

Action-packed season-opener at Zandvoort with wins for Carroll and Job

02/05/2020 A successful start to the new season of the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup for Graham Carroll and Sebastian Job: The British duo from the Red Bull Racing Esports squad won the first two races of the 2020 season on the Circuit Zandvoort in the Netherlands.

The race

Carroll crossed the finish line first in the 15-minute sprint race, with Job winning the 30-minute main event. While last year's champion Joshua Rogers (AUS/VRS Coanda Simsport) claimed a podium spot in the main race, Formula 1 driver Max Verstappen (NL/Team Redline) ploughed through the field to finish on eleventh. Forty sim racers lined up to contest the opening round of the Porsche Esports championship on the iRacing simulation platform.

“The start of the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup couldn’t have gone much better. Right up to the last corner in both races, we were treated to lots of duels and overtaking manoeuvres. What’s more, the field is even stronger than last year. In the qualifying, the best 20 were separated by just 0.27 seconds. This underlines just how incredibly competitive our series is,” summarised Marco Ujhasi, Manager Esports at Porsche Motorsport.

Carroll emerged at the front after an action-packed start of the sprint race in his Porsche 911 GT3 Cup, with Tommy Østgaard (N/VRS Coanda Simsport) and Brian Lockwood (USA/RaceKraft Esports) in hot pursuit. However, the 29-year-old kept his cool to claim his first Esports Supercup victory. “I’m absolutely thrilled to have won the first race. Patrik Holzmann and Sebastian Job are two very strong teammates, and that, of course, is motivating. We aim to be as successful as possible this year,” said Carroll. Østgaard and Lockwood completed the podium. Last year's champion Joshua Rogers crossed the finish line in fourth ahead of Sebastian Job.

In the main race, pole-sitter Carroll came under immediate pressure from Østgaard after the start. In the second minute of the race, the Norwegian snatched the lead and managed to pull clear of the field. Taking up the race from the fifth grid spot, Job manoeuvred his way up the order to rank second during the first ten minutes of the race. A few laps later, the Red Bull driver slashed the gap to Østgaard to less than a car length. The decisive moment came in the 18th minute: Job pulled level with Østgaard, the vehicles touched and the Briton moved into the lead. Østgaard lost several positions, while Job proceeded to break free of the field. After 19 laps, the 20-year-old took the flag 2.2-seconds ahead of Carroll. Rogers claimed the third podium step. “Starting the new season with a win feels terrific. I spent the last weeks preparing intensively and I’m pleased that I was able to reward myself for it,” said Job.

Formula 1 star Max Verstappen made his debut in the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup as the local hero. Position 21 in the sprint race also meant grid position 21 in the main race for the newcomer from Team Redline. Still, the 22-year-old put in a spirited drive with plenty of overtaking manoeuvres on the racetrack at the Dutch North Sea coast. Verstappen finished on eleventh place.

The second event on the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup calendar will be contested next Saturday (9 May), with the virtual one-make cup competing on the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya in Spain. The circuit in Montmeló north of Barcelona offers a diverse track layout featuring a combination of long and tight corners.

Results

Zandvoort, sprint race
1. Graham Carroll (GB/Red Bull Racing Esports)
2. Tommy Østgaard (N/VRS Coanda Simsport)
3. Brian Lockwood (USA/RaceKraft Esports)
4. Joshua Rogers (AUS/VRS Coanda Simsport)
5. Sebastian Job (GB/Red Bull Racing Esports)

Zandvoort, main race
1. Sebastian Job (GB/Red Bull Racing Esports)
2. Graham Carroll (GB/Red Bull Racing Esports)
3. Joshua Rogers (AUS/VRS Coanda Simsport)
4. Tommy Østgaard (N/VRS Coanda Simsport)
5. Brian Lockwood (USA/RaceKraft Esports)

The preview

The Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup season begins: On Saturday (2 May), 40 top-class sim racers will go head-to-head in their virtual Porsche 911 GT3 Cup racing cars. Joining the grid line-up is last year's overall winner Joshua Rogers (AUS/VRS Coanda Simsport) and Formula 1 driver Max Verstappen (NL/Team Redline Fanatec). The Dutch Circuit Zandvoort hosts round one of the ten double-header events on the 2020 calendar. At this year's Esports championship contested on the iRacing simulation platform, drivers will compete for a total purse of US$200,000.

"Here we go, at last – the second season of the Esports Supercup takes off," says Kjell Gruner, Head of Marketing at Porsche AG. "We're proud to be a trailblazer in the world of virtual racing with this competition and to have created a new, exciting sporting event. With Michelin and Mobil1, we're pleased to have two established partners supporting us and with Vodafone and in particular TAG Heuer as the new title sponsor on board, we've gained additional clout."

Twenty of the 40 drivers contesting the championship secured a spot after taking part in a ten-week qualifying phase against more than 5,000 contenders. The top 20 sim racers from last season complete the world-class line-up, including reigning champion Joshua Rogers. The 20-year-old from Gladstone, Australia, won a total of four races in 2019 and is one of the hot favourites this year: "You always have high expectations of yourself as a driver, especially at the start of the season. Obviously, I want to finish every race as well as I can, but you always have to keep an eye on the big picture and not take any unnecessary risks because the competition is simply too strong this year. It's fantastic to see that TAG Heuer has come aboard as a top-class partner and is further promoting the Esports Supercup."

Maximilian Benecke (D/Team Redline Fanatec) is also excited to kick off the season: "The first race of the season is always something special. The drivers have had a lot more time to prepare for the opening round than for other races. For this reason, I expect the competition to be close. On top of that, there aren't many opportunities to overtake at Zandvoort. Under the current circumstances, we're seeing a lot of thrilling online races every day and I'm sure that many drivers will benefit from sim racing." The 25-year-old concluded the 2019 season on second place and is one of seven German drivers to compete this season. The field is made up of drivers from 14 nations.

"In the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup, 40 of the world's best sim racers battle for the title over ten weekends. The season takes off on the Circuit Zandvoort in the Netherlands – a racetrack with fast

corners and a notorious hairpin after the start/finish. This promises some breathtaking duels right from the outset. Here, you need not only speed but also racing intelligence," says Marco Ujhasi, Manager Esports at Porsche Motorsport. Like at all ten events, the Zandvoort race day consists of four sessions: A free practice is followed by a qualifying session run as an individual time trial, a sprint race over 15 minutes, then the 30-minute main race. Drivers earn points towards the championship from both races. Victory in the sprint event is rewarded with 25 points, with the winner of the main race receiving double the points. The top five qualifiers also receive additional points. The pole-sitter earns ten points for the overall classification.

Fans can follow the season-opener on Saturday on the official Porsche YouTube channel. iRacing also airs the races live on the video platforms YouTube and Twitch. Further information is available on the Porsche Motorsport Hub, Porsche Newsroom and the Twitter account @PorscheRaces.

The schedule (2 May, all times CEST)

1:45 to 2:03pm: Free practice

2:03 to 2:15pm: Qualifying

2:17 to 2:32pm: Sprint race

2:34 to 2:44pm: Warm-up

2:45 to 3:15pm: Main race

Schedule of the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup 2020

Event	**Date**	**Racetrack**
Pre-Season Test*	27 – 28 March 2020	Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya
Round 1	2 May 2020	Circuit Park Zandvoort
Round 2	9 May 2020	Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya
Round 3	23 May 2020	Donington Park Circuit

Event	Date	Racetrack
Round 4	18 July 2020	Silverstone Circuit
Round 5	1 August 2020	Road Atlanta
Round 6	15 August 2020	Brands Hatch Circuit
Round 7	29 August 2020	Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps
Round 8	5 September 2020	Nurburgring Nordschleife – 24h Total Distance*
Round 9	26 September 2020	Circuit de la Sarthe*
Round 10	10 October 2020	Autodromo Nazionale Monza
*Lap-based Event		

Info

Further information can be found on the Porsche Motorsports Hub.

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