

30 sim racers fight for the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup crown

01/02/2023 Round five of the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup kicks off this Saturday. The virtual one-make cup with the 911 GT3 Cup is one of the most demanding online racing series in the world. The 30 eligible sim racers will fight on the iRacing platform for valuable championship points and prize money totalling 200,000 US dollars.

Preview

The 2023 season of the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup (PESC) gets underway this Saturday (4 February) with a new qualifying format and a field of competitors focussed on 30 sim racers. 2023 marks the fifth year of the virtual one-make cup contested with the Porsche 911 GT3 Cup. The calendar of the international championship on the iRacing simulation platform again includes ten rounds. The digital Hockenheim Grand Prix circuit in Germany hosts the opening round of the season, with the finale held at the Autodromo Nazionale of Monza, Italy, in early June. In between, the esports series will be contested on tradition-steeped racetracks such as the Nürburgring-Nordschleife and the

Circuit des 24 Heures in Le Mans as well as the modern and classic Formula 1 circuits of Magny-Cours (France), Austin (USA), Spielberg (Austria), Watkins Glen (USA) and Spa-Francorchamps (Belgium). The venue for round three of the season will once again be decided by the esports community via online voting.

“Sim racing is very important to Porsche Motorsport,” explains Nina Braack, Esports Manager at Porsche Motorsport. “Last year we established our own works team with Porsche Coanda Esports Racing. Our four works drivers have one thing in common: They all earned themselves a spot in the squad through great performances in the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup. The virtual one-make cup made its debut in 2019. Now entering its fifth season, the series again features an impressive international line-up. With the fans, we can once again look forward to some action-packed racing.”

A compact grid line-up adds extra suspense

In the new season, 30 drivers from 15 countries will compete for a total prize pool of 200,000 US dollars. Championship points will continue to be awarded up to position 25 in the 30-minute feature races. This should also increase the incentive for gripping duels among the backmarkers.

Another important change is the overhauled qualifying format, which will still run over twelve minutes but is now divided into two groups. The first drivers to take to the track are those ranked sixth to 30th in the interim championship standings. For them, the pit lane exit light turns green for exactly one minute from around 8:00 pm (summer time: 9:00 pm), and each driver has just one attempt at a flying lap. 150 seconds later, the top five follow. Like in a “hyperpole” session, they each line up for the individual time trial at one-minute intervals. A special reward awaits the best qualifier at the end of the season: the winner of the TAG Heuer Pole Award can look forward to receiving a TAG Heuer Connected Watch in the special Porsche Edition.

Diogo C. Pinto has swapped his role of the hunter to that of the hunted: the Portuguese sim racer from Team Redline is ready to defend his title after a remarkably consistent performance last year. His rivals, however, are determined to prevent this – none more than Sebastian Job. The Briton was crowned champion in 2020. Last year, he was only narrowly beaten by Pinto. Now, the Oracle Red Bull Racing Esports driver aims to repeat his 2020 triumph. Among others, the two VRS Coanda sim racers Zac Campbell (USA) and Charlie Collins (UK) are also among the top contenders for the championship title. Cooper Webster should not be underestimated, either. The Australian won the rookie classification as the best newcomer in 2022. The number two driver for the Oracle Red Bull Racing Esports team now has his sights on the next prize.

Tuomas Tähtelä again qualifies for the PESC via the Contender Series

Only the top finishers in the previous year's Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup were guaranteed a

coveted grid spot in the fifth season: they automatically qualified for the first 15 starting positions in the virtual one-make cup. The remaining 15 cockpits were awarded in a two-stage selection process. In round one, all racers registered with iRacing were eligible to take part in a special qualifying competition. In the second stage, the best 15 in the overall standings advanced to the so-called Contender Series. In six races throughout September and October of last year, they pitted themselves against the drivers who had finished the 2022 PESC season in positions 16 to 30. Additionally, wildcard invitations were extended to Brazilian Gustavo Ariel, Philippe Bouchard from Canada, William Chadwick (UK) and Germany's Christopher Dambietz. They had earned themselves the honour at local esports one-make cups. Ariel finished the Contender Series second behind the experienced winner Tuomas Tähtelä from Finland and made it into this year's Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup.

At the season-opening round of the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup on 4 February at the Hockenheimring, the sim racers will first contest a nine-lap sprint event from 8:15 pm (CET). The feature race over twice the distance begins at 8:38 pm. This schedule will generally apply to all other races this season. After daylight saving begins in the respective countries, one hour will be added to these times. Fans can watch the iRacing action live online via Porsche's channels on YouTube and Twitch.

Prominent influencers from the sim racing scene contest the All-Star Series

Well-known content creators from the esports racing scene, like Emily "Emree" Jones, the 2021 title winner, will again showcase their skills in the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup support programme. Newcomers to the series are "Basic Ollie", "Dave Cam", "Lovefortysix" and "Keny500". The Indy500 champion of 2013, Tony Kanaan from Brazil, is also among the participants again. Other Porsche Motorsport drivers from real racing, including the former Porsche Junior Laurin Heinrich from Germany, contest selected events.

The All-Star live stream begins at 7:00 pm (CET) with the qualifying session and sprint race. The following feature race gets the green light at around 7:29 pm.

Further information on the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup can be found in the Porsche Newsroom, the Porsche Motorsport Hub, and on the Twitter account @PorscheRaces.

The 2023 racing calendar

04.02.2023 – Germany: Hockenheimring (9/18 laps)
18.02.2023 – France: Magny Cours (9/18 laps)
04.03.2023 – tba via online voting
19.03.2023 – USA: Austin (8/16 laps)

01.04.2023 – Austria: Spielberg (10/20 laps)
08.04.2023 – USA: Watkins Glen (11/22 laps)
22.04.2023 – Belgium: Spa-Francorchamps (6/12 laps)
06.05.2023 – Germany: Nürburgring-Nordschleife, 24h version (3/4 laps)
20.05.2023 – France: Le Mans (3/6 laps)
03.06.2023 – Italy: Monza (7/14 laps)

in brackets: number of laps for the sprint and feature race

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