

A person wearing a headset is seen from behind, sitting at a desk in a dimly lit room. There are several computer monitors in front of them, displaying various colorful images. The room is dark, with some light coming from the monitors and vertical light strips on the walls.

What does it cost to keep trying
when everyone around you
has stopped believing?

THE INTERNATIONAL

The Dota 2 World Championship

The biggest annual stage in Dota 2, and the horizon this film is chasing.

[TI 14 REFERENCES](#)
[OPENING ↗](#)
[FINALS ↗](#)

TI 14 · 2025

The last completed edition, used here as the concrete benchmark.

HAMBURG **SEP 4-14**

HOST CITY

EVENT DATES

63.16M

1.78M

HOURS WATCHED

PEAK CONCURRENT

CHAMPIONS

TEAM FALCONS · KSA

Won 3-2 over Xtreme Gaming in Hamburg, becoming the first regional team to lift the Aegis.

Sources: Liquipedia; Esports Charts (63.16M hours watched; 1.78M peak concurrent; ex-China).

TI 15 · 2026

The next edition, and the finish line this campaign is trying to reach.

SHANGHAI **16**

HOST CITY

TEAMS

AUG 13-16 **AUG 20-23**

ROAD TO TI

MAIN EVENT

QUALIFICATION WINDOW

Open qualifiers: Jun 9-12. Regional qualifiers: Jun 15-28.

Swiss-stage play cuts the 16-team field to the final eight before the main event.

15TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

Sources: Valve announcement; Liquipedia.

DRYBONES

Five Players. For the game. Through it all. **Still here.**



BBB

SOFT SUPPORT · LEBANON

A veteran presence on the roster, balancing everyday responsibilities with the discipline required to keep competing while trying to carry experience and stability through a high-pressure run.



NIGHTALICIOUS

HARD SUPPORT · LEBANON

An experienced support player whose years in the game give the lineup structure, memory, and emotional ballast while he keeps competing inside a narrowing window.



UNNAMED

MID · LEBANON

The youngest player on the team, bringing high-upside mechanics and the volatility of limited top-level experience to a run that could shape a career early.



WUITER

OFFLANE · TURKEY

An offlaner based in Turkey, adding composure and a different competitive path to a largely Lebanese roster while treating this campaign as a chance to reset trajectory.



YONKO

CARRY · LEBANON

The young carry at the center of the roster's shared bet, occupying the role every draft and late-game decision is ultimately built to protect.

THE FILM

A final qualifying run toward the world stage before life pulls them in different directions.

A feature documentary following DryBones through one last attempt to reach The International 2026. From the first days of boot camp to the matches that decide everything, the camera stays with them from day one.

The film lives inside the qualifier run itself, where ambition, sacrifice, and pressure are felt in real time. It carries the propulsion of an adventure, with each stage changing the horizon and the possibility of the main event waiting on the far side.

NOW · 2026
Pre-Production

SPRING 2026
Boot Camp

JUN 9-28, 2026
Qualifiers

AUG 2026
If they qualify, TI opens

THE STORY

A three-act run.

- I ACT I: THE DECISION** Five players commit to one last run before life can pull them in different directions. There is no institutional backing to hide behind. Preparation begins, the team takes shape, and the possibility becomes real enough to reorganize everything around it.
- II ACT II: THE QUALIFIERS** Boot camp hardens into a pressure cooker. Online rounds, on-site finals, exhaustion, silence, arguments, and small recoveries compress the team into the real shape of the run. This is the film's dramatic core.
- III ACT III: THE UPSIDE** If they qualify, the run opens onto The International and the main event. The scale changes at once. A regional grind becomes a global stage, and the ending lands in what the chase has changed, not only in the finish.

A group of people, likely athletes, are seen from behind, huddled together in a celebratory embrace. They are surrounded by a shower of colorful confetti (red, yellow, and white) falling from above. The scene is dimly lit, with a dark blue background and some light streaks, suggesting a stadium or arena setting.

Is it reckless to keep trying,
or is stopping what actually breaks you?

CREATIVE DIRECTION

We frame DryBones as an adventure.

GENERIC FRAME

The key creative decision is to treat DryBones not as specialist esports coverage, but as an adventure carried by competitive play. The qualifier run supplies the motion, but the real arcs come from the five players: what each is carrying, what each risks, and what it takes to keep moving together.

So the structure is both external and internal: each round opens a new threshold in the run, while work, exile, expectation, inexperience, time, and fear test the players. Competitive play stays legible because the pressure is always anchored to character, not only to results.



CASE STUDY

The King's Avatar

[Netflix ↗](#)[Series trailer ↗](#)[Film trailer ↗](#)

A strong creative case study because the action never floats free of drama: personal pressure, team role clarity, and competitive scale remain readable at once.

WHAT THE PLAY CARRIES

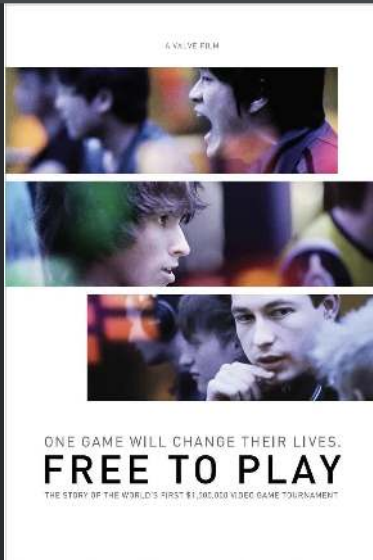
Each player needs a pressure outside the game, and the release has to be collective. If that lands, the match reads as character, not only competition.

HOW THE WORLD OPENS

Each qualifier phase should feel like a threshold, widening the world and raising what the team can reach. New rivals make the world feel larger, without turning the film into a genre exercise.

COMPARABLES

Four comps that frame the film's market position.



FREE TO PLAY ↗

CORE ACTIVATION

A native Dota story that the community watched, shared, and carried on its own.

6.8M views on Valve's official YouTube upload.

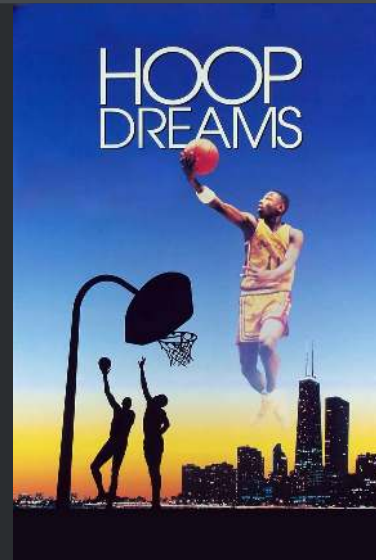


DRIVE TO SURVIVE ↗

BREAKOUT CONVERSION

A specialist competitive world opened into broader streaming behavior through access and character.

Netflix lists 8 seasons on the service in 2026.



HOOP DREAMS ↗

LANDMARK THEATRICAL DOC

Character access and competitive pressure scaled into one of nonfiction's landmark theatrical runs.

\$11.8M worldwide theatrical gross.



FREE SOLO ↗

PREMIUM EVENT DOC

A single high-stakes pursuit sold as a premium event doc with major crossover reach.

\$29.2M worldwide on a \$2M budget, plus the Oscar.

AUDIENCE

Fandom activation and audience flywheel.

THE CORE AUDIENCE

Competitive gamers who follow the road to TI. They know what a qualifier bracket looks like, they understand what BBB and NIGHTALICIOUS are risking, and they have watched enough pro Dota to read every decision the team makes on screen.

They are the first wave. They move the film through scrim channels, team group chats, and creator networks before any algorithm touches it. That is the Free to Play logic: the community behaves like a release engine.

THE BRIDGE AUDIENCE

People who have never opened Dota but know what it means to keep going past the point where everyone around them has stopped. They arrive through the core audience, but stay because the story reads as effort, sacrifice, and collective pressure rather than as insider jargon.

They turn fan activation into broader reach. That is the Drive to Survive logic: character access converts a specialist world into wider streaming interest.

The community starts the release. Story carries it outward.

PRODUCTION ARCHITECTURE

Istanbul base. Shanghai final act.

The production plan is city-based: Istanbul concentrates the shoot, the team's operating base, and the core spend. Shanghai sits beyond the qualifier run as payoff plus added rights logic.

ISTANBUL

Istanbul is the operating base for boot camp, qualifiers, and most principal photography. It keeps the film inside the team's real campaign while giving the production a practical path through Turkish services, production support, and regional access across MENA and Southeast Europe.

SHANGHAI

Shanghai sits beyond qualifiers as the run's payoff chapter. TI 2026 places that final stretch inside a major games market and strengthens the case for China-facing rights, local platform or distribution talks, and wider East Asia positioning.

Istanbul carries the core production. Shanghai adds payoff and rights upside.

FINANCING, MARKET, AND PARTNER PLAN

Four lanes. One path. Three asks.

FINANCING PLAN

A \$600K feature built on four aligned lanes.

TURKEY REBATE

SOFT MONEY

Turkey-based spend lowers cash exposure while keeping the shoot inside the team's real campaign.

PLATFORM ADVANCE

PLATFORM

Advance, minimum guarantee, or pre-buy against a competition doc with crossover reach.

ENDEMIC BRANDS

BRANDS

Selective gaming-hardware and esports integrations already native to the world on screen.

EAST ASIA RIGHTS

RIGHTS

A main-event chapter materially improves East Asia rights value.

MARKET PATH

Audience first. Platform led.

01 CORE LAUNCH

Dota community first through team channels, creators, Twitch, YouTube, Discord, and gaming media.

02 PLATFORM SCALE

Character access and competitive pressure open a premium SVOD lane beyond esports.

03 REGIONAL EXTENSION

A main-event chapter extends the platform case into East Asia rights upside.

PARTNER MANDATES

Three aligned mandates for the package.

TURKEY CO-PRODUCER

Lead Turkish production partner for boot camp through qualifiers, with local execution and services.

PLATFORM BUYER

Early buyer for a competition doc with a built-in first audience and breakout upside beyond esports.

EAST ASIA PARTNER

Regional partner ready to monetize any main-event chapter that grows out of the qualifier run and Shanghai upside.

STILL HERE.

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