

Joshua Rogers progresses to second in the ESL R1 sim racing series

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10/04/2023 Seventh in the finale at Hockenheim was enough for Joshua Rogers to shuffle back up to second place in the drivers' standings after round five of the ESL R1 sim racing series. Driving for the Porsche Coanda Esports works team, the Australian had won his quarter-final and semi-final races on the Grand Prix circuit at the wheel of his digital 911 GT3 R.

The Porsche Coanda Esports Racing works team wrapped up round five of the new ESL R1 series on the "Rennsport" simulation platform with seventh place for the Australian Joshua Rogers and ninth for his fellow countryman Dayne Warren. Fourth in the finale went to Norwegian Tommi Östgaard in the Porsche fielded by his Heroic squad. Thanks to this result, Rogers worked his way back up to second place in the championship behind Jiri Toman from the Czech Republic.

The works team had already demonstrated its skill with the virtual 911 GT3 R: All four drivers

concluded the individual quarter-finals among the top six. This opened the door for them to take part in one of the two semi-final races. The quartet's achievement was also thanks to their significant improvement in the qualifying performance. While Mitchell deJong from the USA made the cut in fifth place, Dayne Warren and Dutchman Mack Bakkum posted second. Josh Rogers, however, achieved the feat of winning his quarter-finals for the fourth time in round five of the season.

The Australian continued his strong form in the first semi-final, which he started from P2 on the grid. In the last of ten laps, Rogers catapulted out of the slipstream with a perfect out-braking move in the notorious Hockenheim hairpin and snatched the lead. In the first metres, his teammate Warren progressed from sixth to fifth and defended this position to the flag – making it into the final of an ESL R1 race for the first time.

Bakkum and deJong tackled the semi-finals from positions four and seven respectively. A scuffle in the first lap, however, robbed them of all hope of progressing. Putting in a strong drive to catch up, the American ultimately took eighth place with Bakkum in twelfth. His brand and former teammate Tommy Östgaard started from pole position and went on to take a lights-to-flag victory in the race. This put three 911 GT3 R in the finale.

There, Östgaard qualified in third with Rogers starting from sixth and Warren from P12. In the sprint to the first corner, the Norwegian lost a position and finished the finale in fourth place. Rogers also lost ground initially but fought his way back up the order to seventh place. A determined Warren fought hard to clinch ninth place after ten laps. In a repeat of his Spa triumph, victory went to Dáire McCormack from Ireland.

The new ESL R1 series of the Electronic Sports League is primarily aimed at factory teams and major esports organisations. It is based on the new sim racing platform "Rennsport". The world premiere took place in mid-February as a doubleheader event with the Intel Extreme Masters in Katowice, Poland, and is followed by six online races until mid-May. Spectators can watch the Spring Major Finale on 3 and 4 June at the Rennsport Summit in Munich. The spring season is followed by the next round of races in autumn.

Comments after the race

Philip Stamm (D, Team Principal Porsche Coanda Esports Racing): "Reaching the semi-finals with all four Porsche is a strong result and a challenge in itself in this series. The day started well for us, with Joshua Rogers and Dayne Warren promptly qualifying for the finals. Things didn't go so well in the second semi-final. Our two cars collided with a rival car in the hairpin – such incidents can happen in racing. The final again underlined just how competitive it is in this fierce-contested ESL R1 series. Everything happens within thousandths of a second. Seventh and ninth place is a great effort."

Joshua Rogers (AUS, Porsche Coanda Esports Racing):"Monday evening brought highs and lows. From second place, I managed to win the semi-final in the last lap – Hockenheim was my fifth win out of five

ESL R1 races. Unfortunately, this streak was broken in the finale. My qualifying lap was solid and enough for P6. I lost a position in the sprint off the line. Afterwards, I couldn't get close enough to the leading pack to attack. But we earned decent points and now I'm looking forward to the next races."

Dayne Warren (AUS, Porsche Coanda Esports Racing):"This was the first time that I made it into the finals in the ESL R1 series. Basically, my pace was good but I didn't quite pull it all together in qualifying and had to start from far down the grid. I managed to make up a few positions and finished ninth. All in all, I'm quite pleased but next time I want to do better in the final."

Results

Hockenheim (B), finale
1. Dáire McCormack, AMG-GT3 Evo (IRL, Mercedes-AMG Team Williams Esports)
2. Joni Törmälä, BMW M4 GT3 (SF, G2 Esports)
3. James Baldwin, AMG-GT3 Evo (GB, Mercedes-AMG Petronas Esports)
4. Tommy Östgaard, Porsche 911 GT3 R (N, Heroic)
7. Joshua Rogers, Porsche 911 GT3 R (AUS/Porsche Coanda Esports Racing)
9. Dayne Warren, Porsche 911 GT3 R (AUS/Porsche Coanda Esports Racing)
14. Mitchell deJong, Porsche 911 GT3 R (USA/Porsche Coanda Esports Racing)
18. Mack Bakkum, Porsche 911 GT3 R (NL/Porsche Coanda Esports Racing)

Team standings after 5 of 10 championship rounds
1. R8G Esports, 502 points
2. Team Redline, 459 points
3. Mercedes-AMG Team Williams Esports, 392 points
4. Porsche Coanda Esports Racing Team, 325 points

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Holger Eckhardt

Spokesperson Motorsports LMDh, GT, Customer Racing
+49 (0) 170 / 911 4982
holger.eckhardt@porsche.de

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Dr. Ing. h.c. F. Porsche Aktiengesellschaft
Porscheplatz 1
70435 Stuttgart