Joshua Rogers seals Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup Championship

26/04/2021 Joshua Rogers has taken home the championship title of the Porsche TAG Heuer Esport Supercup for the second time. Driving for the Virtual Racing School team, the Australian scored first place in the feature race at the finale on the virtual version of the Autodromo Nazionale Monza in Italy.

The race

Thanks to his tenth win of the season, the 21-year-old again convincingly claimed his second title after 2019 in the global championship run on the iRacing simulation platform. “Josh” Rogers' teammate Mitchell deJong from the USA secured vice-champion honours. Britain's Charlie Collins finished the sprint race in second place behind Dayne Warren (DirectForce Pro) and thus rounded off a dream result for the Virtual Racing School squad. The Australian Emily Jones (@Emree) pocketed the title of the All-Stars, a line-up of high-ranking esports influencers.

Sprint race: Warren celebrates first race win of the year

In the close qualifying session for the seven-lap sprint race, Collins narrowly beat Australia's Dayne Warren by just 0.036 seconds. For six laps, the British sim racer held the lead, before Warren catapulted out of his slipstream, edged ahead of him into the first chicane and narrowly clung to lead to the flag. Chasing him across the line was Collins, Mitchell deJong and Joshua Rogers. The critical eighth place and thus pole position for the final round went to the Frenchman Yohann Harth from the Apex Racing team. In the Porsche TAG Heuer Esport Supercup, the eight best finishers from the sprint race tackle the feature race in reverse order.

Main race: Show from Rogers and deJong, drama for last year's champion

The main race over 14 laps was marked by many changes in the lead, a surprising visitor to the podium and bad luck for last year's champion Sebastian Job (Red Bull Racing Esports). The British online racer experienced a day of misfortune at the final event of the year. Due to a penalty from the previous race at Le Mans, Job was not eligible to take part in the qualifying and consequently had to start from the third to last grid spot. In the sprint, the 2020 champion was shunted into a spin; in the feature race, his virtual Porsche 911 GT3 Cup landed on its roof after an accident involving four vehicles. As a result, Job

was thrown out of contention for the vice-championship crown.

For the Briton, however, a bid for second place would have been difficult anyway, as his rivals from the Virtual Racing School team were too strong. Joshua Rogers and Mitchell deJong allowed the Frenchman Harth and then the Dutchman Mack Bakkum (LEGO Technic Esports Team) to lead the field just before the halfway mark. However, from lap seven, they made it very clear who the real pacesetters were at Monza. Lap after lap, the two top drivers of the season used each other's slipstream to take turns at the front of the field. Ultimately, Rogers netted his tenth win, and deJong's second place was enough to earn him runner-up laurels.

Behind the unbeatable leading pair, a turbulent fight unfolded shortly before the end of the final race. In the fierce duels on the long straights of Italy's Formula 1 track, polesitter Harth eventually relinquished his third place to Bakkum and then had to let Dayne Warren pass. However, the Frenchman did not give up and used a chaotic situation while braking for the Variante Goodyear to move up into third place shortly before the flag. For Harth, this proved to be a stroke of luck. Thanks to his podium result at the finale, the 22-year-old made it into the top 20 of the championship.

Joshua Rogers will not only receive his trophy at the traditional Night of Champions at the end of the year. The 21-year-old Australian will also take home US$50,000 and a high-quality watch for winning the TAG Heuer Pole Award. A total of US$200,000 in prize money was awarded during the 2021 season.

2022 season: 20 starters confirmed, more spots allocated in qualifying heats

After the gripping finale of the 2021 Porsche TAG Heuer Esport Supercup, the popular online racing series will take a short break. In July, qualifying heats for next season begin. From these, the remaining grid spots will be allocated for the 2022 season held on virtual racetracks. The 20 best-placed drivers from this year are automatically eligible to compete next season.

Comments after the feature race

Joshua Rogers (AUS/Virtual Racing School): "I'm incredibly relieved that I can now officially call myself champion again. The season was exhausting, exciting and a real rollercoaster ride. At the first events, my qualifying results weren't exactly what I'd expected. We worked on this as a team and made huge progress. The better grid positions then helped me to achieve the many successes over the rest of the year. It was great fun, especially after experiencing a really bad season in 2020. I think Mitchell and I put on another great show for the fans at the final race."

Mitchell de Jong (USA/Virtual Racing School): "That was a top event to wrap up the year. For me, it was

all about the vice-championship. Unfortunately, I couldn't really fight for second overall against Sebastian Job on the track because his penalty meant that he had to start from the back of the grid. It's a pity, but we still treated spectators to a great show. I'd like to thank my teammates for their support – and Porsche for another awesome season!"

Yohann Harth (F/Apex Racing Team): "I knew that it would be very tight for me in the battle for a top 20 spot in the overall standings. I was under pressure – but it seems I coped pretty well with it. Third place at the end of the season is a dream. Finally, everything came together perfectly. Just in time because now, as one of the top 20 drivers of the year, I automatically qualify for the coming season. It doesn't get much better than that."

Results

Monza, Sprint race
1. Dayne Warren (AUS/DirectForce Pro)
2. Charlie Collins (GB/Virtual Racing School)
3. Mitchell de Jong (USA/Virtual Racing School)
4. Joshua Rogers (AUS/Virtual Racing School)
5. Mack Bakkum (NL/LEGO Technic Esports Team)

Monza, Feature race
1. Joshua Rogers (AUS/Virtual Racing School)
2. Mitchell de Jong (USA/Virtual Racing School)
3. Yohann Harth (F/Apex Racing Team)
4. Salva Talens (E/MSI eSports)
5. Charlie Collins (GB/Virtual Racing School)

Points' standings after 10 of 10 championship races
1. Joshua Rogers (AUS/Virtual Racing School), 670 points
2. Mitchell deJong (USA/Virtual Racing School), 478 points
3. Charlie Collins (GB/Virtual Racing School), 408 points
4. Sebastian Job (GB/Red Bull Racing Esports), 395 points
5. Dayne Warren (AUS/DirectForce Pro), 380 points

The preview

The countdown is on: the final round of the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup (PESC) season takes place this Saturday on the digital version of the Grand Prix circuit at Monza. For Joshua Rogers, the tenth and final round of the season could turn into a victory march. Driving for the Virtual Racing School team, the Australian has excellent chances to take home the official championship crown in his virtual Porsche 911 GT3 Cup after the sprint and feature race. For the 21-year-old, this would be his second

title in the global Esports championship run on the iRacing simulation platform since 2019. Nevertheless, suspense is guaranteed on the 5.793-kilometre tradition-steeped racetrack: with a total of 85 points up for grabs, five drivers are in the running for vice-championship honours.

In addition to Rogers' American teammate Mitchell deJong (407 points) and the defending champion Sebastian Job from the Red Bull Racing Esports squad (Great Britain, 395 points), the title aspirants include the British sim racer Kevin Ellis Jr. (Rahal Letterman Lanigan Esports, 349 points), Dayne Warren from Australia (LEGO Technic Esports Team, 346 points) and another Virtual Racing School driver, Charlie Collins (Great Britain, 342 points).

The fight for a guaranteed spot in the 2022 PESC adds even more suspense to the final round at the Italian track. A top-20 result in the overall classification automatically entitles participants to a place on the grid next season. The remaining starting positions will be allocated in qualifying races.

At Monza, the PESC sim racers pit themselves against each other in a sprint race over seven laps starting at 21:17 pm (CEST) on Saturday, followed by the main event over twice the distance from 21:45 pm. Fans can watch the iRacing action live on Porsche's YouTube and Twitch channels.

Beforehand, content creators from the world of Esports will again showcase their skills in a curtain-raiser. They fight for victory with the virtual Porsche 911 GT3 Cup cars. The live stream begins at 19:35 with the All-Star qualifying session. The two influencer races get the green light at 19:45 and 20:12 respectively.

Further information on the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup can be found on the Porsche Newsroom, thePorsche Motorsport Hub and via the Twitter account @PorscheRaces.

Porsche Champions' Show at the Porsche Experience Centre

Porsche accompanies the grand finale of the virtual one-make cup with a special Champions' Show at the Porsche Experience Centre at the Hockenheimring: from there, the high-profile Esports commentator Matthew Trivett – better known as Sadokist – will report live on the race action. At the two All Star races in the lead-up to the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup, content creator Dan Suzuki (Dan_Sosoulski) will race his virtual Porsche 911 GT3 Cup from Hockenheim. The same goes for Ayhancan Güven (Coanda Simsport). In addition to his campaign in the real-world Porsche Mobil 1 Supercup, the Porsche Junior has qualified for this seasons' Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup. The 23-year-old from Turkey tackles the final round of the season from the Porsche Experience Centre Hockenheimring. The live broadcast from Hockenheim begins at 18:40 pm on the Porsche YouTube channel and at www.porsche.com/PESC-thefinal. Online viewers can look forward to an exciting support programme as well as plenty of action-packed racing.

The schedule (all times CEST)

Saturday, 24 April
19:35 – 19:45: Qualifying All-Stars
19:45 – 20:07: Sprint race All-Stars
20:07 – 20:12: Warm-up All-Stars
20:12 – 20:37: Main race All-Stars
20:40 – 21:02: Halftime show begins
20:45 – 21:03: Free practice PESC
21:03 – 21:17: Qualifying PESC
21:17 – 21:35: Sprint race PESC
21:35 – 21:45: Warm-up PESC
21:45 – 22:15: Feature race PESC

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