



AUTOSIMSPORT

Volume 3 Number 4

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World Rally Start Luca Betti

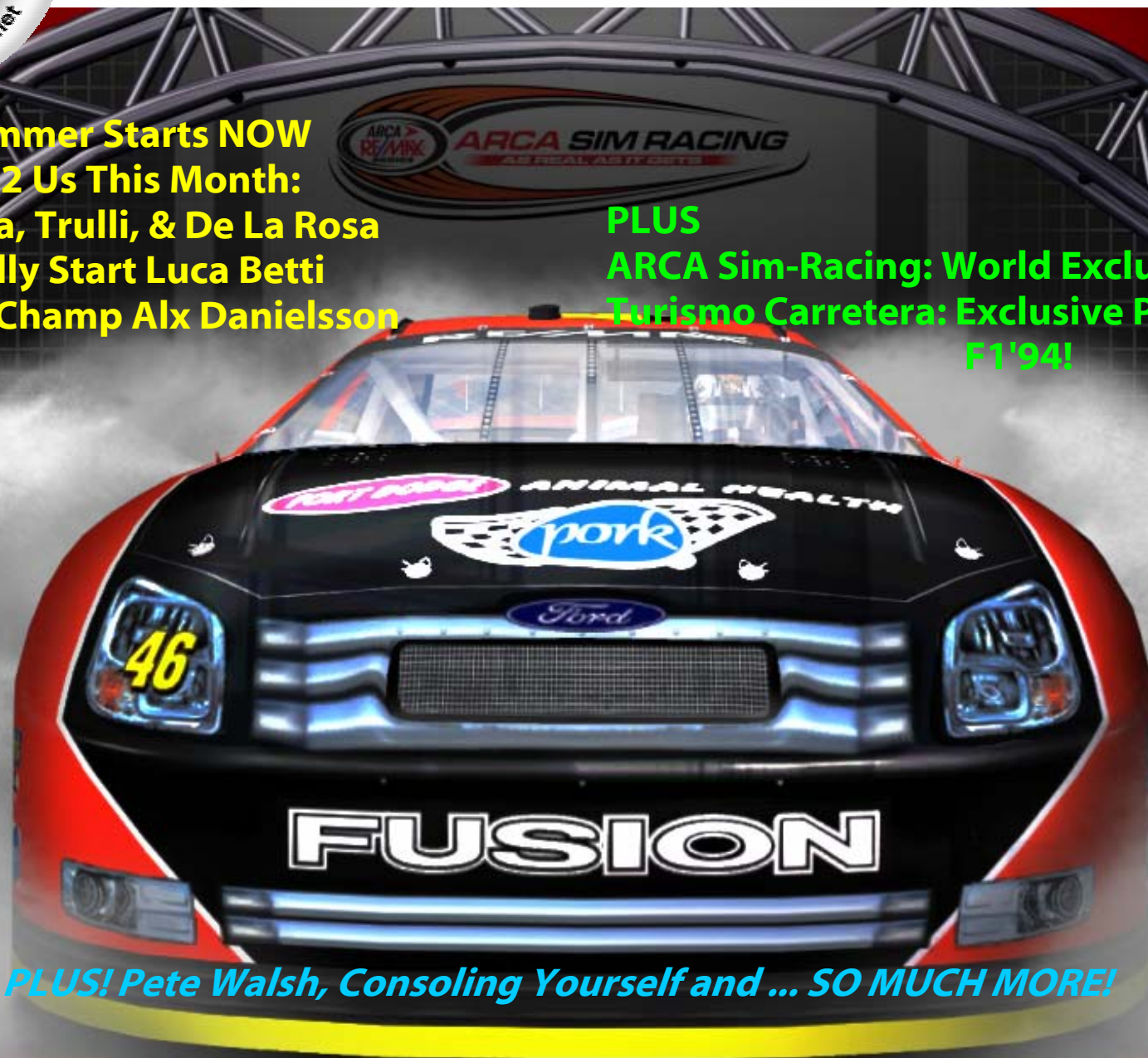
World Series Champ Alx Danielsson

PLUS

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F1'94!



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AUTOSIMSPORT HeadOpEd

LxMartini

What A Difference A Month-And-A-Bit-Makes

As our more perceptive readers have no doubt realised by now, AUTOSIMSPORT is going live every forty-five days or so ... the reason for this? Simple really—since we've managed to get ten (thanks guys, you know who you are) donations in two-and-a-half years of monthly 100-plus page issues—that's over 1,080,000 words if you're counting—we have finally got the message ... (of course 600,000 of those words probably belong to Bob, so we don't really blame you!) ...

Peter Windsor Is A ...

Peter Windsor—who some of you know as the voice of the post-race interviewer on English-speaking Formula One broadcasts, and US SPEED TV viewers know as the guy who does the pit-walk pre-race—wrote in 'F1 Racing' magazine last month that Formula One driver Scott Speed should be spending less time on simulators, and more time driving ...

Not content, however, to make a total twit of himself in print (Windsor, as Lewis Hamilton's official cheerleader, should be a little more positive toward simulators since McLaren's Ron Dennis has attributed the 1,000-plus laps Hamilton ran on the Mac simulator as one of the reasons why the young rookie has been so consistent this season), Windsor then proceeded to make a complete fool of himself on the 'air' by suggesting that Lewis Hamilton was going to win at Monaco (this during the Thursday practice session) and further opined that everyone else might as well pack-up and go home, so inevitable was Lewis's impending victory for Queen ,Country, and all that. Five minutes or so later, twenty-five time world champion Lewis Hamilton stuck himself—and his McLaren—firmly into the wall, before spending the rest of the weekend being used like a re-usable condom at a crackhouse gangbang by Fred Alonso.

The motto of the story being—Peter Windsor really doesn't have a clue, and Alonso is a very special driver indeed. And as for the *bla-bla* from the Brit' press (apparently Alonso and McLaren cheated Lewis out of his win—wonder where that rubbish started, eh!)—well, they don't seem to have much of a clue either ... So who does, you ask? Well, I'm glad you did!

The Prophet!

Yes, those of you who read this section will know that my prophecies always come to fruition (well, one in twenty is better odds that you'll get on Windsor, and I do this for free!) so ... without further a-do (the adieu comes soon, chill!), here is AUTOSIMSPORT's predictions for what lies around the next turn!

Ralf Schumacher will be fired from Toyota before Silverstone. Why? Because he out-Windsors Peter Windsor, whose name you will find in the dictionary under 'bungling'. Was a time—not so long ago—when Ralf claimed he was the third best driver in the world (behind Alonso and Kimi)—well, as it turns out, he was probably right about one of them, because ...

Kimi Is A ...

It has been, sadly, worse than I feared: Had it not been for Australia, where Massa suffered mechanical failure, he would be 5-0 in qualifying against the self-styled maverick of Formula One racing, the 'Kimster'. As predicted on this page way back in February, Kimi is taking a hideous beating by Massa, and it can only be a matter of time before Ferrari lose patience ... *surely!*

Many legends surround our Kimi—whether they are true or not depends on who you speak to—but one thing is for sure: If you want to be a maverick, and just 'get in and drive', as they say Kimi 'likes' to do, then you need to be able to actually get in and drive—*fast*. Being outclassed by your number two driver proves the point about Formula One and every other human endeavour: One percent inspiration, ninety-nine percent perspiration. Now fifteen points off the championship lead, and having just been lapped by his team-mate at Monaco, Kimi needs to find a result from somewhere, and *soon*. After Bahrain, Massa had to find redemption, and has done so by digging deep, and proving he has the courage, passion, and *will* to challenge for the title. Does Kimi have the same desire? I for one have my doubts ... we'll find out in the next month, though, and it will certainly be fun to watch! In the meantime, enjoy your Summer!

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News

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Checkered Flag Racing League

Press Release—www.cfrracing.com

Ron Sprinkel, founder of the [Checkered Flag Racing League](#), (CFRL) is thrilled to announce the biggest sim-racing event in CFRL's history. The DiscountDiecast.biz 200 will run on Saturday, June 23, 2007, and will be broadcast LIVE on [RLMtv](#), Internet Racing Television. CFRL is now accepting Registrations from quick and clean racers.

This special event is sponsored by Discount Diecast.biz, your new online stop for diecast buying. Ranging from collectibles to investment grade, Discount Diecast has what you need. Action, Winner's Circle, Revell & Team Caliber are a few of the many brands that are stocked. All orders are shipped absolutely free. Don't see what you desire? Send an email and ask for it, new products are being added to the website all the time.

The Discount Diecast.biz 200 is an eighty lap, 200 mile race on a customized Daytona night track, provided by the talented track editors at [Revamped Reloaded](#). The race features the rock solid racing platform of *NR2003* by Papyrus using the Cup mod. No trick setup options, as CFRL uses fixed setups which puts a premium on driver ability and car control. The racing is sure to be tight and hard fought. The server will open a 7pm Eastern and Qualifying at 8pm Eastern. The race will commence live on [RLMtv](#) after a ten minute Happy Hour period.

The field size for the race will be limited to thirty-five drivers. Registration for the race can be done by visiting [Discount Diecast.biz](#) and clicking on the link or by going to [CFRL's website](#). If needed, qualifying races will be held to determine the thirty-five drivers who will participate. The top three finishers in the race will receive store credits to Discount Diecast.biz as well as a copies of the full race coverage on DVD.

CFRL is offering guaranteed spots in the field to all entries who sign up as new drivers for the league. As an added bonus, Ron Sprinkel has announced that the all

new drivers will receive up to three free months of racing when signing up during this period. CFRL races *NR2003* three nights a week as well as many short series' mixed in throughout the NASCAR Cup season. Drivers who join now are still capable of winning the Pro Cup series championship due to the 'Chase for the Cup' format.

The Checkered Flag Racing League started in 2004 and offers quality-sim racing, but perhaps more importantly, an excellent starting point for those looking to start league racing. Getting into a league can be a tough task, especially when you do not have a sim-racing résumé. CFRL caters to the new driver, offering a 'Rookie' series in which new drivers compete for their own championship while racing with the 'Pro' series drivers who evaluate their abilities. After a short acclimation period, Rookie drivers can earn their stripes and move up to the Pro series.

THQ NON GTR

Bob Simmerman

Many hopes were dashed when the word hit the streets regarding THQ's decision not to publish SimBin's [GTR for the XBOX 360](#). With the arrival of *Forza Motorsports 2* imminent, *GTR* was in a position to provide for some spice and variety on the 360 (if not competition), but with the deal gone down the drain, fans can only hope the whole project has not been permanently binned. Sporting the new 'Lizard' game engine, anticipation for *GTR*-the-console-version was, and will most likely continue to be, high. Is this some sort of death-bell ringing for the 'hardcore' simulator on the console platform? Personally, I hope a publisher picks this one up quick, and I can only imagine that that will be the case soon enough. Perhaps by the time you read this, perhaps not. SimBin were unavailable for comment ...

Stolen Mods For Sale On eBay

Bob Simmerman

Had I not seen the announcement with my own eyes, I would never have believed it. Seems there is now a cottage industry being built which sees anonymous

people stealing mods and offering them for sale on eBay. I kid you not ... anonymous people on eBay would buy mods stolen from the community ... but God forbid the community even *thinks* of paying for an add-on!

An official statement was issued by [CTDP's](#) Daniel Senff that reads, in part, as follows: *Some notes about leeching and selling mods on eBay. Unfortunately there were cases of our mods being sold (along with other mods) on eBay. eBay is alerted and hopefully takes it down as soon as possible. However we want to make clear again, that our mods are not to be sold or used for commercial purposes at all! They are for free download only and nothing else!*

Bizarre enough to be fiction—if you see any bad eggs around, give em' the toss.

The British Touring Car Mod Killed By The Official Series—The Man Is Back In Town!

Bob Simmerman

Much to the chagrin of TOCA 3 fans everywhere—and trust me, there are plenty—the BTCC has put the stops to a BTCC mod that was being created by 'Sarc'. Stating that he had been contacted by the BTCC Media Officer himself, Sarc noted that he was left with no choice but to murder his project. In his [public statement](#), Sarc explains:

The 'BTCC for Toca Race Driver3' is no longer available. I have been contacted by the BTCC Media Officer and told to remove all references from my mod/skins/website etc., which I am obviously abiding by so as to not incur legal action. I just intended the BTCC mod to be a totally free add-on to help enhance TRD3, and also to try to spread the good word about the BTCC series of which I have always been a massive fan, but was unaware that I would be in breach of any copyright laws/regulations.

If anyone has previously downloaded any of my

files/images/pages etc., could you please immediately remove them from your computer and any other storage media. Plus if any webmasters or individuals have any links to my site, (or images/files etc), could you also please remove them.

Erm right ... good on the BTTC, I'm sure they've made many friends in the sim-racing community ... whatever next? RSC getting involved in the mod-distribution, and rFactorCentral getting nailed by 'The Man'? Anything is possible ...

2007 BMW Sauber Formula One Official Add-on By ISI

Bob Simmerman

As if they have not done enough to support rFactor, now approaching its second birthday, Image Space Incorporated has released the officially-licensed [2007 BMW Sauber Formula One](#) update, following-on from the officially-licensed Panoz release of last month. Featuring a beautiful car model and a breathtaking driving experience, this is without a doubt a must have for any fan of the Pinnacle. And while you are downloading this latest hot rod from rFactorCentral, make sure to have a look around as the offerings for rFactor are coming fast and furious these days, like that awesome Sebring track, or the Porsche Fabcar Challenge 1.2 mod.

Formula 1 BMW-Sauber ... Slower Than An Opel Astra At The 'Ring?

AutoSimSport

Sadly, yes—and only one minute faster than a Ford Transit van! Heidfeld's time, of 8:34, was a true stinker. Considering there were 45,000 people that showed up to watch the first Formula One car tackle this legendary track in thirty-one years, you'd have thought Heidfeld would try a little harder—but maybe he was told to take it easy, though that didn't show on

the back straight, where he hit 270km/h ...

In case you're wondering, the official record for the 'Ring is a rather astonishing 6:11 set by Stefan Bellof way back in 1983, in a Porsche 956. That 1000km race was the last competitive race at the 'Ring, and makes Heidfeld's performance even more disappointing as it would have been interesting to see what a modern Formula One could do, if pushed just a little harder (rumour has it that Heidfeld actually avoided entering the Karussell entirely). On the other hand, this is what simulators are for, aren't they?

So, what is the potential *real* time of a BMW-Sauber F1 2007 around the epic 'Ring? [Send us](#) the best lap in rFactor's version, and we'll put it up next month! We're betting it's around the six-minute mark ...

Another Crown For The King

Bob Simmerman

You'll need to sign up first, but it will be more than worth it as JJ and the [SuperSpeedway.net](#) crew have done it again. Their latest masterpiece is the 2007 mod for *NASCAR Racing Season 2003*. Currently in an advanced beta stage, word on the street says this one is a must have, and the AI is reported to be well above the less-than-average found in other sims. Me? I'm still playing the brilliant 2005 mod!

Holy Grail Gets A Polish

Bob Simmerman

With the recent release of the '[Grand Prix Legends Installer](#)', by the Grand Prix Legends Preservation Society, getting started with this landmark title just got a whole lot easier. This installer promises to make that initial—and often intimidating—foray into the world that is *Grand Prix Legends* a smooth one. For a simulator that is nearly as difficult to install in its modern form as it is to drive, we can only give thanks and praise for such a thing.



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COMMENT**Conspiracy Theory, And Other Stories***Spadge Fromley***Conspiracy Theory**

I have heard that people are now actively turning away from one of the behemoth centres of sim-racing due to the 'rFactor' forum/sub-forum structure which creates a situation in which any notice that you may post for an upcoming event is buried so deep in the structure that it gets a half-dozen views in a week, if you're lucky.

Either this is done by someone who completely over-engineered the entire rFactor forum concept, or by someone who really doesn't want to make it easy to find out about new tracks and cars for rFactor. So, is it a case of haphazard puppetry, or malicious intent? You take your pick.

Considering there have been numerous allegations that the site in question has ties a little too close for comfort with a group who seem to be in direct competition with ISI, whilst still remaining clients (think MS Office in OS X here, and you'll get the picture of how that works), I think a person could be forgiven for thinking that this structure was arranged specifically and purposefully to undermine the rFactor community in an attempt to promote said competition's products.

But with rFactorCentral providing a much better-targeted place to post notices of events and new mods, it needn't hurt the rFactor community at all.

Panoz (Re)visited

So, now that everyone who didn't get the Panoz when it was released only to the chosen few (see last month) have it, we've all been able to have a go and admit—what a ride! A couple of friends and I took some base Cabriolets out for a spin at the gorgeous new Goldenport track. Literally, *a spin*. There're two options

for driving these cars: drift all four wheels, or spin the back ones only. Proper hard cars to race, these. I then riced my wheels with the first level of upgrade packages, and took it out around the Nordschliefe. I haven't crashed so much since I first got *GPL*! Neither have I used opposite lock as much since then, too.

So what was the fuss all about? We're now one month down the line, and the big issue is now not even history-worthy. So much so, you're probably not even reading this! I know I'm not, and I wrote it.

The Art Of Crashing Without Crashing

Recently, I competed in a six-hour endurance race featuring a bunch of GT-spec' cars and Opel Corsas at the Nordschliefe twenty-four hour circuit. I did my three hours and handed over to my team-mate, whose game promptly crashed to desktop. Game over, nul points. Words cannot describe my feelings. Three hours straight of hard driving, the last hour of which was in the dark, at one of the world's most challenging circuits. Never before in my life have I wanted to stand up as much as I wanted to throughout the whole of the last hour of my stint. I was about ready to go outside and find something cute and cuddly to hurt, such was my frustration.

Okay, so I lied about the 'without crashing' bit—I did manage to spend some quality time upside down, sliding down the road on the roof of my Corsa, but you shouldn't let that stop you from having a good time, right?

Think Bike!

It is something I come back to again and again in my life: There is no good bike racing-sim. As a major fan of Superbikes and MotoGP (yeah, I was at Donington to see Biaggi and Haga duke it out for forty-five minutes last month), sometimes I just want to hop on a bike and go nuts six inches away from someone, overtaking

on every corner. I have thought long and hard about this, and have come up with a few reasons why there is no proper bike sim for the PC.

Rider input is so much more of an issue on a bike, and there is no way to emulate this in a sim using current controllers. A set of handlebars with two levers and a twist grip is a start, but that's only a fraction of what a rider does. There're two foot controls needed: Gears, too, and rear brakes. There're two axes of lean as the rider shifts balance around the machine to keep the more-idle wheel on the ground, or to get the thing laid down in a corner. I think it works out to be something like one-third of the weight of the entire package is movable ballast, and that is in the shape of the rider.

So you would need something like a race frame, only movable. But then you'd be stuffed without the gyro-effect. You'd just fall off it all the time. If you think people think you look silly sitting in your frame pretending to be Michael Schumacher, imagine how much entertainment you would provide them as you roll off the damn thing onto the floor, swearing.

The real killer is this though: You can buy a full-on GT1-equivalent racing bike for less than what a small family car would cost you.

rFactorIs Dead, Long Live rFactor

It seems as though ISI have quietly announced that what we have now is all we're going to get. I know of at least a dozen modders who disagree.

LFS In The Balance

Just to show that I don't just carp on about rFactor all the time, and ignore LFS, here's some LFS news.

Erm. Yeah.

LFS is still in beta. Or is that alpha?

Elvis

Elvis Presley is still dead.

T1

LuisaGhibaudo

Alx Danielsson

Alx Danielsson, fresh from his Formula One test with Renault F1 the week before at Silverstone, sat down with Luisa Ghibaudo at Monaco to talk about Formula One, winning the World Series by Renault championship, EuroSeries3000, beta-testing for SimBin's RACE07, and ... oh yes, how to make a million-and-a-half Euro in one month ...



Gentlemen Start Your Engines!



GoGamer.com



Luisa Ghibaudo: You tested the Renault F1—the championship winning 2006 car—last week as part of your prize for winning the World Series by Renault: Can you give me your impressions of the ride? And don't tell me how good the brakes were!

Alx Danielsson: It's impressive—it's been forty or fifty years development for this type of race car, so yes, it's impressive. It's actually very similar to driving a GP2 car, or a World Series by Renault (WSR) car, and I was surprised a little bit by how natural it felt, because you build it up in your mind to be something very, very hard, and it is hard, but if you have done all the major junior categories of formula cars—which I've done, from Formula Ford all the way through to WSR, as well as tests for GP2, Champ Car, Formula Nippon—I've driven all the cars—and if you've done all that, it does seem to come natural, driving an F1 car, because it is very similar. But, if you step from a Formula Renault, to Formula One, then I think that would be very hard, because then you don't know what to expect. Anyway, for me, the impression of driving the car ... well, it's quick, for sure, it's quick everywhere, but it wasn't a shock.

Luisa Ghibaudo: The popular legend has it that Formula Ones are easier to drive than World Series Renault cars, and even F3000s—can you compare them, and tell me whether this is true?

Alx Danielsson: I think the difference—I would say no, not easier, because what happens, it's quicker, in a Formula One car, everything comes at you so much quicker when you sit in the car, which means, your brain has to work faster; basically, you have to plan more ahead ... but again, they're very similar. Braking is important in any Formula car, but crucial in Formula One, because the braking is so good from all the aero {generated} from the wings, it's more crucial. If you brake ten metres too late, you might crash, instead of running wide in a corner {as you would in other Formula cars}.



It's much easier, though, than a GP2 car, because a GP2 car is crazy. It's like—anyone who is good in WSR will be good in a GP2 car, but it takes more effort, because it's set up like a rally car, it slides a lot, and the power delivery of the car is brutal—nothing-nothing-nothing, and then {it goes crazy}—so when you're exiting a corner in a GP2 car, you're almost trying to

save three metres on exit, because when the power kicks in, the car kicks out, and that's something a Formula One car doesn't do because of its traction control, and the smoother engine: So, compared to a road car, or Formula Ford, GP2, and WSR are very similar to each other, but very different to everything else.

Luisa Ghibaudo: Can you compare the real Formula One with the simulated versions you have tried: How close are the sims, in terms of grip, and that sort of thing—'feel', in other words?

Alx Danielsson: Well it's very similar, but—the thing I always have a problem with is, you can catch the {simulated} car with the brakes: That is, if you turn into a corner too fast, and you're about to spin, you can always touch the brakes, and it will save you, but in real life, it doesn't work this way, it's much harder in real life, much harder to save a car, and you need to be much more careful in real life.

I never spin in a racing-sim, even if I'm always backwards, I can always catch it ... in a Formula One car—we didn't have {at the [Renault F1 test](#), held at Silverstone's short Stowe circuit—Ed} the fast seventh gear 5G corners on the track where I tested, but that would be the same as a GP2, or Champ Car: The faster the car, the faster the aero, the more it will snap, and in a Formula One car, if you're in that angle, you're gonna spin. In WSR, again, you have maybe a tiny, tiny bit more of a slip angle: I race Porsches, and there you can power-slide those cars without losing it, same as GT cars, which, actually, you can slide even more—in F1 cars, though, they will snap, especially at high speed. In low speed corners, not really much, because the traction control should be able to catch most of those exit snaps. I always race sims without aids, they make a difference, and it's the aero that makes the car snap, not the car, or the mechanical grip—F1s have a long wheelbase, and on a short track, this makes them difficult.

Luisa Ghibaudo: You've been working for SimBin's *Race07* sim—particularly their F3000 car—what input did you give to them, and how accurate is the sim?

Alx Danielsson: I was working mainly on single-seater physics with Mark Reynolds; he would send me updates for the physics, I would do laps, and write down everything, things he needed to work on to improve the sim, the physics.



The last version, I was mainly working on the F3000—all single-seaters are the same, you know, in this category: Formula Renault, 3000, Formula Master, the characteristics are all the same; it's only when you get to Formula One that things are different, because of the ridiculous aero, the downforce, so ... I would say that {my contribution to the sim was} working with the physics to make sure they were accurate, especially the low speed with no aero, and {primarily} mechanical grip, and high speed with aero-grip, the way the car lets go in the corners, when it wants to start spinning, how that feels, and how to catch it ... I haven't driven the absolute last version, there's a demo version out now, and I drove that version, but it had a funny non-linear steering ... but, if it's the way it was, the F3000 car is perfect, the way you can just slide it a little bit, or in slow corners let it hang out—you lose time, but there's always that option, and it makes the car easier to drive, just like the F3000 car. I'm very excited to have a version of this sim to see, because it will set the standard—I like *GTR2*, and I think that's a brilliant sim, but I think the physics are even more suited for single-seater adaptation, and that is why it was working so well with the F3000 car.



Luisa Ghibaudo: You have started the EuroSeries3000 season well by winning the first round at Vallelunga: Does sim-racing give you an advantage in terms of your preparation and, if so, in what ways?

Alx Danielsson: Normally, I've done a lot of preparation through sim-racing, like the first time I came to Monaco, in 2004, to race here in a V6 Renault, which is like an F3000, but with less horsepower—seventy or so less—and I took the Renault F1 car in *F12002*, and I changed the weight, grip level, and engine to create a V6 Renault—or what I thought was correct, anyway—top speed, gears, everything, and I did a 1,000 laps before I came to Monaco, and that helped me a great deal. Actually, it turned out that the model I made was—my quickest lap on the sim was half-a-second quicker than my best lap on the real track during the entire weekend.



But, {what I would like to see in sims}—at Monaco, for instance, the track changes a lot {during the weekend}: The first test-day, on Thursday, can be eight-to-ten seconds slower than the race because of the dirt, dust, and no rubber, but the rubber builds up—and these are things that are not reflected in sims yet, they could be, but the tracks change a lot during the race, especially in single-seater races. At the beginning of the race, you can't go flat out of hairpins, even if you have new tyres; end of race, there's so much rubber on exit that the track has picked up a huge amount of time, and these sort of things developers need to work on—that would be the next level for sim-racing to simulate, not only physics of cars, but track changes, like the rubber buildup, and that's only on braking areas and exits of those turns—not the turn-in—so you can have a car that is wearing out the rear tyres—your braking will be okay, the turn-in will be very oversteery, but the exit, you can just nail it because there's so much rubber down, it just sticks. These sort of things are the next thing ... so, going back to the question—in 2004 yes, {sims were helpful}, but now, because I've done so many different championships, it's

no longer that important—but it *is* important to prepare yourself mentally; if I am going to Nürburgring, for a race, more than learning the track, I will use it for getting into the right frame of mind, starting to think about the track: It is a good tool for this ...

Luisa Ghibaudo: The traditional route from World Series by Renault Champion is into GP2, and then Formula One: Why are you not following that route, and when will we finally see you in Formula One?

Alx Danielsson: GP2 has only been around a few years, and Heikki Kovalainen went from WSR to GP2, to testing Formula One during this time, and is now racing in F1—Kubica, on the other hand, went from WSR to a contract with BMW, and when Villeneuve was fired, he replaced him, and did a good job, and is now a Formula One driver. But that question is not valid because there is no template of how to get into Formula One: It's not, you do this, this, and that ... if you look at the guys in Formula One, they have very different backgrounds.

It is fair to say the WSR series has been a feeder category to Formula One—if you go back to WSR when it was sponsored by Nissan, you have Monteiro, and Karthikeyan who went straight to Formula One from WSR—and they didn't even win the championship, so it {getting into Formula One} has a lot to do with other factors ...

For me, our season ended October twenty-ninth ... and the thing is, if you want to win in GP2, there are only a few teams really {that can give you this opportunity}: ART, iSport, and possibly Super Nova Racing: Those three teams are consistently winning, while other teams are good one weekend, and P15 the next.

I did a test with iSport, before the end of the year—I know the engineer from my V6 days—but the problem is, they signed their drivers in early November, same as ART, and if you've just finished your season, you haven't spent time finding the money for your next season, so now you're in a position where you need to

find one-and-a-half million Euro in one month ... it isn't going to happen, good luck!

You need to have a father who is very rich, or a father who knows a lot of people who are very rich, or you need to sell drugs ... It's not going to come from corporate sponsorship in a month; that amount of money—you need to be working for a year.

So I couldn't get the money to sign a good GP2 deal that early, and that is one reason why I'm not in GP2: That reason is supported also by the fact that, if I went to GP2 as champion in WSR, I *have* to win, because you need to go from WSR to GP2 and keep winning; if you don't, there's no point in even bothering: If I finished P5 this year in GP2, forget it, my career is not over, but it will have taken a bad hit, and I'm too old now to have a bad season ...

YOU NEED TO HAVE A FATHER WHO IS VERY RICH, OR A FATHER WHO KNOWS A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO ARE VERY RICH ...

So we found a seat where I can win races, and we needed to do a high category racing, and Euro3000 is a good car, pretty much same speed as WSR, and GP2, same kind of cars to drive, and those are big steps up from F3, next category on, and, also, I stay in Europe, because, if you want to go into Formula One, you need to be in Europe.

For instance, now, only in two categories in racing do you get a Super License: GP2, and Euro3000—WSR doesn't, not sure why ... of course, you can also apply for it, but for the bullshit factor, it's good that Euro3000 gets the license. So we went to Euro3000 because we had a good offer from a team that can win, and I can keep winning races, and, let's say that I win this season, that means I have won two

international championships at a high level with fast cars two years in a row; I've done my first test with Renault F1, I have another test, it looks like, scheduled for later in the year—then my career has momentum, people will look at me and say, 'hey, he's a winner'. That makes a big difference—it's always better to win, even if it's not GP2, much better than finishing P5 in GP2 ...

Luisa Ghibaudo: You did a lot of changes on the setup to the Renault F1 in testing—can you explain the nature of the changes?

Alx Danielsson: Okay, so it's not like sims where you go into a screen and change camber, springs, and so forth: That would take all day in the real world. You can only do some basic things: For instance, I went onto the track, and the car was bottoming out, and that's fine if it bottoms

out and bumps, but when you brake, and the car dives a little bit ... what you don't have in {most} sims is bump-rubbers and packers—which I'm looking forward to—because bump-rubbers are like springs in a spring, it looks like an eraser, and it can compress a little bit, but it's very hard, and there are millions of different types of bump-rubbers, with different thicknesses.

So the car will go—when you go quickly—will go down lower and lower because of the dampers, and at some stage, it will sit on the bump-rubbers inside the dampers: The dampers compress when the car goes down, so it will still move a little on the bump-rubbers, but it won't bottom anymore, so if you're bottoming-out, you can change the bump-rubbers or packers to build the

car up. So, anyway, the car was bottoming, and when you brake, the car dives even more, and the tyre is also a spring of sorts, so it compresses, too, so the car was bottoming in the braking areas as well, and it was worrying for me, because I didn't want to crash the car!

So we had a talk about this, because you always have to brake later and harder, and the harder you brake, the lower the car gets, and then you find bumps you didn't know were there, and the car will hit these bumps, and if you're already braking late, and you hit bumps that make the wheel come off the ground a little bit—well, that's how you crash—so we raised the car { so that } I could brake later without worrying about crashing because it's bottoming-out.

We changed the traction control programming as well, because it was a bit 'safe', to me. This was the first time I used a traction control system in a car, and it felt like it was holding the car back a little bit: It picked up nicely when you accelerated, until you went flat, and then the traction control came in, and it was like the car was being held back, so we talked about that, they looked at data, and did what they do, and they have six positions, I think, one-to-six for the traction control settings, and those are not like one is nothing, and six is everything, but it's different programmes, more like a washing machine! So they re-programmed the traction control on the steering wheel—and really, those were the main things: This was the 2006 World Championship winning car, so I'm not coming in to re-engineer the car!

You know—it's good, they've spent a lot of time and money on setting up the car—so it was good, only small things, a little too much entry understeer, but that took care of itself when the tyres got warm at the rear, because the rears wear faster than the fronts, and they started to slide into the corners, and that helped my times.

Luisa Ghibaudo: You attended a LAN session in Sweden that was named in your honour—how did that go, and how come you didn't win the feature race!



Alx Danielsson: Not good! The computer crashed in the second heat! But we decided that everyone should use NGT cars—so Porsches and Ferrari 360s—and I had a bet setup!

Then I tried one of the other guys' setups—they did a special thing on the setups, don't know if its common knowledge, so I won't tell you—but it was clever, and I was a second faster in that car. I was racing with the guys ... fact is, if you're a good racer in real-life, you can challenge the sim-racers, and it will be interesting to see if it works the other way around.

We're going to get Roland {Ehnstrom} who won everything, to a track day, where I am going to try and give him special attention, and it'll be interesting to see how he drives a racing car: I'll ride with him, and it will be interesting to see if he drives a car like a racing driver does: I think he will, and that will prove the point, that you can learn how to drive the cheap way ...

Luisa Ghibaudo: You have tested virtually every big racing series in the world—Champ Cars, Formula One, GP2, F3000, WSR, Formula Nippons, Porsche GTs—so, in your opinion, which is the most fun to drive, and why?

Alx Danielsson: The Champ Car was amazing: I thought it would be a big American piece of shit with a lot of horsepower, but it was amazing, a really good race car: That car could slide a little bit, and you wouldn't lose a lot of time, and it had a turbo engine with 750BHP—same as Formula Ones now—so the acceleration was good, and it had good aerodynamics. I think, from a racing point of view, you want to be in that car, but from a driving point of view, you want to be in a Formula One car, because it's

like the Champ Car, but it handles like a go-KART more than a racing car—more like a go-KART than anything else.

Luisa Ghibaudo: At the LAN session, you saw some very good sim-racers in action—do you believe, given the fitness and physical strength, that a fast sim-racer will automatically be a quick real-world racing driver?

Alx Danielsson: Champ Car, and GP2 World Series cars, are very difficult—the Formula One cars are heavy—for the body—because of the G forces, and you get abused: That puts a lot of stress on the body. If you look at the G-meters during the races—five Gs for one-and-a-half hours, that's tiring: Did you meet Fisichella, and Trulli? These guys are like sticks, you know, and I can see why, because the steering—they have power steering—cheating—so there's no effort in turning the wheel, so you look at Fisichella, he's small, but he's got a neck, you know, because that's the only thing that isn't strapped in to the car, the rest of you is locked into the car, but the neck, it takes a lot of abuse. So, from a physical point of view, anyone who hasn't been in a single-seater would struggle—you'd do two laps, and you'd be fucked—but from a strength point of view, it's not a big problem in Formula One: Champ Cars are heavy, the Nippon is heavy, the Euro3000 is ridiculous—the amount of castor they are running on that car makes the steering very heavy.

Driving a sim for an hour, you know it becomes easy to make a mistake, but in real-life, you are being abused by the G forces, so it means you have to have a physical toughness that is not needed in sim-racing ...

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GTR2 League

[Classified ID 144](#)

BRD Race Frame Pro (V1) in good condition, with separately purchased Blue Cobra-Monaco bucket seat with sliding runners. 3-Pedal BRD Speed 7's with replaced pedal faces (Sparco carbon fibre pedals), orig. pedals supplied. Good condition, with USB box and calib-button. Also - a Red Momo wheel - with the pedals consigned to the rubbish tip some months ago, and the cable reworked to allow it to be plugged in without the pedals. Custom made carbon facia for centre of wheel and white lettering applied (see photos) - will thrown this in with the Pedals as they go together quite well. Looking for approx £175 for frame seat - £150 for Pedals (with wheel thrown in) - or £300 all-in. Technically, could be couriered (at buyers expense) but would be much more sensible to collect from me here in Leicester, or I'll meet you half way within a sensible radius. Photos here: http://www.flickr.com/photos/doug_ellison_tps/sets/72157600033077734/ Any questions - doug@rlproject.com or thread ID2387 at ASS Forums

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ARCA SimRacing— Time With **The Beta Beast**

*Bob Simmerman spends quality-time with the latest 'Great Stock Car Hope'—
The Sim Factory's soon-to-be-released, officially-licensed, and—it turns out—
officially approved ARCA Sim Racing ...*

Bob Simmerman



OvalOffice ARCA SimRacing—Time With The Beta Beast

continued



It's no secret that there is a new stock car sim in development, and it is, in typical new sim fashion, generating all kinds of activity on the forums—some good, and some rather bad—and some ... a little confused: There have been a few instances of people commenting on the upcoming sim in a wildly negative fashion, only to do a complete 180 degree turn after being exposed to the beta that is currently making its rounds.

I have been following this sim for quite some time now, but have reserved comment since, in reality, there has been little to comment about. The occasional

screenshot or forum post from a beta-tester or developer is certainly welcome information, but it is also far from the sort of facts needed on which to base any kind of educated opinion or criticism.

All changed, however, a couple of weeks ago when [The Sim Factory's](#) Bill Zimmerman, aka Zippy, dropped me an email with an official invite onto the beta-test team. Naturally I said yes, and after some NDA signing and thorough instructions on the actual acquisition of the beta, I was ready to get a bit of seat time myself for this, the first officially-licensed U.S. stock car sim in years.



To say that I have been impressed with what I have seen so far (and from what I have been told is yet to come) would be an understatement—and not a small one either! It becomes immediately apparent from the first UI-screen to the time when you hop into the driver's seat—in the garage area, mind you—that this is not only a very serious attempt at echoing the real-world of ARCA Re/MAX Racing, but it is already—in beta stage—showing promise of being *the* best stock car simulator based on the Motor 2.0 engine from ISI to have been created, as well as one of the best stock car simulators to find its way to the PC, no matter the source code ... ever.

Let's start with the fundamentals: is *GTR2* a mod? If so, then *ARCA Sim Racing* is a mod: Otherwise, for those who do not belong to the bizarre world of 'GTR2 is an *rFactor* mod without the multiplayer', *ARCA Sim Racing* is nothing less than a superb simulator whose base code—from ISI—has been massaged and custom-fitted to provide a realistic and very convincing fully-licensed product.

OvalOffice ARCA SimRacing—Time With The Beta Beast

continued

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You can expect real-drivers, sponsors, tracks, and artwork from the series the sim is emulating, as well as an offline mode, and full-integration with a telemetry program to further enhance the immersion factor (no 'r' on that factor, by the way).

The Sim Factory has taken an interesting approach with the beta, one that elevates the sim's physics and ever important 'driving feel' as top priorities. Don't get me wrong, the beta isn't a collection of dull gray cars running around a stick figure track at the expense of hardcore physics development, but ... I can confirm that the way the car rides on the contact patch at each track has been meticulously and painstakingly developed to offer realism at a level never-before seen in the world of simulated stock car racing.



With the help of several of the real series drivers, and, just as important, help from the series' tyre provider, Hoosier, it is—on paper—pretty obvious that the sim is looking to maximize its 'officially licensed' stock to create—on PC-screen—an impressive driving experience, and the most authentic, I can honestly report, that I have ever been privileged to run.

It takes much less than an hour with the beta to realize that what we have here is a quality product that seeks—and in my opinion achieves—'realism'. For one thing, I did not have to make a single text file change in order to thoroughly enjoy my G25 wheel—it just worked. Nor was there endless frustration with a default setup with gearing from an alien world—again, the default setup, while certainly not the fastest possible, is nevertheless an excellent place to start with your fine tuning. (I have never understood why default setups in other sims—some of them commercially licensed, and arriving in boxes splattered with their claims of realism—have gearing sets that must have been created for some other car not in the simulator, as they certainly don't belong to

the one they are the 'default' for.) Now I'm sure some of you are saying, 'What's the big deal, just click and change the gearing', and you would be correct, it isn't a big deal—but it is nice to see a developer make the effort to give the user a decent and competitive setup out of the box, as opposed to a slow and uninspiring introduction to chassis configuration that reeks of laziness as opposed to trying to teach the driver something new. This goes a long way to providing, for me, the kind of 'world' that speaks about the developers' fanaticism with realism: Details, ladies, it's all in the details.

Before firing up the beta, I must confess to having felt a certain ... trepidation as to what to expect. I had my doubts as to just how good it could be given that some other stock car efforts—both commercial and otherwise using ISI's base code—have left a lot to be desired; indeed, this has remained a great source of disappointment to me and the stock car crowd, given the potential that is surely hidden within the Motor 2.0 engine.

Be it a car that incessantly pushes, or an AI that love nothing more than to slam on the brakes the very instant after crossing the start/finish line during a yellow flag, there have been some serious issues with stock car offerings based on the ISI code. The brilliant multiplayer goes a long way to making the experience bearable, of course, but some decent AI would not go amiss, and neither would some realistic physics. Question remains: Is a NASCAR 2003 Racing Seasonesque type of simulator possible using ISI's engine? The Sim Factory is the first officially licensed development team to try it since EA's NASCAR Sim Racing (and that sim was troubled from the onset, but was it from perspective {that is, unsure what it was trying to be, a sim or a game} or was it stunted by the source code?), and many doubt that a stock car simulator can be emulated using that engine. I confess that, after years of disappointments, I had become a little jaded myself ... hence the trepidation.

OvalOffice ARCA SimRacing—Time With The Beta Beast

continued



Well, let me end those doubts right here and now, and state this as clear as I can, since I am often accused of over-hyping products—the instant I began to move in the car, it was blatantly clear that *ARCA Sim Racing* offered—without question—the best physics and tyre model I have personally driven in a stock car setting with ISI's code base—or, indeed, any other code—ever.

The liveliness of the suspension is quite brilliant: You can actually feel, much like a real car, the way the car is behaving at any given instant, and the behavior of the tyres, as they are pushed through different grip and load regimes, is some of the most satisfying and believable sim-driving I have experienced in quite some time.

For my first online experience, I loaded up TeamSpeak so I could have a listen to what the developers were saying while I was giving the multiplayer a workout. Let me say it right off the bat so as to not keep anyone in suspense—the multiplayer was rock solid, lag-free, and you can race as close as you dare to another car with little fear of being launched into the stratosphere: Moreover, when you hit the wall, you will not find yourself glued to

it by some mysterious space-magnet that propels you ever faster into the washing-machine of doom (as seen in *NASCAR Racing 2003*). You will, however, find yourself slowing down, rather quickly, it should be said, just as you would expect. Early in the development, Bill had told me that wall riding was an issue that the development team was taking seriously, since walls play such a defining part on U.S.-based stock car racing, and without question, their focus has been rewarded with the most 'realistic' walls in any stock car sim to date.

The multiplayer, here, is reminiscent of *rFactor*. I haven't, of course, seen a single line of code, and wouldn't know what to do if I did, but if it isn't the *rFactor* MP engine, then it's as close as a world-class forgery, and should the final release contain the beta-version MP that I tested, then it will become *the* standard for online stock car racing.

Sometime during the session—that went on for several hours—I overheard a snatch of conversation that involved one of the other beta-tester drivers saying he would be right back, he was just stepping out to grab his memory stick that contained his setups: He wanted to see how they would work in *ARCA Sim Racing*.

Turns out this guy was a bit more than a beta-tester—he also just happened to be one (NDA prevents me from naming names) of the real-world drivers on the ARCA series. With memory-stick in slot (of course, anyone wanting those settings can email me, the setup is available for a knock-down price of \$20,000!), the driver then proceeded to lap at an astonishing speed: Yes, it would appear—and he confirmed it for me—that setups from the real-world cars used on the real-world track in question are not only a solid base from which to being sorting a setup in the sim; they are pretty-damn perfect out of the box!



That episode should, in my opinion, be enough to highlight the authenticity of *ARCA Sim Racing*: For a real driver to use his real setup at a simulated race track, and be on his real-world pace almost to the tenth of a second, is the kind of testament to the simulation's accuracy that ten thousand posts on forums can ever claim to be: It is also a testament to the tremendous—and realistic—'feel' of the ride. I say this because, if it can provide the necessary feedback to a real driver such that he can approach setup changes to his car in exactly the same way he would approach them in reality, then the simulator is doing its job.

Much of this 'feel' and authenticity has been brought to the *ARCA Sim Racing* by its close-links with the real-world series: And one of those links—perhaps the most important?—is that with the series' official tyre manufacturer, Indiana-based [Hoosier](#), with which The Sim Factory is working to model the tyres within the simulator itself.

OvalOffice ARCA SimRacing—Time With The Beta Beast

continued



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Four years ago, Papyrus's *NASCAR Racing 2003* showed the sim-racing world precisely what could be achieved, in terms of accuracy and feel, with an open relationship with a series' tyre manufacturer: Last year, *GTR2* did the same thing. It became rapidly apparent to me, as I was testing the beta, that *ARCA SimRacing* has maximized its relationship with Hoosier to create precisely the same 'feel': There is something wonderfully authentic about the way the tyres interact with the pavement, something that elevates this sim above anything that has come before it, stock car world-wise.

Add to that, of course, real driver feedback, accurate physics (taken direct from the real-world series that have given The Sim Factory an open-door policy since the outset), and tyre modeling co-operation as I have already explained, and add, further, bona fide licensed content, and a market dying for a new stock car sim, and The Sim

Factory may be on to something very special indeed. But with that, of course, comes pressure: Pressure to succeed, to deliver, because all the elements to create the world's most definitive stock car simulator are in place. No excuses, then, right?

So will this first-time development house bring it all home the way SimBin did with *GTR*? I only have a beta to judge, and my judgement is this: All the pieces are in place for a brilliant simulator, and a lot will have to go wrong between this beta and the final release version in order for *ARCA Sim Racing* not to take its rightful place as the world's most authentic commercially available stock car simulator. It really is that simple. In its current state, I believe *ARCA Sim Racing* to be—already—the Gold Standard of stock car simulators.

The development crew has been working like mad since I got on board, (no doubt they were working just as

hard before, but you never know!), and the past week has been very fine indeed as the new Grand Prix and Fusion models have made it into the sim. Easily some of the best modeling of a stock car that I have ever seen, the screenshots do them no justice whatsoever; the body shapes appear to be spot-on, and the interior detail is incredible—roll bars, ductwork, electronics boxes, realistic dash-mounted caution light, and near photorealistic gauges take the level of interior modeling up to a whole new standard. Again, nothing has been finalized at this point, but it would appear that the fantastic physics are going to be supplemented by cars that have been created with a fanatic's perspective.

The tracks are also shaping up to bring us to new levels of detail and realism to our graphical racing environments. Notable standouts at this time are Nashville, Kansas, Iowa, and the extreme bump-fest

OvalOffice ARCA SimRacing—Time With The Beta Beast

continued



known as Salem. Daytona and Kansas are another pair where the painstaking attention to detail is easily observed. Each track has been scratch-built, and Iowa is simply brilliant in terms of how it looks, and how it feels when you're racing there. One of the newest tracks around, a track designed with the help of Rusty Wallace, Iowa hits

all the right buttons, and it's a venue that perfectly displays the potential that *ARCA SimRacing* exhibits. Nashville is another track that is beautiful to look at as well as fun and satisfying to drive.

Although not implemented at the time of this writing, you can expect to see rubber buildup, multiple racing

grooves, active weather, and many other immersion-enhancing items not often found in sims these days. Track surfaces are created not as billiard table smooth, but with plenty of bumps that mimic their real-life counter parts to an astounding level of detail. Coupled with the extremely well-done cockpit motions, the experience goes quite a long way to suspending the disbelief of the sim-racer. Salem, in particular, will give your arms—and shocks—a tremendous workout, and also a tremendous beating as the brutal surface of that track is reproduced for all to experience. When you have a few laps under your belt at Salem, you will gain a new-found respect for the real-drivers, and the pounding they receive on these ovals. Proper throttle control on corner exit is an absolute must-have talent, and one that will serve you well with this sim.

With a physics model this detailed, you really have to be careful in the garage area as radical changes to the setup will most likely lead to radical difficulties driving the car. Practice, patience, and a good study (and working knowledge) of telemetry data will be one path to a quicker car.

Those who are prone to driving their cars *NeedForSpeed*-style will be quick for sure—quick to run out of tyres and bodywork, that is, as they go pinballing around the ovals. You have to be able to deal with a realistic tyre heat cycle if you wish to succeed; push it too hard, for too long, and there will be very little you can do but come into the pits for a tyre change, and, hopefully, a change of strategy that will see you back it off the next time round. And it is not just bad driving that can turn your tyres to junk; punctures due to debris contact will be modeled, further enhancing the realism level, and giving the driver one more thing to contend with. *ARCA Sim Racing* not only promises to take our driving to new heights, but it is also meant to challenge us as a real-racer might be challenged, by things they have no control over such as a tiny piece of debris ruining your day.

OvalOffice ARCA SimRacing—Time With The Beta Beast

continued



OvalOffice ARCA SimRacing—Time With The Beta Beast

continued



I also like it when I tap an AI car in the rear quarter panel and they spin out, like they should ... and that's all I am going to say about that.

My impressions are, as you will no doubt have noticed, very positive: In fact, I am very excited and

cannot wait to get my hands on the final release. With the beta-version in my PC for a few weeks, I had started to become concerned that my initial impressions would dull over a period of time, once the new wore off, but I must tell you that, if anything, my

interest in the sim has only increased with time, and I am almost certain that the majority of folks who take this one for a spin will not be disappointed.

Of course, a few questions remain to be answered, and the performance of the AI during offline play is going to be one of those issues that shall remain in the 'wait-and-see' column. It is no secret that the AI of this particular code-base can be troublesome—and by that I mean inadequate and just plain mean. The brief encounters that I had with the AI, though, were, for the most part, favorable. It is too early to give a detailed assessment on the AI, of course, but I am sure that the developers are aware of just how important good AI is to those who enjoy the offline experience. Given the fully-licensed nature of the sim, I suspect the offline mode will be the mode of choice for some for quite a while as they explore, in depth, a detailed season against the ARCA regulars.

If the developers of *ARCA Sim Racing* can pull it all off—that is, take all the aspects that work in favour of this being an absolute classic simulator (official license, real-world access, a development crew that are as dedicated as they are passionate)—and I see no reason to indicate anything other happening, then stock car fans in our community are in for a very serious treat as they tackle the first fully-licensed stock car sim in years, and along with it, the dynamic environments of the series' venues in meticulously modeled cars boasting meticulously modeled physics. The beta, fellas, is already extraordinary so in case you're wondering, yes—the time to get excited is now!



Pedro De La Rosa

Luisa Ghibauda sat down with Vodafone McLaren Mercedes' test-driver extraordinaire, Pedro De La Rosa, on the night before the Monaco grand prix ...

LuisaGhibauda





The role of test-driver in Formula One has changed dramatically over the years: A decade ago, a test-driver was nothing more than the team's reserve driver, standing by at race weekends lest something should happen to the team's race drivers. But as technology has increased, test-drivers are now playing vital roles in the teams' overall development, their duties revolving around such mundane aspects as shaking-down the race cars, to such crucial aspects as testing new components and solutions.

What this means, in reality, is that the team needs to absolutely trust the judgement of their test-driver, because, taking De La Rosa as an example, before either Lewis Hamilton or Fernando Alonso test (or use) a new

winglet, for instance, it would have not only already been tested by De La Rosa, but his baseline, as well as final judgement, will have already determined whether the new part warrants being run by the race drivers themselves.

This is one reason why test-drivers now tend to have longer sojourns at teams than the actual race drivers themselves: In De La Rosa's case, he has seen both Montoya, and Raikkonen depart for new pastures, but he remains with the team because this kind of trust between test-driver and team is difficult to create, and once a working relationship is formed, the test-driver has the safest job in Formula One (employment-wise, that is, not safety-wise, for the test-driver is exposed to far more dangers than the race-drivers are).

To understand why they are such long-time servants to their teams, consider how a new piece affects the car; here we are talking not about seconds, or even half-seconds, but about one-hundredths of seconds, faster, that is, that the eye can blink.

The team, it is obvious, needs to trust their test-driver's baselines: If he laps one-hundredth of a second faster than his own previously established baseline, they need to trust this was because of the new piece he is testing (or setup-related, or whatever), and not because the test-driver is having a good day in the car: They also need to trust his judgement when he reports back that, yes, it makes the car faster, for instance, but more unstable. The role of the test-driver is vital, and it is no coincidence that the two fastest cars on the grid in 2007 have long-serving test-drivers. For continuity in this regard, look no further than Ferrari, who has employed their test-driver, Luca Badoer, since 2000, making him the man who has done more laps in a Ferrari than any other in that team's near sixty years in the sport. And in case you don't know who he is—remember the opening ceremony of the 2006 Winter Olympics in Torino? Remember the

Ferrari laying doughnuts for a global audience of one billion? Yes, that was Mr. Badoer in action ...

AUTOSIMSPORT was also very excited when Luisa Ghibaudo managed to secure the interview with De La Rosa because, of all the drivers in Formula One, past and present, he is probably the closest simulated-racing has ever come to introducing the world to a major talent: De La Rosa, you see, started his career not in KARTs, or other lower formulas, but, rather, in radio-controlled racing. Indeed, he was European champion at the (relative old) age of sixteen, before he'd ever run a race in KARTs, a series in which he began competing at the age of seventeen ... so, who could be more ideal than De La Rosa to assess the function of simulators in today's high-tech world of Formula One racing?

Luisa Ghibaudo: Much media talk has surrounded the use of McLaren's simulator in helping drivers in certain areas, with Ron Dennis suggesting that Hamilton's many hours before his GP debut (1,000 hours!) being a contributing factor to his preparation and readiness, and Mika Hakkinen tested on the simulator before his official test in November of last year: What areas do you think simulators can help a driver's performance? Is it speed? Learning tracks? Stamina? Mental awareness? Focus and concentration? Or a combination of these elements?

Pedro De La Rosa: The simulator is mainly used as a tool to improve the car setup for a specific track; you can look for a better setup for the race track you're going to race during the weekend, and then, secondly, a simulator is very useful for a driver to refresh his memory of what the track is like. You know, it is very useful to learn new tracks, as a new-comer, first refresh and then, secondly, to learn the track, and it is very good, {simulators are} very useful, and I think that many teams use simulators nowadays in Formula One.

NO, I THINK IT'S NOT NECESSARILY THAT A QUICK DRIVER ON SIMULATOR WILL BE QUICK IN A RACE CAR, IT'S NOT A GIVEN. THE SIMULATOR JUST SIMULATES, {BUT} THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT ARE NOT REAL: IT'S VERY EASY TO BE BRAVE ON A SIMULATOR, BUT IT'S VERY DIFFERENT WHEN YOU'RE SITTING ON A RACE CAR, AND YOU HAVE TO DO EVERYTHING WITH NO FEAR ...

Luisa Ghibardo: Have you tested on the McLaren simulator? If so, how does it feel from a driving point of view?

Pedro De La Rosa: Yes, I've been working for McLaren since 2003. I would say it's very close, the feeling is very close to what you experience when you're sitting in a Formula One car, and that's why it's useful. If it wouldn't be close to what you experience, it wouldn't be useful before a grand prix, or before a test.

Luisa Ghibaudo: If someone is quick in a simulator like that employed by McLaren, he will be quick in the real car—do you think this is true or false, and why?

Pedro De La Rosa: No, I think it's not necessarily that a quick driver on {a} simulator will be quick in a race car, it's not a given. The simulator just simulates, {but} there are

some things that are not real: It's very easy to be brave on a simulator, but it's very different when you're sitting on a race car, and you have to do everything with no fear, so for me, in the simulator you have to be quick, no matter what, but it doesn't mean that people who are quick on simulators will be quick as well in a race car, it's completely different scenario. But if you're not quick in a simulator, for sure you will not be quick in a race car.

Luisa Ghibauda: The role of the test-driver has fluctuated dramatically in the last decade: You are perhaps the most 'famous' test-driver, having done this unique role since 2003—can you describe what you believe to be the test-driver's most critical function, in as much detail as you can? Is it in setting up the car for a race weekend, or is it in the development of a car during a race season?

Pedro De La Rosa: I think that the test-driver has always to be honest, you know, you always have to be honest about what you feel with the car, even if it doesn't make sense to you, or to the changes that have been introduced. You have to have a very good feeling over what the changes are, and the feeling is in your hands, so you have to be also very methodical, because in Formula One, the biggest problem is that the changes are always very small, there is never a big change that gives you one second, we're talking about hundredths, and you have to be always testing in a way that you can always test something and go back to baseline, test something and go back to baseline. You always have to be very realistic of what you do, and honest, and go always back to baseline to improve and to be sure that whatever you introduce into the race team is *better*. It sounds very simple, but it's not. To become the best test-driver in Formula One, you need to be good in the car, but good on the simulators as well, and work very hard.





Luisa Ghibauda: With regard to your driving style, and considering you have worked alongside four very gifted racing drivers, {Montoya, Raikkonen, Alonso, Hamilton}, how do you find that you like to setup your car in comparison to the two current race drivers?

Pedro De La Rosa: I think I'm between Fernando and Lewis. You know, Fernando and Lewis are quite similar, but possibly Fernando prefers an understeery car compared to Lewis, and I sit a little in-between them, but we're talking about minor differences; my strength comes {from the fact} that I can drive either Fernando's or Lewis's setup, and if I'm testing something for Fernando or Lewis, I can put their setup, their preferred setup, in my car, and I will be quick. That is another ability of a test-driver: You have to be adaptable, you have to be able to adapt; it's not what you want, but what the team wants.

BASICALLY, THEY'RE ALL VERY QUICK, BUT I DON'T THINK THAT DRIVING STYLE IS VERY IMPORTANT, YOU HAVE YOUR DRIVING STYLE, BUT AT THE END OF THE DAY, YOU'RE EITHER QUICK OR NOT QUICK, AND THEN YOU HAVE YOUR DRIVING STYLE. SO, THEY'RE ALL VERY QUICK, SOME DRIVERS LIKE LEWIS, WHO IS SIMILAR TO KIMI, THEY ALWAYS PREFER A VERY SHARP TURN-IN, FERNANDO IS VERY SIMILAR TO MONTOYA IN TERMS OF SETTING-UP THE CAR ...

Luisa Ghibauda: And how does this differ in comparison to the previous drivers from the last couple of years?

Pedro De La Rosa: Basically, they're all very quick, but I don't think that driving style is very important, you have your driving style, but at the end of the day, you're either quick or not quick, and *then* you have your driving style. So, they're all very quick, some drivers like Lewis, who is similar to Kimi, they always prefer a very sharp turn-in, Fernando is very similar to Montoya in terms of setting-up the car, and I think that I'm a little between them, and so was Alex Wurz, my former test-driver, when we were working together, and we were always sitting in the

middle of the setup, so ... but all the team drivers of McLaren have been very quick, and for me the style, I repeat, it's not important at all; at the end of the day, you can make any driving style work, as long as you're quick. Your driving style is like your personality, there are many types of personality, but there are also many types of good people.

Luisa Ghibauda: Who is the quickest driver on the simulator—you, Alonso, Hamilton, Hakkinen, or ...?

Pedro De La Rosa: We're the same, really. It just depends who had the better day or the better lap, but I think that on the simulator we're very close.

T2

LxMartini

Forget NASCAR—forget Aussie V8s ... for those of us who want our action from big, heavy, man-cars, Argentina's answer to stock car racing is also the answer to our prayers ... from Fangio to Reutemann, Turismo Carretera has been the breeding ground for some of the world's most gifted racing drivers, as well as motor-racing's best-kept secret for seventy years ... but not for much longer, as 2Pez Games Development are all ready to unleash the fury this summer...





South America came to road-racing late, relatively speaking: While the first recorded race was held in France in 1894 (Paris-Rouen, a race that was won by de Dion's steam tractor), it was not until the mid-1930s that South America joined the party; that said, and in typical South

American fashion, the party didn't have a soul until the South Americans arrived ...

Turismo Carretera (TC)—literally meaning 'road racing', South-America-style—brought to international racing a blend of machismo and extreme races (or

perhaps tests of endurance would be a more accurate description) that made the European equivalents pale by comparison, and it was in Argentina—in 1937—that the tradition (that is, races that were glorious, and high-on-operatic tests of courage, ingenuity, and sheer desire) began, with a twelve race championship being contested around the different provinces of the vast nation; from the Pampas to the mountains, the twelve races on the schedule were severe tests of man and machine, in which both would frequently fall victim to the severe hazards.

It was, however, in 1940 that Argentina was introduced to the world of international motor-racing: Or, perhaps more accurately, 1940 was the year when Argentina introduced the world to the greatest race that ever was—not to mention, simultaneously, the greatest racer of all time, too.

The race was a 5,920 mile epic that ran from Buenos Aires all the way through to Lima, Peru, and then, for good measure, all the way back again, the road being the famed Camino Real that carved its way through the famed Pampas and then scratched its way up high through the forbidding, snow-capped Andes: Dubbed 'The International Grand Prix of the North', the race was won by a man called Juan Manuel Fangio, in a Chevrolet, after thirteen days of brutal racing, and in cars on which no mechanics were permitted to work; it was only the driver and the co-pilot who were permitted to keep those big, heavy, US-imports running for what would, in the end, equate to over 106 hours of continuous racing.

The race also introduced the great rivalry between Chevrolet and Ford which would endure until the mid-1970s (when Chevrolet would call it a day), Ford's 'faceman' being none other than Fangio's great friend, Oscar Galvez, who would go on to become the most successful TC driver of all time.

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Fangio, 'El Chueco', went on to claim the 1940, and 1941 Carretera championships, but racing was suspended in 1942 as the world became embroiled in World War 2, and spare parts—not to mention cars—became difficult to find in a country that relied completely on imports for its motor-racing heritage. It was not until 1947 that racing resumed, with Fangio again dominant in a racing series that taught the master all the traits he would take with him to Europe, a continent in which—at the sprightly age of thirty-seven—he would conquer all before him, becoming a five time World Champion in Formula One en route to sealing his place as the most successful driver of all time (until his record was eclipsed, a half century later, by Michael Schumacher).

Compared to the dangers associated with the TC racing in Argentina, European racing must have seemed rather pedestrian to Fangio: Death was never far away in South American racing, either those of fans who would dare one another to get as close to the action as they could, or the drivers, who were lauded as bullfighters, as heroes starring in epics of endurance, danger, and adventure.

The series was also responsible for harnessing other world-class talents, such as José Froilán González, who

would become the first man to give Ferrari a win, at Silverstone, in 1951. Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, the TC events would be held on closed local roads, and even future-legends like Carlos Reutemann began their careers in these hugely dangerous races (for spectators as well as drivers—in 1960 alone, at one event held near the coastal town of Necochea, twelve spectators were killed when one of the cars went off the road).

In the mid-1960s, though, the TC was made a little safer with the introduction of purpose-built race facilities on which the local racers cut their teeth—Estaban Tuero being the latest TC driver to make his way to Formula One—and the series continues to this day using large, power-cars that are about as close to the cars found on Argentina's roads as NASCARs are to be found on U.S. roads ... in fact, the cars used today are very reminiscent of NASCARs and Aussie V8s, and the 2006 champion, Norberto Fontana, may be a name equally known to Formula One fans.

Argentines hold a special place for their local stock-car series, very much in keeping with a tradition found in Australia and the U.S.; with the series this year celebrating its seventieth anniversary, fans of the sport are keenly anticipating the first-ever officially licensed simulator being created by software house 2Pez Games Development: AUTOSIMSPORT had the privilege of speaking to [2Pez's](#) lead, Martin, about the development of *Turismo Carretera*.

Martin is an ex-racing driver who cut his teeth in both promotional series, and in the highly competitive '[Top Race](#)' series in Argentina until his retirement in 1999: He is also, he tells me, a long-time sim-racing fan, and has been involved in track or physics creation for everything from Microprose's *GP2* to *rFactor*, as well as some official work for

Codemasters' 2000 PlayStation game, *World Touring Cars*. Indeed, he began editing content in 1997 when he was at Pau and Helsinki with his friend Emiliano Spataro who was, at that time, running for the Coloni F3000 Team: Martin created those tracks for *GP2* in order for his friend to practice on.

In 1998 and 1999, Martin was driving a VW Golf VR6 in the 'Top Race' series: For training purposes, he created all the local circuits for both *GP2* and *GP3*, and this was followed in 1999-2000 when Codemasters approached him in his capacity as manager of what Marin describes as 'some areas' of the internationally acclaimed Buenos Aires Circuit. "I made some videos and pictures to help with the track editing for the PlayStation game *World Touring Cars*," he tells me, "and I signed the license contract with them."

In 2004, Martin assembled a team that would go on to form the core of 2Pez: Hernan Jardon, "a 'frustrated' driver but a good sim-racer and friend—he is one of the 2Pez managers, and he works very well with 3d editors—in fact, he has been teaching me how to use 3dMax." That same year, and also via the web, Martin recruited Marcelo Barrio, who, Martin tells me, is the "Diego Maradona of car modeling—he's working in 3d edition with some TV producers too, and is the 'professional boy' on the staff." The rest of the team consists of a group of sim-racers, all recruited over the web. They are, Martin tells me, "Matias Ibar (3d edition), Diego Gauna (press), Paula Laudato (2d artist, and a girl!), and Sergio Villarim (sounds, and a nice Brazilian boy that has some experience with IDT)." Along with this core, Martin adds, are a medley of others who are helping with the sim, "I don't remember all the names, but some of them are Santi Quizz, Federico Shanahan, Daniel Farina, Alex Zahen, and a lot more ... and all of them, would you believe, have come to us through the web! Amazing!"



The idea for a simulator of Argentina's premiere racing series came when Martin, five years retired from professional racing, found that the bug had not left his system: "I was missing the races for a while, and due to my good relationship with the Turismo Carretera management, I had the idea of maybe creating the first sim of that racing series. TC is in his seventieth year in 2007, and I thought this an ideal time to create a simulator based on the series. Mr Oscar Aventin, the [ACTC](#) {Sanctioning Body} president, was surprised with the idea, but not as surprised as I was when he accepted the proposal almost immediately. I told him that ISI was

the way to go, in terms of technical support, and he take a look at ISI's previous sims—(both Formula One and NASCAR)— and that was that: From there, we made a deal with ACTC, and ISI."

The TC sim will recreate the sounds, sights, and cars of the series in minute detail; Martin explains that, "Our intention is to have the best simulation we can," and, with this in mind, the development team have recruited real-world drivers, such as {former F3000 racer, as well as good friend to Montoya, and now TC driver} Brian Smith, as well as Emiliano Spataro. "And maybe," Martin adds, "in the

near future we will also have a semi-professional sim-racing federation in our country." T

Martin is keenly aware of the history and tradition of TC in Argentina; it is an aspect of the sport that he believes needs to be taken into account when recreating the series for sim-racers: "One of the most important intentions is to give all the Argentine guys that are living in the rest of the world—they miss the food, the football, the family, and the Turismo Carretera—something to remember home by!"

Turismo Carretera will be a stand alone sim that uses the gMotor 2.0 technology: "Something like the SimBin sims," Martin says, adding with a smile, "of course, we are far from SimBin today, and this is our first experience! In our sim," he explains, "ISI will make some interesting changes in their engine in order to function with the unique rules that TC uses, as well as our exclusive GMT format and activation system. ISI is giving us fantastic support, and some good experience: Mr Gjon Camajis a nice guy."

ISI is programming a unique data format for 2Pez, and it will feature GMT archives like those found in *rFactor* and the *GTR* series, but, "Our GMTs will not be compatible with the others," Martin says. As for the activation system, Trymedia, it is used in order to, "prevent problems between licences in a PC, as well as to distinguish who is running *rFactor* too."

ISI are specifically coding for 2Pez in order for the sim to incorporate the series' unique, and quite complex rules: "TC have a very long weekend program, practices in three groups of twenty or more cars, qualifying in three groups too, then they have Prelim' races with another three groups dependent on full qualifying results, and a Final race with forty-eight cars making the grid dependent on the Prelim' race results (the faster Prelim' race winner starts the final in pole for example).



For offline purposes, ISI will recreate those rules precisely. For online purposes, too, but," Martin says, "the final race will be with thirty-to-thirty-six cars, with the rest of the cars kicked to spectator mode, or our exclusive racecast web."

Turismo Carretera will be available for download throughout the world—but will also come (something of a departure for the way in which sims are delivered of late) in a full DVD-box available only—for the time being—in Argentina: "We will have two options," Martin explains, "download, purchase, and activate like *rFactor* with the Trymedia activation system, and a DVD-box, in Argentina, also with the Trymedia activation system. The DVDs in the rest of the world depends on some conversations we are having with publishers and retailers, because we want to show our competitive racing series in all the world."

So what is it about *Turismo Carretera* that the world needs to know? "It's an old racing series," Martin tells me, "the most popular in Argentina, as well as the most powerful. The cars are a little old, if you take them at face value—but they are also one hundred percent stock cars. Tubular structure with carbon and Kevlar bodies (like a DTM), six cylinder engines pushing out 350-plus BHP and weighing about 1,300 Kg, with sequential gearboxes, rear-wheel drive ... and many more interesting things. The full grid for each race is about sixty cars, and forty-eight take part in the final race. On some circuits—like 'Rafalea', an oval with three chicanes (a bizarre option but huge fun to drive)—the TC cars can top out somewhere near 270km/h!"

This being an officially licensed product, can we assume that the real-world series—and drivers—are giving their input into the sim?

"This," Martin admits, "is a little ... tricky ... because this is, for Argentina, that first time anything like this has been created—that is, an official sim with this quality, and it is still a little early maybe for our drivers to believe in the product. Some of them look at the sim and think it is a game like a 'micro machines toy' or something, and automatically assume they should buy it for their kids. But we are making a simulator that can and, I believe, will be used as a trainer sim as well ... The ACTC management," Martin continues, "are all very enthused with the project, and are working with us day-by-day. The tracks owners, too, have been very enthusiastic as well, and we are always very well received in all our travels. One important thing to know is that the TC in Argentina is a passion—like football!"

Indeed, TC in Argentina enjoys much the same cult following as does Australian V8s. But before I ask Martin about the similarities between TC and other forms of Touring Car series around the world, he tells me that the tracks in the sim will replicate their real-world counterparts in infinitesimal detail. "The tracks is the most difficult part of the 3D process," he explains, "and they are probably what we are most proud of. We bought a modern Garmin GPS system (with altimetry and barometer measures) to take the most accurate info we can from all the tracks: Here we have some modern tracks that have a good CAD data, but in others that do not have such readily accessible info, the GPS system became a godsend for us. We have traveled to each circuit for two months now—over 10,000 kilometres of travel (Argentina is a very long country)—taking pictures, videos, and carefully measuring every aspect of the tracks that feature in the TC series. The most important thing, however," he adds, "was not the

GPS or the measurements or access to all the tracks: It was the specialized knowledge that the team found at each track by employing the services, Martin says, "of the 'local driver', because no-one in the world can transmit the *feel* of each track like a local driver who is running at the track every single day."

Indeed, the official license has given the 2Pez crew unlimited access to the real-world series: And that includes complete access to engine specs courtesy of Omar Wilke. "Omar Wilke," Martin explains, "is one of the most important engines makers, and we were with him in a dynamometer for some days, testing the three engines that race in TC—Ford, Chevrolet, and Cherokee. Concerning the chassis, we also have access to important 'secret' info' from a few groups of team managers, info' drawn from experience in the actual races, as well as drivers' feelings and technical data from data acquisition from the real teams and drivers. The ACTC technical department has been of enormous help to us as well. Mr. Alejandro Solga, and Carlos Marchese from the ACTC have given us a lot of technical info', as well as support and CAD drawing in order to help us to model the cars as accurately as we can."

Along with the technical aid from the teams and the sanctioning body, Martin enjoys the active co-operation of one of TC's most famed drivers, Brian Smith. "He's also," Martin says, "a very good sim-racer, and the most important thing he has brought to the project is the comparative sim-to-real perspective: That is, he brings to us a sense of what the tracks *feel* like, as well as accurate lap times, and car handling. But one thing that surprised us was the little adjustments we needed to make from the original 'rule-based physics' work, and the final 'real-driver tested physics': This, I think, not only demonstrates how accurate our sim is, but also that of the ISI engine itself."

Turismo Carretera Winners—1938–Present

1938 Ricardo Rissatti *Ford*
1939 Angel Lo Valvo *Ford*
1940–1941 Juan M. Fangio *Chevrolet*
1947–1958 Oscar Galvez *Ford*
1959 Rodolfo de Alzaga *Ford*
1960 Oscar Galvez *Ford*
1961 Juan Galvez *Ford*
1962–1965 Dante Emiliozi *Ford*
1966 J. M. Bordeu *Chevrolet*
1967 Eduardo Copello *Torino*
1968 Carlos Pairetti *Chevrolet*
1969 Gaston Perkins *Torino*
1970–1971 R. L. Di Palma *Torino*
1972 Hector Gradassi *Ford*
1973 Nasif Estefano *Ford*
1974–1976 Hector Gradassi *Ford*
1977–1978 Juan M. Traverso *Ford*
1979–1980 F. Espinosa *Chevrolet*
1980–1981 Antonio Aventin *Dodge*
1982 Jorge M. Boero *Ford*
1983–1985 Roberto Mouras *Dodge*
1986 Oscar Angeletti *Dodge*
1987–1989 Oscar Castellano *Dodge*
1988 Oscar Castellano *Dodge*
1989 Oscar Castellano *Ford*
1990 Emilio Satriano *Chevrolet*
1991–1992 Oscar Aventin *Ford*
1993 Walter Hernandez *Ford*
1994 Lalo Ramos *Ford*
1995–1997 Juan M. Traverso *Chevrolet*
1998 Guillermo Orteli *Chevrolet*
1999 Juan M. Traverso *Ford*
2000–2002 Guillermo Ortelli *Ford*
2003 Ernesto Bessone *Dodge*
2004 Omar Martinez *Ford*
2005 Juan Manuel Silva *Ford*
2006 Norberto Fontana *Dodge*



With respect to simulators—as well as real-life, to a certain degree—what we feel, when all is said and tested, are the tyres, and the way they interact with the road, be that road virtual or otherwise. So how much focus has been expanded on the tyre model itself?

“The tyre manufacturer is a local manufacturer,” Martin explains, “and we have some info from them, not much ... but the most important info’ we *did* gather was from the teams themselves. We were literally living with some of them at some races, and especially in private testing, and I believe the tyre development is better learnt from the teams, and from the team managers {than from the manufacturers}.”

The feel of the tyres and the sim, Martin insists, will be spot-on: When pressed, he explains that the process involved, “A lot of trial-and-error. Very hard work, really ... We have a lot of what I can only call ‘feeling and experience data’ from the teams and some drivers, and a little manufacturer info’ to work with. With this info’ at hand, we have made what I think is a very good job in replicating the feel of the TC cars, because in the driving experience you can *feel* the tyres like tyres, not like balloons. Some days ago, we were comparing the tyres with some *rFactor* mods, and maybe the most similar tyre experience is to be

found in the GP79 mod. You can be sure of one thing, though,” Martin adds: “You can drift and control the car, but if you don’t have a good setup, you won’t arrive at the finish!”

So back to the question about TC and other stock car series around the world: What would the TC be comparable to? NASCAR, Aussie V8s ...?

“Oh what a question!” replies Martin. “This is so difficult to answer ... TC is unique, but it does share some common things with other series—let me try to make some comparisons. NASCAR is the most popular stock car series in the world, relatively speaking, with eight or ten percent of the U.S. population watching the races either live, or on TV. TC in Argentina is pretty much equal to that—in fact, probably bigger, because we have about ten percent of the entire country’s population at the track each weekend! NASCAR drivers and TC drivers also have a lot in common, not least their iconic status amongst race enthusiasts. Also, the number of cars at each race is pretty much the same—about sixty in NASCAR and TC, as well, I think, in Australian V8s.”

TC is then very much in the mould of the muscle-stock car series, and, Martin says, it shares far more in common with NASCAR and Aussie V8s than it does with the more emasculated European Touring Car series. “European Touring Cars are different, less people, more technology sure, less cars on track, more official teams, less passion, maybe? I very much like touring cars, (I drove an ex-BTCC Honda Accord, and it was an incredible ride), but TC and NASCAR and Aussie V8s have a ‘mystique’ that TOCA or WTCC just don’t have. Maybe it’s the real-wheel traction? Or the raw horsepower? Or the brutal sound? Do you want to know some strange?” Martin asks me. “Very strange, in fact! The most similar TC-engine sound that we can find is the Formula One sound ... The TC sound is ‘acute’ (*agudo* in Spanish) like a ‘Stradivarius Violin’, you know, similar to Formula One incredible sound ... believe it or not!” he concludes, laughing.



What will be missing from the final on-the-shelf *Turismo Carretera* sim will be telemetry: Martin, however, explains that, "Probably in the near future we will have something {telemetry-wise} to download for free—and don't forget that this is a very similar game to *rFactor*, and it will be possible to program plugins and utilities for the sim in the same way as you can do for *rFactor*."

Turismo Carretera will be available, Martin estimates, sometime during the third quarter of 2007: "We have ninety-five percent of the development ready to go," he says, "and we are beta-testing extensively to correct all the little bugs."

This sim could well be a sleeper for what is shaping up to be a slow year in sim-racing development: Featuring a real-world license, fistfuls of real-world input, and a first-

class racing series that has never been recreated before, along with cars that are going to be difficult not to love (low-tech, big horsepower, real-wheel driven beasts on tracks that are all virtually unknown to sim-racers the world over), this one has all the ingredients to be something very special indeed. How good?

"One nice experience," Martin tells me, "was with Brian Smith when he drove the *Turismo Carretera* sim for first time in a beta-testing session with me ... he says: 'Martin, this is incredible, this is a TC, this is a TC!' He stopped the car and wanted to kiss me," Martin giggles, "but I was faster, so he couldn't catch me!"

South America may be coming to the world of simulated-racing a little late, but if *Turismo Carretera* brings us the passion and glory of Argentina's greatest stock car racing series—so good that it is in its seventh decade—then we're all in for one helluva ride come the end of summer ...

Tracks: TC Season 2007: Feb 11 to Nov

Mar de Ajó
Balcarce
San Luis
Buenos Aires
Comodoro Rivadavia
Parana
9 de Julio
Posadas
Buenos Aires II
Rafaela
Rio Cuarto
9 de Julio II
San Luis II
Buenos Aires III
La Plata
Rio Gallegos

AUTOSIMSPORT

The Kink

Jarno Trulli

Luisa Ghibauda catches up with F1's Jarno Trulli on the Friday morning before the Monte Carlo grand prix ...

LuisaGhibauda





Luisa Ghibaudo: Jarno, can you tell us how practice went for you yesterday?

Jarno Trulli: To begin with, hullo, and welcome, and thank you for coming, as you do every year: I have a cold, at the moment, so yesterday was not an easy day for me, because driving a Formula One car at Monte Carlo with a cold is not ideal!

Monte Carlo, as always, is a special event because it is a city-street-track, and it always presents us with

problems, or unknowns, and it is therefore crucial that you start the weekend with tranquility, and slowly become confident running on a track that will constantly improve throughout the weekend, developing the car, the setup, methodically, all with the aim of maximizing the potential of the car you have at your disposal.

Yesterday was a positive day for us, for me, because I finished fourth in the practice session, and the car behaved reasonably well. Certainly, we are not that far off

the front-runners, but I think it will probably be difficult to attack them, considering how fast the top guys are at the moment, and I doubt I will be able to aim for victory this year; having said that, this is Monte Carlo, and anything can happen here, so I'm hoping for a bit of luck, and a good race.

Luisa Ghibaudo: Monte Carlo being what it is—you have won here as a boy, and you have also won here in Formula One three years ago, from pole position—is your car able to keep you in the Top Six, and thereby able to profit from any mistakes or misfortunes from the front-runners, or is your car the one we saw—or perhaps, better yet, *didn't* see—last Sunday at Barcelona?

Jarno Trulli: Like I said, Monte Carlo is a special grand prix, the difference being that we are racing on city-streets, and therefore it is very easy to make mistakes. The cars that will set the pace, like the Ferrari, McLaren, but also the BMW, have shown in the first four races of the season to be decisively quicker than us, but, this being Monte Carlo, I am hoping to be able to make a difference as I have done in years gone by, and to be—I'm not saying on pole, but, I'm hoping not to be too far away, and yesterday showed that we do have potential. And again, I repeat, Monte Carlo is a special, and particular race, and anything can happen come Sunday; it can either be very good, or very bad, and between these two situations there is really a very small margin. So, we'll see, and I hope I won't commit too many errors, and to have a good qualifying run, and a good race.

Luisa Ghibaudo: Between the margins, then, there is also Lady Luck: How is Jarno's luck, and his superstitions?

Jarno Trulli: We can discuss luck, we can have a long debate about it on certain days, because each one of us can interpret luck in our own unique way. In general, though, I have been very lucky in my life, I managed to get into Formula One from nowhere, I am a lucky guy, I have a beautiful family, but, I must confess that, on some occasions, in certain races, luck has also abandoned me. But this does not mean anything really, because, in the end, bad luck is just part-and-parcel of motor-racing.

AS DRIVERS, WE ARE ALWAYS SEARCHING FOR WAYS TO IMPROVE, BUT, AS A DRIVER, I AM A BIT SKEPTICAL WHEN IT COMES TO RACE SIMULATORS BECAUSE RACING A REAL CAR AND A SIMULATOR ARE TWO COMPLETELY DIVERSE THINGS; HOWEVER, THEY REMAIN CRUCIAL FOR THE ENGINEERS ...

Last Sunday was another example, I would have to say, where fortune abandoned me, and bad luck arrived, as always, at precisely the wrong time; the result of a small breakage meant that I had to retire from the grand prix right at the start. However, I don't like to think about such things; as always in sport, as in life, there is a need for everything, and there are many variables, and to succeed, you have to work in a way in which to put all these variables together in such a way as to the best you can. Then, a slice of luck, or whatever you want to call it, is what is necessary, in the end, to complete the circle.

Luisa Ghibaudo: Looking at yesterday's times, what do you think of the guys running up front—that is, Alonso, Massa, Raikkonen, and Hamilton? What is your judgement on these guys, and their chances at securing victory and podiums?

Jarno Trulli: There's no doubt that up front there is a nice fight developing between McLaren and Ferrari, and these four cars are, I think, being driven by four very competitive drivers. The one with the most experience is certainly Fernando Alonso, who has already won two championships. And experience counts for a lot here at Monte Carlo. Like I said before, though, Monte Carlo is a race unlike any other, and, like the stats will show, it is impossible to make any kind of safe prediction. Therefore, it is difficult for me to assess who will win the race. No doubt, though, that the protagonists will be these four, and I hope I will be somewhere close as well, but, as of today, considering we're yet to even qualify, to determine a winner is very, very difficult. Already yesterday we saw drivers—experienced and not-so-experienced—making

errors, and this shows that Monte Carlo is a difficult grand prix where the smallest error is severely punished. At Monte Carlo, I always try and keep my feet firmly on the ground, because you never know what will happen.

Luisa Ghibaudo: Jarno, in 2000, you were on the front row with the Jordan: Can you take a snapshot of the intervening seven years, and tell us the differences you see on the track, the cars, and what has changed in the interim?

Jarno Trulli: A lot has changed at Monte Carlo because every year sees the safety increase for the drivers, even if the track itself is limited in what you can do to it; being a street-track, and one of the oldest with a magnificent history on its shoulders, it is difficult to change it too radically since there is no space. Having said that, I would add that a lot of work has been done, especially through the Swimming Pool section, and at Rascasse, places on the track that are not only dangerous, but also difficult to access for the race marshals. So yes, many things have changed, and I have to say that we are satisfied with what has been done, considering what is possible on this track; the walls and the guardrails are part of the track, and they cannot be altered that much.

Luisa Ghibaudo: Can you explain the process of setting-up your car during a race weekend?

Jarno Trulli: There are diverse parameters that go from the ride-height, to the aerodynamics, to the tyres. They are variables, and therefore we have a working method that is very orderly, in order to limit the changes that we do to the car, considering time, and its limitations that we have at our disposal.



Luisa Ghibaudo: Have you ever used a race simulator?

Jarno Trulli: No.

Luisa Ghibaudo: Do you feel that race simulators now play an important role in the preparation of a race driver?

Jarno Trulli: As drivers, we are always searching for ways to improve, but, as a driver, I am a bit skeptical when it comes to race simulators because racing a real car and a simulator are two completely diverse things; however, they remain crucial for the engineers.

Luisa Ghibaudo: What do you believe is the most crucial function of a simulator?

Jarno Trulli: The simulator tries to reproduce the characteristics of the car and the track, and to put them together in order to get an idea of what one can expect in reality, on the track. However, I would say that, in the end, it is the track itself, and the driver himself, who will always have the final word.

New Advanced Weather For **GTR2**

Marco 'Mattari' Giuttari has developed a simple programme that will finally enable GTR2 to change weather during sessions ... and you can find it in this month's AUTOSIMSPORT.zip!

Marco**Giuttari**





So What's The Weather Like?

The idea of creating fluctuating weather arose because of a 'bug' in *GTR2* that does not allow for weather to evolve during the race sessions. *GTR2* generates weather conditions at the onset of a session, but this weather then remains static for the entire race session.

With the assistance of the communities around SimLeague and Lisgo, and with the aid of a meteorologist who helped me refine the algorithms, I have created NAW, a programme that will accurately alter the weather patterns of each session in *GTR2*, in a realistic way. In other words, NAW will introduce Advanced Weather (variable) for all sessions in a *GTR2* weekend, including the race.

NAW acts on the 'weather.txt' file, a file that is generated by *GTR2* in which all the sessions prior to the race are stored. The meteorological conditions, and temperatures generated by NAW, are directly influenced in a 'simul-real' way by the climate (or track) chosen, the month of the year chosen, and the time of day. The values of the parameters, and the range used for each climate/track, hour or month, are visible in the '.mbd' folder within the application: This file is both visible, and modifiable, by anyone.

Instructions For Use

In order to use NAW, you need to select the 'weather.txt' file. This file can be found within the folder 'GTR2\UserData\LOG' for races generated by the sim itself (that is, offline races, and online races 'host&drive'). This folder can also be found within the folder, 'GTR2\UserData\LOG_Dedicated' for races generated by the *GTR2* Dedicated Server.

Select the climate or the track on which you would like to generate weather conditions, the month in which you want to simulate the evolving weather during a race, and the duration of the various sessions.

The functions activated by the button '**Import time from GDB**' imports the time of the sessions taken from each tracks' '.GDB' file ('GTR2\GameData\Locations'). Choose the weather, or the track for which you want to generate the climate conditions, then choose the month, and time of the race and the sessions that you wish to simulate.

The value inserted in the textbox '**Multiplier**' influences the variability of the conditions, and the temperatures. The default value is '1', and it corresponds to realistic variability. Values '2' and '3' will increase the variability for those who enjoy changing conditions, as well as more extreme temperatures during the weekend's three sessions. Please remember that this does not guarantee extreme changes in weather, but, rather, multiplies the changes calculated by the algorithms, thereby increasing the probability that weather conditions will alter faster.

The button '**Import Durations from DedicatedServer.ini**' allows the user to import the duration of the sessions as found in the file, 'DedicatedServer.ini' generated by the dedicated server.

The button '**View Mode**', allows the user to 'see' the atmospheric conditions that will be generated by the NAW program. To prevent any unwanted errors, and/or 'unwanted cheating' from league operators, however, '**View Mode**' will ensure that the file will *not* be generated, and as a consequence, the possibility of copying the results you see on the screen are nullified. This mode is specifically created in order to demonstrate the kind of files that the programme generates within specific parameters.

The button '**Calculate**' will activate NAW. In '**View Mode**', the results will be visible in the textbox on the right—without '**View Mode**' being selected, the result will be generated in the 'weather.txt' file, overwriting those indicated by the user.

I would recommend that you use the checkbox '**Read Only**' in order to ensure that neither *GTR2*, nor the dedicated server overwrites the file. NAW will be able to generate the file, however, even if '**Read Only**' is not selected.

The values assigned by the variables of the 'weather.txt' will be read as follows.

Conditions: Indicates the level of clouds in the sky. The file 'weather.txt' in *GTR2* contains the initial value of the weather that will evolve as follows:

0=Clear sky

0.1–70.09=Always cloudier without rain

70.1–100=Always more rain

AmbientTemp: Indicates the air temperature. *GTR2* forecasts that the value within the 'weather.txt' file contains the initial value from which the temperature will evolve.

TrackTemp: Indicates the track temperature from the start of the session. The file 'weather.txt' contains only the initial track temperature; the successive values are calculated by the simulator itself according to the criteria imposed by LiveTrack®

OnTrackWetness/OffTrackWetness: The amount of humidity on the track. The file 'weather.txt' contains only the conditions on the track at the onset: The successive values are calculated by the simulator itself according to the criteria of LiveTrack®:

0–09=Dry

5.1–35.09=Humid

35.1–75.09=Wet

75.1–100=Soaked

Gentlemen Start Your Engines!



Ver 1.2

Perfected the algorithm for changing day

Perfected the probability of rain for climates within the Middle East

Ver 1.1

Allows for a 'Polling' functionality. The 'Polling' button activates a module in which, every time the dedicated server or GTR2 itself modifies the 'weather.txt' file, NAW will automatically generate a new weather forecast. The function is not activated in 'View Mode' and, naturally, the protection of the file is activated.

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Donations

Dear user,

We would like you to know that we created this software without material interests. The same spirit that pushed us to create the NAPmod—that is, the passion for sim-racing and motor-racing—is what made us create the NAW.

Having said that, though, it is also true that maintaining a race server requires a financial commitment that is over-and-above simple passion: If we have, even in a small way, contributed—with the NAPmod and now with the NAWmod—to your increased enjoyment, we ask you please to take a moment to reflect on whether our contributions could have even a small economic value, and if assisting us with the expenses that we burden ourselves are in your interests.

If the answer is yes, we ask that you please donate, however small, using the module that you can find here:
<http://simleague.net/forum/donate.php>

A sea, no matter how immense, is always made of small drops.

The Crew of SimLeague

<http://www.simleague.net>

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Spiritual Encouragement

Paolo "Uitko" Gianello ("Hai fatto?" "Hai finito?" "Visual Studio?" "La possiamo usare giovedì?")

Official Lengthener Of Development Time And Official 'Insulter'

Pierfrancesco "Cruz" Santacroce

Furnishers Of Will To Live And To Race

SPVS: Squadra Piloti Virtuali Senese—virtuaracing.net

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AUTOSIMSPORT Split Second

IvanAskew

The Year Of Infamy

MMG's much-touted 1950-2007 F1 mod is back-on-track with the sublime looking 1994 mod now officially in beta ... AUTOSIMSPORT caught up with MMG's Petros Mak to find out more ...





What is left to say about the 1994 Formula One season, a year that has gone down in infamy as the most violent and controversial championship in the ninety-six year history of the sport?

The season will forever be blighted: By the deaths of Ayrton Senna, and Roland Ratzenberger: By the allegations of cheating both on and off the track: By the mystery surrounding Senna's death: By the

disqualifications, on-track shenanigans, FIA-manipulations, and sheer ruthlessness of the championship-in-waiting ... indeed, the very way in which the championship was decided left an indelible stain on the sport, and Formula One—for many—not only lost its greatest driver that season, but lost its soul, too.

And yet ... it all started with so much promise: The FIA had finally bowed to pressure from the fans by banning

all electronic aids (traction control, launch control, stability control), Ayrton Senna had made his dream move from McLaren to the all-conquering Williams Team where he would pit his legendary skills against the future of the sport, a young German named Michael Schumacher at Benetton ... that fight dominated the news in the silly-months leading up to the 1994 season opener, with every pundit in the world convinced this was to be Senna's year, and would end, inevitably, in his fourth world championship.

Destiny, though, had other ideas, as did Michael Schumacher, in a Benetton, who would start the season as he intended to continue throughout his career—maximum attack, leaving Senna, and an ailing Williams, in disarray as the circus arrived for the San Marino Grand Prix, the third round of the championship, in late April.

Senna had retired from the opening two races (painfully so in his home grand prix in Brazil), and came to Imola trailing the young prodigy Schumacher who had quite positively decimated the field in both previous rounds ... everyone knew this was going to be a classic weekend, when the three-times-champion *had* to stamp his authority on the championship, *had* to get a result against the young pretender ... in a car—the FW16—which was found to have a design flaw at the front section (cured for Monaco, the next race, with the FW16—but by then, it was all far too late for Senna ...) ... But the real story—Senna's sudden desire to walk away from the sport—was not known then, and little did the world's media and fans realize the very raw emotional upheaval that was taking place behind the signature yellow helmet that had thrilled Formula One fans on close to a decade ...

The Imola weekend started off ominously: Another Brazilian—Rubens Barrichello, in a Jordan—lost it big-time round the Variante Bassa. It was a [shunt](#) of truly epic proportions, with the Jordan flying sideways into the barriers at undiminished speed, and it was only the masterful on-track talents of Prof. Sid Watkins that

prevented Barrichello from dying that Friday morning. With news that the young Brazilian had survived, the Formula One circus let out a collective sigh of relief: It had been twelve years since the last fatality (Gilles Villeneuve, in 1982) at a grand prix weekend, and it seemed as if the sport had just avoided a bullet. But Senna saw it as an omen, and felt the world closing in ...

In Saturday qualifying, there was to be no further mercy, as destiny contrived to send another of that season's young guns, Roland Ratzenberger, on a collision course with a brutal destiny: At the turn uncannily named Villeneuve, Ratzenberger crashed into the wall at something approaching 200MPH. The young Austrian died on impact.

Ayrton Senna, who had already expressed his desire not to race to his then girlfriend (and who had been told, by his good friend Prof. Watkins, to just pack it in and go fishing), could feel his own destiny closing-in on him. A morbid fascination with the horror that had attached itself to Formula One that weekend seemed to envelope the man many feel was the greatest driver of them all, and on that Sunday, in a race that had started with an ugly wreck leading to eight painful laps behind a safety car, Senna would lose his life in the strangest way possible: Coming through the flat Tamburello turn, Senna's FW16 mysteriously veered off to the right, and impacted with the wall dead-on. Marshals would find a blood-soaked Austrian flag, which Senna had planned to fly in honour of Ratzenberger should he have won the San Marino GP, in the remains of the FW16. Senna was declared dead four hours later, at nearby Bologna hospital.

Monaco rolled on two weeks later, and the drivers were still mourning the loss of Ratzenberger, and Senna, with the weekend hardly underway, when Karl Wendlinger [crashed horribly](#) coming out of the tunnel, leaving him in a coma, and it suddenly seemed as if Formula One was in the midst of its own horror movie, with the tragedies piling one atop the other with no end in sight.



The Formula One suits, led by Bernie Ecclestone, reacted sharply: Nigel Mansell was recruited to the Williams camp—the only 'star' still willing to race, with Senna dead, and Prost retired—as Formula One desperately tried to win back its television audience that had turned away from the sport in sorrow and disgust, tracks were quickly re-shaped (a tyre barrier at Barcelona to slow the cars down), and a new star, Michael Schumacher, was suddenly cast into the role of the bad guy.

As it turned out, though, Senna's death would actually lead to a sharp spike in Formula One viewers, helped along, in 1994, by Michael Schumacher and his Benetton team that would contrive, along with an assist by the FIA, to almost losing a championship that should have been all done and dusted by Monza.

By early summer, Schumacher held what appeared to be an unassailable lead in the championship, his only

competition, a journeyman named Damon Hill who, half-a-decade before, had been a motor-cycle delivery man in London, seemingly out of his depth in his new role as the Williams's number one driver.

Bizarrely, though, Schumacher chose the British GP to contravene an archaic law that forbids one driver from passing another on the warm-up lap before a race; Schumacher, starting second, passed Hill on pole not once, but twice as the cars came around to take their place on the grid: He then chose, along with team-boss Flavio Briatore, to ignore the drive-through penalty which the stewards handed-out for his illegal moves: That resulted in the stewards throwing out the black flag. Quite unbelievably, Schumacher chose to ignore that as well, and the FIA, perhaps sensing some sort of salvation, acted severely, meting out a stiff penalty by banning Schumacher from two up-coming races, and stripping him of his points from the Silverstone meeting.





That—and Schumacher's subsequent DQ from Belgium—meant Williams's Damon Hill, running the number '0' car, came to the final round of the championship at Adelaide one point adrift from Schumacher, in a car—the FW16B—which was now, under Arian Newey's stewardship, the class of the field. Could it be that Schumacher was actually about to lose the championship—because that was how history would judge it, his loss, not Hill's win.

And when Schumacher left the track half way through the race, while leading, his front right wheel colliding hard with the wall, it seemed, for a tantalizing second, as if Hill was about to become world champion; but in a move that was a fitting end to what many regard as the worst year in Formula One history, Schumacher, with his car clearly damaged from contact with the wall, turned into an astonished Damon Hill who, thinking to seize the moment, and without realizing that Schumacher's car was damaged, dived for the inside. Schumacher's race ended immediately, his Benetton flying into the tyre-wall: Hill continued on, managed to get to the pit, from where his mechanics assessed his suspension to be too damaged to continue: As Hill climbed out, the television cameras panned to a grinning Michael Schumacher, standing trackside, Formula One's new World Champion. Mansell went on to win the race, and secure his final win, and Williams's Constructors Cup: For Schumacher, that season—and that final race—would cast a shadow over his career that six more world championships would never quite erase.

But the on-track guile was not the only controversy surrounding Schumacher that year: There was also that constant allegation of cheating by the Benetton team. All electronic aids had been banned for that season (as it will, again, be in 2008), but, in hindsight, not enough provision was put in place to ensure (as in valid tests) teams could not use them illegally.



Senna, in fact, was convinced that Schumacher's Benetton was using both traction control, and launch control, and subsequent investigation by the FIA did find what was described as 'start sequence' software on the Benetton B194, although it was impossible to prove whether it was actually used. 'Start sequence software' was, of course, another name for the banned launch control, but no software was found for traction control on the Benetton, and the FIA did not declare Benetton as acting against the sporting regulations.



All the same, suspicions ran rife all the way through the year, and, as Tom Rubython writes in his brilliant Senna biography, 'The Life of Senna', "After watching the Benetton for lap after lap {after having spun out in the second race of the season, at Aida} Senna was sure it had traction control. He had also been surprised how quickly the car had come off the line, and believed it was using the banned launch control as well. Peter Collins, the Lotus team principal, went to see Frank Williams after the race. While he was waiting, he bumped into Senna. Collins remembers it well: 'I said to Ayrton that the Benetton was behaving like a car that had traction control. Ayrton, suddenly animated that I had reflected exactly what he was thinking, said to me: "'I am sure they are. I have followed it a number of times and I am sure they are.'" Senna told Collins he was determined to beat him {Schumacher} whatever. Collins says: 'He saw himself as being on a crusade of integrity and honor.' The conversation ended as Collins went off to converse with Frank Williams: he was convinced that Senna was resolved to do something about it."

The 1994 season was an eponymous year in Formula One: Many see that season as the year the sport lost its soul. With penalties seemingly contrived to force the

championship to be closer than it should have been, it was all too much for many of the sport's long-time fans. Whatever *did* happen that year—and answers, to this day, remain slim (did Benetton use driving aids, what caused Senna's mysterious death, did the FIA willfully slap down penalties on Schumacher to narrow-down the championship to the final race?)—one thing remains without argument: The sport had never—and has never again—had to endure such an awful season.

Which is a pity, of course, because the cars of that season were magnificent: Without traction control, with slick tyres, and BHP in the 800 range, the cars were extremely difficult to drive to which the injuries and deaths that season pay grim tribute ... so it is a logical place to start, to ask Petros 'Yanden' Mak, of MMG, why he, and lead modeler Raymond, chose this season, of all the possible choices, to introduce the world to MMG's 1950–2007 *rFactor* mod?

"The 1994 season is one of the most controversial seasons in Formula One history," Petros replies. "The death of both Roland Ratzenberger, and Ayrton Senna sent shockwaves not only to the motor-racing world, but also to the drivers themselves who had to deal with two deaths in one weekend, and one serious incident for Rubens Barrichello. Ayrton Senna was no doubt the best driver in Formula One history, and commemorating the season in which he died is done to tribute not only him, but the fallen Roland Ratzenberger who so many people forget about. Here at MMG we all have a soft spot for the 1994 season, and I guess we just wanted to make something different. Seasons from 1995 to 2005 were very common since *F12K2* days, so we wanted to focus on seasons not really seen in a racing-sim before."

"When I joined MMG," Raymond recalls, "I was asked by Petros which season I would love to be doing, and since, at that time, I was playing with the idea of doing a Senna tribute mod (all the cars Senna ever drove), I chose to do 1994; despite the loss of Ayrton, and Roland, it's still

one of the best seasons in F1 of the 1990s, in my opinion. So I was really motivated to model for that season."

The team has been engaged with the 1994 season since 2006, and involves some very talented modders: Petros, of course, is the lead, and he works with Jayforce to create the most realistic physics package possible. "We then have Raymond," Petros explains, "who does all the car modelling for the 1994 mod. He's modeled all the cars that will be featured in the demo that will be released first on AUTOSIMSPORT {*we're hoping for next month!—Ed*}. Jayforce is also responsible for putting the cars in-game, doing some painting and mapping work, engine and gearbox files—Jayforce is one of the many reasons that we are progressing as well as we are lately, and MMG cannot be ever more thankful for his extraordinary help. We then have Juandi who is the main mapper, and painter of the cars, both Williams and Lotus that will be featured in the screenshots within this article. We also have Erik Schakel who does all the rendering work for the mod. Erik is also MMG main modeler alongside Raymond. Erik has been with MMG a while longer than Raymond, and is also hard at work on more recent years of Formula One seasons which will also be released by MMG. We also have djtiesto who helps with the mapping and painting of cars, and who is currently working on the Simtek1994 car which will be featured in the demo of the 1994 mod. On top of these guys, we also have over twenty beta testers, from whom we acquire feedback and views to adjust and make the physics as perfect as possible. Well known drivers in the sim-racing world like Dom Binz, Martin Dyrland, and Danny Davison from FSR, and Matijn Top, Jacob (Cheeveer), Stefan Nydegger, and Ryan Gilmore from NRE (Netracing Europe) are all involved in the beta-testing. We also have a great load of other beta testers too, each doing a great deal of work to help all MMG mods further their progress."



The mods Petros is referring to, of course, is the project F1 1950–2007—is that still in the works?

"Yes it is," Petros confirms. "All our F1 seasons relate to that one gigantic mod. All our seasons are made one-by-one to fill each year in F1's history. We have just taken a different approach in doing it, but the aim is still the same, which is to have every single season of F1 history within a video game that can be enjoyed by any F1, and non-F1 sim-racing fan."

AUTOSIMSPORT has had a chance to get to grips with the 1994 season, albeit in beta form, and even at this stage, it is showing some very serious potential, particularly the driving physics. Where did MMG get the raw numbers from to simulate the season?

"Most of the facts and numbers are collected through fans who have emailed and PM'd with their offers, to help with information through books, and other such utilities they possess," says Petros, "We have also had some help

from some of the teams that existed from that time who were very helpful in supplying us with blueprints, reports, and data that we were able to use to make the mod as realistic as possible. Without that help, we would not have been able to make the quality mod that we are busy creating, which I have no doubt will stun the sim-racing world."

When will it be completed?

"The never-ending question of 'When?' is the one that is easily answered, but also the one that bites you in the backside even easier still," says Petros. "The best thing for me to say here is that it will be done when it is done. All you can do is follow the progress and be patient. Badgering and putting down the team is not the way to go. By doing those things, you de-motivate the people who work on this mod for free for your enjoyment, and it makes the mod take even longer to be completed. We work hard, and have to contend with real-life issues also that require us to spend less time on modding at times, and the community needs to realise this, and understand that we are human beings with lives, and we will do our best to finish as soon as we can. I can say though, we have learnt a lot from the 1994 mod in regards to community attitude. We have learnt how to, and how not to, release info' on upcoming mods, which is why MMG has become more of a quiet group. There are many seasons being worked on at MMG at the moment, but info' on them will not be given as it was with the 1994 mod from the beginning. Now we will play it safer, and give ourselves the time we require, without the added stress that is applied to us from some of those people in the community that have nothing better to do than bash a team for not finishing a mod when they want it."

AUTOSIMSPORT has been treated well by being offered the opportunity of releasing the demo when it is made available—so when will that be?

"The 1994 mod will be released on AUTOSIMSPORT first," Petros confirms, "and then one week later, MMG will allow links to the 1994 mod to be released on websites,

and other such places. When can you expect the demo? MMG is working endlessly, and very hard every day to have the demo ready for next month's issue of AUTOSIMSPORT {end of June—Ed}. But bugs do arise here and there, and if it cannot be a June release, then it will most certainly be a July release without any doubt. Right now, bugs have risen that we need to get through. Some are easy to solve, some are proving to be a bit less so. However, we are working as quickly as we can, and as hard as we can to have the mod out next month. If not, then we hope the community can wait an extra month for the bugs to be fixed ..."

What were the major challenges to recreating this infamous season?

"When I started the 1994 mod," Raymond recalls, "I was relatively new to the community, as it was also the first quality mod that I worked on. I had to learn a lot to get to the level I wanted. I'm very much a perfectionist, so from the get-go, I wanted to make realism the number one priority for the mod. The Williams FW16 was the first car I did, and while in my opinion it came out quite good, it still has a few areas where we can improve it. The quality of the five cars I did after the Williams improved with each car, with the best of my work being the McLaren, and Lotus models. For the demo, we will give out the cars we currently have, and once more of the teams are modeled, we will look back on the earlier cars and update them to make them more accurate. 1994 is basically one of the first *rFactor* mods which really got going. So when the Williams was done, there was very little known about the in-game process, and what requirements that had on the model, so with the experience we have now gained, we will go back to the earlier modeled cars and fine-tune them for the final version of the mod."

"I don't feel like there was anything that really challenged me," Juandi adds. "I guess the carbon fibers would probably have been the most challenging as every single bit of texture reflects to the realism of the car. But

other than that, the mapping and painting was pretty easy for me; these cars are not as intricate as current F1 cars, and so they are quite easily manageable."

"The biggest challenge that I have had so far is getting my hands on the valuable data that is really needed to make the mod as close to the real deal as possible," says Jayforce. "So far, some critical data has not been very easy to come by. A lot of the physics has been based on videos of the cars from this era, and a lot of feedback from various beta testers. With that in mind, the cars are being tuned with lap times at the Imola 1994 track, and so far the cars are very much on par with the qualifying times from this track."

And speaking of cars—what can we expect from them?

"From a modelling point of view," Raymond says, "the challenge for the 1994 cars really lay on the efficient use of polys, so that the cars did not become too draining on the frame rate in-game, while, at the same time, we wanted to get the models as realistic as possible. So in the beginning, with the Williams, we really spent quite some time in figuring out the most efficient way to model the 1994 cars. Once I understood how to efficiently use the polys, the other cars became easier and faster to model. Apart from that, it was just trying to get all the minor details of each car into the model without spending too much poly on them."

Jayforce explains that, "Good reliable data from the 1994 cars is probably the biggest challenge in the physics area. There are, however, quite a few videos of the cars floating around on the net, and these have been used as much as possible in getting the characteristics of the cars on the track as close as possible thus far. If I can, I would like to take this opportunity to ask if anyone has any good reliable data on the 1994 season, please can you forward it to anyone in MMG to help make these cars the best they can be."

The mod will also be released in a novel way, as Petros explains: "No MMG mod will be pay-to-download, or pay-to-play," he says, before adding that, "leagues, however, will have to undergo a scenario to be given rights to use any MMG mod within their league. As you know, I am the

founder/CEO of F.I.S (Federation of International Simracing) which is organizing an online/offline racing league for nearly every single motor-sport event available to sim-racing. This is still a little bit 'in the future', but F.I.S is running and setting things into motion. Sim-racing league owners will need to apply to me for an F.I.S League License, which grants them permission to use the mod within their league for a specified period of time. This does not cost anything, nothing is to be paid. The reason this is done to ensure that MMG can keep an eye on which leagues are using the mod, and to make sure leagues are not forcing the community to pay to download the mod, or to pay the league to race in the league using any of our mods. Our mods are free, and we want to make sure they are used in leagues that will allow people to enjoy them for free. If a league is caught running the mod without a license, they will be asked to stop that category in their league, and will instantly be banned from receiving any F.I.S license. If you want to use one of our mods, we will be more than happy to even support you when you find problems or bugs, as long as you take the right steps to acquire the F.I.S League License."

So roll on June, when we'll all have our hands on another classic Formula One season for the *rFactor* platform ... Formula One 1994 ... without traction control, and without the tragedy. It is a pity it couldn't have been this way for real ...



Constructors—Final Points

1 Williams-Renault FW16 FW16B—	118pts
2 Benetton-Ford B194—	103pts
3 Ferrari 412T1 412T1B—	71pts
4 McLaren-Peugeot MP4/9—	42pts
5 Jordan-Hart 194—	28pts
6 Tyrrell-Yamaha 023—	13pts
7 Ligier-Renault JS39B—	13pts
8 Sauber-Mercedes C13—	12pts
9 Footwork-Ford FA15—	9pts
10 Minardi-Ford M193 M194—	5pts
11 Larrousse-Ford LH94—	2pts
12 Pacific-Ilmor PR01—	0pts
13 Lotus-Mugen-Honda 107C 109—	0pts
14 Simtek-Ford S941—	0pts

Driver Standings—1994

M. Schumacher	92
D. Hill	91
G. Berger	41
M. Häkkinen	26
J. Alesi	24
R. Barrichello	19
M. Brundle	16
D. Coulthard	14
N. Mansell	13
J. Verstappen	10
O. Panis	9
M. Blundell	8
H-F. Frentzen	7

AUTOSIMSPORT

PitBoard

Giancarlo Fisichella

Luisa Ghibauda finds time for Formula One's Giancarlo Fisichella on a warm Friday afternoon on the Med'... two days before he will enjoy his best weekend of the season at the Monaco grand prix ...

LuisaGhibauda





Luisa Ghibaudo: Giancarlo, how did it go yesterday during Thursday's practice?

Giancarlo Fisichella: Yesterday we showed good potential, positive, except for my off at Ste. Devote; but that's acceptable, when you're searching for the limit in practice, these things can happen, the important thing is that the car is going well, that we're doing competitive times, and this makes us hope for good things for the race, as opposed to the other races this season in which we have suffered a lot.

Luisa Ghibaudo: Tomorrow, the track will be rubbered-in after yesterday's free practice, and today's GP2 race; with the increased grip, do you feel the combination Renault-Bridgestone will have satisfactory results?

Giancarlo Fisichella: We're hoping; tomorrow we'll also have the new wing which will help us a lot, and the track will be rubbered-in, too, which will be better for the tyres, and for the brakes, which were difficult yesterday, and which is normal when a track is green. So yes, I'm very hopeful.

Luisa Ghibaudo: What are you hoping for, realistically, out of this weekend?

FOR THE RACING DRIVER, I DON'T THINK A SIMULATOR IS THAT IMPORTANT, BUT FOR THE ENGINEERS, THEY REMAIN ONE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL ASPECTS OF FORMULA ONE ...

Giancarlo Fisichella: From what we have seen so far, the possibility exists to be in the Top Six in qualifying and, since this is Monte Carlo (and we all know how peculiar the races can be here), I think we can realistically hope for a podium come Sunday.

Luisa Ghibaudo: This is the glamour event of the season—how different is this race from the others on the calendar, and how are you enjoying it?

Giancarlo Fisichella: Well, Monaco is a peculiar race, a very special grand prix for everyone, especially for me, because it is a track that gives me good memories; I won in Formula 3, I've been second in Formula One, twice I have finished third so ... yes, it's a track that has good memories for me. It's a particular track—either you love it, or you hate it, and I love it. Very difficult, a bit dangerous too, but that's part of the game. It's also a grand prix that has an atmosphere unlike any other; I have my boat here, and I have my family with me, and I am lucky enough to be in the grand prix, but also very lucky to have my friends and family with whom I can share this weekend.

Luisa Ghibaudo: Could you explain how you go about setting-up your car for a race weekend?

Giancarlo Fisichella: The method from Friday, or, as is the case here at Monte Carlo, Thursday, during the free practice, sees us moving forward in search of bettering the car in the best way possible, with special consideration on the feel, the sensations of the car, tied to your style of driving. We work with the engineers in the areas where we believe we have the most problems, like oversteer and understeer, and similar problems.

Luisa Ghibaudo: Have you ever used a racing sim?

Giancarlo Fisichella: Yes, to learn the track.

Luisa Ghibaudo: Do you believe racing simulators have become an important facet in the training of a race driver, and in his preparation?

Giancarlo Fisichella: For the racing driver, I don't think it is that important, but for the engineers, they remain one of the fundamental aspects of Formula One.

Luisa Ghibaudo: What do you feel is the most important aspect of a simulator?

Giancarlo Fisichella: That is gives, more or less, the anticipated answer for the conditions which you will face once you're on the track for real.



StopWatch

Herding Chaos

Pete Walsh changed the course of rFactor ... so his self-deprecating attitude came as a bit of a surprise when AUTOSIMSPORT finally (after months of trying) sat down with the 'man who saved rFactor' to talk about mods, rFactorCentral, and ... wombats?

IvanAskew





rFactor was a fascinatingly malicious experiment: Give a community rich in talent and poor in quality products the groundwork with which to could create any damn thing they desired, and then sit back and see what happens. The result was a Renaissance in sim-racing: Dozens of outstanding mods, and hundreds of tracks were created and made available to a community that had, until the day *rFactor* released, become sadly too accustomed to being presented with a new sim every two or three years from the industry's few—but dedicated—developers. ISI had planted the seed, and the community's talent had watered and nurtured a veritable (and quickly sprouting) Wattle tree of creativity (urgh...).

The sudden availability of so many mods, though, created an unexpected byproduct: Chaos. Eight months or so after *rFactor*'s release (in August of 2005), ISI's experiment was suffocating like the tangled, mangled roots of a (erm) ... concrete-encrusted Wattle tree: Mismatch errors created by mods and tracks housed in hundreds of un-related sites on the net had garnered *rFactor* something of a reputation for being difficult to get along with, and the successful belief in the community's modding genius was being sapped (ooer) by the ubiquitous mismatch errors ...

From the chaos, though, rose one man who came, saw, and conquered. An Australian from the Outback who seemed possessed with the uncanny ability of being able to herd kangaroos, and make them jump through loops, too! His rFactorCentral.com website proved to be one of those ideas—and specifically *websites*—that are precisely the right idea at precisely the right time, and created by a man who had the experience—and stamina—to actually make it all work.

If ever ISI sit down and analyse the history of *rFactor*,

they would, in all likelihood, point to two defining moments in the genesis of their experiment: Lo's F3 mod, and Pete Walsh's *rFactorCentral* (rFC) website, born in April of 2006 ...

So, how did it all get started?

"It started," Pete recalls, "because my young nephew kept whooping my ass on his PS2 game, *Need for Speed*! We got home from the holidays, and bought a PS2, and I got hooked on more car games, which—eventually—lead to PC simulators."

It is somewhat surprising to discover that Pete Walsh was a complete newbie to sim-racing at the time in which he created what has become one of sim-racing's most treasured sites: When *rFactor* released, Pete Walsh had not even heard about simulated racing. He confesses that *rFactor* was, in fact, the first racing sim ever installed on his PC ... For all that, though, it didn't take him long to lose his virginity late one night while searching for some missing pieces to his favourite mod, and, he says, "It was those things—my own personal interests combined with the need in community for somewhere to organize all this stuff," that convinced him to find a way to catalogue the chaos.

Apart from necessity being the mother of all invention, Pete was also motivated by the modders themselves, with whom he found he shared a certain kinship: "Part of the motivation was definitely the *rFactor* model itself—where guys can make the sim into what they want. Not just that, but the level of dedication guys bring to the game—it's hard not to be inspired by it, and want to make something ... as a frustrated modder, rFC was the next best thing."

As with any great idea, there have been all kinds of rumours surrounding Pete's website—that he was an ISI

employee, that the site was nothing more than a surrogate for ISI themselves, and—even more bizarrely—that it was created out in the middle of the Outback, in the bush somewhere, using nothing but a dialup from last century ...

"Oh no," Pete says, "the dialup story—I'm not sure where that started, but no, that's not true—makes a good story though! However, the part about me living in the bush is pretty much true." Pete lives outside of a small village called Glenlyon, about ninety minutes west of Melbourne, just on the edge of the Wombat Forest. Wombats? "No wombats," Pete replies before I can ask, "lots of kangaroos, wallabies, guinea pigs, ducks, chooks, dogs, and cats though!"

The dialup story, however, like all legends, does have a slight kernel of truth in it: That is, as Pete explains, it was only, "after years of lobbying Telstra—the telephone company out here that owns the network—that they finally got around to upgrading the exchange that services our part of the world, making basic DSL available—and that all happened around about the same time as rFC."

So, having started rFC from his shack in the Outback using a dialup (no sense in letting the truth stand in the way of good copy!), did Pete expect the site to become so popular so quickly?

"No, I didn't really expect it to become popular, and didn't really create it with that in mind. It was more about messing around with ideas, combining things I had an interest in, something outside of the corporate work I do where I could have some fun using the same skills. I've always had an interest in motor-racing, and on the IT side of things, have had a lot to do with online communities as well as web applications. rFC is those things combined: It

kinda became an addiction though. The *rFactor* ride is a lot like the crazy days of IT—never know what is going to happen next, always guys working on great ideas that may or may not end up happening, and I love the volatility in all of that ...”

In those heady early days after *rFactor*’s release, there were many that planned sites along the lines of Pete’s rFC: None, however, managed to combine the features, the ease-of-use, and the sheer amount of mods catalogued at Pete’s website: So, how did his become *the rFactor*-related site on the net?

“It started from playing *rFactor* and looking around the web for resources,” Pete explains. “A common topic in *rFactor* forums was the need to somehow centralize things. I started thinking about having a crack at it, and registered ‘rfactorcentral.com’ in mid-March of 2006, and began to ask people in the community what they would wanted from a site like that.”

That simple? Not quite: It seems that what we now know as rFC had a few incarnations ... “The site started a couple of times before the rFC that people know started: Initially,” Pete recalls, “it was going to be a small personal site to help me as much as anyone find *rFactor*-related stuff.”

For those interested, Pete recalls that, “Oran Park Raceway was actually the first entry in the database for the tracks. And the H6 Pro for the cars.”

Pete populated the site—initially—by personally scouring the web on a daily basis, his energy and sheer will furnishing the site with the information *rFactor*-users were aching for: “I trawled around online and listed everything I came across—I still do that each day, but as time has gone on, more of the site has been handed over to the people that use and support it. Modders for example can manage and release their mods on rFC (including goodies like auto-news stories) at any time that suits them using their own admin tools. Really, a lot have

guys have helped in many many ways over the last year, without their support the site would’ve have grown as it has so thanks everyone!”

Popularity, however, like *rFactor* itself, brings problems of its own—a victim of his own success, Pete—and rFC—began to get into some financial problems last year ... to the point where it seemed, for a few months during the dog days of summer, that the community was about to lose another of its jewels ... and, as always, the blame for the woes could be spread amongst many quarters: Pete, for having created such a behemoth, the community, who continue to believe that these sites—and the work and finances that run them—are somehow mysterious gifts from the sim-racing gods ... and the developers themselves who seem blissfully (or perhaps conveniently) unaware of how the community’s hard work impacts their products in positive (and indeed even financial) ways ...

“When hosting agreements came to an abrupt halt after the release of the 1.150 patch,” Pete recalls, “the file servers had been moving one terabyte *per day* for close to three months. It was scary and very silly stuff regarding costs. What really saved the site in those critical weeks was the support and encouragement of the community, and guys like AUTOSIMSPORT who encouraged people to donate.”

The financial hole, though, taught Pete a few lessons: “I realized it wasn’t sustainable or necessary for any one person to provide so much bandwidth. So in the dark of the night, a new file server fired up on the other side of the world {AUTOSIMSPORT has traced four FactorCentral servers, located in the U.S. and UK}, and changes were made to the site to at least try to run within donations/ad revenue. Things have grown again since, and it remains a touch-and-go thing, financially.” Pete, however, to the question that remains un-asked (though logical) adds that, “while it consumes a crazy amount of time, energy,

and resources, it’s still something I enjoy doing, so on the rFC adventure goes.”

As such, Pete’s tale is a common one within the cottage industry that has sprung up around the world of sim-racing: Guys taking on a load of work to enrich the community, and more often than not taking the financial slack that should—and traditionally is, within other genres—be the domain of the developers themselves. In fact, there are many that claim rFC is *the* site that—quite literally—saved *rFactor*: Would he agree with that assessment?

“I don’t think any site has saved *rFactor*,” Pete replies. “The day-to-day load of growing and supporting *rFactor* is shared across many guys, and many sites. All the modders, painters, leagues, people who frequent forums, who organize events, ISI with their continued support, and so forth—all are equally as responsible for *rFactor*’s success. There’s more dedication there than you can poke a stick at. I don’t have any doubt *rFactor* would have done just fine without rFC.”

rFC, though, is now a staple to the sim-racer’s diet: Even those that no longer run *rFactor* are known to browse the site—and theWIP section—just to see what is coming in the ever-expanding world of *rFactor*-run mods. Does Pete plan to expand the site—perhaps cataloguing the ever-increasing world of *GTR2* mods?

“It’s something I’ve thought about, but I’m more a ‘what needs to be done today’ kind of guy, so it’s hard to say really,” says Pete. “I’m still lost in thinking about all the things I’d like to add to the site, and enjoying that process. Also, there’s the reality that, even though quite a few guys play several sims, the culture within each is quite unique—that’s something that really needs to be respected. What works in one community may not work in another, so we’ll have to wait and see. I’m as interested to see what happens next as anyone, for both *rFactor*, and other sims.”



His success, though, surely means that he must enjoy some level of insider contact with ISI—are *rFactor*'s developers helping with the site, financially or otherwise?

"As the site has grown, I've had more contact with ISI, which makes sense," Pete acknowledges, "in particular because rFC offers *rFactor* for sale, so there are related nuts'n'bolts that need to be discussed. Due to licensing, and other reasons," he adds, "ISI can't support a site like rFC, which is understandable, but I guess one fringe benefit of the site is I sometimes get an early look at stuff."

And ... is there anything he'd like to share with AUTOSIMSPORT's readers?

"I don't like to share," Pete replies.

Who does?—but still, what is more probable—a patch, or *rFactor2*?

"ISI have mentioned 1.250 would be the last update to the current iteration of *rFactor*, but since then the Panoz and BMW F1 07 add-ons have been released—so what does that mean? It's tricky to say."

Tricky being a codeword for no comment: However, the Panoz add-on—released last month (with the official pre-release version available at Race2Play.com) came as a bit of a surprise to many: Not only the fact that ISI released it (a licensed product of this caliber would surely have made

rFactor2—should it be in the works—more enticing than the original *rFactor* that shipped without any officially licensed cars), but in the very way they chose to release it.

"I wasn't in favour of how the Panoz was released," Pete says, echoing the thoughts of many that have posted on the forums since and prior to the release: "The *rFactor* ethos has always been fundamentally inclusive from the get-go—it's one of the things that really appealed to me about it. The day-to-day load of growing and supporting *rFactor* has, as I said, been shared by everyone in the community, which has been the key factor in *rFactor*'s success. A passionate user-community can," he adds, "be difficult to interact with at times, but it's an immensely valuable asset for any company who are fortunate enough to have users who engage with a product so deeply: They develop a true sense of ownership over the product—it's amazing the level of commitment guys bring to *rFactor*. You've gotta love it, and look after it, and respect it—even if it does drive you nuts sometimes!"

Pete's point is obvious: *rFactor*, he tells us, was not 'saved' by any one person, but its success can surely be attributable only to the unpaid, talented, and hard working mod-force that have assembled around ISI's product: Were it not for the countless mod-groups creating content for *rFactor*, the sim would have died out a very long time ago ... that is, ISI could have created the greatest sim on the planet, but without the active interaction of the community that has embraced it, *rFactor* would have been yet another noble failure ...

"Within that context," Pete continues, "for an ISI release to be exclusive, suddenly out-of-the-blue—and for them to select a league—that is, one above all the rest, many of which have been running *rFactor*-related leagues since the sim's release—and further, to require payment to that league to access the Panoz—suffice it to say that I think it was an unnecessary setback in terms of 'feeling and growing the *rFactor* love'. But you know, it's not a big deal in the scheme of things, and maybe it is part of the way forward ... who knows!"

The screenshot shows the Race2Play website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links like 'HOME', 'ABOUT', 'CONTACT', 'FAQ', 'RACE2PLAY', 'RACE2PLAY FOR SALE', 'RACE2PLAY FOR SALE', 'RACE2PLAY FOR SALE'. Below this is the 'Renault Super Clio World Championship' section, which includes a table of race results. The table has columns for 'Rank', 'Driver', 'Race 1', 'Race 2', 'Race 3', 'Race 4', and 'Total Time'. The results are as follows:

Rank	Driver	Race 1	Race 2	Race 3	Race 4	Total Time
1	Steve Wilson	15:26.834	15:26.834	15:26.834	15:26.834	15:26.834
2	John Smith	15:27.514	15:27.514	15:27.514	15:27.514	15:27.514
3	Ulf Lindgren	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683
4	John Smith	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683
5	John Smith	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683
6	John Smith	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683
7	John Smith	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683
8	John Smith	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683
9	John Smith	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683
10	John Smith	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683
11	John Smith	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683
12	John Smith	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683
13	John Smith	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683
14	John Smith	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683
15	John Smith	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683
16	John Smith	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683
17	John Smith	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683
18	John Smith	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683
19	John Smith	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683
20	John Smith	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683
21	John Smith	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683
22	John Smith	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683
23	John Smith	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683
24	John Smith	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683	15:27.683

Below the table, there's a 'Community Rating' section with a star rating system. The rating is currently 4.5 out of 5 stars. There are also links to 'Download Links' and 'Related Videos on R2P'.

Pete's position—as *rFactor*'s premium mod-shop—places him in a unique position to understand the mysterious cycles of mod-creation and distribution, a facet of sim-racing that is absolutely crucial to the survival and well-being of the genre: Strange, then, that mods remain, to this day, free, when modders working in other similar genres—flight sims for instance—have long since converted their interests and products into commercial enterprises.



Pete points out that paid-for add-ons is something he sees as a critical

missing piece in the sim environment: "Stuff created out of passion and given away for free is awesome, no doubt about it, but I think modding and sims generally will struggle to move forward until the community accepts that paid add-ons are okay and have a place alongside free add-ons, and there must—at some point—be mechanisms in place for supporting paid add-ons. By that I mean licensed add-ons, of course." As such, Pete sees the Panoz release as a missed opportunity: "Assuming it was feasible, ISI selling the Panoz add-on themselves would've helped move us all gently in that direction, in my opinion anyway. Even guys who didn't really want the Panoz would've bought it as a way to support and encourage ISI—because, let's face it, for any active player, *rFactor* has been *insane* value for money!"

It would be difficult to argue against this—rationally, anyway: Even if one excludes the mods from the equation, ISI have remained very faithful to supporting their product, and it is almost unheard of for a developer to continue supporting their product a year and more since release. It is one of the reasons why *rFactor* remains so popular: Within the community, ISI have a reputation for being the 'good guys', and the fact that they released a patch—sixteen months after they released their product—really is something as unique as it is laudable.

"I guess one significant challenge moving forward," Pete says, "is transitioning the community to whatever comes next for *rFactor*, and ISI. Maybe the infrastructure will be in

place to better support paid, and free add-ons. It's probably time for a change in direction, which is okay, too, as long as it's communicated clearly so everyone is along for the ride. It comes back to that sense of ownership that *rFactor* encourages, which is one of my pet topics ... have I mentioned that?"

Enjoying such close links to the modding community gives Pete a behind-the-scenes perspective on *rFactor* that the rest of us can only dream about—so, is *rFactor*'s popularity on the decline?

"The traffic to rFC doesn't suggest *rFactor* is on the decline," Pete replies, "but, in fact, demonstrates that it is still growing. In terms of mods, the best is yet to come, no doubt. The frequency of mod releases might be slowing, but I think this demonstrates that the quality is constantly improving. I wouldn't recommend packing up your *rFactor* show and going home just yet."

So what do we have to look forward to? What are Pete's picks for *Best In Show*?

"I would be killed," says Pete laughing. "Loose lips break hips! The 'WIP' area on rFC is a good way to see what's coming, as well as to get a sense of what people are looking forward to the most via 'WIP Watch'. There's a lot of stuff I'm personally looking forward to. One of my favourite things about *rFactor* is that I've been introduced to many cars and tracks I would've otherwise not even have known existed."

With its first birthday celebrated quietly in April, rFC is now expanding—although not as one could have predicted.

"My first *rFactor* 'wow' experience was public online racing. It really blew me away—and so it was disappointing for me personally to see its popularity decline towards the middle of last year. I hatched an idea at the time for an ongoing public event/challenge, but couldn't find anyone who would come along for the ride. The idea didn't want to go away though, and almost a year later, it's finally out of my head."

Out of his head and into the cyberworld: The *rFC World*

Championships.

"The championships are part challenge, part rank, part traditional race events, and are open to everyone and anyone in the *rFactor* community," Pete explains. "While each championship might appeal to different people, one of the core goals was to cater for guys like myself, the lost souls of online racing I guess, who can't practically commit to racing at regular, set times online, and who probably spend more time racing offline but don't find it especially satisfying—guys who *would* race online more if there was some kind of fun, convenient, loosely structured reason and challenge."

Which is where the *rFC World Championship* comes in: "The bottom line of the *rFC World Championship* idea is that it's about enjoying racing online, and encouraging more people to give it a go. I did more racing in the development of the World Champ' gadgets than I had for the previous year, so it's working for me!"

The rFC WC was created by Pete but, this being *rFactor*-related, there were many who helped bring the concept to fruition: "Without these guys, the rFC WC idea would still be driving me crazy: Guys like Ken 'PROKennyVette' Richardson for his excellent work on the race server software, Jerry and MTCO for their assistance with race servers, the guys at VMS for helping out with server config ... thanks!" Pete laughs when he says, "I feel like it's an awards show all of the sudden, and I'll forget to mention someone. Where are the girls in the slinky dresses? Pass me a scotch—not a glass you dolt, the bottle! At least then I'll have an excuse."

No excuse necessary: Pete Walsh's rFC remains one of the jewels of the sim-racing world, and without it, there is absolutely no doubt that our entire genre would be considerably poorer. Not to mention ISI's coffers. And with the introduction of the *rFC World Championships*, Pete's site—created out in the bush a million miles from nowhere—has just become that much more important to the genre as a whole ...

Thoughts on the Great Debate— PCs vs. Consoles as Simulator Platforms

In preparation for next month's epic console issue, Bob Simmerman considers whether the time is now to surrender the PC for a console ...

BobSimmerman



The smell of newness permeates the air as I write this, and the Sony Corporation now has one more customer. With the *Spidermanesque* font gleaming from the top of the console like a beacon of hope, the Blu Ray player of the

PS3 is cranking out a very good looking 'Casino Royale', and my jaw just got done dropping a few short minutes ago as I wrapped up a Formula One session on the very same console.



Last night, with the XBOX 360, I was attacking the demo of the soon-to-be-released *Forza Motorsports 2*—sans cockpit view—and drooling in anticipation. Sans cockpit view? Yeah, well, uhm, that is the sort of behavior that console developers find acceptable, even when touting something as truly 'simulator-like', and hardcore. And in many ways, *Forza 2* really is astonishing; sporting real-time telemetry displays, a physics model running at 360Hz, and graphical effects that are extremely pleasing to the eye, (not to mention convincing to the brain), it's not too difficult to accept the lack of an in-car view, and make do with the hood/sort of view. At least Microsoft has Force-Feedback this time, and a decent wheel.

The PS3, on the other hand, shipped without any sort of controller feedback at all, which is a huge letdown when playing any driving game, arcade, sim, or otherwise. However, sometime before this writing, Sony settled their differences with Immersion, who, as far as I can tell, own the intellectual rights to Force-Feedback (in all its configurations), and the rumble/vibration/feedback may, it is said, resume on the PS3. What is not known is whether or not games will be updated with the good news. When I popped in the *F1 Championship Edition* disk, no update took place, and there did not appear to be an update available. Despite that, though, the game is fun to play, gorgeous to look at, and contains a surprising amount of depth to the career mode, along with some damn-fine looking unlockable content such as a 1979 Renault. Even better, and as is often the Sony way, you can use a DFP, a G25, a USB keyboard, and a whole slew of other peripheral and device attachments simply by plugging them in. I haven't tried my DFP or G25 yet, but even without FFB, *F1CE* has firmly grabbed my attention, which is a bonus since all I had *really* wanted was a Blu Ray player.

But, yeah, uhm, about that damn cockpit view for *Forza 2* ...



And so it begins, a bitter grain of sand that provides not a pearl at the end of time, but instead an argument—how can a sim be a sim if it doesn't have a cockpit view? Sure, there are some folks who prefer not to use the in-car camera—it takes all sorts!—but not to be able to run the car from behind the cockpit ... surely this destroys any claim of 'simulation' right off the bat?

And since when can a console do physics? Because, let's face it, console-land is what movies would be like if the only film producer left on the planet was Jerry Bruckheimer—big budgets, and lowest common denominator to justify them.

Some of you may find it odd then, as I do, that with the contest 'in the bag', the console vs. PC debate still continues to rage like a Derek Smart thread on Usenet. So I decided the best way to go about settling this debate was to find out just where and when consoles and PC entered into their ever-lasting battle.

Taking A Byte Out Of A Console

My first experience with any of these gizmos was some sort of console of unknown origin that played a game called *Pong*. Through a clever bit of engineering, the Pong-paddle displayed was shape-shifted into two paddles at the turn of a knob, with one in front of the other on the same user side, and then the game was called *Hockey*. It sounds so trivial today, but let me tell you, that thing provided endless hours of entertainment for every kid on the block, until it finally just quit working. Not a failure after a massive ROM reconfiguration piped-in through a wireless internet connection you understand, but a failure due to good old fashioned *usage*.

One of the best chronicles of the time-line of consoles to be found online is thegameconsole.com, but if words on paper are your preference, there are countless books and articles that have been written on the genesis of the console, and, of course, there are dedicated industry magazines solely for the purposes of console coverage. For our purposes, all we need to know—and following from Thegameconsole.com's lead—is the banal early reality that was the first commercially available console offering, at least on a mass market scale—the glory that was the 1972 Magnavox Odyssey which, history tell us, was so powerful that it ran on batteries!

It also lacked any sound output, and was not what you would consider 'feature rich.' But it was a start; and one thing that was *not* lacking from the early days in console-land was output—in 1976 alone, Magnavox released not one, not two, but *three* versions of the same Odyssey system! There were others in the show that year as well, and besides the boatload of Odyssey, the consumer was presented with offerings from Atari, Wonder Wizard 7702, Coleco, Fairchild, and RCA, all competing for loyalty in what was then a burgeoning, but newly-nascent, gaming industry. Indeed, in those heady days, there were more console types available than games!



I'm not sure when I got on board, exactly, but one thing I do remember is that, while some of my friends may have had different console systems, they all seemed to be playing some form of the Atari-arcade-supermegahit—*Pong*. Who says there isn't big money to be made at the bowling alley? Considering that, at the time, the bowling alleys were choked with those giant *Pong* consoles, they were sure-fire money-spinners! As were the grocery stores, pharmacies, and probably Las Vegas as well ...



Fast forward to 1982, and we first see what would become my favorite console-set, the epic Colecovision, by, oddly enough, Coleco. Folks, I loved this damn thing to death, and a Friday night didn't go by without a bunch of buddies coming over to *Chez Bob* to indulge in what was so far beyond the primitive *Pong* offerings of a mere decade before; the Colecovision system (just the name was enough to inspire me!) was simply super-amazing, and soon after the purchase of the console, I was able to obtain the wheel controller for the game *Turbo* (I think!), and suddenly gaming had gone into an entirely new level. Oh yes, I'm here to tell you, *those were the days*.

With commercial success, the console development and production process continued to gain momentum—sales were as massive as they were unexpected, and the consoles were getting much better in terms of game content, game play, and graphics. However, the console gravy train was about to leave the station without me, for it was shortly after my last Colecovision controller died with nary a replacement in sight that I began to find my interest piqued by a new thing called 'computers'. In fact, I did not own another console until the purchase of a PS2 in 2004 (which led to a nearly devastating spending

disorder in the years that followed, but that's for another day!) ...

To return to topic, what happened with the consoles was inevitable: Build something cool, sell it to millions of people, build something cooler, repeat ... And once it became clear that the home console-gaming industry was a bit larger than the champagne section at the local 7-11, some really big players began to emerge in the market, and Hobbesian capitalism soon flushed away the weak and, come the new century, the Big Three had elbowed their way into becoming the only games in town.

Nintendo, Microsoft, and, last but not least, Sony became the Kings of Console-land, and while Sony and Microsoft have taken the 'next gen' route with their latest incarnations (new consoles come every few years now, not months!), promising and hyping beyond description the bold new era soon to be upon us, Nintendo took the other route, the route that has proven, especially for them, highly successful—they made a solid system that didn't cost an arm and a leg, and put good games—fun games—right along side of it. Sure, there was a bumpy road at the start with overzealous gamers with under-

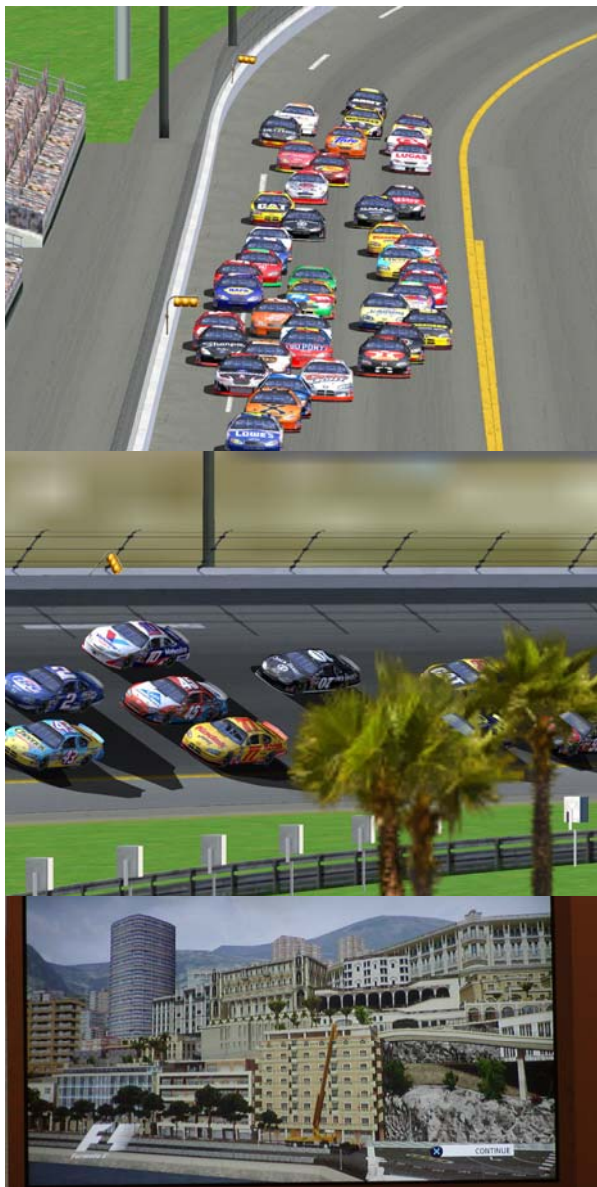
built wrist straps brainning their girlfriends into next week, but it didn't take long for the Nintendo Wii to become an unexpected success: The 'last gen' system may have been underperforming, tech-wise, when run alongside the PS3 and 360, but it outperformed both where it mattered most: Sales-wise. It will no doubt be a while before the swelling goes down around the eyes of Microsoft and Sony.

Not that this beat down will continue, of course: Quite the contrary; after experience with the XBOX 360 for a year and a half, and the PS3 for an hour and a half, there is no doubt about it—the 'next gen' really is a huge step forward, and once the Blu Ray DVDs take root, and once the price of the consoles begin to go down (inevitable, surely), the PS3 and 360s will rule until their next iteration, sometime, one imagines, in 2010 or so ... Graphically, look no further than *Gears of War* for the XBOX 360 to learn all about the promise that is 'next gen'.

Ok, so what does all of this have to do with the price of tea in the Trailer Park? We'll get to that, but first, let's have a look at where the PC came from.

A Bit Of Computer History

Personally, my first taste of computers was sometime around 1981, or whenever the Sinclair ZX81 first hit the market in the U.S. It was available in two forms, as a fully disassembled kit version for 100 dollars, or a fully assembled version for 150 dollars. Sporting a Z80 processor and a whopping 1 KILOBYTE of RAM, it was my pride and joy ... and obsession. If the consoles were banality, this thing made Nero seem worthy—with each key press, the screen would blank out as video duties were shared with other duties. For example, all the duties. Cassette tape loading and saving of the massive RAM took roughly twenty minutes, and was not always successful.



But it got better—soon, a 16 KILOBYTE expansion module was available for about sixty dollars, and the neatest thermal paper printer for somewhere between 100–200 dollars. With that complete a system, the time I spent with the consoles seemed like mere fractions of a second in comparison. Indeed, while the Colecovision certainly saw a large amount of playtime, overall, the computer held my interest in many more ways, and for much longer. But to its disadvantage, it was not a multiplayer sort of thing—you could take turns, of course, but gaming capabilities that the consoles took for granted for nearly a decade were far beyond the feature set of that Sinclair, and that should come as no surprise since it was not geared for gaming, but more toward the ‘hobbyist’ crowd (geeks with beards and bikes, in those days!), a niche market if there ever was one.

However, the first rudimentary computing devices are, most likely, thousands of years old. Ancient, in fact. Consider, for example, the remarkable Antikytherian device, a marvel of ancient Greek engineering, which is generally regarded as a tool for the computation of planetary and star movements. Found at the bottom of the ocean off the island of Antikythera in 1901, the device was carefully handled, eventually x-rayed, and studied in great detail, and, finally, a fully-functional replica was designed and built. Of course, it is not programmable, but it just may be one of the first examples of humankind building a device, a tool, to assist with tasks more than the mundane.

Of course, for our discussion, the device is a historical footnote at best, but it does serve to remind us of the fact that in any given human era, the limits of technology are far exceeded by the human imagination, and our talent for

ingenuity. Perhaps the Antikytherian device was a single component of a much larger Greek design—some sort of XBOX for Atlantis ... or perhaps not. Whatever the purpose for such a device—be it navigation or astronomy—the fact remains that humans have been poking around in this neck of the woods for quite a long time.

Again, you may ask—which way to the Trailer Park tea party? Soon enough, soon enough. First, however, I want to direct our attention to a meticulously detailed and well done presentation of the timeline of computers. That is, computers as we understand them today—not only as tools, but as devices that can be reconfigured for other uses as well, perhaps even—though their founding-fathers would no doubt cringe at the idea—for entertainment.

Since a thorough and exhaustive PC discussion from acorn-to-tree is beyond the scope of this humble article—as it is in the case of the consoles as well—I direct you to [Mary Bellis](#), and her [outstanding chronicle](#) of the evolution of the computer.

For now, we are going right to the heart of the matter, and into the guts of 1974 and 1975 when the first consumer-computers made an appearance. Mind you, these weren’t your everyday ‘convenient electronic device’; The Altair was a hobbyist’s dream, and a casual user’s nightmare with its switches and lights and nary a monitor in sight. The [IBM 5100](#) was another of the available hardware offerings; coming it at a whopping fifty pounds, and featuring a price of about 9,000 bucks at the low end, it wasn’t very portable, and explaining to the wife that 9,000 dollars is what it took to play an emulated version of *Pong* ... well, let’s say the 5100 had some problems to overcome as a home entertainment device—especially considering the consoles, designed for gaming, were coming in at about a hundredth of the price.



Price and heft notwithstanding, the 5100 sold. Much like the consoles, the modern day PC was a logical progression of building cool stuff, and then selling it ... over and over again. Customer disdain came much later, but in those heady days, you lived and died by your word, and your product. Quality hardware lived on to see further development, while those not able to produce the goods were quickly relegated to niche/cult status if the potential was there, or to the garbage heap if that is where it ultimately belonged. Once the consumer market opened up, notable players began to emerge, and before people knew what happened, an electronic device named after a fruit became a household name.

One of the selling points for the consumer computer was things along the lines of 'your life will be magic and easy', or 'your business will thrive and prosper' depending on the target market. But as fate would have it, people seemed to be just as interested as playing games on the computers as they were balancing the checkbook with some sort of accounting software: But, crucially, these computers were not designed for gaming, and no-one even dreamt of selling a computer in the early 1990s or late 1980s (never mind the 1970s!) as 'gaming platforms'. Though, as with everything, there were exceptions, such as the Commodore, which really was all about games ... and we are talking about strange, odd, bizarre, or just plain offensive games that, oddly

enough, never seemed to lead to multiple-shooting sprees, or other criminal behavior as is often alleged of today's more violent and controversial software offerings. Then again, it was tough to make the leap from eight bit graphics on a tiny screen to a multi-state killing rampage using the neighbor's station wagon you stole hours earlier. The games, even back in the old days, were enjoyed more for the core game play than anything else.

The graphics' insatiable days began slowly, but soon gained momentum as people wanted to become more immersed in their game play. Sure enough, as the power of the early computer increased over the years to the levels of today, the visual realism in the games have increased dramatically. Personally, I have always enjoyed simulators of some type, and if there is one thing that the PC of today does extremely well, that is simulate *something*: Airplane, submarine, race car, bus, cities, towns, Rome, you name it, the PC can simulate it, and place us happily into another world.

Getting To Grips

Although extremely brief, our discussion so far has indicated that in the case of both consoles and computers, the path from then to now was one of leapfrogging technological advances on a regular basis, and an appreciation from a segment of the overall consumer market. But that doesn't really address the issue of which system can be better suited for simulator activities, instead showing something they have in common with each other, much like every other electronic device on the planet, such as the toaster, or bug zapper. However, in tracing their geneses, one thing is immediately clear: The computer was never created for gaming, whilst consoles were created for that express purpose.

Moreover, the gaming scene in the 1980s really was about guys—and they were guys, mostly in the late teens and early twenties—sitting in their grungy basements

coding in BASIC, and creating—*literally creating*—the entire gaming industry as we know it today. That kind of creativity could only be found in the world of computers: Consoles, then and now, are things to be programmed by experts, by companies, by teams ... but not so computers. Take one example: Geoff Crammond, the man who invented the motor racing simulator for the home market. He started off life designing *Space Invaders* for the BBC (a Commodore-like computer from the late 1970s), before going on to design *REVS* for the same system. Without the computer, and the ability of guys like Crammond to design—and be able to create, without a staggering budget—games like *REVS*, it is arguable whether there would ever have been a 'motor racing simulator': For sure, were it left up to the consoles, this would never have happened since—to this day—there is not one hardcore simulator ever created for any console.

Why is that?

As an example of a simulator on a console, let us consider the case of the original [XBOX](#), and [Grand Prix Legends](#). On the box (that is, the 'game box', those hard-paper things that, once upon a time, used to contain the simulator's disks/CDs, and, yes, manuals!), *GPL* told us that a minimum rig of a Pentium 133MHz or something like that was required, along with a paltry amount of RAM. Prying open the guts of the XBOX, we are amazed to see a Pentium 733 MHz CPU, an NVIDIA GeForce 3 video card, 64 MB of RAM, and a streamlined version of Windows 2000.

I don't know about you, but I would think that the XBOX would have had little problem handling a simulator such as *Grand Prix Legends*. The system specs—which I no doubt have botched up—are leagues greater than *GPL* minimums, and most likely enough above the 'true spec' to run the thing without a hitch. I know, I know—we need to put in Direct X 8.1 of course, but the XBOX should have been able to run *GPL* without breaking a sweat.



And yet, it didn't. Because Papyrus were not willing to pay the entry price for a development kit? Or because Papyrus knew there was no active market for a hardcore simulator in console-land? Or because there would have been no Force-Feedback? Who knows—the point remains, the world of computers is where one finds the simulators, along with the greatest ideas and concepts. Except, of course, for the one that started it all—*Pong* ... but perhaps *Pong* is the quintessential console story, isn't it?

Simulators (of the console variety) on the consoles never really made an appearance on the original XBOX until near the end of the system's lifecycle with *Forza Motorsports*. Having played that particular title extensively, I was more than convinced—consoles could

do simulators justice, if developers would just take the chance. But the truth of the matter is: They won't take the chance because they know—and their marketing departments know even better—that a *netKarPro*-like sim, in console-land, would be an absolute failure. Why? Because console-land demands games that are quickly used up and thrown away—can you imagine a console-title lasting over a decade? Moreover, there are no modders in console-land, no end-user interaction: Consoles, in this regard, are passive, requiring nothing more than compliance from the end-user. It is, in this way, precisely the opposite of the computer-world: it is the difference between interaction and passive entertainment, and it is here where the computer and the console separate never to meet again ...

We are still early in the life cycle of the PS3 and XBOX 360, and it is very refreshing to see some truly dedicated simulator efforts make their way, albeit slowly, to the end user. I must honestly admit that the lack of an in car camera for *Forza 2* is damn near a tragedy, because it is without question a stellar effort. Anyway, with a wheel in front of me, and somewhat part of the front of the car I am driving on the screen, it really won't be that much of a game killer. *Forza 3*, moreover, will take the series to the next level, and offer in-car simulation to go with the brilliant 360 Hz physics model. But still ...

I haven't had enough time with the PS3 to really give much of an opinion, but damned if the gorgeous *Formula One Championship Edition* doesn't have a certain 'something' that holds my interest intensely, gamepad without rumble and all. For one thing, the sounds are bone chilling and, couple that with an amazing sense of speed, and you have a recipe for either a great time or gravel time. Just when I think I have the thing figured out, I am losing tyres and suspension parts in a flurry of incompetent driving. Feedback or not, it will definitely be a fun experience with a proper wheel hooked up, and I look forward to diving into that one very deeply: But ... still ... if it's playable on a joypad, it just isn't a simulator, is it? Let's face it—a Formula One car will never be, in reality, controllable with a gamepad, and neither will a *netKarPro* car for that matter ...

Multiplayer, too, is nowhere near as powerful, or robust, as it has become on the PC. Which is odd, considering that consoles once owned this area of gaming. *F1CE* is limited to eleven players online, and *Forza* caps out at eight, if I am not mistaken.

Not three weeks ago, I was driving the *ARCA Sim Racing* beta online with about fifteen others, and we were nowhere near the capacity of the server, or the code. The racing was lag free and smooth, something that is not always the case with XBOX Live: I have participated and

spectated a few times, and the lag seen was too prevalent to be coincidence. I wouldn't even begin to know the reasons, but though XBOX Live has millions of online customers, their gaming multiplayer, in terms of racing sims, is vastly outclassed by the net code found in *LiveForSpeed*, or *rFactor*, for example. Chalk one up for the PC—large field capable multiplayer. For some, the conversation ends here and I can't blame them as *F1CE* would be fun with an entire field, and *Forza* would absolutely rule with about forty-five cars at the 'Ring, but it can't be done, so what's the point?

I got nothin'.

If you have ever seen the *Project Gotham 3 Racing* on demo at an XBOX 360 kiosk, you may have been impressed with the incredible graphics, beautiful lighting, and in-car view. Realizing then that the cars, each of them, were sporting between 85,000 and 100,000-plus polygons apiece, you get some sense of just how many pixels a modern day console can really push. Put a field of two cars in any PC sim, each with 85,000 polygon models, and odds are the frame rate may suffer a bit.

Now, what is to say that we can't tone down those polygon numbers and increase the car count? For the PC it is a matter of necessity as you simply can't have that sort of detail in a modern day sim with its (in theory!) modern day physics engine. But for the console, what is it? Why not make a car 25,000 polygons, and have thirty-five on screen, instead of just eight? I don't know—that is why I write for free, and Bill Gates retired a gazillionaire—but I'll hazard a guess: I think it comes down to bottom line—sims are a niche market, and console games that sold in the sorts of numbers PC sims sold in would no doubt be considered market failures, no matter how brilliant they were. And, of course, there is also the market itself: PCs attract a certain segment of the market, who would willingly trade-in graphics for life-like performance. Console-players are precisely the opposite:

Or, at least, that is what the console-marketing-departments believe, judging by their priorities. And considering that the gaming industry is now larger than the movie industry—the biggest entertainment industry in the world, no less—I think it probably safe to say the marketing fellas have got it spot-on.

The PS3 F1 offering is no different. I do not know the polygon numbers on the cars, but they look wonderful, and the lighting effects are something I have yet to see on a PC. Toss in dynamic weather, damage, good AI, decent physics, and a career mode of great depth, and you have the ingredients of a good game. But is it a sim?

For my money, the consoles have a lot more 'wow' moments than pretty much any PC sim to date, in terms of graphics. Obviously, the resolution is maxing at 1980x1080p or 1280x720p on the consoles, and a PC can easily handle both of those resolutions, but it cannot deliver the same sort of visual experience, at least in terms of smoothly transitioning lighting, weather, and damage effects. Chalk one up for the console, but before our heads get too big, remember—it's *only graphics*.

Which brings us neatly to where we want to be—the driving. Much like *Forza 1* for the original XBOX seemed like a counter-punch to the ultra brilliant *Gran Turismo* of the PS2, Microsoft is out of the gate first this time with their much anticipated sequel *Forza Motorsports 2*. I have driven the demo—the MC12 is my favorite—and the developers, [Turn 10 Studios](#), have done one hell of an amazing job with these physics. With the game itself running at a steady sixty FPS, the physics engine is churning away in the background at six times that rate, 360 Hz, not to mention full damage modeling. It is also readily apparent it is not a stomp the gas and fire the machine gun type of console racer; this is a deadly serious effort. Sure, it comes loaded with aids, just like most PC sims do, but as with the PC you can shut off some, or all of them. So far, I find it incredibly well done, and the offline

experience with this one will be a month's long affair, if not years.

And I think we already know what is in the PS3's future; *Gran Turismo* (something) HD, promising to take the masterpiece that somehow ran on a PS2 and bringing it ripping and roaring into the next generation. Screens that have been posted may be marketing hype, but the in-car view looks about as photorealistic as I have ever seen, and I can't imagine the physics model getting any worse, and it was amazing on the PS2. It remains to be seen if the bumper car idiot AI and no damage at all make a return to the series. PC developers aren't the only developers who make promises and then fail to keep them time and time again ... however, the *GT* series is touted as a 'driving simulator', and if you are just driving, it does it about as good as anything else with literally hundreds of cars. And minivans.

So, let's compare them side-by-side then: The greats, *Forza Motorsports 2*, and *Gran Turismo* vs. *GPL*, and *NASCAR Racing Season 2003*. Which would you choose if you're sent to hell and have only one sim to play for the rest of eternity?

Of course, the easy way to end this is to simply take the easy way out—'...the perfect platform is a combination of both PCs and consoles' ... Sadly, not likely, since something like that doesn't exist, so I'll do the next best thing: My choice is to simply own them both ... and that is the most delightful cop-out!



AUTOSIMSPORT

Side-by-Side

Luca Betti

World Rally Championship star Luca Betti sits with Luisa Ghibaudo after his impressive showing at the Rallye of Monaco ...

LuisaGhibaudo





Luisa Ghibaudo: Can you explain the relationship between the driver and co-pilot—it is obvious that there must be a very large level of mutual trust, but it remains a fascinating interplay, and I'm curious to know how far and deeply the relationship extends ... and, can a good driver win with an average co-driver?

Luca Betti: For a driver, the presence of the co-driver is very important, and beyond that of merely dictating the notes and giving the rhythm, he is also a person who must face with the race {with the driver}. The co-driver has also to earn the respect of the driver, and to lighten the tensions in the car.



It is possible for a driver to be competitive with an average co-driver, but after some time, the co-driver makes a difference. In general, the main characteristics that makes for an ideal co-driver are experience, calm, flexibility, and for me in particular, honesty, respect, and quickness.

Luisa Ghibaudo: Could you explain why certain drivers favour certain surfaces over others ... and also, which do you favour, and why?

Luca Betti: The difference {is} the grip, and the setup of the car; in regards setup, I do not have preferences. All the surfaces have their difficulty and, as the best drivers demonstrate, we must adapt ourselves {to the surface}.

Luisa Ghibaudo: Which would be the stage or event that you would class as your best ever performance, and why?

Luca Betti: Corsica 2005, and Spain 2006, where I went off the road, but I was the faster driver.

Luisa Ghibaudo: Could you explain your preparation for a rally in terms not only your physical and mental preparation, but also how you go about preparing the setup for the car ...

Luca Betti: In physical terms, I train myself in fitness centres, I run; in terms of mental preparation, I try to unload myself from the engagements. For preparing the setup of the car, we do some tests before the rallies.

Luisa Ghibaudo: Which is your favourite rally, and why?

Luca Betti: Monte Carlo for fascination, Finland for speed and jumps, Wales for tradition.

Luisa Ghibaudo: Do you use simulated-racing as a training kit, and do you feel they could be useful in preparing both driver and co-driver?

Luca Betti: I like them a lot, but I don't have the time for it.

Luisa Ghibaudo: Could you explain the different ways in which you attack a turn on the different surfaces

Luca Betti: Each surface has its characteristics: On tarmac, you can be more abrupt, and you can attack more easily, while on surfaces with low adhesion you must be more delicate.

Luisa Ghibaudo: How did you get into rally?

Luca Betti: I started as a spectator, reading magazines about rallies, looking at websites, going to see the rallies. Then, I spoke with the drivers, and I started to race in little rallies, the ones that help the drivers. Then, I continued with more powerful cars, until I got to the International Championship.

Luisa Ghibaudo: Do your fingers get numb during a long stage?

Luca Betti: No, the main effort is a mental one.

Luisa Ghibaudo: Are you always pushing on maximum attack, or do you always keep a little bit in reserve considering the very real dangers of rally driving?

Luca Betti: Usually I keep a little bit in reserve, but I push on maximum attack if I'm fighting for an important position into a race, or into the Championship.

Luisa Ghibaudo: What has been your scariest moment in a rally car?

Luca Betti: I'm a brave driver, and I never have fear in the car!

Find more photos [here](#).

T3

Gregory Franck

The Future of Drag Racing Sims

Gregory Franck ponders the future of sim-racing's most ignored crowd: Drag Racers, who haven't had a simulator to brag about since 1998 ... and you thought you had it bad?



T3 The Future of Drag Racing Sims

continued



I think the time has finally come where simmers can feel pretty lucky about what our collective futures hold: In the next year, we should see something from *iRacing.com*, *Drivers Republic* and, hopefully, even *Racing Legends* (I still believe, do you?). I'm very excited about the prospects of these purposely-versatile sims, and if even just one of them delivers everything they promise, we will be in racing into a

new and glittering horizon. At least most of us will. Because there will still remain one group of hardcore simmers that are the most overlooked, most downtrodden but dedicated bunch in the sim-racing universe: Drag racers.

Those of us who are into drag racing sims really don't have much in our hands at the moment. Our most hallowed sim is *Burnout: Championship Drag*

Racing by Bethesda Softworks, (most notably known for their *Elder Scrolls* role playing series). *Burnout* was the first of its kind, and could be considered the *Grand Prix Legends* of drag racing sims, not only in terms of its breakthrough physics, and realism, but also in their mutual timelessness: Both were released back in 1998.

Burnout was astonishing in its depth of customization; perhaps too much so for the average sim-racer who isn't that aware of the ins-and-outs of a real drag (or race) car: All the same, the sim was put together well, and really gave you a very intense feel for this high-octane sport. It was also a relatively simple matter for beginners to find setups and car combinations online that could help them get started. Now here we are nine years later, and that game is still considered by most to be *the* authentic drag racing sim ever created.

The drag racing community has had several sims come and go in the intervening nine years, but all of those, even those by Bethesda Softworks themselves, fell short of their own publicized—and frequently lofty—goals. The two most notable sims since *Burnout* would be *IHRA: Drag Racing* (Bethesda Softworks), and *NHRA: Quarter Mile Showdown* (ValueSoft). Both are solid offerings, yet feel ... somehow unpolished. Blurry textures, buggy physics, low quality sound, all conspire to handicap them to some extent or another, leaving *Burnout*, still, as *the* King of drag racing sims, and leaving drag sim-racers—like the rest of the sim-racing community—awaiting their saviour. As it turns out, though, there is a certain amount of synergy here since our collective futures have now converged: There have been rumours that the Big Three simulators I mentioned above (that is, *iRacing.com*, *Racing Legends*, and *Drivers Republic*) have mentioned the possibility of some type of drag racing support.

T3 The Future of Drag Racing Sims

continued



Is this a blessing, or another slap in the face to the drag racing community? For drag racing to be done, it has to be done right. Blasting down the quarter mile in a 330MPH top fuel dragster can be a blast, but, let's face it, there's not a whole lot of strategy needed here. Getting good reaction times, and playing catch up to a car two seconds slower than you, and not running faster than your dial-in time, now *that* takes strategy and consistency. This form of drag racing is most commonly referred to as Bracket Racing: Two unmatched cars are set side-by-side, with the slower car getting a timed advantage. Go too slow, you lose. Go too fast, you lose. That is the nature of this sport.

Many of us want that totally immersive experience, so imagine this: You log on to a race with thirty other competitors. You see your car parked in the pits. Here you can tweak your setup. You are given a certain amount of time to make a limited amount of test passes. First come, first serve. Once the practice period is over, it's time to race. You can view the other races as you await yours. When your turn finally comes, you start your car and drive up to the 'water box'. A healthy burnout warms the tyres up. Once the smoke clears, you pull up to the stage. You and your competitor both have the pre-stage lights lit, but you each await the other before pulling forward. Finally, the other driver pulls forward, and you follow suit. He has a two second advantage. You see his lights go green first, then yours. Speeding down the track, you are slowly gaining on the other driver—you're neck-and-neck as you go through the lights at the bottom end. You've won, but it was close. That is the experience I'm hoping for.

The purpose of this article is to draw attention to the small group of hardcore drag racing sim-racers. Now, while I enjoy *NASCAR Racing 2003*, I am still on the search for that perfect drag racing sim. Unfortunately, the community of drag racers is too small for a developer to build a drag racing sim from the ground up. However; that is also the reason why a drag racing addition to one of the Big Three sims would be a great marketing strategy. In fact, these developers will be heroes if they can pull it off, because *everyone* will be covered. As it now stands, anyone who wants something bad enough will be able to make it for themselves—especially with *Drivers Republic*, and its online database of car and track 'parts'. If they can all deliver on their promises ... then the synergy will be complete, and drag racers will finally have a sim worthy of the real sport.

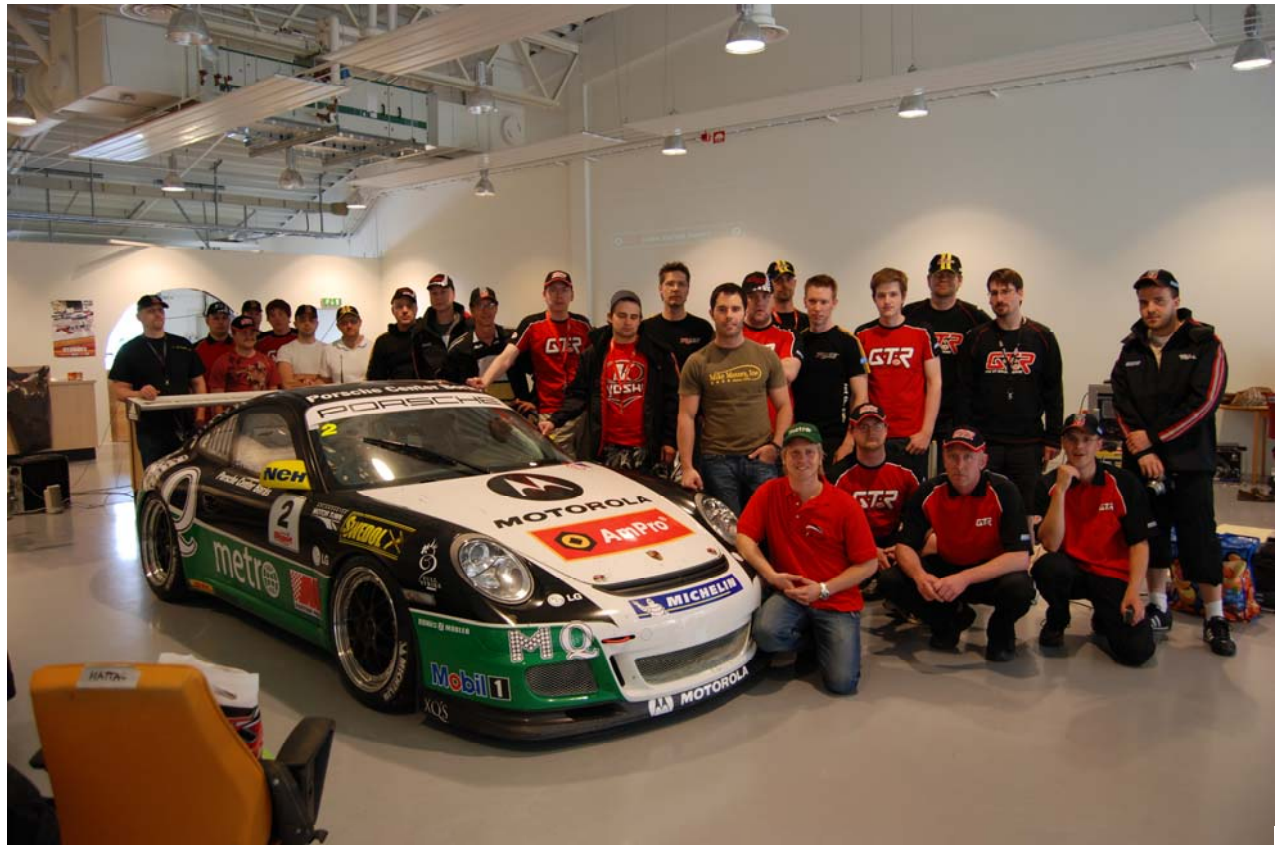
Burnout: Players Choice Edition can be downloaded from www.shra.net as well.

One Helluva LAN

T4

IvanAskew

Real-world race-star Alx Danielsson, a sizzling-hot Grand Prize, a preview demo of RACE07, and consolation prizes for everyone set the stage for this year's Swedish LAN; organized by John Sjöstrand, and Tobias Härnvi, it proved to be a real winner for everyone involved ...





Arlanda, just to the north of Stockholm, and known for its exotic car showrooms run by Arlandastad Motortown, was, on April 27–29 2007, the scene for one of sim-racing's most memorable LAN-sessions in history.

John Sjöstrand, who was responsible for the entire event—dubbed the 'Alx Virtual Racing Challenge'—guides *AUTOSIMSPORT* through some of the weekends highlight ... but first, how the hell did he manage to create such a high-profile event!

"I spoke to a motor journalist at the Swedish newspaper 'Expressen' about it," John explains. "He usually writes about racing, and he was instantly interested in the concept to the extent where 'Expressen' actually became the official media partner for the event. He then spoke to Alx Danielsson (World Series by Renault Champion) who is, of course, also a well-known sim-racer. Alx got hooked on the idea, and spoke, in turn, to Arlandastad Motortown—they're a major partner for his own racing team, Danielsson

Motorsport, which races in the Porsche Cup in Sweden—and they agreed to give us access to one of their showrooms for the LAN itself."

In fact, Danielsson liked the idea so much, he actually provided the Grand Prize for the LAN, as John explains: "A day together with him at the Swedish racetrack Mantorp Park, where the winner, later this summer, will have a day in his own car on the track, being coached by Alx. At the end of the day, Alx will also give the winner a ride around the track in his Porsche 997 race car."

And the winner? "The winner was—as expected—Roland Ehnström, who is regarded as the best sim-racer in Sweden, and one of the top sim-racer's in the world."

Sim-racing in Sweden is already widely acknowledged as a sport, alongside other motor-sports, and is part of the Swedish Automobile Federation, and along with the real-world stars came a considerable amount of column inches for the LAN, which, John says, was good for the LAN's sponsors themselves. "We were written about in newspapers on several occasions, and also mentioned on television, so the sponsors and partners for the event were hopefully pleased. In fact, the coverage for the LAN was probably more than many smaller real-world motor-sports series would ever get, and many people, I think, had their eyes opened to our sport."

With the heightened visibility of the sport comes the inevitable sponsorship, and all that this entails; "The gaming centre 'Zkillz' mailed us and offered to give away prizes to the drivers that raced. They have some Frex SimConMotion cockpits and, of course, that went well with our concept. Arlandastad Motortown also fixed a superb event room for us, in which we got mobile internet connections from telecommunication company '3' who were, incidentally, running a campaign for their mobile internet connections; they gave us a 3.6 Mb download speed, which proved very useful indeed."



The LAN was attended by twenty-five of Sweden's best sim-racers, and, since, "We were lacking some network gear, we got in contact with a computer distributor 'AH Distribution', who helped out with some of the hardware. That was very helpful," John says, adding that, "we could have accommodated up to fifty-eight sim-racers, and we hope more will come next time we organize the event."

Alx Danielsson, naturally, was the headliner for the event, and his race [Porsche](#) was one of the cars on

display at the event: The other, John says, was a, "1962 Formula Junior—a blue Lotus 22."

On the Friday evening, the LAN progressed to its Le Mans-type race where racers shared cars with one another: Later that evening, John recalls, "Alx Danielsson came by and spent a couple of hours driving and chatting with everybody: He had come straight from England, where he had been to Renault F1 for his seat fitting for his [Formula One test](#)."

So how fast was he?

"He was instantly fast, even though he drove on borrowed gear," John replies. "However, the most impressive thing was seeing his extremely fast blipping and lifting. It's not possible to get a closer look at a professional driver at work, and it was a very instructive experience." Alx, naturally, drove a Porsche at Anderstorp, which was the track to be used for the Grand Finale. Before that, though, was the 'Alx Invitational', a special event in which sim-racers were given the chance to race against the man himself.

Also present at the landmark event were developers SimBin, who provided the sim-racers in attendance with a great package of prizes: "To start with, all drivers received a copy of the sim *RACE*," says John, "as well as, a lot of caps, shirts, and jackets with *GTR*, and *RACE* branding were also on the prize table. Some additional software was also given to the top three finishers."

Alx Danielsson also enjoys a high-profile relationship with SimBin, for whom he has been testing *RACE07*, and this relationship brought the sim-racers attending a nice bonus: "During a break on Saturday, SimBin gave a public demonstration of *RACE07* as they showcased the F3000 car, and the new helmetcam," John recalls, adding that it was good fun using tear-offs. "Alx Danielsson is this year racing in the international F3000 Championship, and won the first race of the season, so who would be better to demo the sim than him? He also has had a hand in the development of its physics. *RACE07* looked very promising, and I am quite sure I will enjoy driving F3000, and Radicals when it's finished. The overall impression was very positive," John adds, "even though it was difficult to see the big changes graphics-wise compared to their current sims. The helmetcam will bring better immersion to the game, for sure."



The event's Saturday Grand Finale race also brought some other real-world drivers, such as Mini Challenge driver Jocke Mangs (who had just won the race at Hockenheim the weekend before), and F3 driver Philip Forsman, along with a raucous audience. "For Forsman," John says, "this was the first time that he had ever raced in a sim, but during the day he learned to control the car pretty well. The 'Alx Invitational' (on the Saturday) was run over two qualification heats, and one final event, all at Anderstorp with NGT cars. We had quite a crowd watching the races on a very large LG projector image on the wall. It was free attendance, and it was great having them there cheering and applauding. One is not used to that in sim-racing since we usually race from home! The 'camera' was, of course, mainly focused on Alx, and the battles he was in. Since he raced near the lead, they got a really good show. Most applause, however, were held for Roland Ehnström when he overtook Rickard Hellsten in the final turn in one of the races."

All-in-all, the LAN ran eleven races over three days, and, "It was a lot of work organizing the event, and getting sponsors and partners. The media coverage, however, was both satisfactory and also necessary. It helped to get the sponsors attention as well as ensuring we were able to give them something back. But the most important was, of course, to spread the knowledge about the competitive sport of sim-racing to those who are unaware of it. There are a few things we can do even better next time, but overall, the event was absolutely perfect!"

Keep your eyes peeled for the next installment, and make sure you get your reservation in early!."

JimineeSmith

Do We Need Chicanes?

Jiminee Smith knows why the real-world tracks employ chicanes, but wonders—what are they doing in our simulators? And why are we so painstakingly following real-world schedules and track/car combinations when we have the freedom to do what the real-world series wish they could ...





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Have you ever been watching a real race on the TV or live and wondered how much better it might be if they didn't have to worry about all those changes that have been made over the years in the name of safety and TV viewing? Now I am not suggesting for a minute that we go back to the bad old days when drivers operated without a safety net, but, equally, one of the great things about sim-racing is the ability to survive all those mistakes we make, and turn up

fresh for the next race. So that got me thinking—do we, as sim-racers, actually *need* to have chicanes in our tracks?

If we are chasing authenticity, then of course we do, but how far, precisely, should we take that? Given the limits of current technology, we can only go so far anyway if we're talking about realism, and, coupled with that is the other side of sim-racing: A sport on its own terms. So that leaves us looking for ways to get the maximum enjoyment from our

racing. And I have yet to meet anyone who can claim that chicanes do anything but spoil the show. They are the classic definition of 'necessary evil'.

The other great thing about sim-racing is that we have the freedom to create events that could never happen in real-life, employing any format we choose. We can get rid of safety cars, have our own qualifying formats, and even have our own damage sensitivity to encourage closer

racing. That is, we can use real-world physics to create our own versions of racing—which the real-world would probably do, were it not for safety and other issues which we, in sim-racing, don't actually have to consider.

I started thinking about the possibilities while doing a GP79 mod season using the tracks that GPC provided. I think they have been very well modeled, given the inherent difficulties in recreating tracks that in many cases no longer exist, but to me they were often not the most fun venues; the kerbs were often awkward, and the tracks were very bumpy, point-and-squirt-type tracks. I realize that the cars themselves—being difficult to drive—add to this, but would they not be better on some of the great tracks of the world like Bathurst, Spa, and Road America?

While racing in the season opener at Kyalami, I had the thought that maybe we would be better off modeling tracks to make things easier for ourselves. Taking Kyalami as an example; if someone were to do it from scratch, would it not be better to put in a wider pit lane with a safer entry and exit? This is not 'accurate', of course, but it would make for better racing—and it would not, surely, take away that much from the 'realism' factor. After all, this would be a compromise made for safety (sim-racing safety that is) to make up for the fact that we don't have a full-time spotter available to help us navigate narrow pit lanes, and nor do we have much peripheral vision, so anything we can do to aid a car from pulling out of the garage without being involved in a smash is a good idea ... surely?

It would be easy to take this too far, of course, and end up with something like a Codemasters's product, and I don't want to make things 'easier'—just more *fun*. Another series I have been a part of recently was called the 'Fun Cup'. It grew from an inter-forum rivalry between the Megane racers, and the V8Factor competitors.

A promotional graphic for a Logitech Premium Stereo Headset. The headset is shown in a three-quarter view, featuring a large ear cup and a flexible boom microphone. The text 'Premium Stereo Headset' is in a bold, teal font. The price '\$28.99' is in a large, red font. Below the price, it says 'with Microphone and Volume Control' in black. A yellow banner with black text says 'Free Shipping!'. At the bottom left, it says 'Manufacturers Part No. 980369'. At the bottom right is the Logitech logo. At the bottom center, it says 'find it in the AUTOSIMSHOP' in black and green. The entire graphic is enclosed in a red border.

Some tracks were chosen, and a series was on, four rounds, nothing complicated, just fun as the name suggests. And here, again, is something that would never happen in reality; can you imagine V8s at Tskuba (the venue for Round 1)? But it was that *very thing* that made the 'Fun Cup' interesting, as well as a real challenge! Simulated V8s versus simulated Meganas at a simulated track ... this is realism (the cars, the tracks) but spiced up because, well, we *can*!

Next time you are in *rFactor*, have a look in the server menu, and check-out some of the combinations to be found there, especially in the private servers. There are a few people really taking advantage of the freedom sim-racing offers, so why not take a chance and try something different, as well?

There are issues with *rFactor*, though, that makes this experimenting a lot more difficult than it should be. For a program that is supposed to be all about online play, and one that embraces racing in all its forms, it is stuck with a surprisingly rigid structure in terms of its race weekend setup. There are workarounds, of course, but these usually require a great deal of work from the race or series admins which can reduce their enjoyment of racing, and that is not the point of the exercise. I would hope that *rFactor*'s successor, and all future online racing sims, would do more to help in this area. Top Ten shootouts, compulsory pit stops, and multi-race weekends (such as heats and feature races) are common place in racing in the real-world, so they should surely be implemented in our online events, even if we choose to use them differently.

And that is what I am getting at here: Like chicanes, we do not have to follow the real-world except, surely, in its physical parameters. That is, a car that is physically identical to its real-world counterpart does not need to be raced in exactly the same places, and formats, available to the real-world because we, as sim-racers, have complete freedom to race the cars wherever, and however, we choose. The only thing that stops us is, in my opinion, a belief that 'realism' means following the same structure as the real-world series when, in point of fact, the only 'reality' most sim-racers want is a car that behaves realistically. After that, should we want to take a modern Formula One car and lap round the 'Ring (a little faster than Heidfeld's eight-minutes!), there is nothing that prevents us from doing so. (And I imagine, were it not for safety-issues, modern Formula One would probably be racing at the 'Ring anyway).

Is It Asking Too Much?

Magnus Tellbom knows what he wants—and wonders how long before Developers figure out that the competition already offer the separate components that would, when re-assembled around one product, create the world's one, all-defining simulator ...

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I am a sim-racer! That means I'm racing simulated cars in a simulated environment for one or more of several possible reasons. One such reason might be that I don't have the talent to become a real racecar driver. One other reason might be that I haven't got the budget to race in real life, and so the only available substitute is sim-racing. A third possible reason could be the fact that I'm too scared to plant my wimpy behind in a racecar and drive around a track with my hair on fire, 'cause I might just crash and end up a vegetable for the rest of my life ... That is, if I'm not instantly killed on the site of the crash. The possible reasons for becoming a sim-racer are many, but for whatever the reason, I am here, racing sims.

And whatever the reason you're racing sims, there is one thing we all share in common: You want to be able to simulate the real environment. It should be tense, with close fights, and wins and even podiums should be hard-earned, and the adrenaline should be flowing. There

should be the possibility of wrecking your car to such an extent that you can no longer continue the race. There should be the possibility of messing up pit strategies, both by you as a driver, and by the pitcrew. There should be driving related mechanical failures such as overheating or blown engines, broken suspension, and damaged aerodynamics.

That's what I want from my sim-racing experience: And that's not all ... I also want to drive all kinds of racecars with all kinds of rules and procedures, properly set to simulate the environment in the real world. If I'm racing DTM cars, I want qualifying, super pole and standing starts and two mandatory pitstops that take five-to-seven seconds unless the crew mess up. If I race WTCC, I want qualifying, rolling starts in first heat, reversed top eight, and a standing start in second heat. I want the sim to handle the rules, so the admin' doesn't have to fiddle with grids and stuff.

I also want the sim to handle the penalties. Penalties for cutting corners, penalties for hitting opponents, penalties for speeding in pitlane, penalties for this and that, and let's not forget weight penalties as well. And all this should be there as easy-to-choose option when you fire up the sim and set up the race. I do not want to fiddle with hard to understand config' files in a notepad, I want a graphical interface for these options. I want stuff to be explained to me right there in the sim. Simple buttons that say, 'This does that, and this happens if you choose that'

And even further. Because I might own a two year old computer, I also want the sim to run smooth on an older system. And I mean smooth, like at least twenty-five frames per second with a full field of cars, even if it means I have to scale down the graphics to something that looks like an 8BIT Nintendo game from the late 80s. But just as much as I want it to run smooth on an old computer, I'd like to be able to turn up the graphics so it looks photo

real if I happen to buy a new computer with the horsepower to cope with it. And of course, this should be selectable from within the sim with just the merest touch of a button, or click of the mouse.

I also want to put my own painted cars into the sim, and I want others to see this car I have painted automatically. I do not want to have to put my paint on a website and announce the download; I want to put it in a place where it's instantly available to everyone, a one time upload of my paint, and that's it. The same, of course, goes for custom suits and helmets since they should be paintable as well. The ideal would be if I paint my car, my helmet, and my suit, and the custom paints are snatched directly from my harddrive while I'm loading the track. And of course it should be protected so no one else can steal my paints and use it as their own.

Tracks and cars should be released in one version only, and the only way to distribute third party add-ons should be through a single major site that keeps an eye on everything. If someone has made track 'A', there should only be *one* track 'A', not several versions of the same track, each with its own mismatch error. The same goes for cars. Some modder makes TouringCar Series 'Q', and no one else can make that very series—that's it, done. The only reason for making a new version of anything would be that the new version is better and more up-to-date than the old one, and it will therefore replace the obsolete version, not co-exist with it. And to the user, this should be easy to spot, and if you come to a race with the wrong or old version of the track or the mod, it should auto download the correct one before you can participate.

But where in the name of [insert your favourite holiness here] can I find a sim like this? Well, to tell you the truth, it's already here, but not finished yet. And sadly, it has been split up into several sims instead of one. It's true. Almost *all* the things I've asked for above have been done, but not in one single sim. Instead, the major sims

right now stroll along side-by-side, sometimes glancing at each other, borrowing ideas, but none of them offering the complete package. And to make it even worse, the ISI engine sims (*GTR*, *GTR2*, *GTL*, *RACE*) show a lot of potential, but don't deliver, because they are always destroyed by this or that copy protection or distribution system (Starforce, Steam, etc.) which just irritates a lot of potential buyers.

All sims should go the *LiveForSpeed* way when it comes to dealing with copy protection. I know it isn't perfect, 'cause there *are* offline cracks out there, but still—the licensing system used by *LiveForSpeed* is the best thing I've seen so far. The ISI engine sims could also learn a little something from *LiveForSpeed* world and forum, 'cause the way they are all connected together with the sim is awesome. Best I've seen in a lifetime, and *rFactor*'s Racecast doesn't even come close. On the other hand, *LiveForSpeed* could use some of the stuff I've seen in *rFactor*, like proper working aerodynamic damage, mechanical failures, pit options, and strategies.

rFactor has the option of a rolling start, standing start, formation lap, you name it. *RACE* has automatic weight penalties, and reversed Top Eight grid options. The old sim *STCC 2* by Digital Illusions has hit detection along with a drive-through penalty, and *NASCAR Heat* has the penalties for cutting corners, and other off-track stuff. That's the penalties I asked for taken care off right there. *LiveForSpeed* has an auto download system for custom paints that work brilliantly. And it's easy to paint a car, while painting a car in *rFactor* means creating a folder with a bunch of files in it, and there's no auto download worth the name. Track and car versions is not a problem in *LiveForSpeed* since no third party add-ons are allowed (yet?), but in *rFactor* the only way to go is the *rFactorCentral* website: That site should have been run by ISI themselves, and not by a third party. It should also have been the *only* place where mods and tracks were

allowed to be distributed. How can you create a modder's platform, and then allow all its pieces to be scattered throughout the internet? It's senseless!

As it is now, I have given up doing pick-up races in *rFactor* simply because—on the rare occasion that I do manage to find an unlocked server with people on it—I most probably do not have that particular version of the track, car, or mod. And nine times out of ten, by the time I have located the right version of the track by digging through forum posts on three different sites (well yes, since the track is not on *rFactorCentral* 'cause it's an illegal conversion), I find that the server has switched track, and I have to do it all over again. Pick-up races in *LiveForSpeed* are easy since all tracks and cars are already there, but I'm sure that by the time mods are allowed, the auto download will cover mods and tracks as well.

LiveForSpeed has scalable graphics. I ran it with no problems at all on my old computer which was an AMD 2400+ with a simple GeForce 5200. I could go online and join any twenty-car grid and still have acceptable FPS. In *rFactor*, I get twelve FPS on the main stretch at Toban even with the graphic setting at a level so low it's a joke. Today I run an AMD Athlon64 Dual Core 5200+ CPU and a GeForce 7900GTX. I get plenty of FPS no matter what graphic options I use, but after a session with *rFactor*, the temp on the GPU is just over ninety-five degrees with the cooling fan working overtime, while in *LiveForSpeed* I never reach seventy. Still, I think *LiveForSpeed* has the better looks. Why is that? Does it have to be that way?

I haven't even mentioned changing weather, day-to-night transitions, different types of surfaces, marbles, oil and water spills, and so forth since it's an undisputed fact that no sim to date has been able to do it perfectly. Some, like *rFactor*, can do fairly good day-to-night transition, but no sim I know of can display rain with any resemblance to reality. (If you want to see what rain should look like in a sim, check out the Formula One Championship game on

the PS3). Some sims claim to have a working marbles system, but I have yet to experience this, and I have not heard of any sim that simulates oil and water spills on track with any form of success. Probably because then they would then have to implement proper flag rules.

Bottom line of this rant is simple: Everything I want is more or less already made, but not in the same sim. Why is that, and will it always be like that? I hope not, but I'm not holding my breath. In the end I find myself racing *LiveForSpeed* for all my pick-up racing needs, *NASCAR Heat*, and *rFactor* for the league races, and I don't touch *GTR*, *GTR2*, *GTL* and *RACE* with the proverbial ten foot pole just because of Starforce, Steam, and the likes. And the way things are going with *rFactor*, chances are I will not use it at all, come the day when third party add-ons are allowed for *LiveForSpeed*.



AUTOSIMSPORT

NASCAR HEAT

MagnusTellbom

Physics 101

Magnus Tellbom takes a trip to Adelaide before explaining the way physics work on NASCAR Heat: A key moment in this sim's evolution, as it opens it up to modders like never before ...





Adelaide

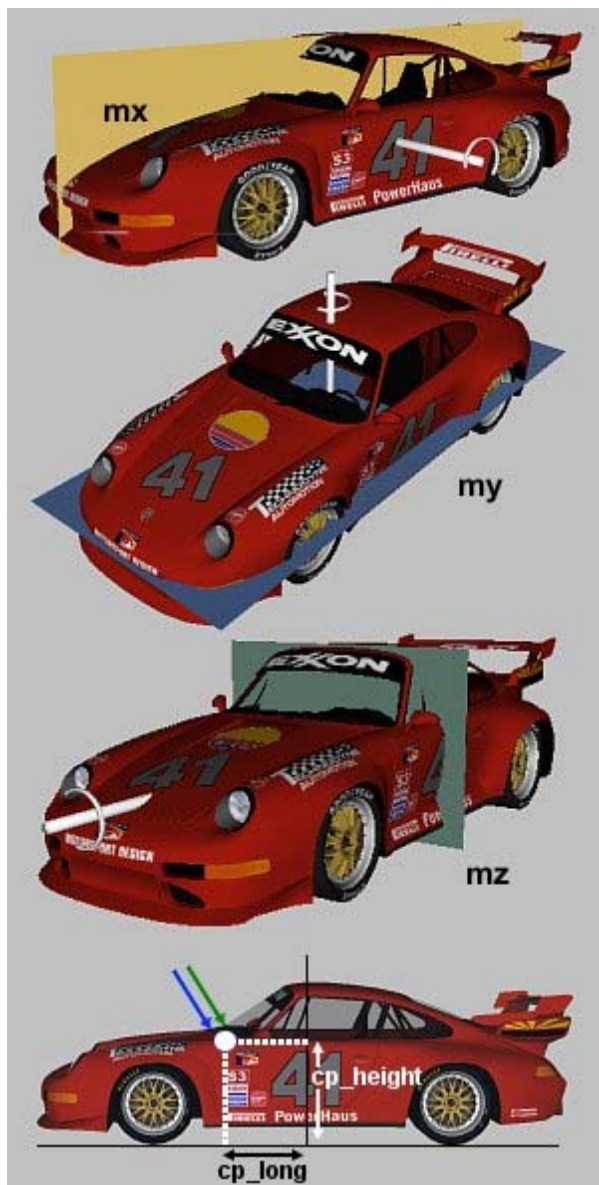
Late last year, and coming into early this spring when the racing schedule on SCORE was in the planning stages, I toyed with the idea of running a series on all Aussie tracks with Aussie cars. Sort of a themed series ... So why did I toy with the idea? Well, because one key track was missing from the schedule. True, it existed in a beta version, but that was far from finished, and rumour said that there was another, much better looking version cooking some place else. So I dug around a bit, and asked whether it was possible for this version to be completed before it was scheduled to run on the season's calendar. The answer was, 'Maybe'. Well, maybe turned into probably, and probably turned into the track itself—all ready to race, and the pics you see here have been taken from a live race with live drivers on *NASCAR Heat*.

So without any further delay, it's time to present Adelaide. Home of the Clipsal 500 in the Australian V8 Supercar Series, and probably one of the most visited motor-sport events on the planet with over 270,000(!) visitors for the main event. That's more people than live in my entire county, and a full one-quarter of the people that usually actually call Adelaide home!

The mind boggles as to where they find place to put the cars, the paddocks, the pits, and so forth. Well, they can't really fit it anywhere but on the streets, and that's why the Adelaide track becomes too bleeding narrow. You see, there is no room at all for passing, except for this one particular braking zone where you constantly gamble with death. Either you make the pass, or you brake too late and hit the barrier and possibly take your opponent with you into a huge crash. This has never bothered the Aussies, of course, 'cause they just throw out a yellow flag and keep on racing, not at all bothered by the fact that a narrow track just got even more narrow.

Now, this is the place where I could bother you with details about how big the download is, how easy it is to install, and how well the AI turned out, and just how good or bad the default setup is. But I won't, 'cause (and take my word for it) it's all good, it's worth the download, and you should just go get this and say, 'Thank you Smoke' without any further delay. The track is available at the by now infamous [Texas Speed Racing](#), and you should go there right away to pick up this stunning piece of track. Bottom line rating? Ten out of Ten—and for those who read my monthly column, you know that is a rare score indeed.

One thing though: For those unfamiliar with Adelaide, I think I should warn you right off the bat—those kerbs in the middle of the street? They're actually *supposed* to be there. I have yet to see this on any other track, street circuit or road course; they appear only at Adelaide, and they give an entire extra dimension to setting up your car, 'cause if you wanna go fast, you got to clip them on some corners, cross them on others, and stay the heck away from them at others. And judging by the comparison video I got from this year's real Super V8 race, I think Smoke put those kerbs in just the right place.



NASCAR Heat Physics Explained

Cholerix, the man behind the upcoming and much anticipated Sportscar GTS mod, has done something truly wonderful. He has given all of us the final and ultimate key needed to create our own mods for *NASCAR Heat*. On his site, www.speedsims.net, you will find an almost complete guide to physics in *NASCAR Heat*, and how to edit them, and put them into a car made for *Heat*. And all of it comes along with nice looking pictures and easy to follow explanations. It actually doesn't get any better than this.

He also made a guide on how to edit the User Interface. This might not sound like much, but there are some tips and tricks in there that any mod-maker for *Heat* really could—and should—use. But the most stunning thing about this is that, if you follow his directions, you can actually make use of the missing garage options for Toe, Ride Height, and Rear Wheel camber. Many are those who have complained about these limitations in *Heat*, but no more. As of now, you can set those values as well, all thanks to Cholerix!

Appeal for news items to post!

I do my very best to hunt down any and all news items in the NASCAR HEAT community, but I'm no search engine. Some things are bound to be missed due to lack of time, or just plain human errors. So I ask anyone with the slightest bit of news to send it to me by email. Anything newsworthy goes. Got a new site? Setting up a new league? Are you releasing a mod or a track? A new utility for the NASCAR HEAT platform? Anything at all? Just send it to me. No news is too small. And ... any news sent in will not only be posted here in AUTOSIMSPORT, but will also be posted on the main page of [SCORE](http://www.score.com).

Installing the Nascar Heat Essentials—The FREE HEAT SIMULATOR

Step 1: Download Nascar Heat Essentials from The Mod Squad. Install it in its default location (do not change installation path).

Step 2: While you are at The Mod Squad, get a copy of the Mod Launcher (Swiss Army Knife Edition) and install that as well.

Step 3: Download and install STCC_Install.zip (located here at [SCORE](http://www.score.com)). Make sure you point the installation to the right location on your harddrive. It should end up in its own folder in the Nascar Heat directory, like this: C:\Program Files\Hasbro Interactive\Nascar Heat\STCC

Step 4: Download STCC_1.3.zip and copy that to the STCC folder. Right click and select "Extract To Here". When asked if you'd like to overwrite existing files, answer YES.

Step 5: Download all the tracks you need from Texas Speed Racing. A look at the schedule in the STCC section on this site will tell you exactly what tracks you need.

Step 6: Install the tracks and make sure they end up in the right location. All tracks should be installed in the run folder in the Nascar Heat directory, like this: C:\Program Files\Hasbro Interactive\Nascar Heat\Run\

FAQ AVAILABLE [HERE](http://www.score.com):

<http://www.scoreracing.de/heathelp.html>

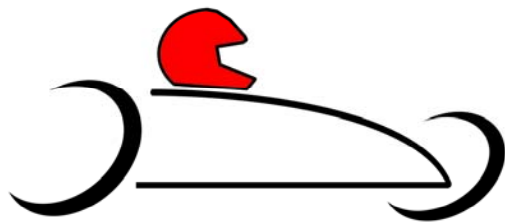
AUTOSIMSPORT

LatinHeat

CRAZY MEXICO CRAZY MAY!

GPLegacy takes motor-sports and sim-racing to new levels ... did we say again?

GPLegacy.com





International Elegance Contest 2007

Mexico's Huixquilucan Expo features some of the world's best cars along with some of the largest names to be found in the motor-sports industry. Toss in the requisite beauties of the booth and you have a recipe for a weekend of petrol-fueled enjoyment. GPLegacy's Charly Suarez-Peredo and Cristyan Elizade give us a view from these lofty heights.

Photos are courtesy of GPLegacy, Francisco Ñame, Armando Zapata, Cristyan Elizalde, Carlos Suárez-Peredo.

The success of the 2006 event, with GPLegacy receiving assistance from 'Car Magazine' Mexico, and featuring the presence of Image Space Incorporated, and Logitech, gave thousands of race fans the opportunity to give rFactor a try in one of many offered classes of racing. For the 2007 event, we had assistance from rally team Name Racing (www.nameracing.com), as well as Mitsubishi who brought the car that is to be driven by Francisco Name and Amando Zapata in the Mexican, French, and World Rally Championships during the upcoming season.

Whilst waiting for the brand new Mitsubishi Evo IX for this season, Expo Huixquilucan was already on the calendar, and this was the perfect opportunity to show people what Image Space Inc can do when they release the brutal Panoz Esperante cars. The result was amazing. The rally stages took place also with a confidential development from GPLegacy Mexico, and GPLegacy Argentina.

While we waited for the appearance of the Mitsubishi Evo IX, another part of the event was also on our minds, and proved to be the perfect place for ISI to showcase the beauty of the Panoz Esparante add-on, with some of the driving stages taking place on secret venues developed by GPLegacy Mexico, and GPLegacy Argentina.

Among the elite seen at the show, we noticed Puma, and Multipack—two of the event sponsors—keeping a close eye on the activities, as well as the occasional glance at the last two issues of AUTOSIMSPORT magazine—with enjoyment, may we add! Several very unique, beautiful, and expensive cars were at the show, including the gorgeous Mustang *Eleanor* from the movie 'Gone in 60 Seconds', several custom Ferraris, Aston Martins, and some exclusive Renault R5 Turbo editions were present as well. We were also fortunate to have a look at what is considered to be the best preserved VW Beetle in the world, and last but not least, the mighty Ferrari Enzo was on proud display.

Sometimes, at events such as these, one may find oneself no longer pumping blood through their veins, but a mixture of gasoline and methanol! For those first timers who were in attendance, the event no doubt provided them for much to think about as they experienced a bounty of some of the best the world has to offer in motor-sports. There was much to see, and the pictures are only a small fraction of what went on. Special thanks go to our very fantastic new 2007 gplegacy beehive co-workers : Bill Tillman, Lou Magyar, James Burroughs, Andrew Hughes, Fernie Prieto, DJPro Pedro Rodriguez, Toby Justus, Cliff Owens, Mike Tyler, and so many to mention to whom I'm particularly proud of working with.

GPLegacy is proud to announce a synergistic partnership with AUTOSIMSPORT, providing exclusive motor-racing news from not only expos, but from the A1GP, NASCAR, and many local classes as well. The data will be fed to the new website, currently in beta, and this partnership promises to further the enjoyment of the sport, real and simulated, for a long time to come, and, hopefully, it will provide the foundation for a legacy of skid marks carved in stone.



Time To Get Back To Our Mission—GPLegacy.

Promoting sim-racing whatever the obstacles ... It's time for you to join!

Dealing with communities from different cultures is easy when you share the same agenda, the same genuine love of the sport. However, as some would wish to have a more controlling influence, we can see difficulties arise.

At GP Legacy, we have tried to maintain a healthy and positive attitude, and through this have maintained a wonderful relationship with Image Space Incorporated and other, undisclosed, newcomers who bring great talent and experience to the table.

It has been requested of me to come 'out of the shell', so to speak. Being present at a major college in America

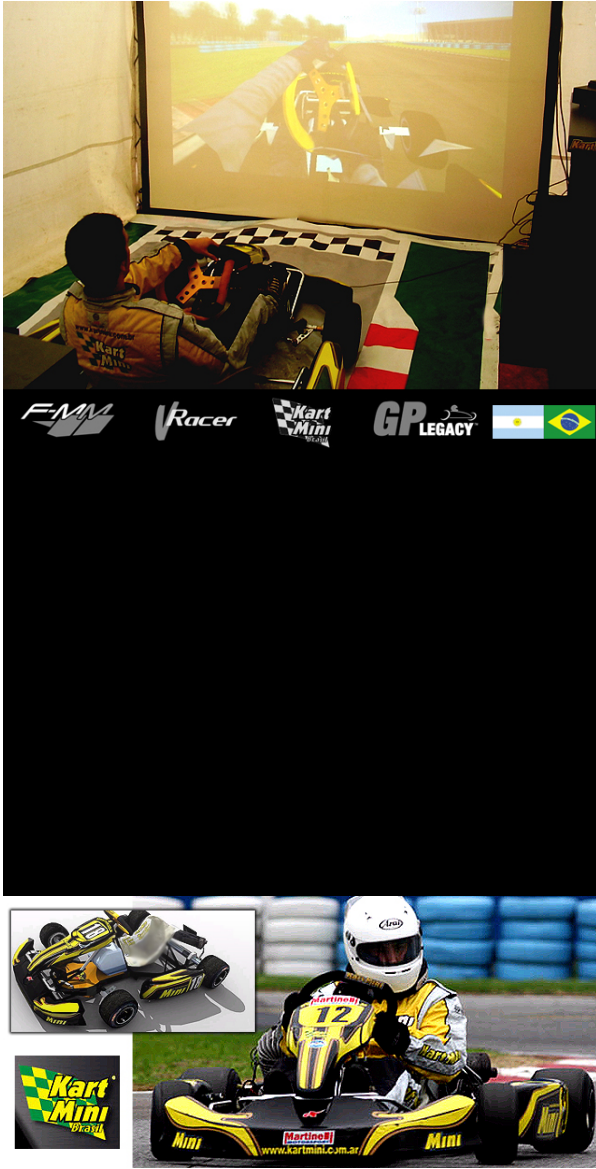
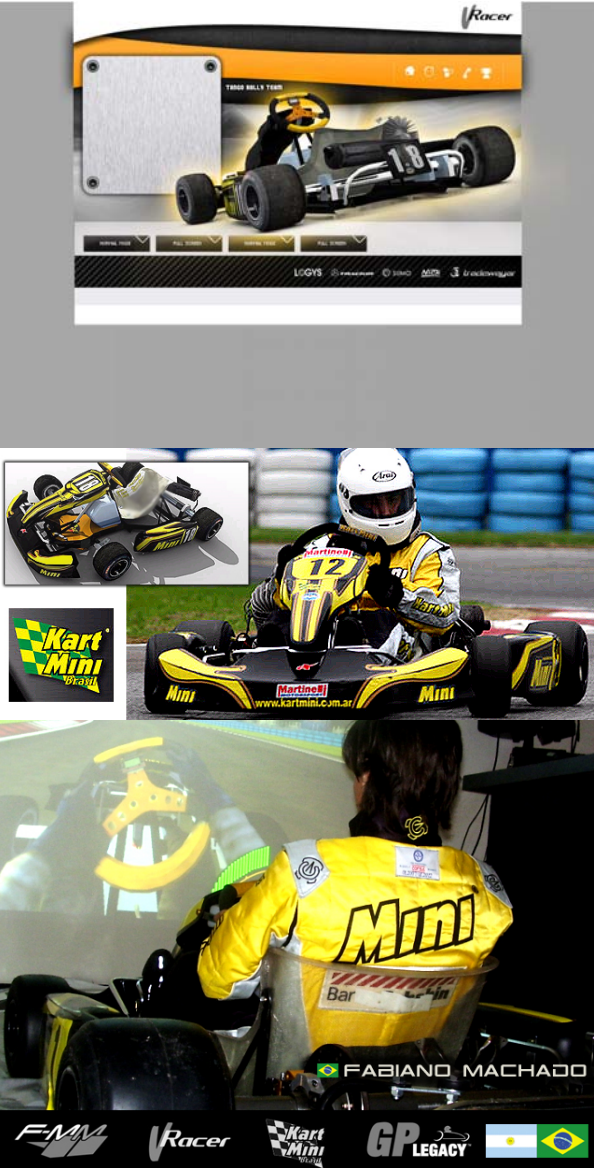
Latina and Spain UIA (Universidad Latin America) has made us aware that it's time to look for a bit of recognition of the fruits of our labor that we're doing out of pure love and personal expense, drawing out of our pockets; being leaders in the field, and giving access to tools so that new sim-racers can find a turn-key solution for the sim-racing community, team managers, drivers, and the sponsorship players.

The efforts have been difficult, placing a strain on social life and health, but I have enjoyed the process. And let me say it, we promise to not only be aware of you, but help you along in your sim-racing career should you have such a need. Altruism suits us all, and the path away from coveting is the better way.

In the past four events, we've kept more focused than ever in the training of natural talents with a huge investment for such a small company. We need your help to roll a new tarmac for the future; in the past, you have helped us keep faithful to what your dreams, goals, and legacies are, so please do what you can as we attempt to further those aspirations.

Send an e-mail to Sergio@gplegacy.com for a personal appointment; please include information regarding your expertise and what you may wish to bring to the table. Two-and-a-half years of burning our resources and pampering our providers, making sure the project is balanced in name and branding, I think you would definitely be interested in finding your potential here, not only for sim-racing, but with future hard-core plans in mind as well. Please, get in touch!

This is the second issue: I am proud to announce that our drivers' training has never been more intense in terms of road rally racing. Name Racing Team is proof of that and we should be proud of joining this project where every time Charly and Cris are stunned with what we've accomplished in such a short period of time.





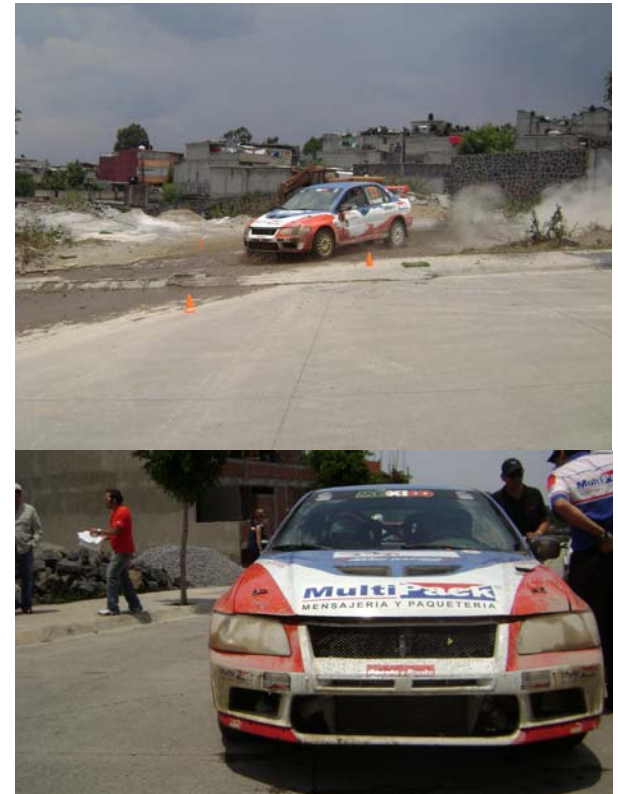
A Take On The Driving Professionals

With Rallys a big goal 2007, Carlos Suarez-Peredo and Sergio Bustamante give AUTOSIMSPORT readers a sneak-peak at what to expect on the dirt-from 2007. Photos courtesy of: www.nameracing.com , Name Racing Team, Francisco Name, Armando Zapata, Bruno Atamoros, Carlos Suarez-Peredo, Cristyan Elizalde ...

At an exclusive VIP location a short rally stage on dirt was organized to show Name Racing Team's potential to the press, sponsors, and VIP visitors.

Carlos Suarez-Peredo, and Cristyan Elizalde co-ordinated their first full-out event with GPLegacy's sim-racing experience, this time focused completely on the development for training tools for the young but professional rally team which will be participating in the National Rally Championship 2006, as well as some dates in the French Rally Championship, and which has already participated in the WRC Mexico stage at Leon Guanajuato.

We'd like to take the opportunity to thank and recognize two of GPLegacy's most talented people, who've been working in the inner rooms of our beehive, and taking the events to the field. Charly has shown all leadership qualities necessary to grant an event the exclusive experience that GPLegacy, rFactor, Logitech, Tech4Pcs, and the sim-racing spirit can provide.



GPLEGACY IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE A SYNERGISTIC PARTNERSHIP WITH AUTOSIMSPORT, PROVIDING EXCLUSIVE MOTOR-RACING NEWS FROM NOT ONLY EXPOS, BUT FROM THE A1GP, NASCAR, AND MANY LOCAL CLASSES AS WELL

AUTOSIMSPORT

Chequered Flag

RacingTimes

All the best action from the best championships and series in sim-racing ...



If you would like to see your series of league featured in these pages, please contact us at alex.martini@autosimsport.net.

Dan Does Disney

By Mark Royer, 30-Apr-2007

Lake Buena Vista, Florida

Disney World has a long repertoire of canines. There's Goofy, Pluto, the 101 Dalmations and or course, the Lady and the Tramp. Now, we can add a Wolf to the fold as HPCORS's Dan Wolf topped a star-studded Short Track ProCup field last night in the Disney 100 at Walt Disney World Speedway. The victory not only gave Wolf the checkers, but also vaulted him into the individual championship points lead and his team into the team points lead. Making it a one-two night for HPCORS was Dave Slade. Slade worked his way from the back of the pack at the opening green to the second place finishing spot during two long green flag runs.

RJ Perles of NSRS, who ran near the front all race including leading 48 laps, pulled in for the third spot while pole sitter Keith Moore of host league BumpDraftin snagged fourth. Rounding out the top five was Doug Carle, also of BumpDraftin .

Wolf, Perles and Moore each captured 5 additional championship points for leading one or more laps. Wolf added another 5 for leading the most laps, 50 of the 100 lap event. RJ Perles grabbed the 5 point 1/2-way leader bonus and Slade took the 5 hard charger points for gaining 12 positions enroute to his 2nd place finish.

Sixteen drivers made the long trip to Florida to take the green. The event was high paced and action packed. "Despite a very tricky course with some very, um..., interesting bumps here and there, the field did an awesome job keeping themselves out of trouble." said STPC Administrator Mark Royer referring to the the fact there was only one caution in the event. "This is in marked contrast to the mayhem in Minnesota." where there were no less than 16 yellows dropped.

The Short Track ProCup drivers are now looking forward to May 20th when NASCARACEPICX Weekend

Short Track Series (NWSTS) will host a night in Iowa setting off the TT Racing 150 at Iowa Speedway. But, in the meantime, it's back to the weekly circuits!

For more info, goto <http://www.stprocup.com>



Short Track ProCup Goes To Disney World

By Mark Royer, 24-April-2007

Lake Buena Vista, Florida

Mickey and Minnie will be in the back seat of the convertible pacecar, Goofy will drop the opening green flag and Snow White and the 7 dwarfs will be selling peanuts and cotton candy in the grandstands. However, amid the Disney-styled, vacation-like atmosphere will be 25-plus who mean all business, driving business, the business of winning the third Short Track ProCup (STPC) event. STPC drivers will line up for the Disney 100, the third race of the 2007 season at Walt Disney World Speedway, a unique one-mile, tri-oval in Lake Buena Vista Florida this Sunday at 9:30 PM ET.

With two races under their belts, the championship points race is red-hot. Keith Moore of BumpDraftin, the host of this Sunday's event, and Donny Moore of NSRS are locked in a dead tie for the front spot with 315 points each. A mere 12 points behind them in the third spot is Dan Wolf of HPCORS. In fact, each of the 7 participating leagues has at least one driver in the top eight, a testament to the balance of quality drivers each league brings to STPC.

Keith Moore, Administrator of host league BumpDraftin describes Walt Disney World Speedway, "It's a very fun track, like Phoenix but different. 3 completely different turns. It should be big enough to have a great 20+ car field on too." "This should be an exciting race. The track has some unusual bumps and it will support higher speeds than typical at STPC events. It will be very interesting to see how the short track drivers handle the track." added Mark Royer, STPC Administrator.

STPC runs events about once every third week. Each event is hosted by one of the participating weekly leagues and STPC works very closely with them to insure mutual benefit and greater short track awareness throughout the sim-racing community. This week's host, BumpDraftin, is a long running league that is home of the 2007 Impact Modifieds Series. In addition, BumpDraftin offers a variety of different class choices which change from time-to-time including past CUP, ASA, CTS, LM, and IROC series.

If you like short track racing and are looking for a high-paced, knuckle whitening experience check out BumpDraftin or any of the participating leagues for one that matches your schedule and needs.

For more info, goto <http://www.stprocup.com>



Formula Sim Racing Begins Its Season

By Vitor Barreto

And so it has begun. After months of preparation, the Formula Racing Challenge has hit the virtual tracks. It all started at the beginning of the month, with the first round of the FBMW league, but soon the GP2 and F1 would follow up.

On the beginning of the month, the small FBMW raced at Lime Rock Park. It was with big anticipation, as it would be the first race ever of the new Formula Racing Challenge era. The main favourites were GhostSpeed Racing Team, and Evolution Racing, but it soon would be clear that it wasn't very true. Both Hype Raceframes, and Sonic Racing Team showed they were there to challenge the top positions. The pole would go to Álvaro Parente, the only professional driver at the league, but he would not win, due to strategy errors. The same problem would take off Renan Catucci, the main contender from Evolution. The win would go to João Barbosa, from GhostSpeed. The other podium positions, would go to Gomes Silva, from Sonic Racing Team, who gave his team a podium on their debut.

The pack would follow to Laguna Seca, where the scenery would be the same. Traditional track, and once again hYPE Raceframes taking the lead. But this time it would not be Parente, but, his team mate Alexandre Caetano, to make the pole and to win the race. It was the first win ever for the Hype Raceframes team at the Formula Racing Challenge. But regularity is the base of it all, and with the second place, João Barbosa, took a comfortable lead at the drivers standings. Closing the podium was Ricardo Nogueira, from Nova Formula Racing. The pack of the wild and small FBMW cars will travel now to the UK, to challenge the Oulton Park track.

On the GP2 field, things have been more quiet, but not less competitive. Here the surprises have been less. The entry category as proven to be a good challenge, to those wanting to learn how to setup an open wheel car, and to race on long distances. The main battle here is between

GhostSpeed and Evolution Racing. At Australia, the win would go to Filipe Gonçalves, from GhostSpeed, but the rest of the podium would go to the Evolution guys. Filipe would win one more time, at Malaysia, but, this time he had company of his team mates on the podium. It would be on the next round, at Bahrain, that Evolution would strike back, by taking their first win of the year, by Hugo Nobre. With this score, Evolution put them back themselves on title contention.

But apart from all this, the big action has been happening at the F1 league. Where two races have been challenged. And although the races have been won with no surprise, by Bruno Marques, the field has been proving to be a bigger challenge, than it was previously expected.

At race one, as it would be expected, in Australia, 20 racers lined up to challenge the win, but it would be only one guy to do it. He had a easy run, so the biggest highlights happened way back in the grid, as from him, and up until the fourth place, all spots were filled by GhostSpeed Racers. The busiest group was composed by a fight between Miguel Madureira, from Virtual-Games.com Racing Team, and Xico Rocha, from SRS-ClassicJazzTeam. Both were fighting for fourth position, but late race brake problems, allowed Rui Azevedo from GhostSpeed to claim it. Miguel would have to settle for fourth and Xico with the 6th place. Behind them come Duarte Pires, from Evolution Racing, who had a lone race back in 7th, to bring to his team the first points of the season. Still not much for one of the best teams in the 2006 season. The last points position would go to Mário Esteves that in his debut managed to score for his formation, Team Multivisual Motorsport.

The Formula Racing Challenge grid would move then to Malaysia, no surprise again. But this time, it would be a more challenging race, although the winner was the same, Bruno Marques from GhostSpeed Racing Team.

The qualifying would be more disputed with new faces climbing up to the front grid. At 2nd position was

Carlos Rocha, who kept on a high the good performance from SRS-ClassicJazzTeam. Closing the Top 3 was Álvaro Parente, from Hype Raceframes. The reigning Champion, Luis Azinheira, wasn't able to get more than fourth.

The picture was more or less the same as in Australia, with several groups packing in, and fighting between them all along the race. At the front Bruno had a biggest challenge from Luis Azinheira, but this last one, had problems in his second pit stop, leaving not only Bruno comfortable, but also lost is second position, to his team mate, Rui Azevedo, who keeps scoring big, in complete opposition to his 2006 season start.

The second pack, was formed by Carlos Rocha, once again Miguel Madureira, from virtual-Games.com Racing Team, and finally the young talent from hYPE, Alexandre Caetano, who probably will challenge for podiums in a not very far future. This time Miguel would be beaten by the SRS-ClassicJazzTeam car, and finished once again in 5th, some seconds in front of Alexandre.

Behind those guys, and closing the points, finished the best rookie of the 2006 season, Filipe Santos, and finally, once again Duarte Pires that added one more point to its account. He is still the only driver from Evolution to score points, at this year's league edition. The rest of the Evolution squad, would get the following positions, from P9 to P12. Behind them, still finished Filipe Galego from Sonic Racing Team, and Nuno Lourenço from Knight Racing. The first race finish for the British team.

The league will challenge now three more rounds, at Bahrain, Spain and Monaco, where the grid order will definitely start to take shape. The big question marks are if someone will be able to rise his game, and challenge Bruno Marques for the wins, and whether if teams like Evolution Racing, and Hype Raceframes will be able to improve to the premises they set themselves before season start.

League url: www.simracingportugal.net/frc

Driver Championship			
Current driver championship standings:			
P	Driver	C	PAD
1.	Bruno Marques		20
2.	Luis Azinheira		14
3.	Rui Azevedo		13
4.	Filipe Santos		8
.	Miquel Madureira		8
6.	Carlos Rocha		5
7.	Xico Rocha		3
.	Duarte Pires		3
.	Alexandre Caetano		3
10.	Mario Esteves		1
11.	Vitor Costa		0
.	Filipe Goncalves		0
.	Nuno Lourenço		0
.	Carlos Lopez		0
.	César Mendes		0
.	Hugo Nobre		0
.	Alvaro Maia		0
.	Richard Scott		0
.	Gomes Silva		0
.	Ricardo Lopes		0
.	Maurício Machado		0
.	Filipe Galego		0
.	Fernando Porteiro		0
.	Ricardo Pimentel		0
Driver Championship			
Current driver championship standings:			
P	Driver	C	PAD
1.	Filipe Goncalves		30
2.	Nuno Abreu		13
.	Ricardo Pimentel		13
4.	Hugo Nobre		10
5.	Marco Ribeiro		9
6.	Mário Ribeiro		8
7.	Alvaro Vazquez		7
8.	Joao Oliveira		6
9.	Darran Taplin		4
10.	Rui Bessa		0
.	Chris Knight		0

Driver Championship			
Current driver championship standings:			
P	Driver	C	PAD
1.	JPC Barbosa		35
2.	Alexandre Caetano		20
3.	Vitor Enes		18
4.	Renan Cattucci		16
5.	Alvaro Maia		15
6.	Gomes Silva		12
.	Ricardo Noqueira		12
8.	Nick Lawrence		8
.	Cesar Ferrolho		8
10.	Filipe Galego		7
11.	Jorge Rocha		4
12.	Ramiro Nunes		3
13.	Berto Carvalho		2
14.	Raul Carvalho		1
.	Guilherme Marques		1
16.	Pedro Ferreira		0
.	Alex Simoes		0
.	Nuno Lourenço		0
.	Chris Knight		0
.	Sandro Costa		0
.	Vitor Jorge		0
.	Ricardo Lopes		0
.	Miquel		0
.	Zarco Castro		0
.	Roberto Quintal		0
.	Paulo Martinho		0
.	Pedro Rodrigues		0
.	José Oliveira		0
Team Championship			
Current team championship standings:			
P	Team	C	TR P
1.	GhostSpeed Racing Team		5 39
2.	Evolution Motorsports		5 23
3.	Evolution AutoSports		4 21
4.	Evolution Racing		5 11
5.	GS Racing		1 6
6.	Knight Racing		2 0
.	GhostSpeed Engineering		1 0

Team Championship			
Current team championship standings:			
P	Team	C	TR P
1.	hYPE RaceFrames		3 35
.	GS Racing		4 35
3.	Jaquar Racing		4 22
4.	Sonic Racing Team		3 19
5.	Evolution Racing		2 16
.	Evolution Motorsports		3 16
7.	Nova Formula Racing		4 12
8.	GhostSpeed Racing Team		3 3
.	ORIMAR - online racing team		3 3
10.	RCdesign		2 1
11.	Team Portugal		1 0
.	Knight Racing		1 0
.	Silver Wolf Racing		2 0
.	Areia Racing Team		4 0
.	Dragon Knight		2 0
.	GhostSpeed Engineering		2 0
Team Championship			
Current team championship standings:			
P	Team	C	TR P
1.	GhostSpeed Racing Team		4 34
2.	GhostSpeed Engineering		2 13
3.	GS Racing		4 8
.	SRS-ClassicJazzTEAM		3 8
.	Virtual-Games.com Racing Team		4 8
6.	Evolution Motorsports		3 3
.	hYPE RaceFrames		4 3
8.	Team Multivisual Motorsport		4 1
9.	Evolution Racing		3 0
.	Knight Racing		3 0
.	Apple-Maserati-BMW		3 0
.	Sonic Racing Team		4 0

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