

Joshua Rogers goes into the new ESL R1 championship as series leader

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12/02/2023 The Porsche Coanda Esports Racing works team got off to a successful start in the new ESL sim racing series with Joshua Rogers taking victory at the virtual Hockenheimring.

The new championship series on the simulation platform Rennsport celebrated its world premiere at the weekend with a double-header in Katowice, Poland. All four works drivers made it into the semi-finals on Sunday, with the Australian and his fellow countryman Dayne Warren winning their quarter-final races in dominating fashion. Rogers also remained undefeated in the semi-finals driving the Porsche 911 GT3 R.

On Saturday, with a quarter-final victory, only Rogers made it into the semi-finals, where he finished

fifth, which secured his ticket into the final round. On the digital version of the Belgian Formula 1 circuit in Spa-Francorchamps, he crossed the finish line in fourth place. Following unfortunate collisions and penalties, his teammates Mack Bakkum (Netherlands), Dayne Warren (Australia) and Mitchell deJong (USA) were out of the running early on.

The ESL R1 series of the Electronic Sports League is based on the similarly new simulation platform Rennsport, with extremely realistic images that are very convincing. It is aimed primarily at works teams and large esports organisations. The world premiere was held as a double event as part of the Intel Extreme Masters in Katowice, Poland, in front of a live audience. Six more races will follow online until mid-May. On 28 and 28 May, the participants will then compete at the Spring Major Final at the Rennsport Summit in Munich in front of spectators once again for the ESL R1 championship title and the team rankings. The spring season will be followed by the next round as early as autumn.

"It's great that the new ESL product and Rennsport has come to life as the ESL R1 racing series," says Nina Braack, Head of Esports at Porsche Motorsport. "The organisers have put on a great show and two exciting days of racing here in Katowice. As far as the sporting competition is concerned, things went extremely well for us, particularly on the second race day with Joshua Rogers' victory. We have shown that, as a manufacturer, we can also compete with the most popular esports teams on the big stage. Following this weekend, the anticipation for online racing later on in the season is immense."

The new race format has already created excitement in Katowice. Each of the twelve teams competed with four drivers, with every one of them taking part in a quarter-final. Of the twelve who competed in a race, the first six advanced to one of the two semi-finals. Once again, only the first six qualified for the final. This scheme will also be used in the online races that will follow, but will then be spread over a period of two days: the quarter-finals will be held on the Friday, the semi-finals and finals will be held a short time later on the following Monday.

On Sunday, the racing action at the Hockenheimring was dominated completely by Josh Rogers. Starting from second on the grid, the Australian won the preliminary race, then started the semi-final from pole position and subsequently advanced to the final round, where he took a flawless start-to-finish victory. Here again, the Porsche Coanda Esports works driver secured the front grid spot with the fastest qualifying lap. Before the first bend, Rogers was able to maintain the lead and continued to defend it successfully for 13 laps on the Grand Prix circuit of Hockenheim against the German Moritz Löhner.

After the race quotes

Philip Stamm (D, Team Principal Porsche Coanda Esports Racing):"The event went very smoothly – it's really nice that sim racing has arrived on the big stage of esports. We saw a lot of exciting racing over the weekend. We faced a number of challenges on Saturday and were a little unlucky at times. The improvement in performance today was really impressive and I'm very proud of the entire team. The fact that Joshua ran a perfect race today and won each of his three races is of course the crowning

achievement for a successful start to the new season."

Joshua Rogers (AUS, Porsche Coanda Esports Racing):"Obviously I'm thrilled to have secured a victory at the debut of the ESL R1 Series here in Katowice. It will take a moment for that to really sink in. Normally I don't react so emotionally when I win a race. As far as the preparation for this event goes – in the run-up as well as yesterday – I have to thank the whole team. The mood was always on a high level. It's really great to be a part of the future of sim racing."

Mitchell deJong (USA, Porsche Coanda Esports Racing):"A difficult day for me here in Katowice today. I was happy to make it into the semi-finals, but unfortunately things didn't quite go according to plan there – things like that happen sometimes. But I am very happy for Josh. He really nailed it and got the maximum result. We'll learn something from this for the coming races."

Results

Spa-Francorchamps (B), final
1. Maximilian Benecke, Audi R8 LMS GT3 evo II (D/MOUZ)
2. Jiri Toman, Audi R8 LMS GT3 evo II (CZ, R8G Esports)
3. Marcell Csincsik, Audi R8 LMS GT3 evo II (CZ, R8G Esports)
4. Joshua Rogers, Porsche 911 GT3 R (AUS/Porsche Coanda Esports Racing)
5. Moritz Löhner, Audi R8 LMS GT3 evo II (D/MOUZ)
6. Yohann Harth, Audi R8 LMS GT3 evo II (F/Apex Racing Team)

Hockenheim (D), final
1. Joshua Rogers, Porsche 911 GT3 R (AUS/Porsche Coanda Esports Racing)
2. Moritz Löhner, Audi R8 LMS GT3 evo II (D/MOUZ)
3. Marcell Csincsik, Audi R8 LMS GT3 evo II (CZ, R8G Esports)
4. Kevin Ellis Jr, Audi R8 LMS GT3 evo II (UK, Apex Racing Team)
5. Kevin Siggy, BMW M4 GT3 (NL, Team Redline)
6. Enzo Bonito, BMW M4 GT3 (I, Team Redline)

Drivers' standings after 2 of 8 events
1. Joshua Rogers (AUS/Porsche Coanda Esports Racing), 107 points
2. Marcell Csincsik (CZ, R8G Esports), 102 points
3. Moritz Löhner (D/MOUZ), 97 points

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