

12 September 2019

**F1 Esports Pro Series 2019: Event 1**



The new F1 Esports season got underway in London last night with the first three races of the Pro Series 2019. This year, all ten Formula 1 teams are taking part in the “virtual” world championship, which consists of 12 races split into four events. All the cars have identical performance levels which makes for very close and spectacular racing, with the driving and setup skills of the 30 drivers making the difference. It certainly produced some thrilling and even controversial racing last night.

Each team is made up of three drivers, with two of them taking part in each round, with Scuderia Toro Rosso represented in London’s Gfinity Arena by Patrik Holzmann from Germany and Cem Bolukbasi from Turkey, both already part of our line-up last year. There to support them was none other than our race driver Pierre Gasly. They had put in plenty of pre-race training along with their opposite numbers from Red Bull Racing Esports, before tackling the Bahrain, Chinese and Azerbaijan GPs yesterday.

Qualifying is run over a 20-minute session and the races are run over 25% of the distance of a real Grand Prix. Points are allocated for the top ten to the same rate as in Formula 1, including a point for setting the fastest race lap.

**Bahrain:** Patrik was soon into his stride, finishing a strong eighth in qualifying, while Cem was sixteenth. Pole went to our former driver Rasmussen, who is now with Red Bull Racing Esports. Over the 14-lap race, Cem managed to make up a single place to finish 15<sup>th</sup> and Patrik drove well to finish where he started in eighth. Ferrari Esports took the win, courtesy of David Tonizza.

**China:** Qualifying proved to be decisive when it came to the result. At the first sign of rain – yes even the weather is thrown into the mix in F1 Esports – all the drivers rushed out on track in the hope of setting a time on the soft compound tyres while the track was still dry. Unfortunately, our drivers got stuck in traffic, which meant Patrik was 15<sup>th</sup> and Cem 19<sup>th</sup> on the grid. Once the race began, Patrik was involved in a collision on the opening lap and



had to pit for a new front wing, which compromised his race and he took the flag in 19<sup>th</sup> place. Cem was 13<sup>th</sup>, while once again Ferrari Esports driver Tonizza took the win.

**Azerbaijan:** Qualifying went better this time for our pair as they did a great job of working as a team, giving each other a tow, resulting in Patrik and Cem lining up on the grid in 6<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> places respectively. Unfortunately, the race did not go so well. A few too many collisions on the streets of Baku dropped our pair to the back of the pack with Cem finishing 15<sup>th</sup> and Patrik 19<sup>th</sup>. This time the winner was Frederik Rasmussen for Red Bull Racing Esports, who had won this round last year driving for us.

**Patrik Holzmann** (Germany)  
 Round 1 – Bahrain (Sakhir): P8  
 Round 2 – China (Shanghai): P19  
 Round 3 – Azerbaijan (Baku): P19

Driver Standings: P14 – 4 Points

*"I'd have to say I found these two days here to be the most frustrating of my Sim racing career! It seemed that everything that could go wrong did go wrong. But there are some positives to take away from these first three races, including the fact that the pace was there. And at least, I picked up points for eighth place in Bahrain. Now, I plan to clear my mind and work out how to improve and I'm sure that, working as a team, we can achieve that. I think we just need a bit of luck on our side and avoid picking up damage on the car, as we were in good positions in all three races. But for a variety of reasons, we couldn't get all the performance out of the car. We missed out on a lot of points today, but this is a long championship and I'm sure we will be fine in the coming races."*

**Cem Bolukbasi** (Turkey)  
 Round 1 – Bahrain (Sakhir): P14  
 Round 2 – China (Shanghai): P13  
 Round 3 – Azerbaijan (Baku): P15

Driver Standings: P18 – 0 Points

*"We had prepared very well for this first round and our speed and pace was there. We also did a great job of working on our setup prior to the event, but unfortunately, on the night, things didn't really go to plan and it was a race night to forget. But I'm not downhearted, because we can learn a lot from these first three races and come back stronger for Round 2 and the next three Grands Prix. Compared to last year, the actual racing was more aggressive. I think we need to work on this aspect and change our driving styles. It was a case of racing to survive and if you survived, then you did well. I think we just need a bit of luck to do better next time."*

Team Standings: P10 – 4 Points

**Pierre Gasly** (Scuderia Toro Rosso F1 Driver)

*"I was impressed by the level of the gamers here tonight. I also attended the first round last year and I'd say the performance is even higher this time. The racing was closer and faster, but unfortunately, our own Toro Rosso guys did not have the best of nights over these three races. We picked up a few points and there's a long way to go still, so we believe they can fight back and be competitive over the remaining nine races. I'll be supporting them all the way!"*

Photo Gallery (credit: F1)

<https://scuderiatororosso.redbull.com/en/gallery/esports-2019-event-1/>

