

Joshua Rogers scores first double win of 2021

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20/02/2021 First place in the sprint and a lucky winner of the main race: at Road Atlanta, Joshua Rogers took a giant leap forwards in the fight for the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup (PESC).

The race

After five of ten rounds this season, the Australian has pulled away considerably from his pursuers. Title defender Sebastian Job from United Kingdom experienced a race day to forget in the virtual US state of Georgia. Mitchell deJong, who ranks second in the drivers' standings, lost all chances to win the main race of his home event just a few metres from the finish line. Second place went to Norway's Tommy Östgaard ahead of Kevin Ellis Jr. (Great Britain). The PESC with the digital version of the Porsche 911 GT3 Cup – 991.2 generation – is run on the iRacing simulation platform.

Points' leader Rogers had good reason to look forward to the Road Atlanta round: Last year, the 2019 champion had won the main race on the 4.088-kilometre rollercoaster racetrack and turned the fastest lap. This time, the ace qualifier had to make do with the second spot on the grid for the ten-lap sprint: His Virtual Racing School teammate Charlie Collins (Great Britain) had conquered pole position. However, in the first lap, Rogers snatched the lead and never looked back. Up until the eighth lap, Collins was able to fend off the attacks from Dayne Warren (DirectForce Pro), who ultimately passed the Briton to score second place. Behind the leading pair came Jeremy Bouteloup (France/Coanda Simsport), Mitchell deJong (Virtual Racing School), Kevin Ellis Jr. (Great Britain/Rahal Letterman Lanigan Esports), and David Williams (Great Britain/Coanda Simsport). Tommy Östgaard, another Coanda Simsport entry, finished eighth. Consequently, the driver from Norway took up the main race from pole position – the first eight finishers of the sprint event start the main event in reverse order.

Östgaard was fastest off the line ahead of Ellis who had overtaken Williams after the first metres. DeJong, Bouteloup, Warren and Rogers chased the leading duo with DeJong clinching the third spot. Title defender Job botched the start, spun off the track and found himself amidst the backmarkers.

Meanwhile at the top, the leading group of eight displayed some disciplined racing. Ellis made the best use of the very long approach to curve 10 in the seventh lap and slipped by Östgaard who had given him a nice tow. But the Norwegian reclaimed his place in the next lap at exactly the same place. The pair would swap position another three times. Rogers had worked his way up the order to fourth place behind DeJong who watched the duel of the pair in front until lap 17. DeJong found a way past Östgaard and soon got by Ellis. Now Ellis found himself under pressure from Rogers who had slotted into third place.

This was how the trio entered the last lap, but the order would again be turned on its head. Braking for Curve 10, DeJong took an early inner line in an attempt to keep Ellis at bay. Door to door, the two turned into the left-hand kink. A slight contact sent DeJong into a spin. Now, Rogers sensed his chance and pulled alongside Ellis, who had lost a bit of momentum just a few metres from the finish line. Another nudge followed, with Ellis sliding off the track and touching the barrier. Rogers won with Östgaard inheriting second ahead of Ellis in third. The drivers saw the chequered flag in this order: Maximilian Benecke (Germany/Team Redline), Charlie Collins, Graham Carroll (Great Britain/Red Bull Racing Esports), Moreno Sirica (Italy/Mahle Racing Team), and Jeff Giassi (Brazil/Apex Racing Team). Mitchell deJong finished 14th, the title defender Sebastian Job was 18th.

Scoring the first double victory of the current PESC season, Joshua Roberts further expanded his lead in the points' table. After five of ten rounds, he has pulled clear of his pursuers now holding 348 points. DeJong was able to defend second place with 259 points while Collins, Ellis Jr, and Warren moved up the leaderboard past Job.

This coming Saturday, the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup takes off into the second half of the season visiting Canada's Montreal. The Formula 1 city circuit is located on the Île Notre-Dame and partly uses roads which are open to the public traffic. The tight right-left chicane leading into the main straight is regarded as one of the most famous passages of the 4.361-km Grand Prix circuit. Even

famous race drivers had to bury their dreams of victory after hitting the wall at the outside of this corner, which has consequently been dubbed the "Wall of Champions". The sim racers tackle a ten-lap sprint on the Circuit Gilles-Villeneuve, the main race goes over double this distance.

Comments after the race

Joshua Rogers (AUS/Virtual Racing School): "We expected it would get difficult on the last lap. We were all very quick, especially in qualifying. Slipstream plays a huge role in such entertaining races. That's why it was important to be in the right place at the right time. At first I wanted to take the lead on the penultimate lap, then I tried to position myself optimally for the final lap. In the penultimate corner things got pretty tight between me and Kevin Ellis, but I managed to squeeze next to him."

Tommy Östgaard (N/Coanda Simsport): "I'm happy with second place. After my tough start to the 2021 season, this is a great result. In the first few races I was plagued by a lot of bad luck and I got caught up in accidents too often – that's why I put in a lot of practice to get faster and avoid such situations using more race craft. I always take a good look at every incident to learn from it."

Kevin Ellis Jr. (GB/Rahal Lettermann Lanigan Esports): "It's a shame that the race ended like this. Mitchell and I actually gave each other enough space, but unfortunately it didn't go well and it shouldn't have happened that way. Josh then relegated me back to third, but maybe I gave in a little too early. All in all, I'm quite okay with another podium result."

Result

Road Atlanta, sprint race
1. Joshua Rogers (AUS/Virtual Racing School)
2. Dayne Warren (AUS/DirectForce Pro)
3. Charlie Collins (GB/Virtual Racing School)
4. Jeremy Bouteloup (F/Coanda Simsport)
5. Mitchell deJong (USA/Virtual Racing School)

Road Atlanta, main race
1. Joshua Rogers (AUS/Virtual Racing School)
2. Tommy Östgaard (N/Coanda Simsport)
3. Kevin Ellis Jr. (GB/Rahal Letterman Lanigan Esports)
4. Maximilian Benecke (D/Team Redline)
5. Charlie Collins (GB/Virtual Racing School)

Points' standings after 5 of 10 championship rounds
1. Joshua Rogers (AUS/Virtual Racing School), 348 points
2. Mitchell deJong (USA/Virtual Racing School), 259 points

3. Charlie Collins (GB/Virtual Racing School), 222 points
4. Kevin Ellis Jr. (GB/Rahal Letterman Lanigan Esports), 221 points
5. Dayne Warren (AUS/DirectForce Pro), 201 points

The preview

This coming Saturday, the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup (PESC) will be contested on the Road Atlanta circuit in the US state of Georgia. The virtual version of the 4.088-kilometre rollercoaster racetrack is the venue for the fifth of ten races of the global Esports championship run on the iRacing simulation platform. Due to the fast and technically demanding layout, the storied circuit is one of the favourites of sim racers and "real-world" racing professionals. With its combination of twelve fast corners and long full-throttle passages as well as significant elevation differences, the conditions for gripping racing with the digital Porsche 911 GT3 Cup are ideal.

With the halfway mark fast approaching, the situation at the top of the fiercely-contested championship is tight: At the previous round in Silverstone, Joshua Rogers managed to defend his championship lead with two second places in the sprint and feature race. Driving for the Virtual Racing School team, the Australian is eager to pocket his second PESC title after 2019. So far he has 265 points to his credit. In second place sits his American teammate Mitchell deJong (227 points), who is really looking forward to his home race at Road Atlanta. The reigning champion Sebastian Job rallied in Silverstone, claiming fourth in the sprint and victory in the main event. The British sim racer, who aims to retain the title with his Red Bull Racing Esports squad, currently ranks third with an 82-point gap to the leading Rogers.

At Road Atlanta, 40 PESC sim racers contest a ten-lap sprint race on Saturday from 8.15pm (CET). The main event over twice the distance begins at 8.45pm. Round five of the season also includes a free practice, qualifying and warm-up session. Fans can watch the iRacing events live on Porsche's channels YouTube and Twitch.

Prior to this, well-known content creators from the world of Esports will showcase their skills as part of the programme. They will fight for victory with Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport. The live stream begins at 6.30pm with the All-Star qualifying session. The two influencer events get the green light at 6.45pm and 7.10pm respectively. Just one week later, the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup will make its debut on the 4.361-kilometre Formula 1 racetrack in Montréal, Canada. The Grand Prix circuit located on the Île Notre-Dame includes roads that are normally open to everyday public traffic. One of the most notorious passages is the tight right-left chicane just before the start/finish: many prominent racing drivers have had to abandon their dream of winning after a sudden encounter with the barrier wall – hence, its well-earned nickname "Wall of Champions". Further information on the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup can be found on the Porsche Newsroom, the Porsche Motorsport Hub and the Twitter account @PorscheRaces.

The schedule (all times CET)

Saturday, 20 February

6:35 – 6:45 pm: Qualifying All-Stars
6:45 – 7:00 pm: Sprint race All-Stars
7:05 – 7:10 pm: Warm-up All-Stars
7:10 – 7:30 pm: Main race All-Stars
7:45 – 8:03 pm: Free practice PESC
8:03 – 8:15 pm: Qualifying PESC
8:15 – 8:32 pm: Sprint race PESC
8:34 – 8:44 pm: Warm-up PESC
8:45 – 9:15 pm: Main race PESC

The 2021 racing calendar (number of laps sprint / main race)

Event	Date	Race track
Round 1	9 January 2021	Brazil: Interlagos (10/20 laps)
Round 2	16 January 2021	Spain: Barcelona (9/18 laps)
Round 3	30 January 2021	Italy: Imola (9/18 laps)
Round 4	6 February 2021	Great Britain: Silverstone GP circuit (7/14 laps)
Round 5	20 February 2021	USA: Road Atlanta (10/20 laps)
Round 6	27 February 2021	Canada: Montreal (10/20 laps)
Round 7	13 March 2021	Belgium: Spa-Francorchamps (6/12 laps)
Round 8	27 March 2021	Germany: Nürburgring Nordschleife, 24h version (3/4 laps)

Event	Date	Race track
Round 9	10 April 2021	France: Le Mans (3/6 laps)
Round 10	24 April 2021	Italy: Monza (7/14 laps)

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



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