

Porsche Coanda Esports starts the new ESL R1 season in fourth place

18/05/2024 The Porsche Coanda Esports Racing Team kicked off the new ESL R1 year by winning two quarter-final races. In the final round, newcomer Charlie Collins from Great Britain and defending champion Joshua Rogers from Australia finished eighth and eleventh in their virtual Porsche 911 GT3 R race cars. This puts the works team fourth in the team standings after the opening race on the digital rendition of the Daytona International Speedway.

The ESL R1 series on the 'Rennsport' sim racing platform comprises six rounds. Three of those count towards the drivers' championship and three towards the team ranking – as was the case at the season opener in Florida. The event format remains largely unchanged from last year: The twelve participating teams each send one of their four drivers to tackle one of four heats. In Daytona, these were contested over a distance of nine laps on the 5.730-kilometre circuit, which features an infield passage and the steeply banked turns of the tri-oval. The top six finishers qualify for the two semi-final races, from which the top six from those two races advance to the final. The most significant innovation: like in real GT3 competitions, the race will now feature a 'flying' start instead of a standing start.

The heats proved successful for the Porsche Coanda Esports Team: Rogers and Collins both won their races by a razor-thin margin following exhilarating slipstream duels. Dayne Warren was initially classified in seventh place. Luckily, he benefitted from a time penalty, moving up to sixth place and thus earning himself a spot in the semi-finals. However, the Australian was plagued with misfortune in qualifying: a so-called slow-down penalty threw him to the very back of the grid and robbed him of any chance of success. Despite putting in a fight, he narrowly missed out on a place in the final round.

Things went better for Collins in the second semi-final. He started from fourth on the grid, utilised the slipstream of the car in front of him and commandeered third place to secure his spot in the final. Rogers had his work cut out for him. He started the race in second to last place, but managed to make up six places in the first two laps. After duels, he finished sixth. This meant that the defending champion also made it through to the last twelve.

In qualifying for the final race, the Porsche Coanda drivers' performance continued: eighth on the grid for Rogers and eleventh for Collins. After the first lap, both found themselves at the back of the reverse-ordered field. The Briton crossed the finish line in eighth place, while his Australian teammate finished eleventh.

Impressions after the race

Jörn Jens (D, Team Manager Porsche Coanda Esports Racing):"We prepared very well for the race day, despite having to adapt to last-minute rule changes. But we managed that well. Daytona always requires a bit of luck. But with three drivers in the semi-final and two in the final, we can definitely be satisfied and we're pleased with the points haul."

Charlie Collins (UK, Porsche Coanda Esports Racing):"We knew that, given the current classification of the Porsche 911 GT3 R, we'd be fighting an uphill battle against the other cars. But the team did a fantastic job in compensating for this disadvantage. That's why I'm happy with the results – even if the final could've gone better. At least I know that I can keep up with the frontrunners."

Joshua Rogers (AUS, Porsche Coanda Esports Racing): "All in all, it was a day of highs, lows and a race win. I struggled with the qualifying sessions but I still managed to make it through to the final. Then, I got completely caught out at the start and found myself at the back of the field. That being said, we scored decent points as a team and are well-prepped for the coming weekend."

Daytona (USA), result of the final

1. Luke Bennett, BMW M4 GT3 (UK, Team Redline)
2. Kevin Ellis Jr., Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo (UK, Apex Racing Team)
3. Jiri Toman, Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo II (CZ, Vitality R8G Esports)
8. Charlie Collins, Porsche 911 GT3 R (UK, Porsche Coanda Esports Racing)

11. Joshua Rogers, Porsche 911 GT3 R (AUS, Porsche Coanda Esports Racing)

Team standings after the first of three races

1. Williams Esports, 166 points
2. Team Redline, 147 points
3. Vitality R8G Esports, 130 points
4. Porsche Coanda Esports Racing, 109 points

Full results and standings:

https://eslr1.com/fall23-2/

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