

Jordan Caruso takes PESC points lead after bold manoeuvres

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19/03/2023 Defending champion Diogo C. Pinto has won his first feature race in the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup. The Portuguese narrowly beat Australian Jordan Caruso on the virtual Circuit of the Americas in Austin, Texas, to move to the top of the standings after four of the season's ten rounds.

Race

Alejandro Sánchez clinched the win in the sprint race, while Spanish guest driver Pablo López caused a sensation in the All-Star support programme, but was unable to secure the win.

The sprint race did not go as planned for championship leader Charlie Collins. The VRS Coanda driver

managed to secure eighth position on the grid in qualifying. At the end of the short race, this position would have been enough for him to benefit from the reversed starting grid for the feature race over twice the distance with eighth place starting in pole position. However, this was thwarted by defending champion Diogo C. Pinto: The Portuguese from Team Redline squeezed past Collins after only half the race distance. The Briton was left with ninth place, and was unable to benefit from the so-called "reverse grid."

Alejandro Sánchez (Stormforce Racing ART) emerged as the winner of the sprint. The Spaniard had set the fastest time in qualifying and benefitted from the fact there were very few overtaking manoeuvres among the leading group on the 5.516-kilometre Formula 1 circuit. Second place went to Briton Sebastian Job, the 2020 PESC champion from the Oracle Red Bull Racing Esports team. He was followed over the line by Frenchman Yohann Harth (Apex Racing Team), Jordan Caruso from Australia (Altus Esports) and Denmark's Lasse Bak (FYRA SimSport) as the best rookie.

The first three starting positions for the feature race were occupied by Pinto, Germany's Maximilian Benecke (MOUZ) and Jamie Fluke from Great Britain (Apex Racing Team). For the leading group, the 16-lap race initially began without any major position changes, with only Sebastian Job losing out in a three-way battle in the early stages and sliding off the track. Gradually, the leading four – Pinto, Benecke, Fluke and Caruso – were able to pull away.

From lap eleven, the situation became tenser: With a bold attack, Caruso out-braked Fluke approaching the hairpin, and two laps later, he got around Benecke. The German then made contact with Fluke and dropped back. Almost simultaneously, Caruso took Pinto by surprise, but the Portuguese was by no means prepared to settle for second place: With a courageous "all-or-nothing" manoeuvre, he squeezed past the Australian in the hairpin to regain the lead. Even a narrowly missed braking point in turn 1 didn't prevent the defending champion from successfully maintaining his lead. Thus, he won a feature race in the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup for the first time ever.

While Jordan Caruso missed out on his very first win in the PESC, he can take comfort in leading the standings. Sitting on 253 points, he has passed Charlie Collins. The VRS Coanda driver had finished fifth in the feature race behind Sanchez and Fluke. Defending champion Pinto moved up to third in the championship standings.

Sim racing influencers and content creators deliver a gripping duel to the finish

In the All-Star races leading up to the PESC feature event at the Circuit of the Americas, a newcomer caused a stir: Pablo "ThePulpoLopez" López set the fastest qualifying time in the digital Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 RS Clubsport, snatching pole position from sim racing pro Casey Kirwan. The Spaniard enjoyed leading the pack until the fourth lap, when the US driver gained the lead with an impressive attack through several corners and held his position all the way to the chequered flag. Lopez finished

second ahead of Australian Emily "Emree" Jones and US American Tyson "Quirkitized" Meyer.

As usual, the content creators went into the All-Stars main race in reverse order of the sprint result. That put Lopez on the back row next to Kirwan, who got off to a slightly better start and hurtled through the field at a blistering pace. After just five of twelve laps, he was biting at the heels of race leader Christian "Keny500" Ortega from Spain, and shortly afterwards he was in first place. Kirwan approached from behind again shortly afterwards, with defending champion “Emree” Jones in his wake. This culminated in an exciting final phase with an epic duel for victory, which Lopez ultimately clinched by a mere 0.057 seconds. Jones finished second ahead of "Keny500" Ortega, Dave Cameron from Great Britain and Spaniard Xabier "Heikki360ES" Sánchez.

PESC round 5 takes participants back to Europe

The Red Bull Ring in Spielberg, Austria, will serve as the stage for the fifth round of the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup season on April 1. On the 4.318-kilometre Formula 1 circuit in Styria, the 30 sim racers and their virtual 911 GT3 Cup cars will compete in a sprint race over ten laps and the feature race over 20 laps. Well-known influencers and content creators from the Esports scene will also be on hand again in the event's supporting race. They will once again be competing with the digital model of the Porsche 718 GT4 RS Clubsport. The live stream on twitch.tv/Porsche and youtube.com/@Porsche will commence at around 8:00 p.m. (CEST).

Comments after the race

Diogo C. Pinto (P/Team Redline): “My first win in the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup feels really good. I wasn't able to train much in preparation for this race. That makes the victory even more valuable for me. But there are still things I can improve. In qualifying, for example, I wasn't able to implement the strategy for my out-lap and in the race, I would have liked a better start. My tyres struggled over the later stages. Nevertheless, I still managed to overtake Jordan. After my mistake in the Long Beach race, I didn't want to settle for second place.”

Jordan Caruso (AUS/Altus Esports): “I'm very happy with my progress from fourth to second place. When I was stuck behind Jamie Fluke, I thought I would spend the rest of the race behind him – but I was not content with that idea. I had a good run down the hairpin and made the move on Jamie, same thing with Max. I would have liked to put up more of a fight in the final phase against Diogo Pinto, but I didn't want to take any more risks. If someone had told me before the season that I'd be leading the overall standings after four rounds, I wouldn't have believed it.”

Aléjandro Sanchez (E/Stormforce Racing ART): “I'm super happy with my performance today. There was some contact made between me and Lasse Bak. I'll have to look at it again to see if that was my fault. In the feature race, I had massive understeer and had to go easy on my tyres. A pole position, a win and third place: I didn't even dare to dream of such results this weekend.”

Result

Circuit of the Americas, sprint race

1. Aléjandro Sanchez (E/Stormforce Racing ART)
2. Sebastian Job (UK/Oracle Red Bull Racing Esports)
3. Yohann Harth (F/Stormforce Racing ART)
4. Jordan Caruso (AUS/Altus Esports)
5. Lasse Bak (DK/FYRA SimSport)

Circuit of the Americas, feature race

1. Diogo C. Pinto (P/Team Redline)
2. Jordan Caruso (AUS/Altus Esports)
3. Aléjandro Sanchez (E/Stormforce Racing ART)
4. Jamie Fluke (UK/Apex Racing Team)
5. Charlie Collins (UK/VRS Coanda)

Overall standings after 4 of 10 rounds

1. Jordan Caruso (AUS/Altus Esports), 253 points
2. Charlie Collins (UK/VRS Coanda), 243 points
3. Diogo C. Pinto (P/Team Redline), 204 points
4. Sebastian Job (UK/Oracle Red Bull Racing Esports), 190 points
5. Cooper Webster (AUS/Oracle Red Bull Racing Esports), 161 points

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



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