

Porsche works team wins the first final of the ESL R1 drivers' championship

22/06/2024 Defending champion Joshua Rogers kicked off the drivers' championship of the ESL R1 series with a victory in the final race. The works driver from the Porsche Coanda Esports Racing team clinched pole position on the digital Hockenheimring and defended his lead from start to finish.

Apace with the Australian, Coanda driver Charlie Collins also made it into the top twelve, alongside the two Faze Clan drivers Enzo Bonito and Michal Smidl also competing in the virtual Porsche 911 GT3 R.

The first three of the ESL R1 series' six rounds contested on the "Rennsport" sim racing platform counted solely towards the team championship. Porsche Coanda Esports Racing finished in third place. The drivers' championship commenced on Friday evening on the 4.574-kilometre Grand Prix circuit in Hockenheim. Rogers now ranks second after the first race day.

Three of the four Porsche Coanda Esports Racing works drivers survived the four quarter-final races of

the knock-out round. All twelve teams send one race car each to the start, with only the top six finishers advancing to the semi-finals. Only Dayne Warren failed to make it through to the next round: the Australian was in the lead after the first corner and was on his way to victory when an unstable internet connection threw him out of the race in the ninth of ten laps.

Despite Warren's setback, four other digital 911 GT3 R started in the first semi-final: in addition to Rogers and Collins, G2 Esports' Nikodem Wisniewski from Poland and Enzo Bonito from Italy also progressed.

Defending champion Rogers secured pole position for the final, won the battle for the lead on the first corner and drove to an unchallenged victory. With that, the Australian celebrated his 32nd victory in the 200th race of the ESL R1 series. Collins, who started from 7th on the grid, was hampered by positional skirmishes and crossed the finish line in ninth place. The two Faze Clan teammates Bonito and Smidl were thrilled with fourth and eleventh place – their team's best result to date.

Impressions after the race

Nina Braack (D, Esports Manager Porsche Motorsport):"The first race day of the ESL R1 drivers' championship ended with a big smile and one with a frown. Joshua put in a mega performance and scored a heap of points with his victory in the final. Charlie also made it into the final. We're upset for Dayne. He was leading his heat by almost a second when he was forced to retire due to his internet connection dropping out – I suppose that's the equivalent of engine failure in sim racing."

Jörn Jens (D, Performance Coach Porsche Coanda Esports Racing):"We could've made it into the final with all four drivers today, Dayne Warren was actually the fastest of the lot. He was very unlucky with his retirement."

Joshua Rogers (AUS, Porsche Coanda Esports Racing): "Of course, I'm thrilled with the victory in the final. I hadn't expected it at all, but I managed to put together a good qualifying lap today and clinch pole position. After the race started, things got tricky because I had to defend the lead fiercely at times. Things are looking pretty good in the championship now, but we still have two more events to come."

Charlie Collins (GB, Porsche Coanda Esports Racing):"If someone had told me the result before the race, I would've been delighted. But now that I've seen what was within reach, I'm less happy. In the qualifying sessions, I consistently lost time in the first sector. Things went better in the races. More could've been possible in the final."

Hockenheim (D), Result of the final

1. Joshua Rogers, Porsche 911 GT3 R (AUS, Porsche Coanda Esports Racing)
2. Kevin Ellis jr. Mercedes-AMG GT3 (UK, Apex Racing)

3. Sebastian Job, BMW M4 GT3 (UK, Team Redline)
9. Charlie Collins, Porsche 911 GT3 R (GB, Porsche Coanda Esports Racing)

Drivers' standings after one of three races

1. Kevin Siggy (SLO, Team Redline), 60 points
2. Joshua Rogers (AUS, Porsche Coanda Esports Racing), 56 points
3. Enzo Bonito (I, Faze Clan), 56 points
9. Charlie Collins (UK, Porsche Coanda Esports Racing), 38 points
17. Mitchell deJong (USA, Porsche Coanda Esports Racing), 19 points

Complete results and standings.

ESL R1 – Brief overview

- The unofficial sim racing premier class is contended on the "Rennsport" platform.
- The cars fielded are based on GT3 regulations, including the 911 GT3 R.
- Like in real racing, the Balance of Performance (BoP) ensures a level playing field.
- 12 teams consisting of 4 drivers each compete in a team and driver championship.
- The drivers qualify for the final live event through the online events.
- 500,000 US dollars in prize money up for grabs in ESL R1 and Esports World Cup.
- The Porsche Motorsport Hub offers more information about the series.

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