

Diogo C. Pinto wins sprint, main race goes to Kevin Ellis Jr.

19/02/2022 Diogo C. Pinto is the new leader of the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup. The Portuguese driver from the Redline Team won the sprint race on the Circuit de Barcelona Catalunya and scored critical points from the main race after a spirited charge through the field.

The race

Round two of the international esports one-make cup on the iRacing simulation platform provided thrills and spills. Thanks to a disciplined performance in the virtual version of the 375 kW (510 PS) Porsche 911 GT3 Cup, Britain's Kevin Ellis Jr. took the flag as the winner of the main event. For season four of the PESC, the one-make cup racing car is based on the latest 992-generation model.

In the first nine-lap race on the 4.655-kilometre digital version of the Formula 1 circuit, Pinto proved unstoppable: As the fastest in qualifying, the Portuguese driver converted pole position into a close victory. Driving for the Redline Team, he tried every trick to shake off Alejandro Sánchez (MSi eSports)

who was trailing in the slipstream of his Porsche 911 GT3 Cup. At the flag, only 0.083 seconds separated the Spaniard from Pinto. Sanchez had benefitted from incidents in lap two, which resulted in Australia's Dayne Warren (Coanda), Britain's Charlie Collins and the American Zac Campbell (both VRS) losing important positions. As a consequence, the Coanda driver Jeremy Bouteloup from France and Germany's Maximilian Benecke (Team Redline) shuffled up the rankings. Peter Berryman (Apex Racing Team), Campbell and Jamie Fluke (Apex Racing Team) occupied positions five to seven, with Kevin Ellis Jr. claiming eighth – thus, the British sim racer from the Apex Racing Team took up the second event on the Circuit Barcelona Catalunya from pole position.

In the main race on the Spanish Grand Prix circuit, lap two once again played a decisive role in the outcome: Charlie Collins was shunted from behind while braking for Turn 10, he touched the barriers and spun back onto the track, scuttling ex-champion Sebastian Job (Red Bull Racing eSports) Pinto, Sanchez, Graham Carroll (Red Bull Racing eSports), Warren, Collins and Berryman from the track. Pinto ultimately managed to minimise the damage to his championship aspirations with 14th place.

At the front of the field, this left the road to victory clear for Kevin Ellis Jr., who cleverly defended his lead from his fellow teammate Fluke as well as Campbell, Benecke and Bouteloup. In sixth place, Cooper Webster (Red Bull Racing Esports) again took the flag as the best rookie – the Australian had started from the twelfth grid spot. Coanda driver Ayhancan Güven from Turkey finished on ninth after a commendable charge through the field. In the first lap, the Porsche contract driver was running in P18. As the winner of the season-opening main race in Hockenheim, Güven had travelled to Barcelona leading the points.

After the second of ten race weekends on the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup calendar, Diogo C. Pinto has moved to the top of the leaderboard with 112 points. Ayhancan Güven now ranks third with 99 points behind Jeremy Bouteloup, who plans to retire from professional esports at the end of this season.

All-Star wins for Jimmy Broadbent and Xabier Sanchez

In the support programme of the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup, Jimmy Broadbent won the first All-Stars race. The British content creator used the tumultuous start to sweep from P7 into the lead and defend it to the flag over the following ten laps. Second place went to Jaroslav "Jardier" Honzik from the Czech Republic ahead of Australia's Emily "Emree" Jones, who had started from pole position. IndyCar ace Tony Kanaan from Brazil concluded race one on fifth place. The Porsche works driver Laurens Vanthoor became entangled in an accident at the start and fell far behind.

The grid lineup for race two was in the reverse order of the results of the previous race. Xabier "Heikki360ES" Sanchez used his advantage well to clinch a lights-to-flag win. However, the Spaniard first had to fend off repeated attacks from Laurens Vanthoor among others. In lap three, the Belgian lost a lot of ground after a nudge with Dan "Suzuki" Sosulski and ultimately crossed the finish line in eighth. Consequently, Sosulski moved up to second place. His unsuccessful attempt to pass Sanchez several

metres from the finish line opened the door for Emily Jones, who finished second as a result. Behind Sosulski, Tyson "Quirkitized" Meier and Matt Malone occupied positions four and five.

The online voting results are in: Sao Paulo hosts round three

The dice has been cast and fans have made their decision via online voting: Round three of the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup will be contested on the Autódromo José Carlos Pace on 5 March. The 4.309-kilometre Formula 1 racetrack on the outskirts of the Brazilian metropolis of São Paulo is also known as "Interlagos" due to the two lakes it passes. In contrast to most other circuits, the sim racers must tackle the rollercoaster circuit in an anti-clockwise direction in their digital 911 GT3 Cup. A year ago, reigning champion Joshua Rogers laid the foundation for his second title by winning the sprint race, with Britain's Kevin Ellis Jr. the victor of the main race. Ellis competes for the Apex Racing Team again this year and is one of the favourites. Rogers does not compete this year.

Well-known influencers from the esports scene will again add to the excitement at round three of the season in Brazil with two All-Star races.

Comments after the race

Kevin Ellis Jr. (GB/Apex Racing Team): "The championship title is my goal for the season. During the first round in Hockenheim we had a problem with the tyre grip. Since then, the whole team did a mega job to fix these issues. I hope our season is now back on track. From now on we have to focus on bagging points from every race."

Jamie Fluke (GB/Apex Racing Team): "I really struggled with cold tyres in the beginning. Fortunately, Zac Campbell didn't try anything silly on me. On the other hand, I couldn't get really near my teammate Kevin Ellis in front of me. The team did a remarkable job to recover from the problems we encountered in Hockenheim."

Zac Campbell (USA/VRS): "I immediately realised that my car had too much downforce. I wanted to fight with Jamie Fluke but that would probably have destroyed my tyres. So, I'm pretty happy. Although I'm back in the USA, the work with the team is awesome. The time difference to Germany even works for me: I can do classes at school and talk to the guys afterwards."

Result

Barcelona, sprint race
1. Diogo C. Pinto (P/Team Redline)
2. Alejandro Sánchez (E/MSI eSports)
3. Jeremy Bouteloup (F/Coanda)

4. Maximilian Benecke (D/Team Redline)
5. Peter Berryman (GB/Apex Racing Team)

Barcelona, main race
1. Kevin Ellis (GB/Apex Racing Team)
2. Jamie Fluke (GB/Apex Racing Team)
3. Zac Campbell (USA/VRS)
4. Maximilian Bennecke (D/Team Redline)
5. Jeremy Bouteloup (F/Coanda)

Points' standings after 2 or 10 championship rounds
1. Diogo C. Pinto (P/Team Redline), 112 points
2. Jeremy Bouteloup (F/Coanda), 108 points
3. Ayhancan Güven (TR/Coanda), 99 points

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