



AUTOSIMSPORT

Volume 4 Number 1

Slidin the Sport into the Sim

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WORLD EXCLUSIVES:
FANATEC'S PORSCHE 911 WHEEL—REVIEWED
A1GP SIM—EXPOSED
KARTSIM—FIRST LOOK
ARCA SIM-RACING—FINAL RELEASE PEAK
TPSCC MOD—WE HAVE THE NEW DEMO
ANTARTIDA 3—UNVEILED



TM

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Imagine: You're probably the best sim-car designer on the planet, and some guy comes up to you and says—'Here's my cheque book, go make the best sim money can buy' ... iRacing.com is the result ... and we have the inside goods on page 19

AUTOSIMSPORT

HeadOpEd

LxMartini



Get This Wallpaper—and other beauts specially designed by GPLegacy—at our website's 'download' section!

Welcome To Volume Four...

Our fourth year together starts on rather a high: We have not one, not two, but (did I miss a number?) four world exclusives on our hands this month. Which is why those who were expecting the magazine to go live in another two weeks from now are holding our (we hope) pleasant Valentine's Day surprise.

Following on tradition, I will make my usual half-baked prediction for this year and claim that—it's going to be the best year in sim-racing, as in like, dude—ever! The year will begin with the release of *ARCA Sim Racing*, and probably end with Blimey! Games' official Ferrari sim. In between, we'll be treated to the *A1GP* sim, the *Kart Sim*, and, erm—what am I forgetting?

Oh yes, a guy by the name of Kaemmer is releasing something as well. And I for one can't wait ... which explains why volume four is fifteen days early!

Bob Simmerman

Bob Simmerman has decided to betray our organization. As many of you no doubt know by now, I made Simmerman into the (insert choice epitaph) that he is; to show his gratitude, he has decided to throw in his towel with the dodgy fellas at Sim Racing Tonight (with whom we still wait to schedule an interview—talk about busy ... but then again, they're down in Daytona this week, while I'm here in Manhattan freezing), so keep an eye out for Bob's SRT articles; they're sure to be a pleasure since Bob has a face not for radio or TV, but the internet (2.0 Yo!)

Sergio Bustamante

Sergio is one of those guys who seems to be constantly chasing some schedule, plan, or plane. Regular readers will know Sergio as the face of GPLegacy, and will therefore know that he brings to every issue some amazing tale involving (and not always in this order) glamour girls, racing boys, and gleaming simulators. Those who have been steady readers—and there are a few, I have the emails to prove it—have often asked, 'Who is that lady that always seems to be around photos featuring Sergio?'.

Well, while I can't give out phone numbers—and Sergio isn't kissing (nor telling, by all accounts)—I *can* tell you that the 'girl' in question has now signed a deal with some wrestling organization ... indeed ... not content with that, however, two of Sergio's long-time plans have come together this month, and we wish him well with both the *A1Legacy-Team Mexico* officially licensed sim (that features our very own Lou Magyar somewhere in the mix), and also a—good Lord—*bona-fide* TV gig.

Sadly for Bob, Sergio seemed none too keen to have Simmerman as the 'face' of sim-racing ...

Bits & Pieces

We have some new columns this month; we've also re-worked some of the content, opened a new shop, got rejected by wikipedia, made about \$200 last month including donations (thanks to all three of you), got downloaded over 12,500 times, tinkered a bit with the backend with the hope of getting a new website designed, started an RSS feed (if you have it, you would have seen the iRacing.com price schedule about five minutes after it went live at iRacing), and, again I forget something—oh yes, produced another sparkling magazine which, as wikipedia informed us, is not a 'notable' something-or-another ...

Ah well, there it is, many thanks to the fine guys who worked hard to keep the wiki reference up; and really, who are we to judge why a free internet website that comes with impeccable references ([like this one](#)), and fine attention to detail ([such as this one](#)), would reject us. You won't find me ranting about their decision, no sir!

Letters, Donations & Things That Make Us Happy

We now have a letters page. Please send us your thoughts so that, while we're staring at our tax returns for this year trying to explain to our loved ones how we managed to lose a few grand, we can whip them out and show the deep affection we enjoy in the community! One thing we should always remember; it isn't the size of the donation that matters, it's the fact that no-one donates at all! Enjoy the new year, and see you in the spring!

THEY'RE WATCHING
FOR DETAILS
CONTACT GREG HAGLUND

Gentlemen Start Your Engines!



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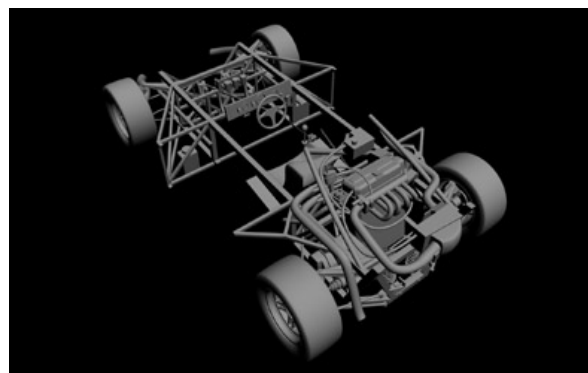


AUTOSIMSPORT News

**Got Milk? ... Got
Juice?**
Then send it to us!



SCCA Club Racers To Compete For iRacing.com Cup: Drivers In All Classes And Divisions Eligible For 2008 Awards *iRacing.com*



By precisely determining the location and mass of each significant component of the Spec Racer Ford and accurately measuring all suspension geometry, iRacing.com's digital model of the car will perform in the simulation exactly as it does in the physical world.

SAN ANTONIO, TX. (February 9, 2008) Sports Car Club of America, Inc. and iRacing.com Motorsport Simulations today announced the iRacing.com Cup, a season-long contingency program that will crown a single champion among the more than 5,000 licensed SCCA national racers across the country. The program, which spans all of the Club's nine geographic divisions and all 30 competition classes, will award more than \$20,000 in cash and merchandise, including \$3,000 and a professional-grade racing simulator to the winner.

"iRacing.com's new motorsport simulation software is one of the most innovative products coming on the market, something that actually helps a driver develop his or her skill behind the wheel, and we're excited to announce the first part of what we expect will become a multi-faceted relationship," said Eric Prill, SCCA vice president of marketing & communications. "The new iRacing.com Cup gives drivers an opportunity to see how

they stack up against everyone else across the country, regardless of their competition class. The inaugural iRacing.com Cup Champion will have accomplished something very special in 2008."

Prill, speaking at the Club's national convention in San Antonio, Texas, explained that drivers who register for the program will accrue points for race finishes in accordance with the regular SCCA national points system. To equalize the effects of class size, program participants will be awarded one bonus point for each starter (in the same class) listed behind them in the final race results, with a maximum of 10 bonus points per race. A driver's best six results in regular-season races will count toward the Cup.

Even more points are at stake at the SCCA National Championship Runoffs(r), with double base points for the top nine finishers and no limit on bonus points. Throughout the season, competitors and fans will be able to follow the chase for the iRacing.com Cup with regular updates on www.iRacing.com. Contingency registration information is available at SCCA.com under the Club Racing header. Points will be awarded retroactively to drivers that have already begun their racing seasons. Drivers must register for the program to participate.

"This program carries with it some great cash and prizes, but I think the bragging rights may be the best motivation of all," said Scott McKee, iRacing.com vice president of marketing and an SCCA-licensed racer. "We don't expect the winner of the iRacing.com Cup to be determined until the conclusion of the 2008 Runoffs in October, but whoever wins will go home with a serious ego boost!"

In addition to the contingency program, Prill and McKee also announced the inclusion of the SCCA Enterprises Spec Racer [Ford vehicle](#) in the iRacing.com simulation service.

"No one ever gets enough seat time," said McKee. "Our simulation software has been designed with people like the SCCA Club racers in mind, to provide a truly beneficial training tool and a way to go racing when you

can't get to the track. It only makes sense that we would model the Club's most popular racecar."

With the Spec Racer [Ford](#), SCCA joins a growing list of iRacing.com partners that already includes more than 60 racing facilities and a variety of both road- and oval-track racing machinery. iRacing.com's racing simulation service is expected to launch later this spring.

Race2Play Announces Sanctioned Championships Of Online Auto Racing

Race2Play



The most sought-after competition of 2008 will take place in the final weeks of the year at Race2Play: The first annual Championships of Online Auto Racing presented by the National Auto Sport Association to crown and recognize the best in the disciplines of Sports Car, Open Wheel, Touring Car and Stock Car online auto racing!

In a unique playoff series format introduced by Race2Play, qualified competitors will have to prove their mettle in not just one car, one track, one sim, but in multiple cars, tracks and sims for a given racing discipline. The 'equipment' of modern online auto racing is greater than just one platform, and so will be the test of mastery for online Sports Car, Open Wheel, Touring Car and Stock Car racers.

Race2Play is the world's largest online auto racing organization. It conducts more than 100 sanctioned events each month, supporting unrestricted access to more than 150 car types and 250 track layouts across multiple racing platforms and disciplines. Race2Play is the only such organization recognized by a real-world motorsport body, the National Auto Sport Association.

Last year, Race2Play hosted more than 18,000 entries from drivers in more than fifty countries. To qualify for the Championships and compete at year's end is an

opportunity unrivaled in the world of organized sim racing ... To win truly is to earn the title of World Champion of Online Auto Racing!

All events in the playoff series will be conducted by live Stewards and broadcast across the World Wide Web. Thousands of dollars in sponsorship prizes will be awarded.

For more details on the Championships of Online Auto Racing and qualifying conditions see [this website](#).

CXC Simulations Announce A New Plugin

CXC Simulations



A new plugin pack that adds all sorts of new features and games to CXC's list has been released. Some of the main features are as follows:

- Easy to install exe file
- Automatic Game plugin installation
- Automatic Firmware Updates
- Adds Stall Warning
- Adds Pit Speed Limiter Warning
- Adds GTR, GTR2, GTL, NR2003 and ARCA computability
- Integrated Test Utility
- User Configurable Profiles

AUTOSIMSPORT Get Some Publicity As RC Motorsports Put Us On The Race Map!

Richard Courtenay Smith

RC Motorsports put on a great show when they crossed the chequered flag to win both classes, LMP1 and GT1, in the 2007 New Year's Enduro at Road America.

Daniel Smektala took Pole in the LMP1 class, in his '#7 AUTOSIMSPORT' Audi R8 for Team RCM, and shared a brilliant drive in the eleven hours with alien co-driver Klaus Kaag of Denmark. Some intense fights with Team KR3W didn't stop them from claiming a well deserved victory!



In GT1, Kevin Brents took Pole (as usual), in his '#3 Natural Point' Corvette C6.R for Team RCM, and led the field with Steve Rousseau and team owner Courtenay Smith for the entire eleven hours. Dominating victory for those three, who are now three for three in GT1 Endurance race wins.

The other LMP1 Audi R8 for Team RCM, the '#8 CXC Simulations' Audi R8 car, started out well with Swede Fredrik Arbegard taking sixth place on the grid, and holding it steady in his first stint. The #8 Audi R8 car was running fifth in the LMP1 class with help from JT Ninja, Luis Soria, and Tony Rice, before, in the last hour, running out of fuel on the backstraight, and finishing P5 in LMP1.

We'd like to thank our great sponsors, Natural Point maker of the TrackIR 4 Pro, AUTOSIMSPORT with their magazine, and CXC Simulations with their Logitech G25 SLI Shift Light Indicator, for their continued support for our team, and their great products.



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BMW 320 E21

Eliot Earle

This exec-mobile from the 1980s, tuned-out and fully body-kitted-up, is my favourite *rFactor* tin-top of the moment. This generation of vehicle was around from 1975 to 1983, and I'm guessing these are a post-1979 6 cylinder model.

The mod has an impressive roster of vehicles to choose from, with each team running one of three slick tyres: Michelin, Pirelli, or Dunlop. The only difference between the tyres, though, is the name; the performance and wear of each is identical.

Setup options are fairly limited: Break Balance, Duct and Strength, Steering Lock, Tyre Pressures, Camber,

Gearings, Wings, Radiator, Max Revs, Fuel Load, Diff Preload, and ARBs on/off are all you get to play with. But that's plenty to get tweaking, and it keeps the field pretty evenly matched. You really can just jump into one and be halfway towards competitive without any changes at all. Saying that, after a few laps you will have a good idea as to what you will want to change. In my mind, this makes them perfect for pick-up races and leagues alike.

They somehow feel more alive than any other car out there. My only criticism about the feel of the car is the poor showing they get with RealFeel. However, they feel just great with stock ISI Force-Feedback. They don't fall to pieces at the slightest knock, either, so good physical hard racing is possible.

The sounds are more edgy than a lot of other cars, and this goes a long way to immersing you into the car, and adds a whole lot to the thrill of racing them.

The handling is fantastic. Throw them into corners, catch the slide as the back tries to come round on you, get the power down early and hard with a bit of tyre spin; these cars will let you do all that, and will make you grin like the Cheshire Cat as you do it. Keep it smooth for the faster lap times, and to preserve the tyres, but nobody ever overtook anyone else like that, or kept a faster driver behind them.

Some *rFactor* mods will just flip out on you, giving you almost no chance to catch it, but not these things; you get plenty of warning that the car is trying to kill you, and you can sedate the thing a little to survive the experience without losing a whole bunch of time—or drive—in the process.

The power band seems to be wide enough to allow you can opt to run using only five of your six available gears, even at a track like Mills GP with its long straight and fast, 'flowy' bits.

V1.01 has just been released, which is a minor version bump to fix some graphic bugs and performance issues. I can't wait until we race these at Rouen in a few weeks. Get it, as always, at [rFactorCentral](http://rFactorCentral.com).





Inspired By The Danish Twenty-Four Hour Races, And VLN, The Swedish Sim-Racers Are Organizing The World's First Twenty-Four Hour LAN Event In Stockholm

John Sjöstrand, Tobias Härnvi, and Fredrik Lestrup

International teams and drivers are invited to join the Swedish contingent featuring real-world drivers such as [Fredrik Lestrup](#) who will be competing in this event.

We are also offering special arrangements regarding payments of starting fees, if necessary. Also, if you need a ride from the airport, ask in the forum if someone can help you out!

The date for the weekend is: March (7)-8-9 2008.

The track will be the legendary [Nordschleife](#) VLN-layout.

We are on site from 16:00 on Friday, March 7, to welcome you. At 20:00, we will have some fun races as warmup. On Saturday, March 8, we start connecting the computers that haven't yet been fixed, and have a free practice until 10:00. We will then qualify before lunch,

and at 14:00 the twenty0-four race will begin!. The race will end at 14:00 on Sunday 9 March.

Do you have what it takes?

We have access to network and servers, plus chairs and tables. Network will be 10/100mbit TP. Teams must have their own computers with correct software, steering wheel, power chords, and six-way power extensions. Bring your own network cables!

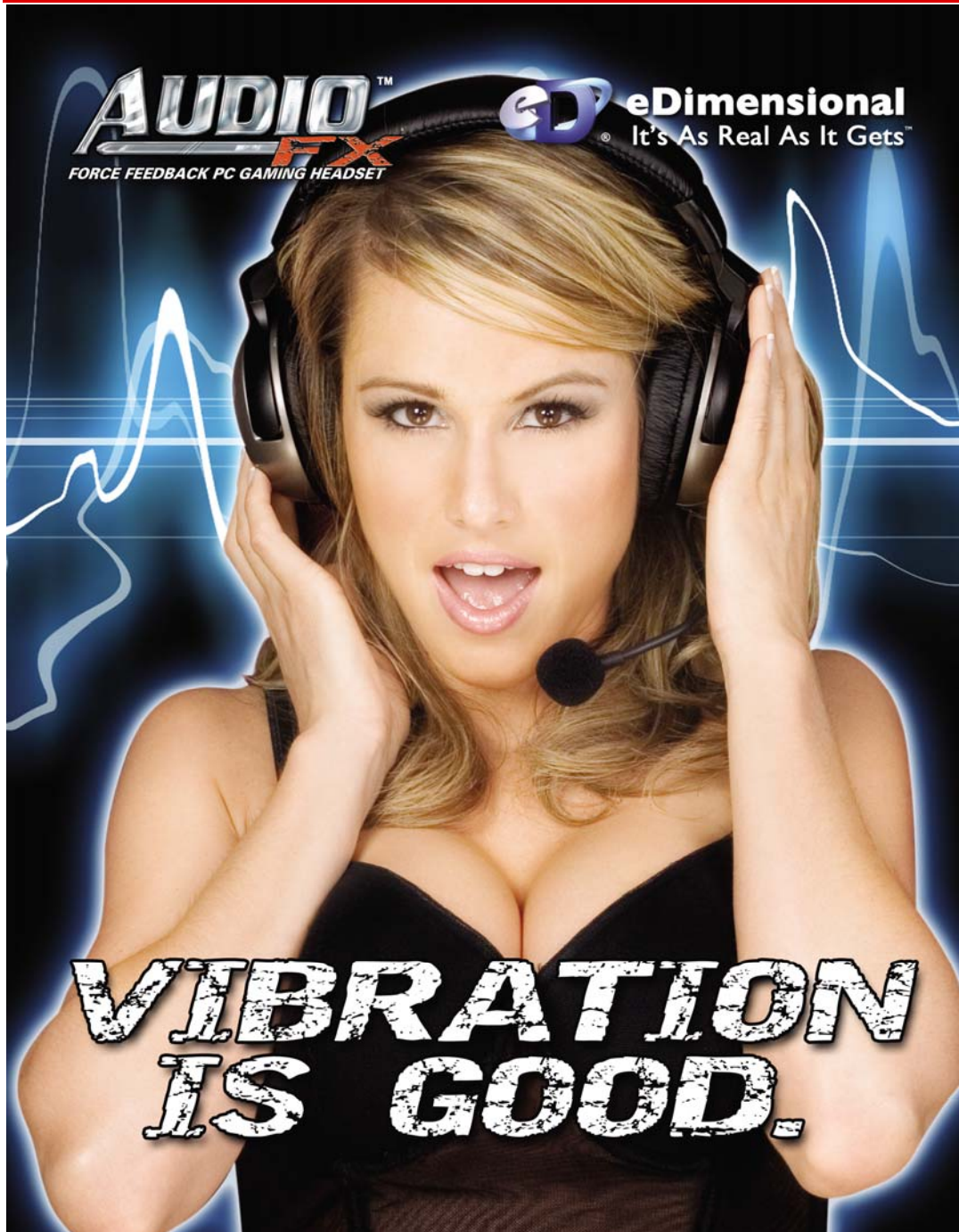
You will also need some lights for the cockpit, as it will be dark during the night. Some flashlights may also be good in case you need to do service on the cockpit. An extra computer is permitted for the pit-wall, and Telemetri and Teamspeak will be premitted. The only way to communicate with the driver in the cockpit will be via Teamspeak, or pit board. Headsets are therefore also necessary.

Teams must be signed up, and [car selections](#) finalized, by Friday February 22, 2008.

To find out more, see our [website](#), and we'll see you in Stockholm for this unique event!







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**COMMENT**

Spadge Fromley

Our Wiked Experience

About the most exciting thing to have happened to us—as a magazine—in recent times is our brush with a Wiki stepmother. Apparently we are not notable enough for inclusion, which is why about 12,000 of you aren't reading this. What irony; but not quite as ironic as the fact that no-one actually bothers reading this page! I keep telling Herr Martini that my comments page ought to be virtually printed on thin, soft, and absorbent paper.

Anyway, if any of you out there want to help ensure that our page is not 'swat down' like the irritating bug that is most assuredly it is, please feel free to head over to the Wikipedia and add all your favourite AUTOSIMSPORT-related tales. Just don't mention the 'Minge Issue' ...

You'd think a magazine would be able to find someone who could write a wiki entry, right? Wrong.

My Favourite Recent rFactor Mod

Have you tried those BMW 320 E21s? As I write this, I am looking forward to running a one hour race in them in about two hours—I seriously can't wait! They are such great fun to drive. It's the only thing that's got my face out of that damned *Knighthood* game all week.

TV Is King

One of our writers, Bob Simmerman, recently modelled a retro-look Honda race leather jacket on the popular web-

broadcast fashion show 'Sim Racing Tonight'. I think there was also some tree-hugging involved. Certainly not a lot in the way of keeping a car on the black stuff, anyway. Bob promises to sport his Hoff-signed authentic Baywatch orange Speedos in the next episode if enough people write in to the AUTOSIMSPORT forum and beg. Although I hear some German lobby-group from near Nürburg may want to talk to him about cruelty to a 1955 Mercedes F1 car, so he may not be available.

RACER F1 Season

In case you were wondering how my team did in the F1 mini-season I wrote about last issue ... One of my drivers, Theo Gort, won the Drivers' title, and FTW finished second in the Constructors' Championship. I would just like to say 'congrats' to those McLaren peeps, and 'thanks' to everyone who took part, not just in my team (Mike Fertitta, Kevin Going, Theo Gort), although I love them the best. It was great seeing a full F1 grid every race, and some fantastic racing too! Roll on next season!

Place Your Bets!

Which will be released first: NAGT mod, *rFactor2*, *Duke Nuke'Em Forever*, or Britney Spears? Come on guys and gals, we're gagging for it here!

RFC Comments

Is it just me, or is anyone else getting the feeling that the comments section of rFactor Central has reached critical

mass; where the comments are no longer useful but just noise? The sort of noise usually reserved for the RaceSimZilla forums. Just a heads up, kids: it takes a group of modders an awful lot of time to put something out there for you to download and use freely. So maybe you could spend even just a tiny fraction of a percent of that time thinking about what you are going to say when writing your comments to the site. Then we may see some actual signal poking its head above the noise.

I agree that it's nice to say 'thanks' to the people providing you with cars and tracks, and I dunno, maybe that's what the comments section is actually best for. Then we could perhaps move bug reports to a place where the devs may actually see it, and all the whiney bitching that seems to follow sim-racers wherever they go, like Mary's little lamb, could be easier to spot by the site admins and just deleted summarily. But hang on, was Mary's little lamb summarily executed?

God, I'm starting to sound like what I hate the most: Alex Martini RaceSimZilla.

So to keep this column bitterness-neutral, I should also add a MASSIVE 'THANKS' to everyone who has released anything for free to this community ever, but especially recently—you're the people who keep the rest of us with something worth doing. And top of that list this month may well be VLM: As if releasing Les Essarts wasn't enough, those crazy guys have just released V1.10 of Le Mans, adding the 1977 layout. If ever there was a must-have, then this is it.

AUTOSIMSPORT

Dear Sir,

I would like to inform you, having read the pathetic tirades against Vodafone McLaren Mercedes, Matt Bishop, and Jackie Stewart which appear on page 5 of AUTOSIMSPORT Volume 3, Issue 6, that I shall not be wasting my time downloading or reading your publication in the future.

Regards, J. R. Bourke

Dearest Jon Denton ,

I really love pretending to race pretend cars with other pretend cars on a pretend race track.

Should I see a doctor?

Stay Black, Matt Seymour

Dear Sir,

I would like to congratulate Bob Simmerman on routinely providing great copy in this magazine. I suspect his work goes largely unrewarded, which makes the high quality and huge quantity of his work all the more impressive. Mr Simmerman is a credit to this community and I feel honoured to read his work in AUTOSIMSPORT every month (or thereabouts!). Here's to SmokinBob, a legend in his own lifetime.

Yours, Omar Niliphi

Dear Sir,

Whilst reading Jon Denton's review of *RACE07* I was suddenly struck with a terrible thought. I had left the gas on.

However, I turned it off and continued reading. Denton's review, along with the excellent review by Bob Simmerman, were refreshing to read; it is good to hear reviewers tell it like it is for a change.

Though it did seem odd that there were two reviews of the same software, I can only presume that the editor is an insufferable oaf.

Cheers, Dom Duhan, London

FORCE-FEEDBACK

Dear Sir,

I would like to suggest that Alex Martini is no longer given the opportunity offer editorial for your magazine. This is mainly because he uses it as a launchpad for pushing his warped political ideas on the world, and then adds in offensive bile aimed at whomever he has decided he does not like that week. Stick to the topic! I'd have thought that was the first thing they taught in Journalism school. Oh, but wait, you're a free internet ezine. 'nuff said!

Lenny Bridgehampton, USA

Dear Sir,

Whilst perusing last month's issues of AUTOSIMSPORT, I came to the realisation that I had been reading this magazine for three years and that it's rather good.

So, I thought I would drop you guys a note (as that was easier than donating any money!) to congratulate you on the gargantuan effort of putting a magazine out the door on a shoestring that we all get to enjoy time and time again. The writing really is superb, and your articles are routinely better than the work I read in the printed press.

It is wonderful to have a magazine that provides such deep insight into my favourite hobby. I really don't know what I would do without it.

Hats off! Peter Worthy

Dear Sir,

Is sim-racing really coming to this? There was one title released last year in total, and it was an EA-like yearly re-hash of a title that was released in 2006. It also had the worst name any racing sim has ever had, maybe the next title will be imaginatively named *RACER!*

It makes me weep to think that during the passing years our favourite genre is in a slow decline. Or is it? I am now hoping 2008 will be the year of the racing sim, what with iRacing coming, Blimey's Ferrari sim, and Simbin's next release of *RACE* with a new physics engine we may well see a year of non stop, heart pounding virtual motorsport.

Here's hoping!

Francis McKnight



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T1

JONDENTON



iRacing.com Announce: **Revolution**

Jon Denton sat down with Scott McKee, Vice-President of Marketing at iRacing.com, to discover what the 'next generation of racing' entails ... MMORS, anyone? ...



T1 iRacing.com Announce: Revolution

continued





iRacing.com Pricing Structure

Subscription:
1 year subscription: \$13 (\$156 per year)
6 month subscription: \$15 or (\$90 for 6 months)
3 month subscription: \$17 or (\$51 for 3 months)
1 month trial: \$20

Additional Charges:
Per car: \$15
Per track \$15-\$25
3 cars or tracks: 10% discount
6 cars or tracks: 20% discount

There are only two; in the evolution of commercial simulators, only two names may be cited as having *created* and verifiably *defined* the genre: Geoff Crammond, and Dave Kaemmer—and in that order. Crammond's *REVS*, and Kaemmer's *NASCAR Racing 2003* stand as idyllic book-ends to simulated racing, and one need only start with the former (the creation) and end with the latter (the definition) to gauge the history of our sport. In between, both men built the foundations of this community, with Crammond's *Grand Prix 2*, and Kaemmer's sublime, and perfectly conceived, *Grand Prix Legends* standing as jaw-dropping, genre-defining moments of diaphanous luminosity. Or, if you will, just bloody 'awesome'.

By the start of 2003, though, after two decades at the cutting-edge of PC game creation, both men had left the scene (amazingly, virtually at the same time), with Crammond vanishing into a netherworld which has, to this day, consumed him whole, and Dave Kaemmer—whose Papyrus Design Group were mercilessly shut-down by Vivendi—into the welcoming arms of John W. Henry (the

'W' is to distinguish him from that *other* John Henry who, it is said, died whist trying—successfully—to prove that a man was stronger than a machine ... go figure ...), futures and foreign exchange trading advisor, Red Sox franchise principal owner, co-owner of Roush Fenway Racing, and just the wrong side of being a billionaire as doesn't actually matter (Boston Magazine estimates his wealth is somewhere around the \$800 million range).

But back to Kaemmer and Crammond: Have we noticed their absence? Let's take a look at what sim-racing has offered since 2003: *GTR2*'s Live Track, *nKPRO*'s ambitious (and still, sadly, un-patched and flawed) attempt at drop-kicking the genre into the new century, *rFactor*'s highly-successful sandbox platform, *Live For Speed*'s wondrous stats-and-community-based service: Of note, in terms of technical improvements, would also be *rFactor* and *Live For Speed*'s netcode. And that, chaps, is the entirety of the fat lady's repertoire.

In terms of substance, what we have today, in our hands, is nothing more than what was conceived (and pretty-much perfected) by Crammond and Kaemmer over a decade ago. Modding? Take a look at *Grand Prix Legends*, ten years on and still going strong. Netcode? Doesn't get much better than *NASCAR Racing 2003*, even to this day. Physics? There is a reason why the NASCAR good ol' boys are still running *N2003*.

But what makes it even more remarkable is that *N2003* was coded—basically in the box ready to be shipped—at the end of 2002. Minimum specs? Don't laugh: Processor: 450 MHz Pentium II; Memory: 64 MB.

Shall we compare to *RACE07*, the latest in-a-box simulator? Processor: 1.7 GHz Intel Pentium 4; Memory: 512 MB. So, you ask, what more does *RACE07* offer (for a processor four times as fast as what *NASCAR Racing 2003* needed)? If your answer is, pretty little (certainly not a better netcode, and certainly not anything that far removed, in terms of physics, or graphics, from what

Papyrus were creating six years ago), then you come to understand the point I'm making; despite the quadrupling of processing power, our sims remain—to this day—at fundamentally the same level as when Papyrus left the scene. Why? Perhaps because the rest have spent the last half decade playing catch-up ... or perhaps because the ability to create something as astonishing as *Grand Prix Legends* is reserved for only the very gifted few: Whatever the case, one thing I can say with absolute certainty is this—the last time any of us bought a simulator, loaded it up, got on the track and thought, 'Oh my, what *is* this?', was, without much debate, *Grand Prix Legends*, ten long years ago.

Excellence: for its time, its place, its space. That, ultimately, was what we expected from Papyrus, didn't we? When they released, we knew we'd have something special, right out of the box—it was like waiting for the new Scorsese movie; whatever the subject, you knew it would be a treat because an artist was at work ...

And then we talk about destiny. Professional destiny, that is. What were the chances that either Kaemmer or Crammond, after 2002, would create another sim? After all, both were at the crest of their professions, creating high-end, boxed, licensed products of the biggest racing series on earth: Formula One and NASCAR. Neither, we knew, would settle for anything minor; it would be anathema, like Scorsese directing an episode of "Law & Order".

And then came destiny: John W. Henry, and iRacing.com. Love him or hate him, one thing even Kaemmer's greatest detractors cannot take away from the man is his ambition, a fire to constantly push the genre forward. In his work is reflected our passion, *our* desire. He may not always get it right—in fact, some even suggest he got it very wrong with *Grand Prix Legends*—but that doesn't detract from what the man has achieved; or, more accurately, from what he has attempted.

T1 iRacing.com Announce: Revolution

continued



Plus, at launch, we'll have a minimum of six cars, divided evenly between road racing and oval track racing, and we'll have nineteen tracks, with a total forty-six configurations, available as added content.

Whether we agree or disagree with where he wants sim-racing to be, we cannot fault him for the desire to transcend the status quo: And more than that, we cannot fault his 'feel'—that innate and God-given ability to be able to translate the essence, the *soul* of motor racing into a series of numbers that magically evokes the sport to us, behind a screen with nothing more than two dimensions. It is immediately obvious to anyone who has sat down and fired up a Papy sim—that very first moment where you feel yourself transported *into* the sim—that we are in the land of an artist here. Truly, I would challenge anyone to find any sim that is as immersive as *Grand Prix Legends*; the aesthetic of that sim is just so evocatively tied-in to the time and place; all of it is so ... *right*; place, setting and sound—*mood*: *Grand Prix Legends* probably remains the closest we have yet arrived to a simulator that is at once game, *and* art, in its purest sense—that is, where the aesthetic meets the subject in a way that makes us, the audience, respond in the same way as gear-heads respond to the sound of a V10 screaming down Indy's mainstraight, not the eyes or the ears but with the *gut*.

And all of this came to an end in May of 2003 when Papyrus shut their doors one final time, bringing the curtain down (yes, a mixed metaphor!) on thirteen years of genre-defining brilliance. It was, for many, like reading of the death of a favourite author; there were no more tomorrows, no more anticipating what comes next, no more certainty that tomorrow, in sim-racing, would be better than today. In fact, come the end of 2003, most sim-racers were certain we had just seen the final great moments of the genre; without Crammond and Kaemmer, the future, we knew, would never live up to its promise. We had lost our artists.

Cue professional destiny. Cue (for better or worse) the future of simulated-racing: Pay-to-Play. Kaemmer's back, and his first words have resounded throughout the community: Pay-to-Play, within a 'world' that is best described as MMORS (Massively Multiplayer Online Racing Simulator) is here, courtesy of the nucleus that once formed Papyrus, and bankrolled by John W. Henry.

Welcome to Kaemmer's next revolution. And let's none of us be under any illusion here: With SimBin on its way to the land of consoles along with Blimey!Games; with ISI's code showing its age, and the privateers being snapped up by the big-hitters (*nKPRO*'s Stefano Casillo at BRD, Eero Piitulainen at Blimey, and even modders like Renato {GP79} Simioni at SimBin); with the rest of the independents having to create simulators that take a team in the dozens years to develop, the future is coming in much as it did for the flight-sim genre sometime last century: One big fish is in town, and whether they intend to eat the rest of the fish in the bowl or not, what is for sure is this: No-one in this genre has the capital that iRacing does, and no-one has the pedigree of Kaemmer and his Papyrus team. These are giants, and in their footsteps the rest have followed for twenty years. Which makes their future sim-racing's future: Be that win ... or bust.

As for John W. Henry; hate him or love him, as is the case with Kaemmer, there is one thing we should make clear right (a metaphoric pun!) off the bat: The sim-racing community, as a niche sport, is lucky to have this kind of capital investing in what is our most prodigious 'star', Dave Kaemmer. Because without John Henry, we could well have been speaking of Kaemmer as we do Crammond: In the past tense.

So is Pay-to-Play the future of simulated-racing? What better way to determine that than to speak to Scott McKee, Vice-President of Marketing at iRacing.com, who was kind enough to flesh out the details.



Tracks Licensed

Road Courses

Barber Motorsports Park
California Speedway
Daytona International Speedway
Infineon Raceway
Homestead-Miami Speedway
Lime Rock Park
Long Beach
Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca
Mid-Ohio SportsCar Course
Miller Motorsports Park
Moroso Motorsports Park
Phoenix International Raceway
Road America **Silverstone Circuit**
Summit Point Motorsports Park
Virginia International Raceway
Watkins Glen International
Willow Springs International Motorsports Park

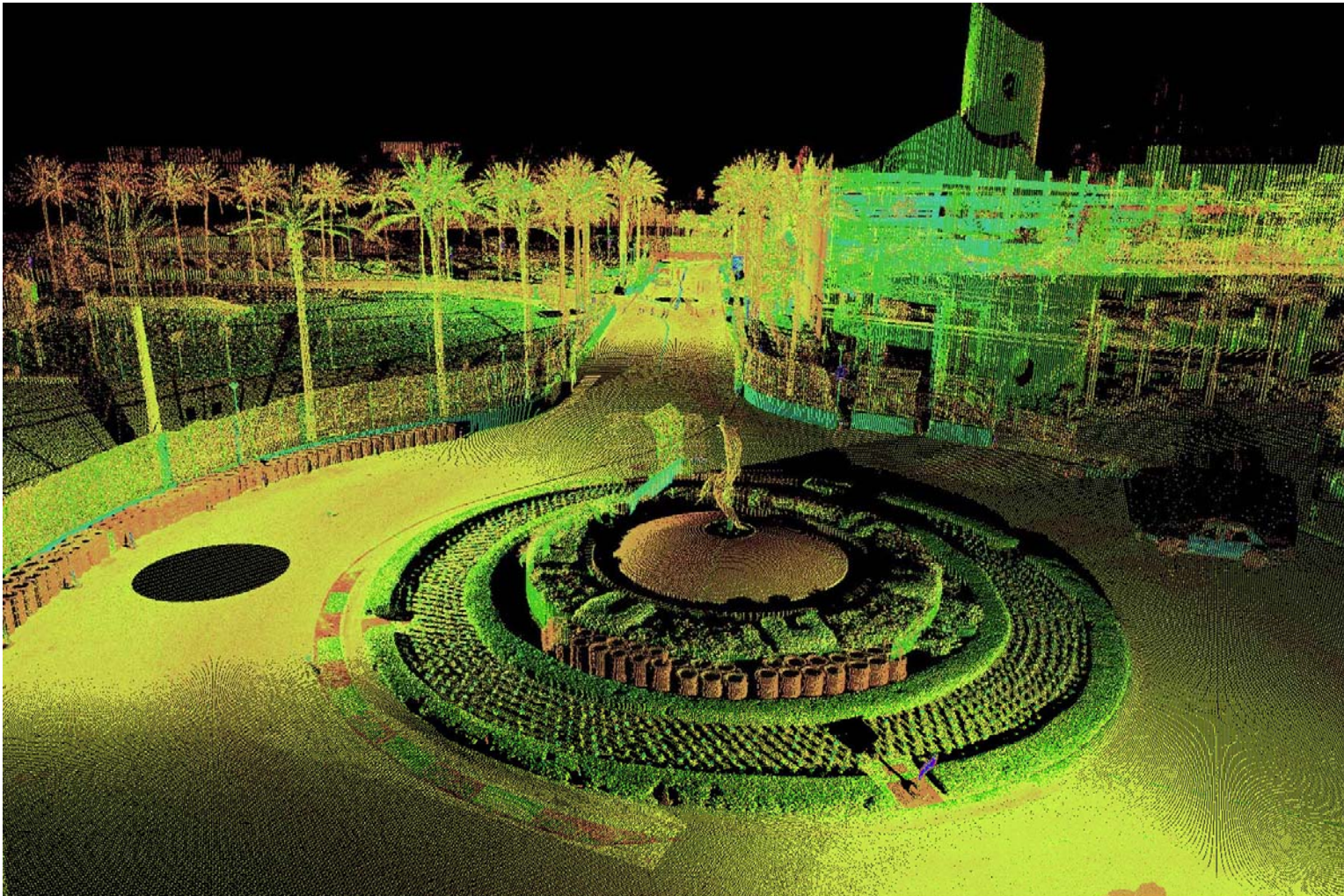


A precision Leica laser scanning device provides the raw data for iRacing.com's proprietary Exactrac process for building digital models of race tracks. A "point cloud" with millimeter accuracy means a digital track that is identical to the physical one.

Tracks Licensed

Ovals

Atlanta Motor Speedway
Bristol Motor Speedway
California Speedway
Chicagoland Speedway
Concord Motorsport Park
Darlington Raceway
Daytona International Speedway
Homestead-Miami Speedway
Irwindale Speedway
Kansas Speedway
Lanier National Speedway
Las Vegas Motor Speedway
Lowes Motor Speedway
Martinsville Speedway
Michigan International Speedway
The Milwaukee Mile
Oxford Plains Speedway
Phoenix International Raceway
Richmond International Raceway
South Boston Speedway
Stafford Motor Speedway
Talladega Superspeedway
Texas Motor Speedway
USA International Speedway



With iRacing.com's proprietary Exactrac process up to a quarter of a billion data points from more than a dozen laser scans are stitched together to build a "point cloud" that captures with unparalleled accuracy and in precise detail every feature of the famed Fountain Turn at the Long Beach Grand Prix race course.

Tracks Licensed

Kart

Briggs & Stratton Motorplex at
Road America
F1 Outdoors
Miller Motorsports Park
Moran Raceway
Moroso Motorsports Park
Plantation Valley Kart Track at
Virginia
International Raceway
Willow Springs Kart Track

Cars Licensed

Open Wheel

Skip Barber 2000
SK Modified

Other

Late Model
Legends Ford '34 Coupe
Radical Sports Cars
XV8R SuperSaloon

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continued

AUTOSIMSPORT: To start at the beginning, how did the relationship between John Henry and Dave Kaemmer come about?

Scott McKee: John first got into sim-racing back in 1990, when he bought Dave's {Kaemmer} first title, *Indianapolis 500, The Simulation*, and a set of controls for his PC. He loved road racing and spent a lot of time with Geoff Crammond's *Grand Prix*, getting progressively more involved with the sport over the years. After he bought the Red Sox in 2002, John remembered hearing that Papyrus was located in the Boston area, so he stopped in to introduce himself to Dave. While he was there, they showed him an early version of *N2003*. John had so much fun driving it that he decided to form a league and eventually fifty or sixty of his friends were all racing in it. That was kind of the genesis of iRacing, though there was no name or anything at that point. But they really liked each other, and shared a passion for sim-racing—what it was, and what they both thought it could be.

AUTOSIMSPORT: I assume that churning out massive profits was not foremost in John and Dave's plans—otherwise we'd see iRacing going the console-route. But is iRacing intended in the long run to pay back the development cost, and then cover its operating costs?

Scott McKee: Like I said before, passion for the sport is the main motivation for both John and Dave—they have a shared vision of what sim-racing can be, and all of us at iRacing share that vision. And just like with other sports businesses—owning a baseball team for instance—there are easier ways to make money.

That said, no business that doesn't cover its costs has a bright future. You mentioned the key

phrase, 'the long term'. We plan to expand the sim-racing community, including bringing in people who race in the physical world, and others who are motor-sport fans looking for ways to get more involved in the sport. It's the quality of the experience that is the key to this expansion; we're making it easier for newcomers to go sim-racing and, by eliminating things like server failure, more convenient for everyone. We have confidence that with this strategy the business will grow steadily and, in the long term, be profitable.

The software resides on the member's hard drive, so it doesn't require a download each time you would like to drive. And our members will have virtually unlimited opportunities to test any car on any track.

AUTOSIMSPORT: As you mentioned a moment ago, iRacing has been 'in business' for four years, and your goals appear to be pretty ambitious. One can only assume the budget for Kaemmer and co. (not to mention the proprietary tech involved and purchased) to be on the far side of a few million dollars—would you be prepared to comment on the amount of investment in this venture, and why this did not necessitate an earlier release?

Scott McKee: We're following our passion, and that means taking the time to get it right. We're fortunate that the ownership of the company places that above getting a quick return on its investment. We're eager to open our service to the public, but we want to make sure that we'll be offering our customers the level of quality that they expect and deserve.

I also want to add that, what the service will be when we open the doors to the public, is really just the beginning. The quality will be there from the start, but the service will grow very substantially over time.

AUTOSIMSPORT: Have you set a date for release? And if so, can you give a rough estimate of when this will occur?

Scott McKee: We've announced as specific a timeframe as we're comfortable giving right now, which is late spring of this year. The important thing is that we won't make the service available to the public until we're confident that it will meet, or exceed, expectations for quality, accuracy and authenticity—theirs and ours. And we won't just throw the doors open to all comers all at once.

We're planning a rolling launch and managed growth so that we can ensure a consistently high level of service to our subscribers.



Knowles Brings the field down to the start on Way to flag-to-flag T2 Win at 2007 SCCA runoffs

AUTOSIMSPORT



At the 2007 Annual Performance Racing Show, NASCAR's David Gilliland gives iRacing's simulator a spin

AUTOSIMSPORT: Then I gather it's correct to say that iRacing will be a simulator that will continue to be added onto as it grows? That is, that the simulator itself will feature constant add-ons going into the future?

Scott McKee: Yes, that's correct, but there's more to it than that. iRacing is a community; it will grow in content, and evolve in organization and scope. People who see our service as just a better

sim are not getting the whole picture yet. We'll have more to say about this as time goes along.

AUTOSIMSPORT: To change the subject a bit, will iRacing feature only licensed products? If so, is launch content already determined—are the tracks/cars that are now stated on the iRacing.com website the final list for the simulator on release? And lastly, your recent pricing announcement

mentions free content for subscribers; can you specify what comes free with a subscription?

Scott McKee: Yes, all of our cars and tracks are officially licensed. Authenticity and realism are our touchstones, so fantasy properties wouldn't really fit. And we respect the right of cars and tracks to control what's theirs, their names, logos, likenesses and reputations, so we will never model anything without the owner's permission to do so. That said, all of our licenses are non-exclusive, leaving our partners free to do business with anyone they choose. Locking up properties doesn't serve our interest, that of our partners, or sim-racing in general. We believe there is room for everyone in the sim-racing space, and despite some of the rumors that have flown around in some of the sim-racing forums, we've never interfered with anyone's attempts to obtain any license.

As for the content at launch, yes, it's set. We won't have everything that's listed on the site ready to go, but we'll have a good selection, and we'll be adding to it regularly.

To your last question, about what comes free with the subscription, every subscriber, no matter how short a term of service they choose, will have a car to run on ovals, and one for road racing, along with a total of seven tracks, including fourteen different configurations. At list price, that's a total of \$150 of free content.

The free cars, an SCCA Showroom Stock B-Class Pontiac Solstice Z0K Club Sport, and a Legends Ford '34 Coupe, come in two specs, rookie and advanced. With this basic content package, members will be able to build their skills, enjoy close racing, and compete for championships without any additional expenditure.

Plus, at launch, we'll have a minimum of six cars, divided evenly between road racing and oval track racing, and we'll have nineteen tracks, with a total of forty-six configurations, available as added content. You can buy them all on the first day if you want and test every car at every track configuration. And some of our members will do that, I'm sure. But most of them won't. The overall experience will be so challenging and fun that we expect that most members will acquire content much more gradually.

AUTOSIMSPORT: As a follow-up to your comments: First, could you give us a quick explanation of the 'specs' of the cars?

Scott McKee: The primary difference between the rookie and advanced car specs is garage functionality. On the rookie cars, you can't really make any adjustments to the chassis. On the advanced cars, there's some basic adjustability (tyre pressure, weight jacking, gear ratio, stagger, and so forth).

There are also some relatively minor performance differences. The rookie Solstice has a slightly softer setup, and the rookie Legends car is rev limited, resulting in power output that's about 20BHP less than the advanced car.

AUTOSIMSPORT: And regarding the base content, will the user have a choice on what they select for their initial package, or will this be pre-defined? In other words, can I say—I want *only* road tracks, and *only* open-wheelers?

Scott McKee: The free basic content package that comes with the subscription is set. If someone doesn't want to use the road-racing or oval-track part of it, that's up to them. And, of course, if and

when they want to add content, they can choose whatever tracks and cars they need for the sim-racing career path they're interested in.

AUTOSIMSPORT: What you're describing sounds pretty much like an integrated product with everything—add-ons, leagues, series, servers—run

So far our focus has been on North America, but we expect quite a bit of international expansion in the next several months. And we're in licensing discussions for a number of other cars ...

in-house by iRacing. Will there be any place for modders, league admins, and such-like, in the future of iRacing?

Scott McKee: As you suggest, our service is highly integrated; it's the only way we know that we can ensure the kind of seamless, user-friendly, high-quality experience that we believe is necessary to expand the sim-racing community beyond its current boundaries. But we will address our customers' desires for individualization. From the start, they'll be able to paint their cars and customize their driving suits and helmets, and we're looking into ways to support leagues and pick-up races within the iRacing structure.

If by 'modders' you mean people who create their own cars and tracks, at this point we don't have a way for them to build content that would work within our simulation. Obviously, modding is as important—if not even more so—to some people in the sim-racing community as the actual racing. We're glad that the community is broad enough to encompass that approach as well as ours. But I think this is one of those examples of not being able to be all things to all people.

AUTOSIMSPORT: The answer to this question is probably self-explanatory, but I want to ask it anyway: The sim-racer who buys a license for

iRacing—will he have an offline simulator on his hard-drive, or is it solely an online sim? Specifically, could a player download the base sim, presumably paying a set initial charge, and then drive offline, with the option to later pay a subscription fee if they decide they want to race online?

Scott McKee: No. We're an online racing community and we want to emphasize the community experience. In addition, the subscription provides members with automatic updates to the software, so that improvements to the sim, and updates to the cars and tracks are made available seamlessly. That allows us to guarantee that everyone racing online has the same version of the software and content. The software resides on the member's hard drive, so it doesn't require a download each time you would like to drive. And our members will have virtually unlimited opportunities to test any car on any track.

AUTOSIMSPORT: Quoting from your recent news release on pricing, 'A one-year subscription to the service will cost \$13 per month and includes all of the content necessary for a subscriber's first season of oval-track and road-racing'. I infer from the use of the term 'season' that iRacing will be running championships within the sim-world?

Scott McKee: Yes, that's a core aspect of our community. I don't want to get into the details too much right now, but we plan to provide a virtual analog to racing in the physical world; a driver with little or no experience can come in as a rookie, and then over time develop his or her skills, race, compete for championships and build a career as a sim-racer.

T1 iRacing.com Announce: Revolution

continued



AUTOSIMSPORT: So, to sum up, once the monthly charge is paid, the sim-racer is now part of the MMOG (or MMORS—Massively Multiplayer Online Racing Sim) that is iRacing.com ... from there, will he be able to buy additional content as and when he desires? In other words, I start with so many cars and tracks and then, three months later, I decide to buy a new car for whatever price, as a one-off purchase?

Scott McKee: Yes, a subscriber is free to purchase whatever content he or she wishes at any time, and they can test with it as soon as they have it. As our pricing announcement mentioned, we have a program of quantity discounts and subscription incentives that substantially reduces the price for additional content.

I think I should emphasize that if your primary interest is in skills acquisition and close,

competitive racing, you won't need to spend a lot of your own money on acquiring content. On the other hand, if you want to build a huge content collection and the part of sim-racing that appeals to you most is doing one or two test sessions with a lot of different cars at a lot of different tracks, then we may not be the best solution for you. Again, we can't be all things to all people, and we're not trying to be.

AUTOSIMSPORT: This whole concept is a first in sim-racing, and certainly a welcome one. But can we expect regular, new, licensed cars as we go forward?

Scott McKee: Yes, as we go forward there will be a great deal more content. People who have been looking on our website will see that we've licensed more than sixty tracks; with the painstaking way we

build them, that's going to keep us busy for a while. But we're already talking to other tracks about licenses. So far our focus has been on North America, but we expect quite a bit of international expansion in the next several months. And we're in licensing discussions for a number of other cars and will begin announcing some of them in the near future.

AUTOSIMSPORT: Will the community of subscribers be able to guide iRacing toward what their 'most wanted' content would be?

Scott McKee: Very much so. One of the advantages of being a community is that we develop a regular dialog and a relationship with our members. So long as we're able to secure the appropriate licenses, we'll deliver what our customers tell us they want.

AUTOSIMSPORT: Will there be any additional costs, such as a cost for the initial software before the monthly subscription fee kicks in?

Scott McKee: No, the initial subscription, even if it's for only a month, covers all of the software necessary to participate in the community and go racing. By the way, we've had a few questions about whether the software is downloaded each time you race. It isn't; the software is downloaded once and stays on your hard drive. Periodically, when you log on, the server will download small files that update the software.

AUTOSIMSPORT: The 'iRacing dollars' (mentioned in your press release) that come with subscriptions and can be used to purchase additional content: Will there be a way in which drivers can win additional iRacing dollars in racing series organized by iRacing itself?



Scott McKee: Yes. We're still sorting out the details, but that's the plan. And we'll have more to say about that in the near future.

AUTOSIMSPORT: When I buy a car or a track, will this be a 'one-off' purchase? And what happens in the event that I subscribe just for the winter months—and I buy additional content: Will I retain these purchases when I return? In other words, if I buy extra cars and tracks, and then cancel subscription for the summer, only to return six months later when the nights get darker, will I still have these purchased cars and tracks?

Scott McKee: You license content, cars or tracks, once. Period. There are no annual charges or anything like that. If you let your subscription lapse—even if you go away for two years—when you come back, all your content is there waiting for you, and there's no fee associated with reactivating your content.

AUTOSIMSPORT: Again, I feel I have to ask: What guarantee do we have that iRacing will be around in two years? Or more ...

Scott McKee: Our business plan extends well beyond three years, and we are fortunate to have

all of the resources necessary to make those plans a reality, so we don't see this being an issue for our customers.

AUTOSIMSPORT: So, if I own the car, will I then be able to sell it off for iRacing dollars to someone else who may want to purchase it? In other words, is there a possibility of a 'second-hand' market where, once I tire of a certain class of car, I can sell it or trade it for something else?

Scott McKee: We have no plans to create a secondary market in 'used' cars; our community won't be a sort of motor-sport version of *Second Life*, and we're not looking to create a virtual economy inside the community. Your car won't wear out. And while it may get damaged in a wreck, all that means is it won't drive right—or at all, depending on how hard you crashed. But in the next session your car will be good as new, and you won't have had to 'pay' for the repairs.

AUTOSIMSPORT: Are there plans to run a public beta before "going live"?

Scott McKee: We have more than 300 members in our alpha test group now, and we may expand that a bit. But we don't have any plans for a public

beta. As I mentioned earlier in our conversation, we will have a progressive launch, with ongoing improvement of the sim and the service. iRacing's 'product' will never be finished in the sense that a boxed product is; we will always be making it better.

AUTOSIMSPORT: What guarantee does a subscriber have that iRacing will continue developing the product into the future? Is there a minimal time-frame for guaranteed content and game enhancements? In other words, what would you say to the sim-racer who intends to collect every car and track over the next three years? Will there still be an iRacing system at this time that is not dependent on the success of the product?

Scott McKee: I guess the best way to answer that is to say that all of us at iRacing.com are in this for the long haul. Dave Kaemmer has dedicated twenty years, basically his entire professional career, to making the most authentic simulations possible, and the core of our company is made up of people who have worked with Dave for much of that time—I think there's about fifteen of them at this point, and they're all committed to racing simulations as a career.

John Henry, meanwhile, is absolutely passionate about iRacing.com and is motivated by his desire to build a community where racing enthusiasts can get together, compete and share their common bond, which is a love of the sport. He's taking a long-term approach in the creation of a global, web-based sport.

Sim-racers who join the iRacing community will be investing both their money and their time. We've made the same kind of investment, and we've done so very willingly because we believe in what we're doing.

AUTOSIMSHOP

We've got your STUFF right here...



AUTOSIMSPORT

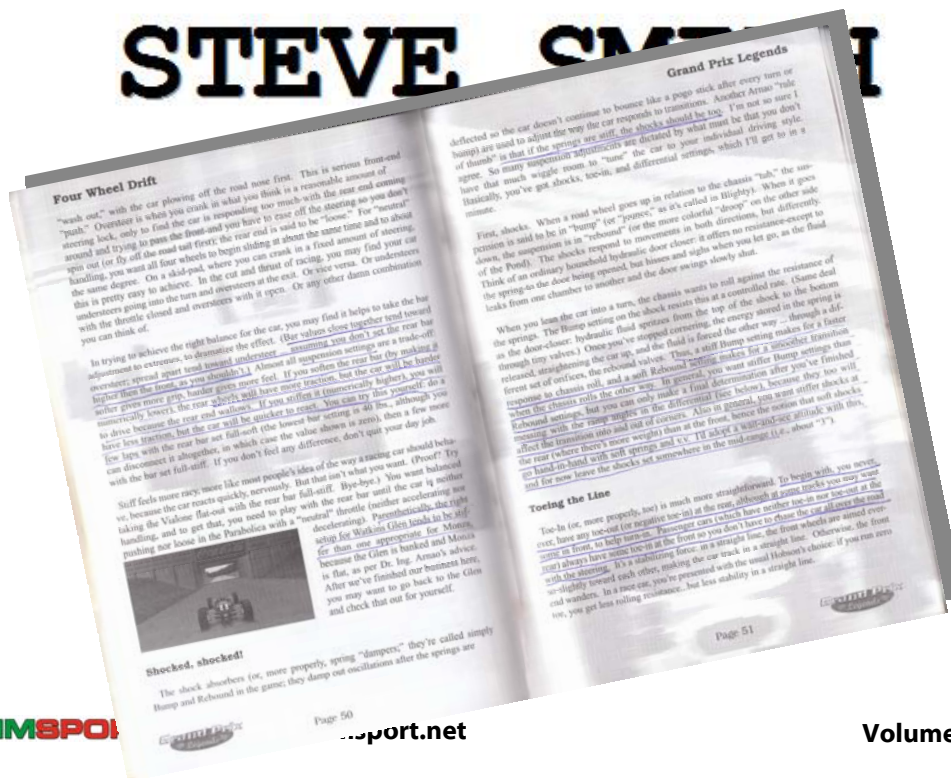
10 Years Of GPL

STEVESMITH

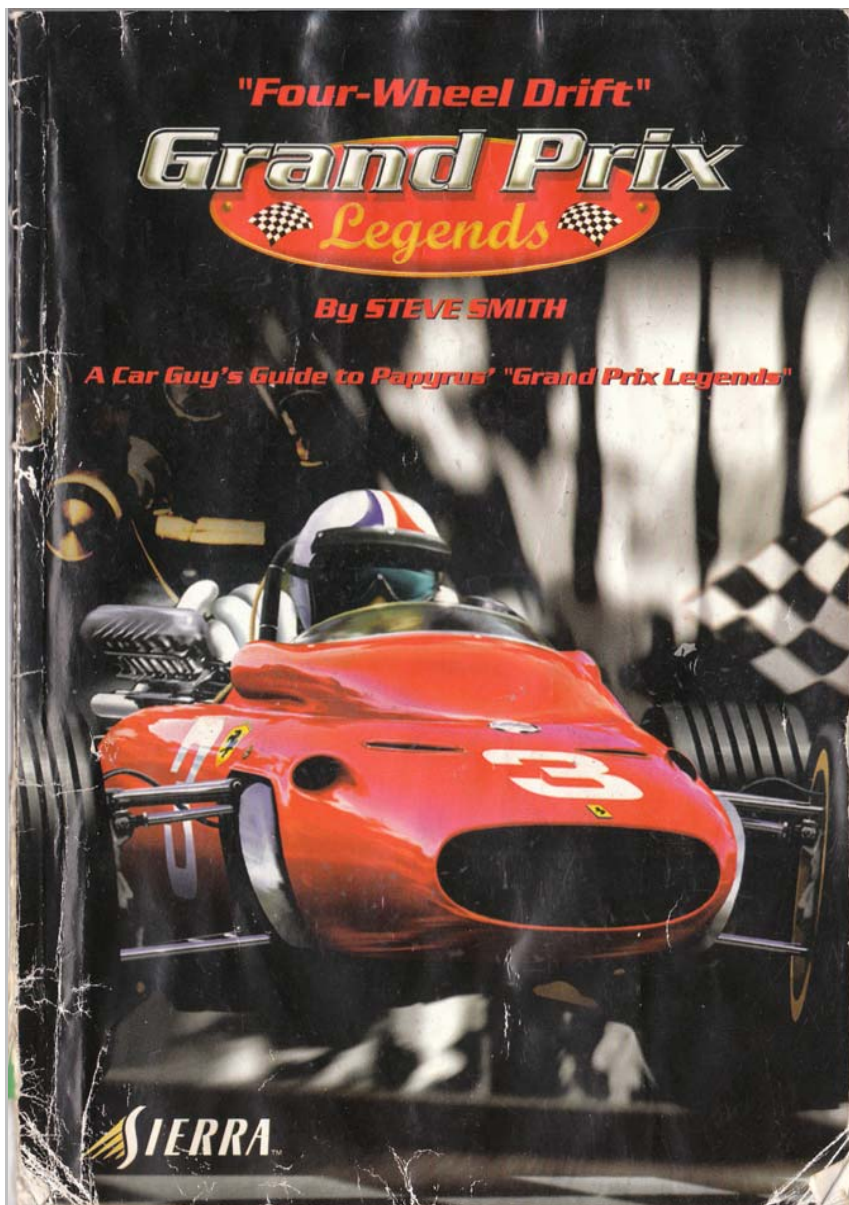
"Four-Wheel Drift" Revisited

AUTOSIMSPORT kicks off its 'ten years of GPL' celebrations with Steve Smith recalling how he came to pen the finest manual ever written ...

"Four-Wheel Drift" By STEVE SMITH



10 Years Of GPL "Four-Wheel Drift" Revisited *continued*



The Papyrus spokeswoman sitting across the conference table from me looked a little, mmm, *déclassé*. Like a low-rent hausfrau: hair up in curlers, lipstick askew, housecoat open, fluffy Bugs Bunny slippers dangling from her painted toes. Well, almost. She'd just told me that I was a "failed writer whose last book hadn't sold very well." Actually, 'PC Pilot' had sold a hefty 807 copies worldwide. And, after all, I *had* been the Editor of *PC Computing*. And *Car and Driver*. And *Motor Trend*. But who's counting? I knew she was just trying to get my price for writing the *Grand Prix Legends* strategy guide down to a less astronomical figure than the one I'd scribbled on a piece of paper and slid across the table to her, *mafioso*-style.

I didn't bother telling her that I would have written it for nothing.

We agreed on the astronomical figure. Plus a ton of extra money for Doug Arnao (a sim-racing expert and onetime SCCA National Solo Champion) whom I'd demanded as my 'Technical Advisor' on this mission. The book was to be called "Four-Wheel Drift".

Done and done.

I'd already written two strategy guides for Papyrus, both titled 'Winning!' after the Paul Newman flick of the same name. (Well, when *IndyCar Racing* became *CART Racing*, I freshened up the first draft a little.) I'd been a fan of Papyrus and its co-founder Dave Kaemmer, whom I'd dubbed 'the godfather of sim racing' since his first racing game, *Indianapolis 500: The Simulation*, came out in 1989. I had written an enthusiastic review for *Car and Driver*, and followed Kaemmer's career as he progressed through *NASCAR Racing*, *SODA* (an off-road game ... and the only Papyrus title not developed in-house), and the two road-racing sims. Mike Lescault, one of the producers at Papy's tasteful atelier in a suburb of Boston, had taken a shine to my writing, and after the modest success of *IndyCar/CART Racing*, asked me to write a guide to *Legends* from a car guy's perspective.

Perfect; this was my era! I'd been at *Car and Driver* through most of the Sixties and had championed the motorsports coverage there. I'd driven in some minor league races myself, hung out with major players like Dan Gurney and John Frankenheimer, and gotten drunk with World Champions Graham Hill and Jimmy Clark. I'd since given up magazines for advertising, but I couldn't give up cars (remember, 'At Ford, Quality is Job 1'?). I assayed my love for airplanes in 'PC Pilot', a strategy guide for flight sims, so I figured I was ready for 'Four-Wheel Drift'.

The problem was, *Grand Prix Legends* wasn't ready for me. In the magazine business, we got to drive the new cars up to a year before they went on sale (we drove hand-built 'pre-production prototypes' for the road tests; the actual mass-produced cars were never as good), but in the computer-game business, once the developers signed off on the software ('going gold' meant a gold-colored CD was on its way to the publishers, in

10 Years Of GPL “Four-Wheel Drift” Revisited *continued*

this case, Sierra Sports), the game was only weeks ... maybe days ... from being in the hands of the public. Which meant that what we—the beta team—were driving was usually several ‘builds’ short of the final ‘shrink-wrapped’ product.

Everything was moving along at a breakneck pace. When I signed on, not all the entities represented in the game (car makers, drivers, tracks, suppliers, etc.) were in place. In those days, you needed a separate license for every logo, every sponsor, every graphic, every decal. BRM driver Jackie Stewart wanted more money than existed in the known universe. Honda refused to let its name be used in the game, so the RA300 look-alike became the ‘Murasama’ (I suggested calling it the ‘Yamura’ in tribute to Frankheimer’s 1966 epic, ‘Grand Prix’, but there were problems there, too.). Lawyers nixed John Cooper’s involvement, so the real-world T81B (a miscegenation of a Cooper chassis and an ancient Maserati engine) became the ‘Coventry’ in the sim (both nomenclature deviations were easily corrected in *GPL*’s text files).

Papyrus was worried about Ferrari’s participation—a key element of the simulation—but the Italians tossed their hat in the ring at the last minute. They retained the right to vet the strategy guide’s copy, however, and when Papy sent them the manuscript over an Italian holiday, they didn’t return it by the publishing deadline, so each and every reference to the marque of the Prancing Horse was regrettably excised (like the VC hacking off each U.S.-innoculated arm in ‘Apocalypse Now’) in the final product. People have been asking me how come Ferrari wasn’t mentioned in the book ever since.

If only there was some way to re-publish the guide with all the missing content magically restored ...

The original book contained some misstatements of fact, as well. Matt Sentell, whom I described as the ‘Lead Designer’, was officially listed in the credits as the game’s ‘Director’. And I went to some lengths to describe how the game’s ‘adaptive’ AI was supposed to work: the intention was for the AI to follow you around and note where you were most vulnerable—at least that’s the way it was described in the game’s ‘design document’—along with some other embellishments, like brake fade that didn’t make the final cut. In the end, the designers settled for a simple algorithm: the faster you went, the faster the AI went.

There was great controversy about this. Most of the beta team (and a few Papy turncoats) felt that the user ought to have control over the strength of the AI. We urged an AI speed ‘slider’ be added to the menu. But Kaemmer, a stern taskmaster, was the

boss, so he ... prevailed. (After the game was released, it didn’t take long to figure out how to edit the text files to slow the AI down.)

The other great controversy didn’t materialize until the game was in the hands of unscrupulous cheats (*aka* ‘aliens’ ... just kidding) who discovered that they could unrealistically improve the handling—at the expense of making the cars look ridiculous—by adjusting the suspension so low that you could roll beer cans down the pit road with the nose of the car. This was alluded to in the strategy guide (and later covered in depth on Wikipedia, here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Prix_Legends) but this unintended loophole was quickly put ‘on the trailer’, as we car guys say, with the first patch (version 1.1) which clamped the ride height at a more reasonable (and realistic) figure: you couldn’t go below 2.5 inches.

The game came out to glowing reviews. However, despite my efforts to lure car guys into the fold, most of them never overcame to lack of proprioceptor (*aka* ‘seat of the pants’) input, and dismissed the game as too geeky (this from guys so visceral that they sometimes checked the health of their race car’s bearings by physically *tasting* the crankcase oil). Computer geeks, for their part, found the cars in the simulation a little *too* accurate (i.e., not arcade-y enough), and even Dave Kaemmer finally had to admit that *GPL*’s cars were actually harder to drive than the real thing.

Grand Prix Legends, which was supposed to sell in the hundreds of thousands (like its forebears), never even came close to making its sales goals. But it did lay the foundation of the physics model for *NASCAR Racing 3*, which begat *NASCAR Racing 2003*, the most polished sim Papyrus ever produced. There was to be no *Grand Prix Legends 2*, but its spirit lives on in mods like the 1979 Formula 1 add-on for ISI’s *rFactor*.

What happened to Papyrus? Even before *Legends*, co-founders Kaemmer and CEO Omar Khudari had sold out to Sierra On-Line. Sierra was later sold to Cendant (a shady aggregator whose principals were eventually indicted for fraud), which was later acquired by Vivendi, once the Water Department for *toute la France*. After Papy lost the NASCAR franchise (which they’d basically invented) to Electronic Arts, Vivendi shuttered the studio, and Kaemmer entered into a partnership with billionaire businessman John Henry (owner of the Boston Red Sox). Their company, now known as iRacing, bought the rights to the *NASCAR Racing* code and plans to release a subscription-only racing service sometime this year.

Shed a tear for Papyrus ... and *Grand Prix Legends*. But not for me—I got rich!

ARCA Sim Racing— **Oval-time**

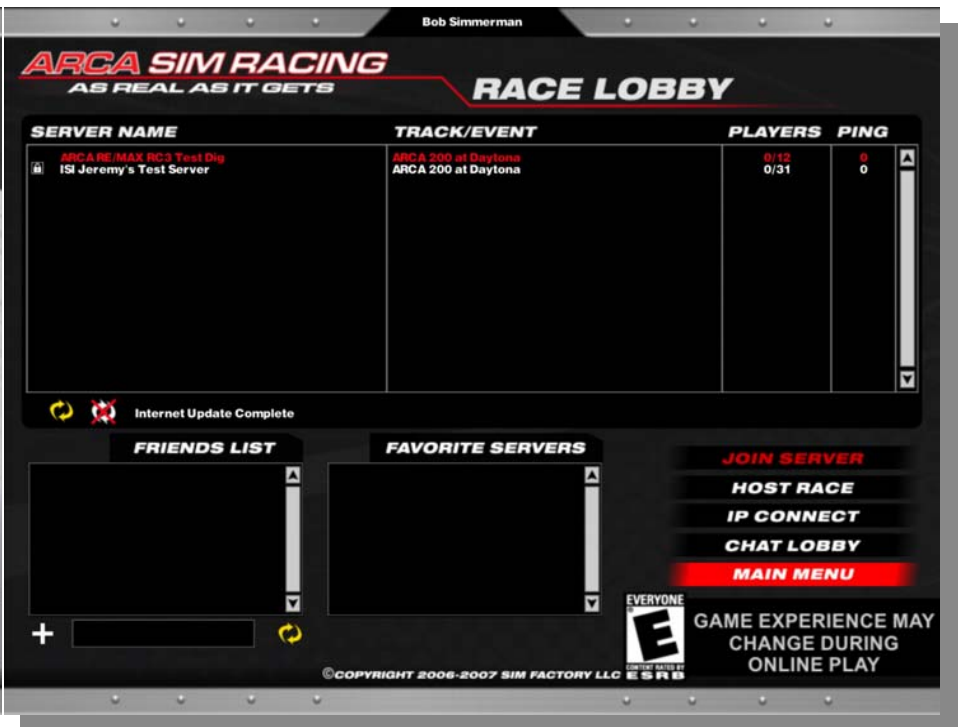
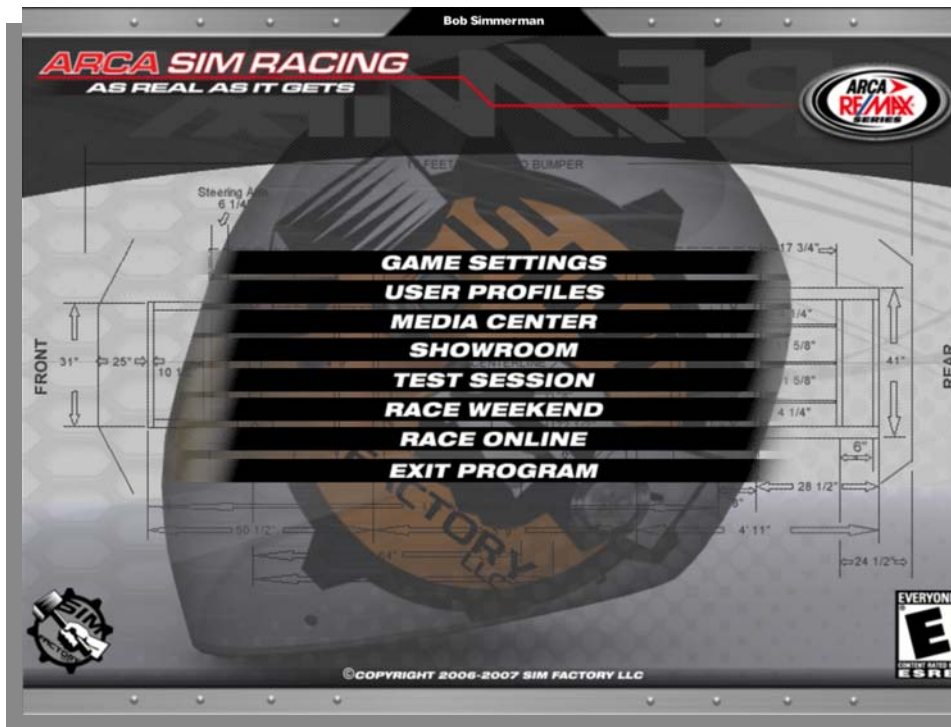
Bob Simmerman takes a final glimpse of the final beta of the likely heir to NASCAR Racing Season 2003: This one should be all done and 'boxed' and ready to review for our next issue ...

BOBSIMMERMAN

All business. A quick breakdown of what lies behind this sim is enough to make any oval fan sweat with anticipation: Official stats from Hoosier Tire, officially licensed cars and tracks with direct input from ARCA, *and* ARCA (not to mention NASCAR) drivers, laser-scanned models, topographically correct tracks, and ... well, I could go on, but why spoil the surprise?

It's been several years since we last saw a fully-licensed, commercially available oval track-series simulator, but the time is fast approaching for The Sim Factory to lay that final shine before strutting their beauty out the door. Featuring the cars, drivers, tracks, logos, sponsors, and liveries of the real ARCA Re/Max racing series, no expense (or time! Come on already!) has been spared, and after a couple of weeks with the latest build, and recalling an earlier build of the simulator—which was excellent at that time—I am simply amazed to see how far the development team has advanced every aspect of the sim; from the interface graphics to the brilliant Hoosier tyre physics, all has been investigated with a magnifying glass. Coupled with the industry standard Image Space Inc. Motor 2.0 multiplayer component, *ARCA Sim Racing* not only promises, but *will*, finally, satiate our oval cravings.

So let's take a closer look!

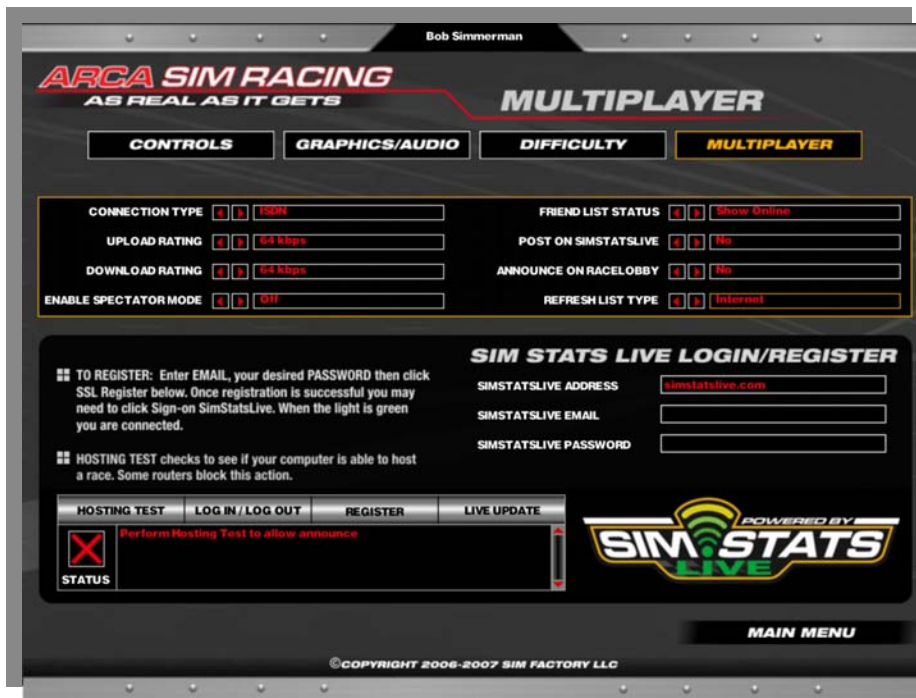


MAIN_INTERFACE

Although similar in layout to *rFactor*, the main interface has been completely redesigned and, as can be seen from the shot, quite a bit of polish has been applied as well.

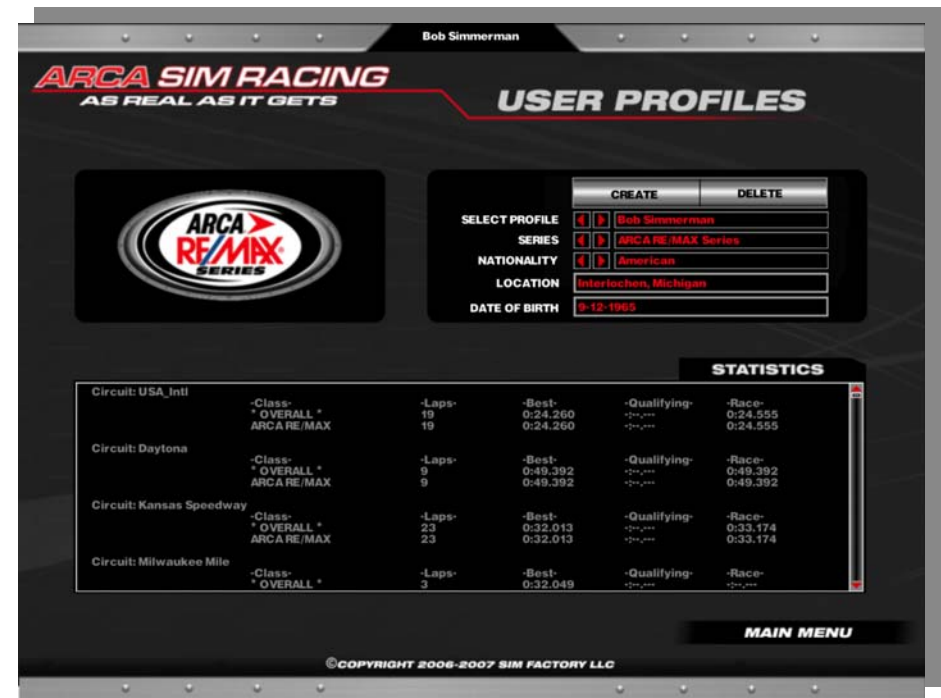
MULTIPLAYER_LOBBY

Featuring all sorts of great MP features such as chat, server bookmarking, boot and ban options, buddy lists—and including the fully-licensed and oh so wonderful *rFactor* multiplayer component—the foundation for what is shaping up to be the definitive online oval racing simulator has been set.



MULTIPLAYER_INTERFACE

Sleek and slim, the MP interface is cleverly done both in layout and functionality. And the 'SimStats' live portion takes things to a new level by providing race details, downloadable XML race results, driver profiles with statistics, the ability to see who is online, and view or join races. There is also a ranking system based on the driver statistics. See the [Sim Factory](#) page for more details on this welcomed addition to the sim.



PROFILE_SCREEN

Very similar to the default *rFactor* offerings in terms of stats tracked, no surprises here other than the completely redesigned way to present the information.



REPLAY_SETUP

About the same as that found in *rFactor* in terms of how things are done, the interface nevertheless has the look and feel of all of the other interface screens, that is, damn fine looking. In terms of replay viewing, things haven't appeared to change much from previous commercial efforts based on the ISI code, but the functionality is sufficient, and coupled with several new camera views, does provide for a great way to have a look from outside the car for a change.



TEAM VIEWER_SHOWROOM_CARVIEWER

The car modeling of *ARCA Sim Racing* is second to none, and has taken a huge leap in terms of detail since our last look at it several months ago. The main car viewer allows a better look at just how great these cars look, and how true to the real deal they actually are. In fact, the cars have been laser scanned for a degree of accuracy not often found in racing simulators.



UNDERSIDE_OF_CAR

Not content with above the ground modeling, The Sim Factory saw fit to include extremely detailed undercarriage modeling as well.



DIRT_TIRES

Here are the dirt tyres. Not to mention another look at the precise modeling to be found in the sim. And yes, I said dirt ...



DIRT_TRACKIN'

Duquoin gives us yet another opportunity for dirt tracking, and the physics do a great job; letting you know your grip level is a bit different than that found at Daytona. An early work in progress, the track nevertheless is a blast to drive, and is complete with a dust effect from the cars' tyres, and some great models of stock car dirt track tyres.

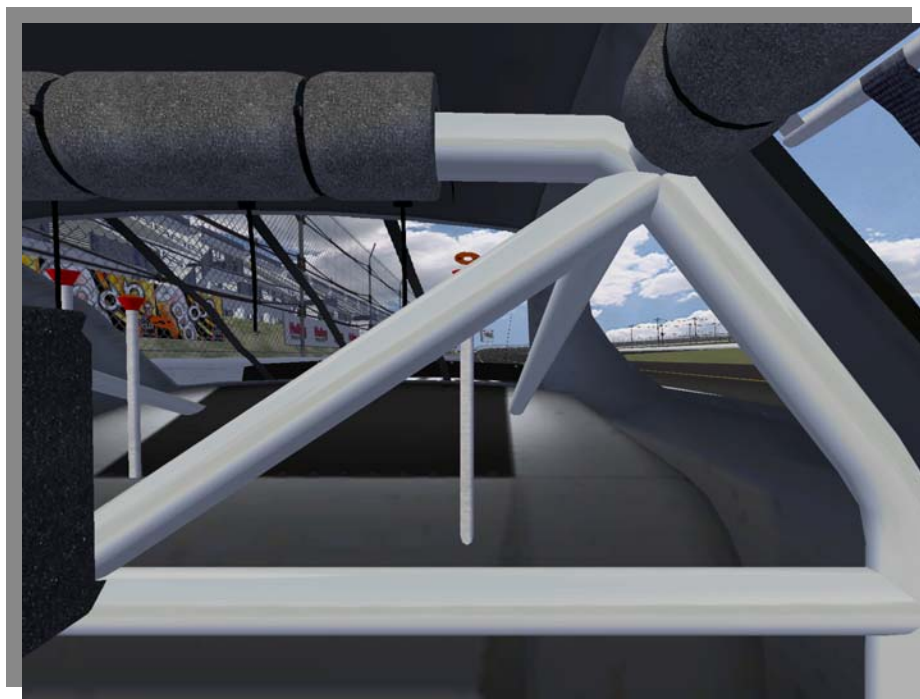


INCAR

While not finalized yet, the current build cockpits are extremely well done, all the way to the ARCA mandated dash mount yellow light that illuminates when the yellow flies. All gauges are functional, and looks to the left or right reveal even more detail, nearly identical to the actual car. And the goodness doesn't stop there—while you're driving around, you may notice changes in the grip level, and you wouldn't be mistaken. Surely, worn tyres do that, but this sim provides what is known as Active Grip Technology and, like other products with this type of dynamicity to track modeling, goes a long way to immersing the driver in the experience, even if doing nothing more than turning test laps.

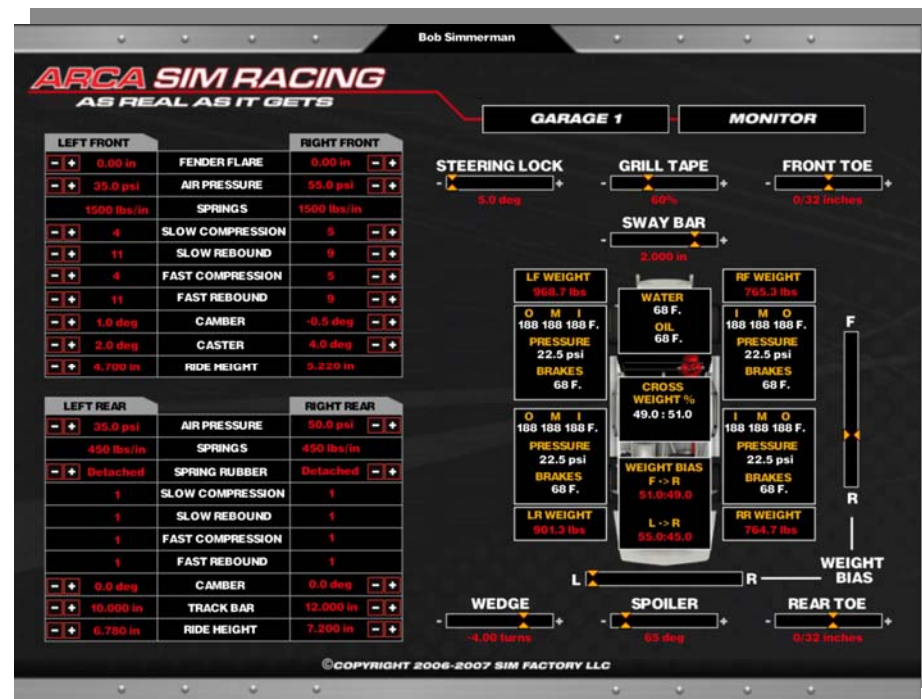
Dynamic lighting changes also occur, and are user adjustable in terms of rate. Head physics and cockpit vibrations seal the deal, and it only gets better as you look out the front window at the AI or human opponents and notice all of the motions their cars are doing at any given moment. The cars remain detailed at very long view distances, and I didn't notice a single bit of the texture dropping that is often seen at this level of on track car detail. Of course, the graphics are fully adjustable in similar fashion as *rFactor*, so if things are a bit much for the PC, it is a very easy matter to find the proper sweet spot of settings to get a smooth experience.

And, perhaps best of all—actual tyre models created using Calspan data as provided by Hoosier Tire. I think we all remember how good things were the last time this was done! Yep, the physics feel just fine, not to mention the convincing aero effects, effects that really come into play as the user navigates Daytona and Talladega.



COCKPIT_LOOKBACK

Not that a driver can turn his head around and check, but if they could it, wouldn't be much help as this shot reveals. With full roll cage modeling in car, even the view from the mirror is obstructed. Another attention to detail



GARAGE

It wouldn't be a true stock car sim without a barnyard full of adjustments and setup options, and there is no shortage of them here. Clean and crisp, this garage is a pleasure to turn a wrench in!



DAYTONA_TRACK—ONTRACK

Preparing for the big race, a lone car at Daytona has recently entered the legendary high banks that, at one time and in real life, were relatively flat—especially the part that was, literally, made of beach sand because it was, well, a part of the actual beach! Undergoing constant revisions, including those prompted by real drivers' input, the *ARCA Sim Racing* Daytona track is truly a sight to behold: It's also wonderful to drive. One thing that immediately stands out is that all of the ten shipping tracks, from a graphical and topological viewpoint, are painstaking labours of love.

Convincing road surfaces, grandstands, garage areas, and more camera views than FOX, the level of track modeling is second to none, and most definitely of the quality we come to expect from commercial software products.



DAYTONA_SUPERSTRETCH

A view through the fence indicates that not just one side of the track story is being told—if you stand too close to this fence, you might up with a face full of *klag* as the cars roar by at nearly 195 miles per hour. The shot doesn't do justice as this particular view was eerily realistic, and reminiscent of real-life visits to real-life tracks. I haven't counted the seats in the stands yet, but it wouldn't surprise me if even those were of the same number!



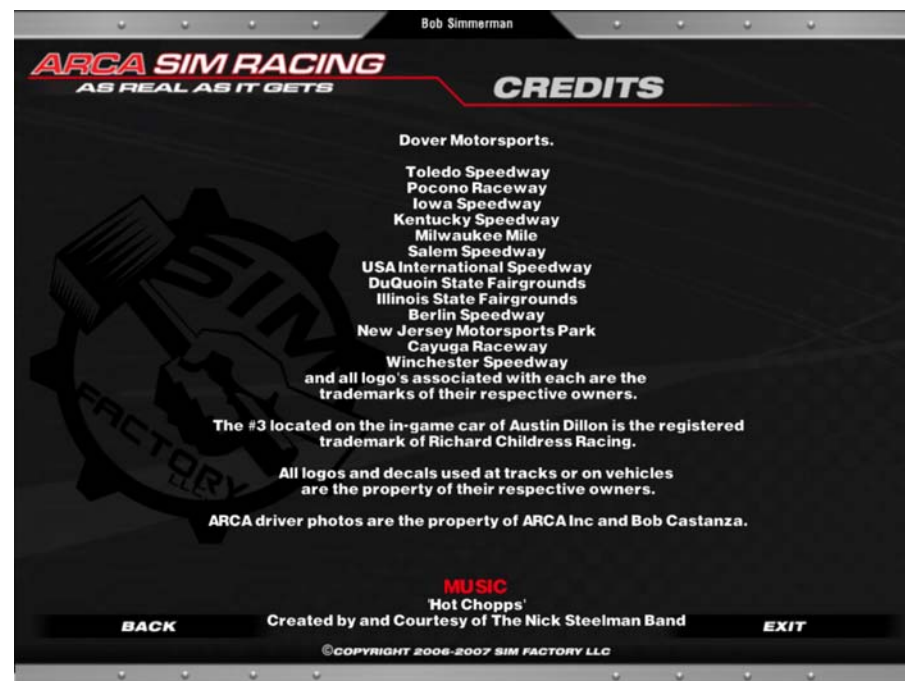
LEAVING THE GARAGE

Just like the real guys, you have to navigate your way to the track from the garage area. Although it may sound trivial, it can, at times, prove quite difficult if you have not given the entire area a good look over to find the proper route to the track. If you find yourself wandering around the garage area too long, you just may get banged up a bit! And no, the cars don't with the GPS.



LOADING_SCREEN

About the only thing remaining from the original code base in this shot is the loading bar at the bottom. Like all of the other UI portions of the game, the look and feel is top shelf, and more than satisfying in terms of what we have seen before—and been happy with—other commercially release products. Neat, tidy, and very well done.



LICENSING_LICENSING

No doubt one of the reasons the sim is being 'hotly anticipated' is the great deal of official cars, tracks, drivers, and livery to be offered, including Toyota. I'm no expert, but from talking with folks who have actually gone through the process of licensing something for a game, or other software product, it's clear this is no easy task. Hats off to the Sim Factory for their efforts in bringing a fully licensed commercial oval racing product to the table after too many years of not having one!



DAMAGE_1, 2, 3

Cars can, and sometimes do, deviate from two dimensions and enter the third, and not in a good way! Body damage is fairly well done, and like any decent sim, damage of any kind makes racing a much more difficult affair.





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Fanatec's Porsche 911 Turbo Wheel

Lou Magyar on why this isn't quite your dad's Porsche 911 ... but it might feel close when you're using the Fanatec Porsche 911 Turbo Wheel—Nordschleife Edition! The G25 has gained a competitor ...

LOUMAGYAR

PORSCHE

911 turbo

WHEEL



PORSCHE

T3 Fanatec's Porsche 911 Turbo Wheel

continued



Fanatec asked whether I'd be interested in reviewing their new Nordschleife Edition Porsche 911 Turbo Force-Feedback steering wheel set. I'm a fairly busy guy, but I never pass up the opportunity to test out some exclusive new hardware ... especially when I can write a nice piece for AUTOSIMSPORT Magazine while doing so, so I said yes, (please!), and anxiously followed the test-unit as it UPSed its way to Indiana—in ten long, and lonely days. The thought of my Porsche wheel being touched by all those foreign hands had me quite depressed for a while until one cold afternoon, my baby arrived.

I opened the outside packaging—which has Porsche 911 Turbo blazing all over it—and realizes the delivery man must have thought I was getting a Porsche-in-a-box, or a replacement steering wheel for the Porsche hidden behind the Pink Elephant in my garage. In essence, though, this is what the Fanatec Porsche 911 Turbo wheel is: an officially licensed and badged Porsche 'item'. The wheel-box proper is rather nicely constructed, and certainly builds your anticipation as you open each flap of the box (there are, for the more anal out there, four of them!)—Take a Deep Breath—Relax—Not yet!—Right, go, go go! as you finally open the last flap, and the contents are revealed.



Being an engineer by trade, I tend to look at things with a critical eye, and, as readers know by now, I always appreciate a good job of packaging. From the outer shipping box, to the protection of the components inside, the Fanatec wheel is, I can confidently state (for those who care about these things, and you should, because good packaging is a sign of good design), well packaged, and for the environmentally conscientious, almost completely recyclable. I have heard that some G25s did not fare well under shipping, with bent steering wheels being the primary cause for concern, but I can't see any reason for concern with packaging of the Porsche 911 Turbo wheel.

Once I got everything out of the box, and gave it the once over, I set about figuring out how to get up and racing. Madison, my year-old-racing prodigy—she raced alongside the gang at the LAN party this summer—took one look at the wheel and promptly exclaimed 'Cool!'

Which was my initial thought too, actually. When you get it all laid out on the desk (or table, floor, horizontal surface) and look at it, the whole thing just looks ... cool. The wheel itself is a design based on the real deal, modeled after the genuine Porsche 911 Turbo wheel.

T3 Fanatec's Porsche 911 Turbo Wheel

continued



The Fanatec version is 300mm in diameter, and has a genuine, licensed Porsche emblem in the center of it. (I figure that's worth about a half-second right there.) The hand-stitched, all-leather grip is comfortable, and it's thick enough so that it reduces finger fatigue for longer periods of racing—which is a good thing since this wheel invites you to take your favourite sim out for a spin.

There are, in addition to the wheel and pedals, two shifter units. One shifter for sequential, and one for H-pattern shifting. They ride on two steel rods that are mounted in the wheel base—which means, for the technically challenged, that separate mounting isn't needed for the gear shifters. The H-shifter has six forward positions and one reverse position. There are also two Porsche 'emblemmed' 'keys', one of which is a 1GB USB memory stick (it holds the drivers and manuals), while the other is the wireless USB-Dongle transmitter unit. Both are USB1.1 and up compatible.

The included quick setup guide which, apart from a few grammatical and minor spelling errors, is simple and straightforward, as it should be. I mean, what good would a quick setup guide be if it was complicated ... why not just call it a user's manual for Pete's sake—and while we're on that subject, does anyone actually know who Pete is? And why do we do so much for his sake—is he important?

Now, aside from the manual's apparent left-handedness (it seems to me to be folded backwards), it will get you up and running in six simple steps, each with clear drawings and easy to follow written instructions, and unlike other six-step plans, this one will guarantee you success in a few minutes.

The first thing new users are instructed to do is install the driver software from the USB memory stick, which really is a nice bonus, isn't it? While the path to the drivers is not specifically spelled out, only the most incapable computer user might experience difficulty

finding them. The USB memory stick works just like any other 'gimicky' USB/Pocket Knife/Flashlight/Nail Clipper memory stick you might see, just that this one looks like the keys to a Porsche, and has a Porsche emblem smack in the middle of it. A fraction of the 1GB is used to hold the drivers, quick guide, drilling template, and manuals—the rest could theoretically be used to store your racing setups, favorite replay, or pictures of your niece Ashley's first birthday party. So factor that in the price.

The manuals, which are written in German, English, Spanish, French, Italian, and Russian, should suite your fancy, and are actually needed in order to learn the finer points of the wheel. The Quick Guide, while efficient, does not cover all of the features of the wheel so a quick browse through the manual will help you find what you are missing out on!

Okay, now that we've browsed the USB stick and scanned over the manual, the drivers will probably have been installed, and will now be searching for an update on the web (so you have the latest and greatest, of course). That done, the wheel is ready to be abused.

The next thing to get busy with is the USB-Dongle. The USB-Dongle looks just like the USB memory stick, except that it has some LEDs to indicate connectivity with the wheel and pedals. Here we find a slight flaw in the design in that both of the USB devices are sufficiently large that they cannot be used in adjacent ports at the same time: one in front, and one in back works, but you will not be able to put the two of them side-by-side or stacked ... they are simply too bulky.

I tested the wheel with my laptop, and a PlayStation3: Using the laptop, I even had to get a cable for my wireless mouse transmitter because only the wheel key would fit ... it's like the largest baby bird in the nest, everything else gets pushed aside. So factor that in your plans.

The USB-Dongle plugs in and detects the wheel. While it does that, you need to install the four AA batteries into the pedal unit; that done, a respectful squeeze on the three pedals will assure connectivity. LED indicators tell the tale, as all good telltales should. I experimented with switching modes (more later), as the Quick Guide instructs, and I am happy to report that I survived without injury. The wheel and pedals connected without issue.

Now it's time for the gear-shift unit. Since you haven't actually attached your wheel yet (I hope!), the installation is fairly simple: Take the two steel rods, and slide them into the wheel base, then clamp them in place with the coin-operated screws (I'll leave you to figure that one out). Next, slide the shifter of your choice onto the rods, and connect the (very) short PS2-style connection cable. The shifter unit can be installed on either side of the wheel, and its distance from the wheel is adjustable anywhere out to 180mm from the edge of the wheel-base unit.

The wheel is held to the table by either clamping, or drilling holes to match the supplied template. Fanatec says they didn't know how thick my table was going to be, so they didn't include the screws ... however, once you determine how long your screws need to be, they also need to be 6mm diameter. Naturally, since I wasn't going to run down to the hardware store and buy (four, by the way) 6mm x 30mm screws just yet in order to drill my keyboard tray to hold the wheel, I clamped it to the dining room table (remember, I'm using the laptop to test on).

Immediately, a potential problem becomes evident to me. The clamping mechanism on the Fanatec wheel is different than, say, that of the G25. Rather than two long arms that are screwed tight, the Porsche 911 Turbo Wheel has a sliding clamp that you must draw tight to the surface, tighten, before rolling two cantilevered cam-

clamps in place. It works more like a clamp on an old-hand bicycle tyre pump, and it needs some room to role over and lock. The dining room table, meanwhile, has a stiffer board attached to it about 50mm from the edge which allows the clamp to fit, but there is no room to enable the actual clamping mechanisms—all of which resulting in the wheel not being securely attached ... only partially.

On a keyboard tray, or a desk top, this won't, I predict, be an issue at all, but if you race on a table with a stiffening component that is anything less than 75mm from the edge of the table, you won't be able to clamp the wheel down—so factor that in your plans as well. Also, if you have any kind of uneven edge on the bottom of your race table (like a card table, or counter top for example), then the wheel isn't going to mount very well, if at all, and you will need to make a mounting board to put under your monitor.

So, let's draw a conclusion on this mounting mechanism; at first look, it comes across as quite unique and ingenious. However, in practical use, its mounting surface requirements become a limiting factor. Any surface that is flat, on both the top and bottom, works perfectly. A surface thickness anywhere between 5mm and 50mm will fit nicely (and firmly) into the clamps, and the wheel will not move until you say it's okay to do so.

Meanwhile, I slid the clamp out of the wheel base, and turned the knob a bit as a test. This was a mistake. I am still not sure what I did, but if I had to guess, it would be that I backed the clamp out too far, and before I knew it, the knob was spinning off the shaft into my hand. In trying to put it back, I couldn't get the clamp to actuate, leading me to think, for one horrible moment, that I had stripped the clamping plate threads—before I'd even turned a wheel!

However, after a bit of finagling, I managed to get it all back together and working ... no harm done.

T3 Fanatec's Porsche 911 Turbo Wheel

continued



Right, so we now know what kind of table you need for this baby to clamp onto with anything like the stiffness you require. And I should add that, if you have—like you should!—a race frame or race seat, you won't have any problems with the mounting of the wheel.

Let's move on to the design—and I promise, I won't use the word ergonomic! Let's begin with the good news: Unlike the G25 wheel's count of two, the Porsche 911 Turbo wheel has a plethora of wheel-mounted buttons, and knowing this is one of the biggest gripes against the G25, Fanatec have obviously been doing their research here. There are four buttons at each thumb, along with a hat switch on the middle spoke at the bottom of the wheel. In racing situations, you will not need to take your hand off the wheel unless you wish to shift, thanks to all these buttons, and this, as G25 drivers will testify to, is a good thing (and also allows you to use a third-party gear shifter with no buttons, like the Sim Gear units, if you so desire, without a loss of buttons, as happens with the G25). In addition to the amount, what strikes you about the buttons, as well, is their clean look, and well considered layout. The buttons have a nice smooth feel, without that 'clicky-cheap' sensation.

With my admiration for the wheel's design now mounting, and the wheel mounted, it's time to power the thing up: When you do so for the first time, it will go through a typical self-test, full lock-to-lock rotation, before you are met with Christmas tree-like display of all the lights and indicators. And here's where the surprise comes ... the buttons, despite their outwardly clean appearance, are actually all back lit.

This is probably due to the Porsche 911 Turbo being designed for both PC and PS3 use, which means that the buttons are back lit for both arrangements. Red lighting, with typical PS3 markings (L1, L2, R1, R2, Triangle, Circle, Square, X, and so forth.) for the console, while white lighting with button numbers are for use on the PC.

The Porsche 911 Turbo wheel has, like the G25, the capability of up to 900 degrees of rotation. Most sim-racers don't use anywhere near that (unless you're doing the P&G mod, of course), as they like responsive steering, but for the purists, if you want 900 degrees logo-to-clock, just like on your road 911, then you have it.

What you will also find on the Porsche 911 Turbo wheel is something quite unique, and not found on any other wheel I am familiar with: An extra Force-Feedback driver that is 'linked' to the throttle. When the throttle is pressed, and depending on how hard it's pressed, you feel the 'engine' vibration in the wheel thanks to two motors in the wheel that vibrate with increasing intensity as the pedal is pressed. Think Force-Feedback allied to the rumble you get on your gamepad, and you're halfway there—very ingenious!

The pedal set, too, has a nice feel to it. It comes with Velcro strips and rubber feet which ensures it will stay put on a carpet, or any hard surface. Actually, I had my doubts here, thinking that there was no way the pedals would stay put on the carpet with just some Velcro, but I was pleasantly surprised: They were firm and did not slide.

As with any decent wheel set these days, the pedal set is a three-pedal system, and they all have a feel that is as close to aftermarket pedals as you can get without spending an extra \$500 to get it.

The throttle is smooth with just the right amount of resistance, the clutch has a progressive pressure feel, just like a real clutch, and the brake pedal has a very good hydraulic feel with a soft-stop. Overall, the feel of the pedals is great, but, this being a Porsche thing, I would like to have seen the throttle and brake a bit closer together to better facilitate heel-and-toe action. The pedals, in addition, have yet another unique feature in that they can be run either wireless or wired—they run on four AA batteries in wireless mode, and are good for about 100 hours of racing. If you have a sim-rig, and don't want the hassle of replacing batteries, the pedals come with a 1.5m cable. Regardless of which method you choose, there is no lag that I could discern in the pedal actuation.

So, I think I've given the wheel a good once-over, here, and my conclusions are: They look great, I love the Porsche decals, I really like the buttons, I like the manufacturing, and there are a few novelties here which I believe will be well received by sim-racers.

But does it perform? First, let's talk about setting it up. The info on the website glosses over some of the features, but they are covered well in the manual. The wheel has internal configuration capabilities which you need to familiarize yourself with should you want to get the most from this wheel. With the built-in LED panel coupled with the on-board software, you can adjust the sensitivities (rotation amount), Force-Feedback (percent of effect), vibration (percent of effect), and gear shifting calibration. You can also save up to five different versions of this configuration. The GAME CONTROLLERS options are fairly limited, but then again, not much is needed. You can enable or disable split axis, adjust the Force-

Feedback level, and set the rotational sensitivity. Other than that, about all you can do in the Windows control panel is verify the operation of each button, pedal, and the wheel.

Setup is simple, and you can go straight onto the track if you want ... well, almost. I tested the Porsche 911 Turbo wheel with *rFactor*. Similar to the G25, I needed to go into *rFactor* in order to set up the mappings, feedback, and sensitivities. Some final tweaks to the offsets and 'digitality' of the axis, and I was good to race. I sat down behind the wheel of an *rTrainer* for some laps at Monza.

The Fanatec Porsche 911 Turbo wheel has a unique belt-driven Force-Feedback mechanism, and the feel of the belt drive is smooth. There is no gear whine, and no mechanical dead-spot caused by gear lash. The buttons all work well, and quietly. The gear shifters, while not so quiet, are well made, and both have positive, smooth actuation. I find that the gated-shifter feels a little better than that of the G25. This is mostly because of the positive feel. The G25 shifter is free enough that you can miss shifts by skipping a gate, but this doesn't seem to happen as much with the Fanatec gated shifter, and I believe this is due to its gates being more positively engaged. Driving with the wheel, shifter, and pedals is quite a bit of fun. Perhaps it's because I have been using a shifter for a while now that I took to it so quickly, but it seems as if, whenever a new wheel arrives, there is a learning curve ... not so with this arrival. I was a bit leery about the shifter being mounted on what amounts to a couple of sticks on the side of the wheel, but my concern was unfounded. The fly-away shifter mounted on the steel shafts works great, and the design, by way of fit and function, uses the edge of the mounting surface to bolster its strength. When used on the lap, the shifter strength is still more than adequate to hold the shifter stoutly. My first race with the *rTrainer* and the Fanatec Porsche 911 Turbo wheel resulted in a win!

I next turned to testing on the PS3. The Fanatec website claims that the wheel is compatible with *Gran Turismo HD*, *Need For Speed: Carbon*, and is estimated to be fully compatible with the PS3's massive release of *Gran Turismo 5* sometime this year. I have *GT: HD* on the PS3, so that's what I went with. Jumping straight in, the wheel is configured to work right out of the box. All that is needed is a quick 'reset' of the wheel from PC mode to PS3 mode—and this is as simple as pressing two buttons simultaneously on the wheel which makes it PS3 ready. It is fairly compatible with the Logitech wheel settings built into *GT: HD* as well. As with *rFactor*, gameplay was smooth and fun. The laptop configuration worked well—but wasn't ideal, being a little too narrow for my big-man (let's say) legs. Perhaps someone of smaller stature might have better luck keeping the wheel in place on a lap, but for me any rapid wheel input, things became a little upset and out of place.

The shifter(s) work well out there as satellites to the wheel base. It is a very practical way to mount a shifter yet use no additional mounting means - your lap and the wheel get the job done nicely. To get set up with the lap mode, Fanatec has included two 'wings' that clamp under the table clamp to form an integral unit. Since the wheel is largely wireless, sitting in the recliner to play on the PS3 is as simple as putting the pedals down, plugging in the USB-dongle, and putting the wheel on your lap. All of the game controls (select, start, and so forth) are right there on the wheel, and seem to work without problem. Just for kicks, I took out *Formula 1 Championship Edition*, and *Ridge Racer 7*. Both worked quite well with the Fanatec wheel.

And there you have it. Overall, the look, feel, and precision of this wheel are outstanding. The genuine hand-stitched Porsche licensed replica of a genuine

911 Turbo wheel feels great in your hands, and operates extremely smoothly thanks to the belt-drive Force-Feedback mechanism. The shifter units have a positive engagement feel to them that helps you shift with confidence; you aren't going to blow up your transmission, or motor from a blown shift with this number. The pedal units, while not configured greatly for heel-and-toe performance, have a feel to them that is as close to real pedals as I have yet tested for the money ... even better than some pedal units costing twice that of the entire wheel kit alone. They also have a unique look which is rather attractive. The wireless connection has no lag at all, and makes gameplay very convenient—especially if you are a PS3 gamer. PC gameplay with the wireless connection is not compromised in the least, either. Adding to the wheel's desirability, of course, is the genuine Porsche 'badging to the wheel, but you don't need to have a passion for Porsche 911s to seriously take a look at the Fanatec Porsche 911 Turbo Nordschleife Edition as a G25 alternative.

The only drawback that I can fault the Fanatec wheel for is its mounting clamp system. Because of its cam-lock, it is somewhat limited in the surfaces to which it may be clamped, and potential buyers will do well to take a good look at their mounting platform before committing. On the other hand, beside the potential mounting issues (which are easily surmountable, if you'll excuse the pun), I do not see any potential faults or difficulties with the Fanatec wheel. The 'official license', as well as an authentic Porsche wheel in our hands, is a great addition to the sim-racer's choice of wheel.

As always with AUTOSIMSPORT product reviews, I will be running this wheel through its paces over the next few months to see how it holds up, and I'll report back on my findings in a future issue. I should also add that this assignment is going to be a pleasure.

Manufacturer Stats: www.FANATEC.com

- *Price: \$350.00—Available [HERE](#)
- *Original Porsche 911 Turbo steering wheel design
- *Licensed by Porsche Lizenz- und Handelsgesellschaft mbH
- *Authentic metal Porsche logo on wheel
- *Hand stitched leather wheel manufactured according to Porsche quality standards
- *Compatible with PC and Playstation 3 (all games which support ForceFeedback wheels)
- *6+1 Speed H-pattern gear stick with realistic shifting feel
- *Additional exchangeable sequential gear stick included
- *Wireless pedals with + 100 hours battery life time (low battery warning on display and optional power supply cable for simulators)
- *Realistic clutch pedal with declining resistance
- *Pressure sensitive brake emulation with soft-stop
- *Diameter of wheel is 300 millimeters
- *Gear sticks are interchangeable and can be mounted on the left or right side
- *Turning angle can be adjusted in the wheel to 900°, 360° or 180° or in 1° steps by software
- *For PC: Strong table clamps with quick release, special non-slip rubber pads, and Velcro strips on the pedals keep everything in place. Integrated nuts allow the strong fixation on a gaming cockpit
- *For Playstation: Attachable lap wings and the attachment of the gear sticks to the wheel allow comfortable game play in the living room without the use of a table
- *Illuminated button symbols switch automatically between PC and Playstation
- *Powerful Mabuchi RS 550 Motor as used in RC cars delivers extra strong ForceFeedback effects
- *Additional 2 Force Feedback actuators in the wheel simulate motor vibrations
- *Extra smooth and silent belt drive without mechanical dead zone
- *High resolution wheel sensor
- *TUNING functions with LED display
- *Saves up to 5 wheel set-ups
- *Adjust ForceFeedback strength during game play
- *Adjust sensitivity independent from the game

Preview

KartSim

AUTOSIMSPORT finally persuaded Melbourne-based Maschine Simulations' Director Zach Griffin to give us a preview of their upcoming project, KartSim ... we've actually been trying for about a six months, having been treated to some periodic goodness via Google Talk, and as you'll see, the wait will be worth every moment

ZACH GRIFFIN





After announcing *KartSim* in November of 2006, Melbourne based developers Maschine Simulations Pty Ltd have now released in-game screenshots showcasing the Oakleigh Go-Kart Racing Club in Melbourne, Australia, that will feature in their soon-to-be-released demo. In addition to revealing what we can expect visually from *KartSim*, the new screens are the first to demonstrate the capabilities of their new proprietary simulation engine dubbed 'Kaizen'.

In what will be a first for racing simulations, *KartSim* will present drivers with the very same challenges that face real-world drivers and teams in real-time. Through the inclusion of interoperable dynamic weather, environment and track modeling technology, drivers will be forced to adapt to the changing conditions produced by these systems. With each system being co-dependent and visually represented, other dynamic elements such as time of day, cloud cover, sunlight, track temperature, air temperature/humidity, and racing-line rubber/marble levels are all calculated and relayed to the physics and graphics engines for processing; thus effecting the karts' handling and lap times.

With the initial release to feature Australian circuits only, Maschine Simulations have taken the unique approach of selecting circuits based not on their prominence within the Karting world, but upon the driving and visual experience offered; a decision that has led to little-known Kart tracks being included in the selection along with several world renowned circuits. As well as being the home track of one of the developers, the Oakleigh Go-Kart Racing Club is also known for its notorious bumps and undulations, high-difficulty level, as well as its tendency to generate many professional drivers.

Placing emphasis on realistically recreating the atmosphere and experience of a real-world Kart meeting, *KartSim* looks set to change the way drivers have traditionally approached sim-racing. With drivers having to adapt to the changing wet and dry conditions, fluctuating rubber levels, and the possibility of a downpour thirty seconds before the start of the race or qualifying, it should make off and online racing much more exciting and immersive, as well as making players keep an eye on those overhead clouds. With Maschine Simulations keeping quiet on the release date of both the demo and full release, *KartSim* is definitely one to watch.

More information can be found on their website KartSim.com, and by signing up to their announcement list.

A promotional graphic for the Logitech G-25 racing wheel. It features the Logitech logo in the top left, the text 'G-25' in large green letters, and 'FREE SHIPPING!!!' in blue. A large red price tag shows the wheel is on sale for \$259, down from \$289. A black racing wheel is shown in the bottom right corner.







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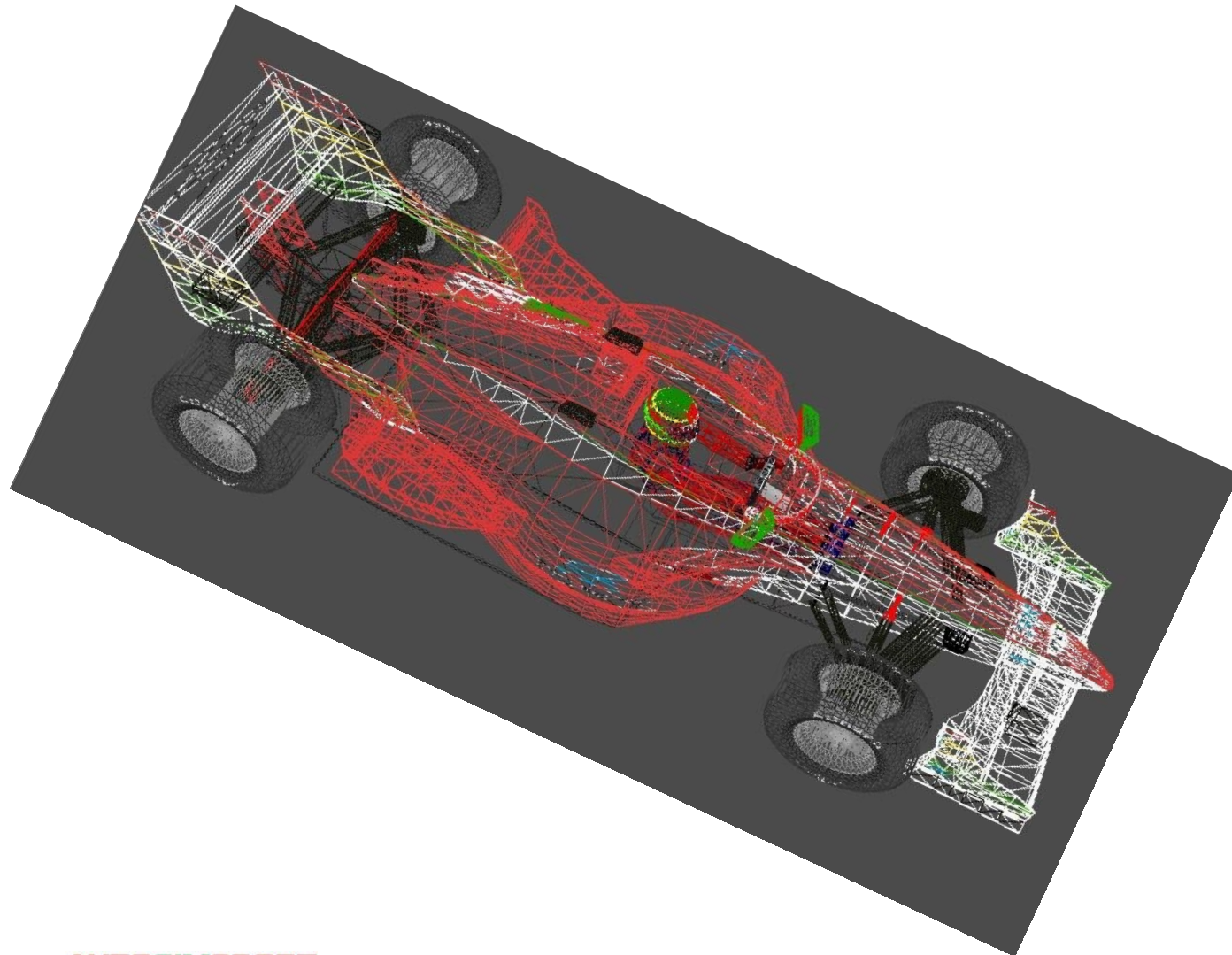
Preview

A1Legacy Preview

Sergio Bustamante and Lou Magyar preview the A1GP inspired simulator—two years in the making, the A1Legacy deal draws near to completion ...

Sergio Bustamante
Lou Magyar
GPLegacy/D3Legacy

Images courtesy of A1GP Team Mexico, D3Legacy Inc,
GhostSpeed and GPLegacy





Scene by GPLegacy Portugal, GhostSpeed.net

The Story

The greatest honor the D3Legacy/GPLegacy organization has had, as a company, has been working directly with A1GP Team Mexico since December 2005, when we became interactively involved on the outskirts of the Media Center in Monterrey with the A1GP series. Since then, we have developed plans for promoting the A1GP series, and not just on the software side; and it's definitely been quite a ride ... though a bumpy one too!

The first approach towards the software development took place in early 2005 when the co-founders of the project—including Maurice Willems and Raymond Schram from the Netherlands—'incorporated' their talents into what was to become known as A1Legacy, for which Raymond prepared a stunning A1GP model for A1GP Mexico's benefit. We were struggling to get the correct physics at the time, and it wouldn't be until early 2007—having worked with the A1GP Team Mexico offices, promoting the series at the AutoShow 2006 in Mexico (SIAM 2006), and creating a successful synergy for the media with both A1GP and 'Car Magazine' in Mexico—that A1GP Team Mexico Vice President and Seatholder, Julio Jauregui, announced to the media that the A1GP and GPLegacy alliance had been formed in order to assist in the training of drivers.



MONTERREY 2006

The first model provided by Raymond Schram, and Maurice Willems, still in its early stages and not introduced at the race in Monterrey, Mexico, in 2006



The quality of the first efforts for A1GP was a balanced mix featuring the wonderful talents of Tago Kalbri, MorroW Designs, Viljami Mäki, and of course, Raymond, Maurice, and James. With our deepest gratitude, we present this high-level render by MorroW Designs ...



Models for A1GP showing the continuous adjustments by the team. Raymond Schram's helmet design was used as much as possible in honour of the first A1Legacy line-up

It was during this period that we began the D3 Inc. and GPLegacy alliance which resulted in a direct evolution that provided us with a new model, as well as new data and physics that included plans for the series in the years to come. Keeping up with the confidential nature of this software was hard for everyone, especially considering the big 'name' that was about to enter into A1GP.

There were many different parties involved, beginning with the entire D3 team, and we had several challenges to overcome prior to the possibility of completion; following the guidelines for everyone involved, keeping Image Space Inc. in the know, following up with A1GP, Logitech guidelines, the current arrangement with Playseats as A1GP's partner—these were just some of the loops through which we had to hurdle. There were a lot of interests involved, and it required a lot of patience, sometimes meaning we'd go through weeks without any news. By this time, Maurice and Raymond were busy with outside projects (Raymond had already moved up, and was busy bringing *rFactor* developments to amazing new levels working with MMG), and we were working hard to find the magic formula that would keep everyone happy.



Renders by GhostSpeed.net, Pedro Rodrigues, Fernie Prieto, Andy Jones (I hope I'm not forgetting anyone!)

The software development lead was now in the experienced hands of Bill Tillman, assisted by James Burroughs who instantly became the software coordinator for the first stage of the software, back then known as 'Challenge Duran'—a title that was meant to promote the brilliant performances of Chava Duran in the British Formula 3 Series, and his successful run in A1GP.

Dave Henry continued to work on the physics, and the team now included new faces in the rFactor scene,

including Andy "eXtreme" Jones, who created some fantastic 3D work (which also allowed us to go live with the A1GP Team Mexico website to provide an interactive-tour of a track with the navigation system created by Media360 and GPLegacy).

GhostSpeed.net, already in talks to become the trademark holders in Portugal thanks to the work of Pedro Rodrigues (better known as dj_PRO), worked several skins for the car, and set together some

stunning scenes which helped us find a perfect balance in both promotion, as well as in-game 'action'.

Fernie Prieto, besides working on the new look for the car's spinner model, also set the new scene for the promotional campaign in Mexico: This was an exciting moment for all of us (you can imagine our pride) when, all over Mexico City, you could see the newsstands boasting the A1Legacy renders by Fernie, and previewing the car with GPLegacy's sponsorship on it! Really, this was a dream come true for us, and we couldn't wait to see the car on track with our logo set by the cockpit just as we had imagined. We were handling the promotional tour of A1GP Mexico leading to the race that was to be held in March: It was really difficult to reconcile fact with fiction at this stage; remember, we had done this with virtually no bankroll at all! It is important to mention too that, while in the throes of the frantic work to get the Mexico racetrack (Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez) organized in the sim, we realized that 'Carrera.4' had already completed a stunning version of the 1988 layout. That was a miracle since the lay-out of the track being used for the A1GP event was the same! I contacted him, and he authorized us to continue working with his track model, and I would like to publicly thank him, not only for his generosity, but for his continued quality of product which will culminate in his upcoming Formula One 1988 season featuring many of the best tracks from that year.

The track was then taken as the base for our work—preserving the personal touches of 'Carrera.4'—while now featuring the different lay-outs of the Mexican circuit, including the NASCAR lay-out, the short oval version (which we still need to set counter-clockwise), and a few more changes here and there.

GPLegacy then provided the transportation for the real A1 car, its engine, and everything else included. Of

course, this provided its own unique problems since we didn't actually have the means to transport the car to the race track! Not that Team Mexico had any idea ... so we turned to a personal friend and mentor Jean del Rosalm, who kindly provided us with his supercharged 540BHP Hummer H2. The Hummer then carried the car—and us—to the most important parts of Mexico City to promote the upcoming A1GP race at Autodromo Hermanos Rodrigues. You may remember these articles which were published exclusively by AUTOSIMSPORT.

In the meantime, the 'Challenge Duran' concept was evolving bit by bit, and, working together with ISI, we had a three series mod, including the rTrainer cars, the rF3 mod with closer settings to the British Formula 3 championship, and a 'hybrid version' with new physics using Bridgestone-provided specs for the tyre model. (The teams in the Formula 3 series would run in unison with the A1 Team Mexico liveries, and, at that time, we also had a very nice surprise from Marcelo Manfredi and Desafio Virtual who, while running the Formula 3 championship, had the skin for the GPLegacy team as close as it could be to the A1GP Team Mexico's skin. It was near impossible for me to complete the championship, but I'd like to set a well deserved 'thanks' to Desafio Virtual for this fantastic gesture.)

Inside Glance: Latest Developments And Work

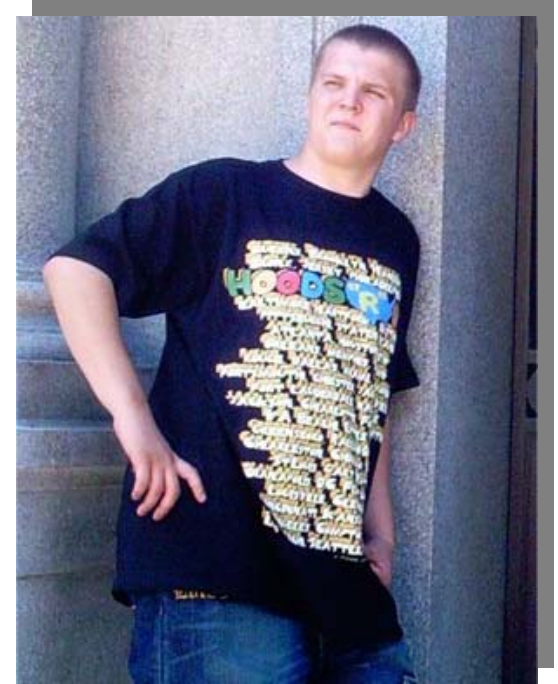
As the project moves forward, we would like to recognize and thank the efforts and work for the Ferrari 599 GTB Pace car. The model was not only a brilliant debut in the rFactor scene for Sergey Poltavskiy (AKA RedStar), but also an incredible process both in terms of time and quality. The full model from start to finish took 9 days, and every day it was a perfect balance between quality, poly-count awareness for better FPS for everyone, and learning all the inside operation needed for rFactor.



Salvador "Chava" Duran testing the software, assisted and spotted by Raúl Valenzuela (red shirt) and Eduardo Borrego (gray shirt)

This work was also the result of our newest collaborator, Alexander Balanesko. Alexander took over the importing for the model and textures, and got straight into the inner core of rFactor. The early import of the car in-game was done by Sergio Bustamante, making sure that the basics were covered, while Sergey completed the model. It only took the very first day for Alexander to coordinate with Sergio, and

together they made sure that, by the end of the day, the car would have good drive-ability, correct gear-ratio, a reasonable engine to start with, and the core sound editing by Sergio. It was impressive to watch Alexander work, and even more impressive when both Sergey's model and Alexander's expertise proved that the car was definitely a joy to drive even in its early stages.



Here's a small showcase of the work done from Thursday January 31 to February 10 2008. The Pace Cars in the software will be drivable as a special feature which is now in the final stages for the simulator's release. You can also download a special AUTOSIMSPORT wallpaper at the download section of our website. And don't forget to read Sergio's regular GPLEGACY column further on in this issue.

Credits

A website (in the works) will be revealed soon with pictures and some goodies because this has been a huge effort, and we really want everyone to receive the credit and recognition they deserve. All your efforts have been the inspiration for all the hard work that was carried out throughout these last two years and counting. Please note that we're setting the names in a random order because of the importance of everyone's work: We wouldn't want people to think that this is a hierarchy kind of thing.

Dave Henry: Physics—D3 Inc, D3Legacy, Nate Steinke: Audio—D3 Inc, D3Legacy, James Burroughs: Coordinator, In-Game Expert, Importing, 3D Modeler, General Support, Paul Harwood: Beta Testing—D3Legacy, Martin Bruno: 3D Modeller, 2005-2006 Audi Pace Car Details—VRacer, GPLegacy Argentina, Bill Tillman: Coordinator, 3D Modeller, In-Game Import & Updates including 2005-2006 Audi Pace car model— D3 Inc. D3Legacy, MorroW, Tago Kalbri: 3D Modeling, Early Scenes & Renders, Lou Magyar: Coordinator, Track Maker, Beta Testing, Schedule Keeper—GPLegacy USA, D3Legacy USA, Timo Hakala: 3D Artist, Graphic Design, Skins— GPLegacy Co-founder, Bogart Escamila: Coordinator, Operations, Advisor— GPLegacy Mexico Sub-Director, Maurice Willems: InGame Expert ,Early Co-ordination— A1Legacy Co-Founder, Pedro Rodrigues: Graphic Design, Skins Designer, 3D Scenes, Renders— GhostSpeed, GPLegacy Portugal, Nicola Palarchi: Technical Advisor—A1GP, GP2 Head Engineer, Cristyan Chavez: Media & Event Operations, Skins & Graphic design— GPLegacy Ltd., Ericka Garcia: Legal Advisor, General Support—GPLegacy Mexico, Alejandro Barradán: TV Coverage, Manager & Producer— Global21, Viljami Mäki: Eximius Art, 3D Artist, Mechatronics, Software-Hardware Blue-Printing, Software-Hardware Interface Design— GPLegacy Finland (N), Sergey Poltavskiy (RedStar): 3D Artist, 2007-2008 Ferrari Fiorano 599GTB Pace Car Model & Textures— GPLegacy, DPLegacy Project Founder, Israel Selvas: Technical Support, Event Operations (EDM 2006), Alexander Balanesko: rFactor Vehicles Guru, In-Game Importer, Physics, Sounds, Upgrades Expert, Isidro Farfán: Media Advisor, Promotion—Farfan Films Entertainment, FOX Sports, Media Advisor, Promotion, Raymond Schram: 3D Artist, In-Game and Import, First A1Legacy Model—A1Legacy Co-Founder, Ivonne Selvas: Event Operations (EDM 2006), Maria Teresa Riba: Media Advisor, Promotion—Farfan Films Entertainment, FOX Sports, Media Advisor, Promotion, Carlos Suarez-Peredo: RP, 2006 Promotional Route, Graphics Design—Co-ordinator Operations A1GP Mexico, Clif Davis: Software Coordinator, Supervisor, Beta Testing—D3 Inc, D3Legacy, Raúl Valenzuela: Beta Testing & 2006 Events—GPLegacy Co-Founder, Leslie Gonzalez-Kennedy: Advisor, TV Anchor, General Support, Sergio BustamanteL GPLegacy Founder, GPLegacy Mexico President, Tim Watt: Beta Testing, News, League Management & RP—AUSMEX, Alex Martini: Beta Testing, News, General Support, Scott "Uly" Groom: Set-ups Expert, Beta Testing, News, League Management—AUSMEX, Brian Nathanson: Skins, Graphic Design, Editorial Trainee, Luis 'Chapulin' Diaz: Professional Beta Testing, Salvador Durán: Professional Feedback, A1GP Team Mexico: Technical Advisor, Licensing, Support, Operations, ISI: rFactor Platform, Support, Technical Advice & Support, Arnold Wong: In-Game Support, Shaun: Track Making, Skins, General Support—A1Legacy Co-founder - GPLegacy Honorary Founder, Stuart Cowie: Technical Advice, General Support, Brendon Pywell: Technical Advice, General Support—BTB, Peter Walsh: Technical Advice, News, General Support—RFCentral,

Very special thanks to: We really hope we don't forget anyone! Logitech Latin America, Alma Almeyda, Raúl Esquivel, Abraham Flores, Moller, and everyone at DesafioVirtual group for the eternal support, Special thanks and dedication go to Julio, Juan, Jose Ramón, (last names undisclosed for security reasons) RacerAlex, Keith Smith-Gillespie, Bob Simmerman, Rosa Elena Torres, Manuel "Chacho" Medina, Jean del Rosal, Erika Rodriguez, Luis Monroy, Fernando Cortina, Ferito Deutsch, Marcelo Manfredi, Arturo Vega, León Gateño, Oscar Teutli, Oliverio, Guso, Raúl, Claudia Mora, Antonio Otero, Antonio Reyes.

Pro Drivers Luis "Chapulin" Diaz for early beta testing, Salvador Durán, David Garza, Juan Pablo García, Michel Jourdain Jr., Memo Rojas Jr., Juan Carlos Herrero, Francisco Name Jr., Fernando Labardini, Fernando, Andres, Beli, Juan Manuel and Mauricio Name, Benito Guerra Jr., Leslie Gonzalez-Kennedy



USPits

TPSCC Mod

Bob Simmerman finds the US Pits' beta in his inbox—and is stricken with a most enduring love at first site as he realizes he is witnessing the best AI racing in an rFactor offering ever created—but that came after his marveling at the physics of the Car of Tomorrow ... and that came after he was gob-smacked by the graphics ...

BOBSIMMERMAN





Just around the corner now, another oval racing experience is coming to a PC near you in the form of the latest mod from the US Pits, the TPSCC mod. Among other things, this is what I call a Valentine's Day surprise! How they kept this one quiet for so long is probably a great story in itself, but in the meantime, it was a pleasure to have an early look at what is shaping up to be one hell of a knockout.

Jim Kerekes, the kind soul who tipped me off to this upcoming mod, mentioned the inclusion of the Car of Tomorrow, and I was pretty much hooked right there—and still hadn't even installed! Seriously, the COT as modeled by the US Pits is a work of art. While not a favorite of many drivers, and, for that matter, many fans, I think that this past weekend's Bud Shootout was, without question, one of the best restrictor plate races

that has ever been run, and not just because Dale Earnhardt Jr. won; it was the best because NASCAR, in my opinion, is getting closer to the design of car—a 'formula' if you will—that will not only provide for fantastic racing, but will also provide for the longevity of the sport should the worst happen. And I can't wait for the Daytona 500, it's *torture!*

The worst? All manufacturers pulling out of the series, for example. The COT goes a long way to preventing the end of the sanctioning body should something like this happen as the specs are pretty much cast in NASCAR stone, and it doesn't take a U.S. or Japanese automanufacturer to build and race one. Long story short—I like the COT, and feel that it will be a large contributor to the continued success of the NASCAR Sprint Cup for years to come. You know, it sure would

be nice if we could, you know, sort of slow down on the sponsor changes? I know that things change, and NASCAR has certainly seen its share of main sponsors over the years, but just once I would like to see something like the NASCAR Jims Oil Cup, or the NASCAR Rock Crusher Transmission Cup, you know, elbows and grease sorts of things. *Ahhh, the good old days...*

Ok, back to the important stuff. I grabbed the file at the end of the link Jim provided, and got on with the business of obtaining and firing up the latest oval action for *rFactor*. Now let me say this right off the bat: I didn't have much time with this baby because we were up on a deadline, and it came in pretty late ... that said ...

After a painless install, I was presented with what must be one of the most gorgeous COT *rFactor* models ever created. I know, I know, I say that about everything but ... *damn!* I couldn't wait to hit the track, making Delaware the place for some laps in anger in this stunning car.

The first thing I noticed was the competition—including the likes of Elvis Costello, and Bond (James) Bond—it was refreshing to see the obvious enjoyment the mod team is realizing doing this sort of thing, and an official license, as we know, is not a guarantee of quality, while a lack of it sometimes allows the developers to actually give us an authentic ride. And this, I should add, *is* the US Pits. They have pedigree. Okay ...into the cockpit we go ...

The modeling is outstanding, with fully functional, and just this side of photorealistic gauges. I found myself in the garage, so I decided to have a look at the AI, and what they were up to. Some damn fine racing, that's what. I hope they are as gentle with me, I can get pretty rough out there if pushed too far.

Damn, this car is gorgeous.



I watched a lot of Daytona coverage in the last week, and one thing about the COT is clear—it would appear to have a bit of bounciness to it, if the on-track behavior of the cars was any indication. The problem? Those damn bump stops! And another thing was clear as well, and that was the dramatic effect the splitter and wing element truly have on a 3500lbs stock car—or, rather, a 3500lbs sports-type stock car. Kurt Busch drove out of a spin that was difficult to believe (if it was a sim, we'd be saying 'arcade!'), but it was also clear evidence as to the influence of that wing on the car if and when the rear-end gets out of shape. He just drove out of the damn thing, it was amazing to see. Of course, there is a limit to this, but it would appear that more driver control exists with the splitter and wing package, and that is exactly

how this new Pits mod drove—like a 3500lbs stock car topped with sports car aero accoutrements. I loved it. You can definitely feel the effects of the wing, and it is fully adjustable in the garage. The splitter, however, is fixed, so you might be able to fiddle with ride heights to see where that leads ...

Sounds are very well done, and at this stage of the beta, you just can't beat the guttural tone of an American V8 at idle. I wish I could take a screenshot of that!

I think it's safe to say the multiplayer will be fine, that seems to be a common theme among most *rFactor* mods.

After admiring the entire experience for a while, I had to get back to the business of driving; this really is a fantastic driving model, proof positive of a lot of blood,

sweat, and tears behind the effort. The US Pits took a little heat for their first stocker, and you can see they're out to prove a point here: And I'll tell you this, they just have.

Off to Talladega. I wanted to see how these babies handled on the big tracks with all these new aerodynamic gizmos—not to mention a noobies enthusiasm. And damned if I didn't run into some of the best offline racing to be seen in *rFactor*.

My jaw nearly dropped as I was running three wide with the AI for laps at a time! Huge fun—and the AI weren't simply driving in a single file line, no; they were actually changing lanes, and position, the entire time. Well, at least what I saw—I got bushwhacked in Turn 3 and left the event early, but subsequent replay examinations revealed further proof of on-track observations: This was some of the best AI I have ever raced with in *rFactor*, shipped product, or mod. The draft was also modeled extremely well, and it was interesting to note just how damn fast you can go to the rear of the field if you get out of the line in front of you. On the other hand, hitting the middle lane seemed to have quite a bit less of a 'loss' of position, but it was obvious that in the middle, the draft was different. The aero effects are very well done, and you will do yourself a favor with some practice offline before the big race on league night. In fact, I can't wait to stomp Martini into the ground—again—in these cars at this track! I was a bit surprised because it all really seems too good to be true—great car models, great graphics, great physics, and great AI, but there it was. Time to try a 'Michigan Type' track, off to Fontana ...

Well, uh, I sort of got 'behind' on the setup here, but the field never did get far enough away to prevent me from seeing some damn fine AI racing up ahead. I didn't mind as I was still enjoying just driving the COT around. Anyway, a short way into a race, I watched as a bit of

smoke appeared up ahead, and then the clear indication that a couple of AI got together and a yellow was imminent. I thought that it might be a field clearing incident, but was happy to note that the AI were doing just fine getting around the incident. It reminded me of the millions of wrecks I have seen on TV, and the simple matter is that the on-track action of this mod is fantastic.

Now, for the ultimate AI test—a race at Brist...I mean, Tennessee. Sure enough, the AI were more than capable here, but I figured a yellow flag was inevitable, just like the real life event, and sure enough, it happened when a car got turned sideways in front of me. One of the infuriating things about many *rFactor* AI behaviors is the annoying tendency of them to slam on the brakes after a caution, often well before the start/finish line. However, in this case, the AI appeared to actually slow down gradually, and then slow down to pace speeds *after* crossing the start/finish line. No slamming on the brakes that I could see, and I had cars all around me. But all was not perfect as they did appear to have some trouble navigating through the wreckage, noticeably more so than on the bigger tracks, but this should come as no surprise as even the venerable You Know What 2003 had a short track pace car and AI issues for practically the entire life span of that series. Then again, if you have ever seen the race on TV or in person, well, the AI may, in fact, be a lot more human! Whatever the case, it was great seeing them race two and three wide here, but there were often dips to the apron that may have been frowned upon in a real event. Nevertheless, seeing this sort of AI racing at Bristol was a huge surprise.

Did I mention I can't wait to race this in the Saturday AUTOSIMSPORT League? With offline AI this well done, practice will mean something again!

I

I still can't believe they snuck something this good under the radar for so long, but I am damn glad to have been given a chance to have an early look and I assure you—you *must* have this one!

Thanks to Jim and all the rest at the US Pits, you guys are the best! I'll be reviewing this one at leisure in our next issue, of that you can be assured. Oval racers—2008 is the year you really get spoiled for choice!




AUTOSIMSPORT

T2

Grid Motorsports

Bob Simmerman takes an in-depth look at the most astonishing 'thing' ever created for rFactor: Combining elements that will ensure that mismatches become a thing of the past along with the possibility of the casual sim-racer creating mods for their own use at the click of a button—not to mention a fine grid-GP car for the discerning sim-racer's pleasure—this mod/utility is destined for greatness, as Dave Hostetler explains ...

BOBSIMMERMAN



rFactor is a giant salad bar, but you've got to dish it up yourself. We've just added a waiter to the equation, so our customers can come in and just sit down at their regular table and have their plate delivered to them.



Introducing The 'Thing'

Rapidly approaching its third birthday, *rFactor* has shown us both the good and the bad of a freely moddable design. I think we can all agree that the multiplayer and modability options set new standards in the racing-simulator genre, but, as we move rapidly forward, we are beginning to see—as we are experiencing in the largely unfettered mortgage and loan markets in the real-world—the faults of deregulation as well.

For instance, have you ever tried to jump into a pick-up server lately? If so, then you will have run across the problem of having the right car and track, but not the correct version of one, or both. Brands Hatch by any other name is still a race track, but in the *rFactor* world, Brands Hatch can be one of numerous versions created by different modders ... which effectively means, you

have no idea whether you have the 'right' Brands until you either land up with a 'mismatch' of some sort, with a subsequent boot from the server, or a joyful hour with a pack of grey boxes with wheels. In other words, it is extremely difficult to simply hop on a server and race a few laps, and *rFactor* has evolved—almost as a result—into a 'buddy-system' sim where the only races you want to bother getting involved in are the ones with guys you have some association with, since you are (probably) on the same page when it comes to mod (which version), track (which version), car (which version), and so forth.

Where this leaves the newbies—since *rFactor's* lobby is not precisely your old VROC when it comes to friendliness—is anyone's guess, and mine would be—disappointed, frustrated, and probably playing something else entirely. Indeed, for all intents and

purposes, we can safely say that the days of jumping online for a bit of fun racing strangers *ala* VROC are now over. Which is a sad thing, though also something that may well change when *iRacing* rolls into town—except, of course, that the strangers will all probably be rich dentists running on tracks with cars you can't afford!

So yes, problems—which could have been nipped in the bud had anyone taken the idea of a Consulting Body seriously (as opposed to killing the idea off the bat without even a dialogue) are consuming *rFactor* like a, erm, weed: Sooner or later, it's going to get out of control, and someone's gonna have to do something about the backyard that will probably involve some power-tools and a lot of cutting.

Having said all of this, *rFactor*, when it all comes together, remains one hell of a great time. And it's about to get a lot better too, thanks to the efforts from the folks at Grid Motorsports who have released a mod that not only provides an excellent GP-type racing car to drive, but an interface to *rFactor* that offers unprecedented levels of control, and may well be a cure for the weeds that doesn't involve said power tools.

The ability to change all kinds of interesting parameters—power curves, body shapes—of any given mod ... *on the fly*? Nothing short of miraculous. The ability to make mismatches a thing of the past? Nothing short of inspirational. The end of my power tool analogy? Blessed intervention!

Now, as regular readers are aware, my ability to comprehend 'things' (as I like to refer to things which have more than one syllable and rely on the ability for thought) is limited at the best of time, and this offering from Grid is obviously a bit more than your 'typical' mod; you can therefore rest assured that it resides in a place that is well beyond my comprehension.



So you'll excuse me if we take this slow: Which, of course, is exactly the opposite from the car that comes with this mod; it is not only quick, but a blast to drive as well. Excellent physics, wonderful models, and decent AI for those offline times when you've been booted from 3,000 servers as a 'possible cheat'.

But it is the front-end of the mod—before you even get to the cars—that is the most intriguing part of this thing, and makes it unlike anything we have seen before.

In order to find out more, I contacted the folks at Grid Motorsports, and was immediately put in touch with developer Dave Hostetler, with whom we will now take a guided tour of this unique and highly-creative mod/utility that will offer leagues some fascinating, and new levels of control. Like that, you ask? How about—creating four chassis and four engines with totally distinct aero and power in about five minutes?

What prompted the development team to create an interface with an obvious design for future growth of the sim it was built for?

The features currently available in our application are indicative of one of the core philosophies of our team: Sim-racers should be provided with the means to easily apply their own preferences to their sim-racing experience. We think that many sim-racers are savvy enough to have sophisticated opinions and desires about how they would like to customize the look, feel, and feature set of their vehicles, but don't necessarily have (or care to have) the technical familiarity required to implement those opinions—and nor should they.

Someone who's familiar with racing and motor-sports has likely developed an intuitive understanding of many of the concepts involved, but in sim-racing, those concepts tend to manifest through arcane and often poorly documented technical programming and configuration features exposed in the various simulations. These technical barriers effectively prevent people who otherwise have the capability of experimenting within the context of those motor-sports concepts from being able to do so. And even worse, it dramatically raises the barrier to entry for people who don't possess a familiarity with basic motor-sports concepts, but would like to begin to develop it.

Obviously every simulation platform accumulates its own subset of individuals (modders) who bridge that knowledge gap and provide customizations to the drivers, but in general, that just means that the drivers are getting a different (or slightly altered) set of features from the original, which may, or may not, even be more closely aligned with what the driver truly wishes. As a community, anyone who isn't themselves a modder is just sort of stuck waiting around for someone to implement the particular set of customizations that they want.



We want to take the 'community service' aspect of modding a step further and actually enable drivers to own some of the customization spectrum, without being burdened with the technical minutia that is typically required to create simulation software mods.

This isn't an original concept, by any means, but we think it's one that is under-served in simulation racing. The modding community is fantastic, don't get us wrong, but the tendency for most folks is to tackle their particular fancy, which they do with admirable fervor, and then simply invite drivers to come along for the ride if they happen to share the same fancy.

Which isn't to say that we aren't really doing the same thing; it's just that our fancy happens to actually be enabling drivers to experience some of that customization power themselves.

And a lot of that remains unrealized at this point, as you've experienced with the current version of our software. What's currently available is just the barest minimum of what we envision. A lot of the customizations still require us to implement them manually, and that's a service that we offer to those who join our league (Grid Motorsports World Cup—GMWC).

The league, and the Grid Motorsports concept, germinated together. The league is, on the one hand, a typical league with typical benefits (camaraderie, quality racing, catalyst for socialization, and so forth), while on the other hand it's our laboratory for developing these customization concepts. It's going to take us a good long while to fully implement our vision, but there's already tremendous opportunity for it to begin to manifest, at least on a small scale, and the league serves that purpose.

What are some of your plans for the interface as development continues?

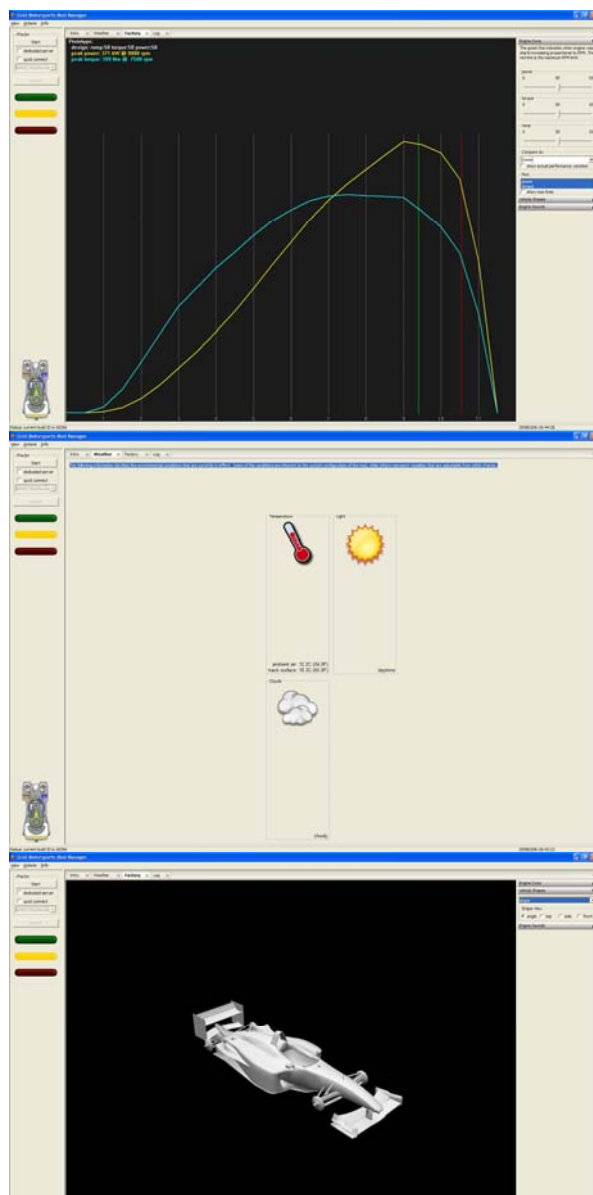
As you can probably well imagine, we plan to provide a much broader set of automated vehicle customization capabilities, so that someone can interact with our software and simply point and click their way into a genuinely unique set of vehicle components, which are assembled to create a brand new vehicle. Furthermore, once having done so, that vehicle can then be assimilated by our mod infrastructure which will then communicate that new vehicle definition to anyone who uses the Grid Motorsports software, so that the vehicle is recognized and legitimately usable in online racing.

That process is basically what occurs now for our league members, only it happens for the most part through informal, non-automated communication. In other words—any of our drivers who are inclined to experiment with the available options informs us what they wish to do; we implement it (usually within a day or so), and it then becomes available in the next incremental Grid Motorsports update (of which we average one or two per week).

What inspired the inclusion of GPL era cars?

That happened specifically to address event variety in the league schedule. Collectively, we're fans of motor-sport racing of nearly every ilk, and after an extended period of racing our grid-GP cars exclusively, we developed a desire to broaden our racing menu, so to speak. We've got a couple of old school GPL veterans in our ranks (not least of whom is our lead engineer and co-founder), and so vintage formula cars were an obvious choice. We also race stock cars, and GT sports cars. We'd race motorcycles if they were available (at least I would).

This is a great chance to segue into a description of another unique aspect of Grid Motorsports as a league service. Those vintage formula cars are a perfect example of our ability to proxy third party *rFactor* content easily to league members. In effect, the Grid Motorsports infrastructure can act as a content manager for alternative vehicles (and even tracks), giving drivers one-click entry into a very diverse league environment, without being burdened with all of the individual quirks associated with finding/installing/configuring a large set of independent mods. That process (managing all the various mod content) remains one of the biggest obstacles to online participation, in our opinion. With Grid Motorsports, that burden is shifted to us, the administrators of the official Grid Motorsports configuration.



The Grid Motorsports Mod Manager in action: Top left and bottom left; the 'Factory' where you create your unique ideas come to life: Centre left; the weather ...

We can make sure that the right content is made available in a compatible manner, and from the drivers' perspective, they just receive whatever they need to have in order to jump into *rFactor* and join the league server.

This feature evolved from our desire to incorporate other content into the league activities. We evaluated the situation and discussed how we might best leverage the tools and services that we'd already implemented for the league and our own mod. *rFactor* provides the means for simply redefining the set of available vehicles when any particular mod is active, and it can easily include vehicles that already exist in the *rFactor* installation, independent of the active mod. So—when we wanted to race, for example, stock cars, it made absolutely no sense to redistribute a package of stock car content when ISI saw fit to provide a very serviceable set to everyone by default. But rather than require that league members switch to a different mod/series in *rFactor* just to race a different car, we saw an opportunity to streamline the experience greatly and simply incorporated the other category into our vehicle filter. Our software enables us to present that content to drivers, alongside our grid-GP cars, seamlessly.

This is just one of many unique opportunities that are available to us because of the fact that we have a client-side application that is capable of reconfiguring and rebuilding a fully capable *rFactor* mod on the fly.

But this actually brings up an important point that needs to be stressed: The heart of Grid Motorsports is the grid-GP class of vehicles, which are our original contribution to *rFactor*. We've implemented the ability to

deliver and configure additional content, but we make no claims of credit for that content itself. To a certain extent, the Grid Motorsports software can be thought of like a web browser, and various *rFactor* mods as web content. We simply deliver the content in a manner that makes for a simple and cohesive experience for someone who wants to participate in an online league and who therefore needs the specific pieces of content used by that league. Imagine if every time you wanted to visit a particular website you had to manually install something onto your computer, and worry about whether you'd gotten the right version or put it in the right place. Well, that's effectively how the current process works for the sim-racing community.

It's a giant salad bar, but you've got to dish it up yourself. We've just added a waiter to the equation, so our customers can come in and just sit down at their regular table and have their plate delivered to them. They're still free to get up and go grab a helping of anything else that's available, but in general, drivers significantly invested in a league environment don't need to or even particularly care to.

When we packaged Grid Motorsports for its public release, we simplified the content configuration to showcase the grid-GP cars and to help avoid confusion over what, precisely; Grid Motorsports was bringing to the table. Once someone syncs to our online configuration, however, they're effectively opting into what amounts to the league content, which is what we maintain and customize on a continuous basis. It can be an amalgam of content cobbled together from various sources, be it default ISI content, or the latest hot thing on *rFactor* Central, or some experimental car posted by someone on an obscure forum. Regardless, we do the hard part and our league members just have to click and drive, secure in the knowledge that they'll have everything they need and shouldn't have to wrestle with incompatibility issues or mismatches, and so forth.



On a related note, one of our long term goals is to address the major problem of distributing, sharing, and applying vehicle setups in a collaborative league environment. The current situation is actually quite derelict, from a usability perspective. It's something that most platforms (*rFactor* included) really make little or no attempt to address—which isn't terribly surprising since they tend to neglect league needs categorically.

Some Conclusions On The Thing

While considered by many to be a risky endeavor, *rFactor* has shown remarkable resiliency, and the interest of the modding community seems only to be intensifying as time passes. Moreover, with no 'modder-sandbox' sims planned from any developer in the future (with the

exception of *VGP3* {see Volume 3 Number 7}), *rFactor*'s supposed weakness is also the uniqueness that guarantee its longevity. And given the depth and complexity of many recent additions, it is also clear that content developers are feeling comfortable with the platform, its limitations, and, more importantly, its possibilities.

ISI have been hands-off since the birth of their baby—which is not the same as being indifferent. Their policy seems to have been, from the beginning, to trust the community implicitly with their baby, in the full knowledge that any problems that would inevitably arise from such an innovative concept would be solved by that very same community. Grid Motorsports' 'mod' (more accurately, it should be called a mod/utility) offers

just the right solution for a problem that has vexed *rFactor* since day one: With the idea of an all-powerful vetting community nixed in the bud, a system that is apolitical—that is, a 'computer-controlled' system—that will ensure sim-racers are all on the same page when running *rFactor* is a tremendous boon for the simulator's future. Add to that the possibility of leagues creating a 'sim-engineering' aspect for their drivers, and what you have is one of the most fascinating things ever created for *rFactor*.

If the current work by Grid Motorsports is any indication, the next three years may just have us hooking the computer up to a 'special box', and five minutes later driving away in a real car of our very own design! Well, maybe not that advanced, but in the meantime, we can get pretty close thanks to the genial team behind Grid Motorsports.

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AUTOSIMSPORT

Papyrus

Looking Back At Papy 2 Look Forward 2 iRacing

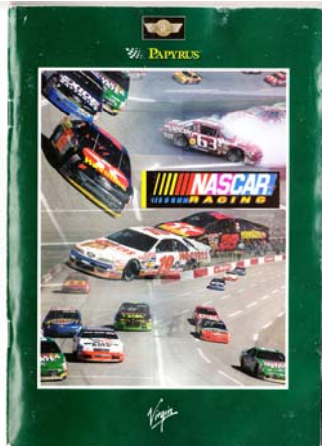
Jon Denton confesses to an infatuation with Papyrus ...

JONDENTON



Papyrus Looking Back At Papy 2 Look Forward 2 iRacing

continued



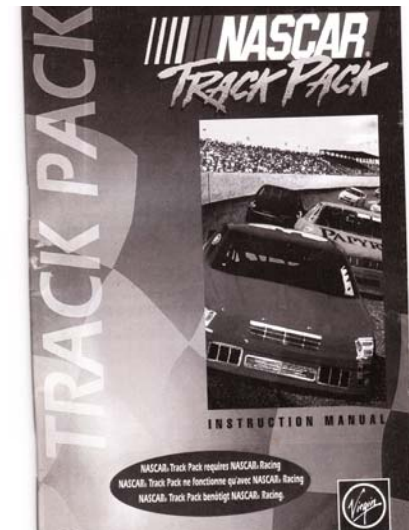
It's about feel. The history of Papyrus Design Group (1989-2003)—whether it be their hits or their misses—is about that unique feel they brought to sim-racing: Even their rare flops came with a stamp that guaranteed one thing—you could always be sure that the feel—that impossible to qualify or quantify 'something', that magic atmosphere—would be present and, always, inspired.

Whether you were driving IndyCars, NASCARs, SODA off-road machines, or 1967 Formula One cars, you always felt as if you were taking part in a motor race. The suspension of disbelief, they call it, and however they did it (and they alone know since I cannot think of one sim that has replicated the feel of a Papy sim), the fact that they did it so consistently is what has made Papyrus sims benchmarks in the genre, from their first offering, 1989's *Indianapolis 500: The Simulation*, right through to their final effort, *NASCAR Racing 2003 Season*.



I remember to this day my first try-out with every Papyrus sim in their stable; I purchased every single one (with two notable exceptions), and would rush home feverishly with box in clammy maw, desperate to get virtual wheels turning the moment I stepped through the door.

It was not until 1990 that my father replaced the family B+BBC Micro with an IBM compatible PC; until that fateful day, I had been driving in *REVS* for years using an analogue stick (which had developed my hand-eye co-ordination to a fine, delicate level of precision), but the arrival of the PC meant the time had come to move on, and the first thing on my mind, when I was introduced to my dad's new kit was, 'What next now that *REVS* has gone?'

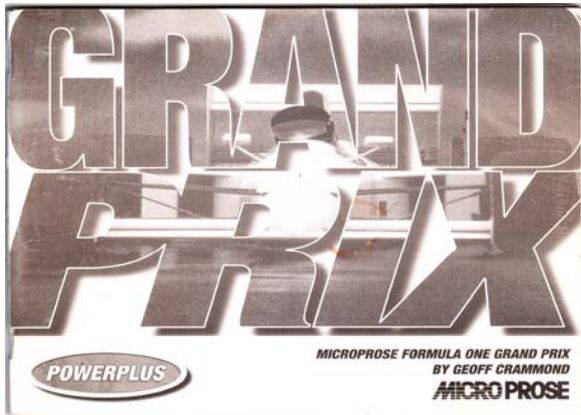


Back in those days, PC-gaming was simply a matter of buying one game, and then swapping floppy discs in the playground—piracy wasn't even a concept back then, much less a crime. Initially, I got hold of all the driving games I could find with Accolade's *Test Drive III* and *GP Circuit*, as well as the aurally superb 4D Sports Driving all vying for my attention ... but none quite took me in the way *REVS* had done in the mid-1980s.

Unlike *REVS*, none of these games were attempting 'real' simulation, and while *Test Drive III* had (at the time) a lush 3D open environment, the vehicle modelling was so poor that it was only the graphics that allowed you to know that you were driving a car! All that, though, was to change when, one fateful afternoon, I was handed a single disk titled *Indianapolis 500: The Simulation*; it came with a word of warning from my erstwhile fellow casual-pirate, too: 'This one is *really* hard!'

Papyrus Looking Back At Papy 2 Look Forward 2 iRacing

continued



Just the words I wanted to hear, I didn't even change out of my school uniform before firing up the sim. I still hadn't three hours later. At the time, playing with a stick, the sim was tricky, but it *felt* like a car, the entry level March (the blue one!) understeering mildly on turn-in to a wonderfully realised Indianapolis track, while the edgy but quick Penske (yep, the yellow one!) becoming scarily loose if you happened to take a bit too much speed into Turns One or Three.

It was a delight; I spent days tuning my Penske, putting it on pole and then watching startling replays of a full thirty-five car field indulging in a cataclysmic accident as they tried to avoid me spinning in Turn One! Each car bounced off each other, or each wall, in a way that looked so convincing—as convincing as the way they handled. This sim was my future: Finally, I had found my *REVS* killer.

By spring of 1992, though, with the Indy 500 won more times than I could count, and my parents growing so tired of my three hour, 200-lap races that headphones had been implemented on the family PC, it was finally time to move on.

FORMULA T2



User's Manual
Manuel de l'utilisateur
Bedienungsanleitung
Manual del Usuario

Other titles had come, of course; Accolade's *Grand Prix Unlimited*, for one, but they had gone away oh so quickly. However, 1992 was an amazing year for me in more ways than one; not only was Crammond (via MicroProse) to release *Formula One Grand Prix (F1GP)*, but I was also to obtain my first set of pedals and wheel, a rather rudimentary, plastic device that could turn through about 180 degrees.

So, with the arrival of *F1GP* it was time for *Indy 500* to be consigned—like *REVS*—to my legendary sim-history. But that, too, was not to last because, at the 1993 Computer Games show in London, at the Olympia, I witnessed Papyrus' next evolution: *IndyCar Racing*.

The cockpit view reminded me of my time at Indy, but this sim itself looked spectacular. Fully texture mapped, and featuring eight of the 1992 season's tracks along with most of the real drivers (Michael Andretti's sojourn into F1, in 1993, saw his name fall outside of the CART licence), it was definitely something to get excited about. A friend at school had a copy, I went over and tried a brief run on a short oval, and, yet again, I was hooked.

Papyrus Design Group (1989–2003)



- Indianapolis 500: The Simulation (1989)
- IndyCar Racing (1993)
- Project Nomad (1993)
- NASCAR Racing (1994)
- IndyCar Racing II (1995)
- Road Rash (1996) (with Buzz Puppet Productions)
- NASCAR Racing 2 (1996)
- NASCAR Grand National Series Expansion Pack (1997)
- SODA Off-Road Racing (1997)
- Grand Prix Legends (1998)
- NASCAR Legends (1999)
- NASCAR Racing 1999 Edition (1999)
- NASCAR Craftsman Truck Racing (1999)
- NASCAR Racing 3 (1999)
- NASCAR Racing 4 (2001)
- NASCAR Racing 2002 Season (2002)
- NASCAR Racing 2003 Season (2003)

I simply had to have a copy; I borrowed the money from my parents, jumped on the train to the next town (at the time there were no computer game-shops in my town), and bought a copy with such desire that, looking back, the guy behind the till must have wondered whether the gleaming white box contained answers to one of life's enduring mysteries.

And perhaps it did, too, because this was the next beginning.

For a solid year I studied and learned. The physics modelling was so fantastic for its day that I was learning genuine car control and race-craft skills (that would later serve me well in Karts); the track pack that was released (for about the same price as the original sim!) only enhanced my addiction, and I embarked on a season of sixteen full length races.

Papyrus Looking Back At Papy 2 Look Forward 2 iRacing

continued

It was so immersive that I can recall, to this day, losing the title after a tough season-long battle with Emerson Fittipaldi, and Al Unser Jr. I took victories at Mid Ohio, Road America, Long Beach, and Laguna Seca, commencing love affairs with those tracks that last to this day. The victories were not enough to make up for my poor oval results, though, so I set about competing in another season, working on my oval setup skills and race-craft. By the end of my second season, the title was mine: I don't remember the date, but I can tell you it was late one winter's night in 1994, and I can tell you that I felt as if I'd actually achieved something ...

During 1994 another title from Papyrus had hit the shelves, *NASCAR Racing*. Whilst I had heard of this brand of U.S. racing from my regular reading of 'Autosport', I knew precious little about it. My uncle picked up a copy, as a fan, and on first practice I was—yet again—stunned.

The initial *NASCAR Racing*, to my knowledge, used an evolved version of the physics engine from *IndyCar Racing*, but the sounds were fearsome! And the graphics had been updated to give a sensation of speed such as I had never before experienced. Running unrestricted at Talladega was enough to give me Goosebumps. However, my keen focus on single-seater racing, and my continued issues with oval setups saw me return to *IndyCar Racing* and *F1GP*. Very few other games got a look in.

Papyrus, in 1995, released their follow-up to *IndyCar Racing*—*IndyCar Racing 2*, and 1996 saw the follow up to *NASCAR Racing* (yes, you guessed it, *NASCAR Racing 2!*), both titles extending the physics engine further: By this time, I had aced the Papy physics model (it is quite distinct, in feel, from any other developer, and many old Papy-heads had a tough-old time getting accustomed to ISI-based engines such as *GTR*), and not only had I won

another couple of CART titles, but also a NASCAR title—albeit owing a lot to luck!

During this time, other driving sims had come into my sphere, the original *Need for Speed*, and the magazine-formatted *Car and Driver*, but I gave them only a marginal glance since neither had the depth of scope of Papyrus's sims—aside, of course, for Crammond's *F1GP* which had been thoroughly pasted by *IndyCar Racing 2*.

Crammond, though, perhaps stung by Papyrus' effort, struck back with what many consider his finest moment, 1996's *Grand Prix 2*, which was not only a massive step forward in simulators, but equally a big-step forward in the video game landscape. It really was that good. This sim had, at the time, out-of-this-world graphics (described as verging on photo-realistic), along with—for the first time—a three-axis physics model which allowed the cars to veritably bounce up into the air in incidents, especially those involving open-wheel contact.

For the first time—and perhaps the last—a simulator was heralded by the gaming press as *the* example of state-of-the-art PC gaming.

To say that this sim sucked up a great deal of my free time would be something of an understatement; I competed in sixteen full-length championships, with all practice sessions, qualifying, and every single race lap, taking seven world championships along the way. An online community sprung up, too, along with the burgeoning web, and it was not long before there were mods available for *GP2* to download. I was in my element, keenly anticipating those 4Mb files of skin-updates that seemed, at the time, so unbelievably large.

Those who followed these things were now enthralled, of course; it was Europe versus the U.S., and Crammond versus Papyrus, and everyone wondered what Papyrus' reply to Crammond's *GP2* would be.

IndyCar Racing 3, surely? But that became a forlorn hope, when, in 1997 *CART Precision Racing* from Microsoft suggested the licence had gone elsewhere. Sim fans the world over mourned.

Finally, in 1997, Papyrus released their next sim: To put it mildly, Papy fans were in for a rather large surprise (and, for many, a nasty one at that). *SODA Off-Road Racing* was not only a departure from the tried-and-tested NASCAR or IndyCar offerings, it came with no licensed cars or tracks. Even more disappointingly, the sim was released on the cusp of the 3D revolution, and looked dated on release. When compared to Crammond's *GP2*, Lording it over every other sim in the world, it looked as if Papy had not only been vanquished—they had been well-and-truly routed. The sim passed under the radar, unnoticed, unloved, and un-played.

Which is a pity since, hiding behind those old, grizzled features, lay something quite extraordinary. You see, rumour had it that *SODA* was a test bed for a new, advanced physics engine which—unlike *Grand Prix 2*, where the cars would seemingly launch and hit a ceiling—cars could flip, bounce, and slide pretty much anywhere in their given world. The two faster trucks, pushing out 800BHP, were really rather tricky to keep on the road (even with my shiny new Thrustmaster Formula T2 wheel), but the physics felt very, very convincing, to the point where RAS (Rec.Autos.Simulators—the newsgroup that started a community) regulars were in rapture. This test bed showed a lot of promise as to what could be done, and while popular opinion had persuaded itself that Papy were a spent force, many who had given *SODA* the time of day were intrigued to see where this experiment would lead.

Papyrus Looking Back At Papy 2 Look Forward 2 iRacing

continued

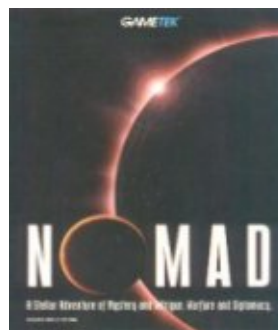


{ Indianapolis 500: The Simulation—on the Amiga ... }

As it turns out, *SODA* was a one-off experiment created—the only Papy sim which ever was—by an outside developer: The entire sim was, in fact, coded by a programmer named Shawn Nash, in one year, from scratch, under contract with Papyrus. At one point, legend has it, Shawn sent Papyrus a demo that had them driving the sim hours, and it remains, so it is said, one of Kaemmer's favourite sims.

And what happened to Shawn Nash, you ask? Well, he's somewhere near Boston, would you believe, working on a project called iRacing.com

In July 1998, my father, brother and I took a trip down to the south coast to attend the Goodwood Festival of Speed, an event which brought together racing cars from all the ages to compete, in a light-hearted manner, on the famous Goodwood hillclimb course. Whilst browsing around, I noticed something that caught my eye—a simulator. Now, it was not rare for such a thing to catch my eye, and it probably came as no surprise when I informed my dad that I would be joining the queue to have a go.



{ Dave Kaemmer and co. go Elite ... }

Waiting in the queue, I began to notice a commonality amongst all those who took turns on the sim before me: They were all, to the very last one, astonishingly hopeless. There seemed to be an old fashioned single-seater cockpit on the screen, and what looked like a track with no barriers or gravel traps. I had seen a brief sidebar report in 'PC Gamer' a few weeks before concerning Papyrus's next title—it was to be a realisation of the 1967 Formula One world championship, and as a young man of twenty at the time, I had never directly experienced that era, but I had read much about it—specifically Jim Clark and his legendary Lotus 49—so one and one quickly made 1967, and there before me, I slowly realised, was Papy's next simulator: *Grand Prix Legends*. It was a steaming hot day, but as the front of the queue drew near, I had those old Goosebumps back; finally it was my turn to leap into the seat of the Eagle, and I pulled out of the pits with much anticipation. "Meh", thought I, "this is Watkins Glen, I have won here in NASCAR, it'll be a walk in the park."

Then I spun on the pitlane exit.



{ Going out in style: And the foundation of iRacing ... }

I eventually got as far as the Inner Loop before my time was up and I had to yield my seat to the next in line, but I had more or less decided that those five minutes were just about the best I had ever experienced in a simulator. Luckily, they were selling copies of the demo on CD for £4.99. I got myself a copy and proceeded to be not terribly interested in the rest of the Festival!

I tore home and, as soon as I got into my little flat, was in my room; to the bemusement of my flatmate, I was still in there some six hours later. Yes, one track, one car, one me, and lots of swearing, not to mention a new ability to find the 'Shift' and 'R' keys in the dark! My poor little Pentium 60 had to have the graphics turned down some way, but the feel of the physics was sublime—with this sim in my hands, I had no need for food, drink, or anything else.

I purchased the full version on the day of release—having bought myself a new PC in the intervening time and driven the demo for so many hours that I could even stay on the road for an entire lap at a time—and took a day off work. In minutes, I was transfixed by the cacophonous roar of the Ferrari 312, the fierce torque of the Lotus 49, the sheer enormity of the Nordschliefe; I was never to look back.

Papyrus Looking Back At Papy 2 Look Forward 2 iRacing

continued

At that precise moment, it was possible to claim that racing sims had altered forever. Everything that had come before was no longer good enough; and, if we're to be honest, most things that came after weren't either. It was not until the advent of Force-Feedback, and my purchase of a Microsoft Sidewinder FFB wheel, that another sim came near my PC. Alas, while the physics of Monster's *Viper Racing* were very nice indeed, it was really only the Force-Feedback that kept me interested, and in 1999, when *GPL* was patched with a delightful, subtle Force-Feedback that felt better than anything else, I was right back to 1967.

Sadly, however, the extreme difficulty was something that worked against *GPL* when it came to commercial success. An old story, yes, and we all know the result: No *GPL2* was to come. Intriguingly, legend has it that Dave Kaemmer had punted for a ladder system to be rolled out with *GPL* which would have forced the player to start with the Novice Trainers, and then work their way to the fully-fledged Formula Ones. Instead, *GPLers* were thrown full-speed into an alien world with cars that were just unerringly difficult to drive, and, alas, the gaming press were either blown away (with a proviso that the sim wasn't for everyone, the equivalent of an R rating), or were just plain annoyed by its complexity.

Whatever the truth, *GPL* was, by all accounts (alas here, too, legend does not necessarily meet facts), a commercial disappointment, and in 1999, Papyrus went into production overdrive, releasing no less than an astonishing four sims: *NASCAR Racing 1999 Edition*, *NASCAR Legends*, *NASCAR Craftsman Truck Racing*, and the father of the latter two, *NASCAR Racing 3 (NR3)*, which was the next evolution in Papy's NASCAR franchise, employing an enhanced engine derived from the now ageing *NASCAR Racing 2*. *NASCAR Racing 3* did not feel as

dynamically clean as *GPL*, but it nonetheless was a fine simulator package and, at the time, pounded Electronic Arts' *NASCAR Revolution* into the ground. *NR3's* spawn—*NASCAR Legends*—a sim covering the 1970 NASCAR season—and *NASCAR Craftsman Truck Racing* were, sadly, both unavailable in Europe and, as such, remain the only Papy-derived sims that I do not own.

It was another two years before the accomplished *GPL* engine was to be turned over to NASCAR with *NASCAR Racing 4 (NR4)*. The vehicle dynamics, and the implementation of the car's mechanicals, were a great boon for the NASCAR Racing series; however, the tyres used in NASCAR were some way more advanced than those in *GPL*, as was the modelling of aerodynamic forces, and *NR4* was judged, by the community, to be 'off' in one crucial area: The tyre slip curve, which was a little too unforgiving.

It took only a year for *NASCAR Racing 2002 (NR2002)* to be released, and this was Papy's attempt to resolve the tyre issue, and while *NR2002* made some headway, it was not until 2003's *NASCAR Racing 2003 (N2003)* that things finally felt 'sorted' in the tyre department. To me, *N2003* was a *tour de force* when it came to physics implementation, and arguably holds its own five years on against any modern competitor you care to name. No other sim feels so quite so 'organic', the cars move on track with unnerving precision, and they respond to driver inputs as you would expect; driving a Papy sim had become nigh-on intuitive, with time passing indeterminably, one can easily drive and drive and drive until the fuel warning light starts to flash.

This, for me, is key; in the history of sims, there have been precious few that have really pushed me into a whole other world of immersion that sees me disappear under the radar for days on end. Of these, more have

been made by Papyrus Design Group than by any other developer.

Of course 2003 was the last time any sim was released under the banner of Papyrus, and as we look on, the stage is being set, five years later, for the next episode in David Kaemmer's sim-racing odyssey. As to whether it will be a hit or a miss? History tells us we can be sure of one thing: It's definitely something to get excited about.



Advanced Setups

In each issue of AUTOSIMSPORT, Professor Ari Stone will be answering your questions regarding the essentials of setting and tuning your simulated racecar with solutions derived from decades of real-world experience, and specifically tailored to meet your simulated-racing needs ... This month, Prof. Ing. Ari Stone will discuss the fundamentals of differential settings ...

Prof. Ing. ARI STONE

If you would like to have your setup or tuning questions considered by Prof. Ing/ Ari Stone for reply, please send them along to Jon/Denton@AUTOSIMSPORT.net.

THE MAGIC FORMULA!
Side force as a function of slip angle

$$F_y = D \sin(C \tan^{-1}(B \Phi))$$

$$\Phi = (CE)^a + (E/B) \tan^{-1}(B^a)$$

$$C = .10$$

$$D = a_0 F_z^3 + a_1 F_z^2 + a_2 F_z$$

$$BCD = a_3 \sin(a_4 \tan^{-1}(a_5 F_z))$$

$$E = a_6 F_z^2 + a_7 F_z + a_8$$

ALL ARE FUNCTIONS
OF VERTICAL LOAD!

The driving stability is affected by driver wheel slip, which can be controlled by the driver wheel torque. In a vehicle powered by an engine, the torque can be controlled by a motor management system. The sliding mode algorithm is the mechanism behind the design of the traction control system. The longitudinal slip is controlled by the position of the throttle valve. The vehicle model has 7° of freedom & 2-state engine model. A non-linear tyre model for combined slip is used for tyre force computation.

We should begin by stating that a vehicle's wheels rotate at different speeds, especially when turning corners. The differential (or diff) is designed to drive a pair of wheels with equal force, while allowing them to rotate at different speeds.

In vehicles without a differential, such as Karts, both driving wheels are forced to rotate at the same speed, usually on a common axle driven by a simple chain-drive mechanism. When cornering, the inner wheel travels a shorter distance than the outer wheel, resulting in the inner wheel spinning and/or the outer wheel dragging. This dragging results in difficult and unpredictable handling, damage to tyres, and strain on (or possible failure of) the entire drive train.

So let's look at how the Power/Coast/Preload options function.

Power adjusts the amount (percentage) of force used to lock the inside and outside wheels together when accelerating; an example being, when exiting (or powering out of) a corner.

The effects of an increase in the Power 'side' of the diff is that, when on the power, the car will be 'forced' to oversteer since both wheels will be closer to doing the same speed. Since they shouldn't be, one will be slipping.

If you drive any of the GPC79 cars, you will note that, when you apply the throttle on the exit of corners, it often wants to 'power oversteer'. The greater amount of power in those cars allows us to see the effect of an increased 'Power-side diff' more notably. What we see then is that a lowering of the Power diff locking will allow you to be earlier on the throttle while experiencing less power on exit oversteer, but at the same time it will cause a loss of total power at the drive wheels. Therefore:

MORE DIFF POWER = MORE OVERSTEER ON EXIT/BETTER ACCELERATION OUT OF CORNERS IF GRIP/DRIVING STYLE IS GOOD ENOUGH.

LESS DIFF POWER = LESS OVERSTEER ON EXIT/LESS ACCELERATION OUT OF CORNERS.

Coast adjusts the amount (percentage) of force used to lock the inside and outside wheels together when off of the throttle, an example being when entering a corner.

If the rear axle is locked 'closer' together (or even completely locked as one would find in a Kart), the car, on turn-in, will want to 'plough' or continue its forward momentum. A lower Coast diff setting, however, will cause the inside rear wheel to 'drag', thereby pulling the car into a corner. Coast diff adjustment primarily accounts for the balance of the car on corner entry, and, therefore:

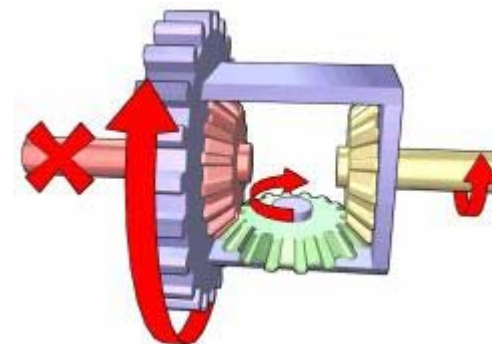


Illustration of a differential gear: If the left side gear (red) encounters resistance, the pinion gear (green) rotates about the left side gear, in turn applying extra rotation to the right side gear (yellow). Source: wikipedia.org by user: Wapcaplet.

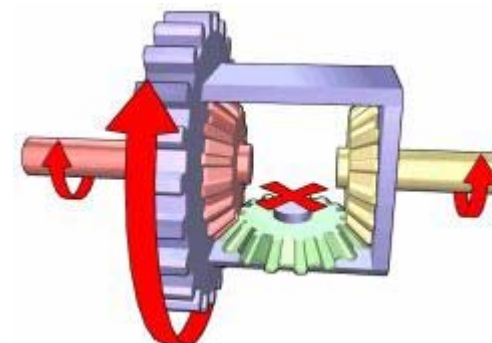


Illustration of a differential gear Input: Torque is applied to the ring gear, which turns the entire carrier (all blue), providing torque to both side gears (red and yellow), which in turn may drive the left and right wheels. If the resistance at both wheels is equal, the pinion gear (green) does not rotate, and both wheels turn at the same rate. Source: wikipedia.org by user: Wapcaplet.

MORE DIFF COAST = LESS OVERSTEER ON ENTRY/MORE RISK OF LOCKING REAR WHEELS UNDER BAD DOWNSHIFTING (HANDBRAKE EFFECT).

LESS DIFF COAST = MORE OVERSTEER ON ENTRY/LESS RISK OF LOCKING REAR WHEELS UNDER BAD DOWNSHIFTING.

However ... It should be added that there is a proviso here and it is this: A lower Coast setting will not actually *cause* oversteer, but more simply close the trajectory of the car's entry into the turn. So, it will *pull* into the corner, but it is the suspension and inertia that will govern whether the car will go into oversteer. So, as such, it is not a 'cause' of oversteer, but rather something that helps it along.

Preload adjusts the amount of lock built in before any acceleration/deceleration effects take place, an example being—a neutral throttle condition. In essence, a higher Preload is for managing a big gap between Power and Coast diff settings. If you have a high Power diff, and a low Coast diff, you may have a severe reaction between on-throttle or off-throttle behaviour; increasing the Preload will help make that transition smoother.

In real life, there is no difference between the reaction in front, or mid-engined cars except that a mid-engined car has more weight over the rear wheels, and can therefore get away (generally) with higher Power locking. However, it will have more of a tendency to oversteer under heavy braking conditions, and thus might prefer a higher coast locking state to compensate. This may not necessarily translate to some *rFactor* mods that might have more suspect suspension geometry.

Right, with the 'theory' out of the way, let's talk about what you actually use diff adjustment for. You see, in the good old days, it may have been a useful tool for massaging entry and exit behaviour, but that was before the days of four-way adjustable dampers. Indeed, slow dampers are a far more useful and precise way of governing the corner entry and exit behaviour, and roll bars offer a far more refined way of massaging mid-corner behaviour.

So, then, are diffs redundant? Most race cars will use a diff setting from their default setup that rarely ever changes from track to track. It really should be one of the first things you look at on a setup, get it set early, along with the brake balance, and then move on.

In terms of power-on out of a corner, it is a complete trade off, and the best thing to do is to optimally work the dampers and springs to be able to get that power down, rather than squander power by loosening the diff (unless maybe you have some manner of F1-style power conservation system!). In this sense, a good setup should be

looking at diff settings as something as a last resort since, on a modern race car, there are so many other influences that are less severe.

Of course, older cars with less adjustability have to use crude diff adjustments to achieve the same success, and *GPL* certainly made everyone diff obsessed!

An area where diff settings are still in common use, however, is in Rallying, where the diffs are used deliberately upset the balance of the car; this, to a certain extent, can also apply in circuit racing. You see, a softer Coast diff combined with a low Preload will result in lift-off oversteer virtually on demand. So, you might setup a car that has a tight Power diff, to ensure maximum power output, but to counter the inherent power-on oversteer, you have setup your roll bars to make the car understeer on exit. To quickly counter this understeer, you do brief lifts to bring the back end around.

Naturally, this is something a driver would only do to counter contradictory handling in a bad car, and anything that is half decent won't require this kind of treatment. Mainly because the car would be a huge handful.

In Rallying, the driver is often in a situation where they want to use the throttle and brakes as devices to inspire yaw in the car, hence the diff comes into its own.

TPSCC, with its 100/0 diff setting, is an 'oval thing'. In oval racing, the tendency is to emulate a solid axle, which, I believe, are found on both midgets and sprint cars. In order to emulate this behaviour, a NASCAR will run a 100/0 diff to make it oversteer on entry and exit. If this is non-adjustable, I would suspect the rulebook is in place to make things look more exciting with a more 'oversteery' car. This will make them a right old handful on road tracks, though!

This is no doubt a throwback from the good ol' days of Stock Car racing, where it was cheap way of going racing, and a locked diff is a cheap way of getting a car to handle a large power output. It was down to the driver to keep it on the track!

If the COT has changed to a looser coast diff at 100/50, then I guess this is just to make it more manageable on corner entry, possibly offsetting the reduction in aero grip.

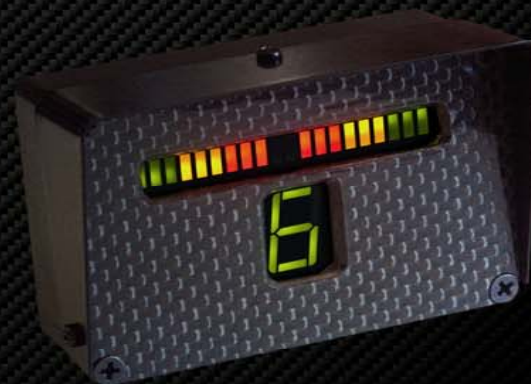


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Side-by-Side

SERGIOBUSTAMANTE

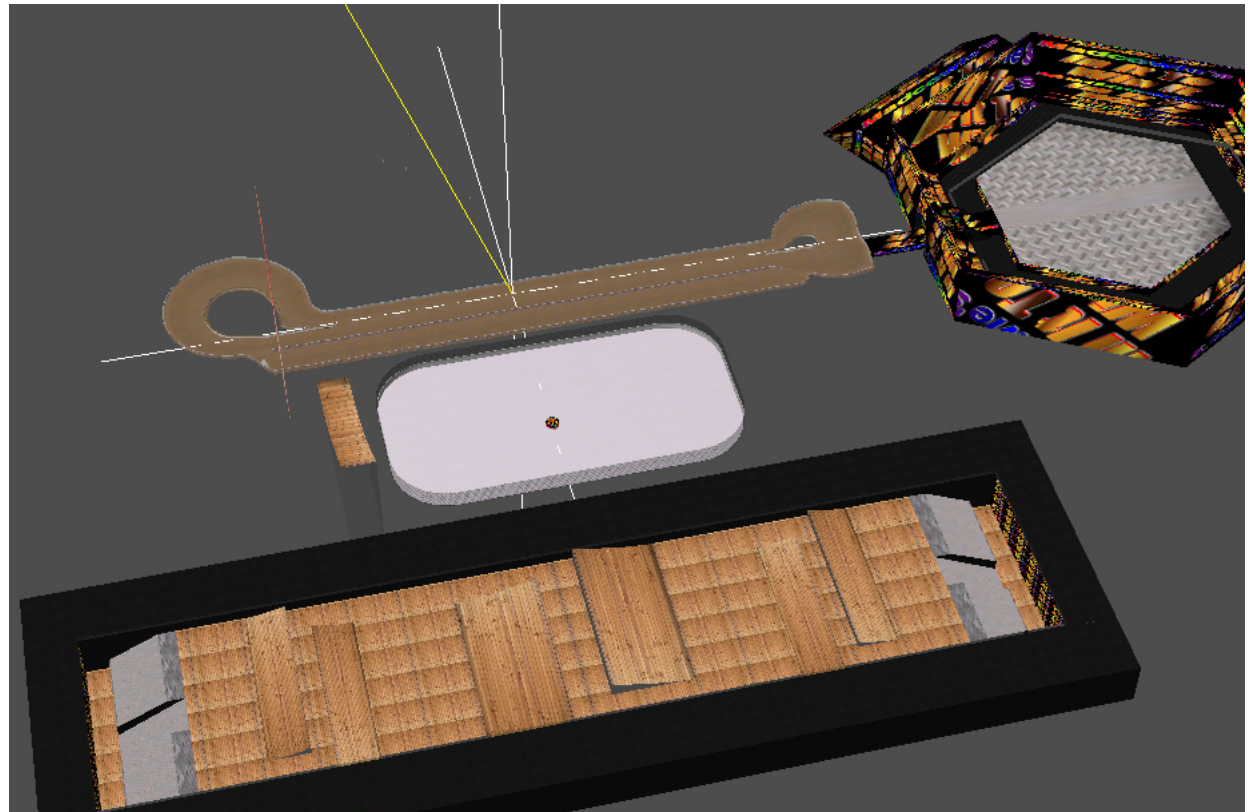
Images courtesy of: rFactor Central, Stuart Cowie

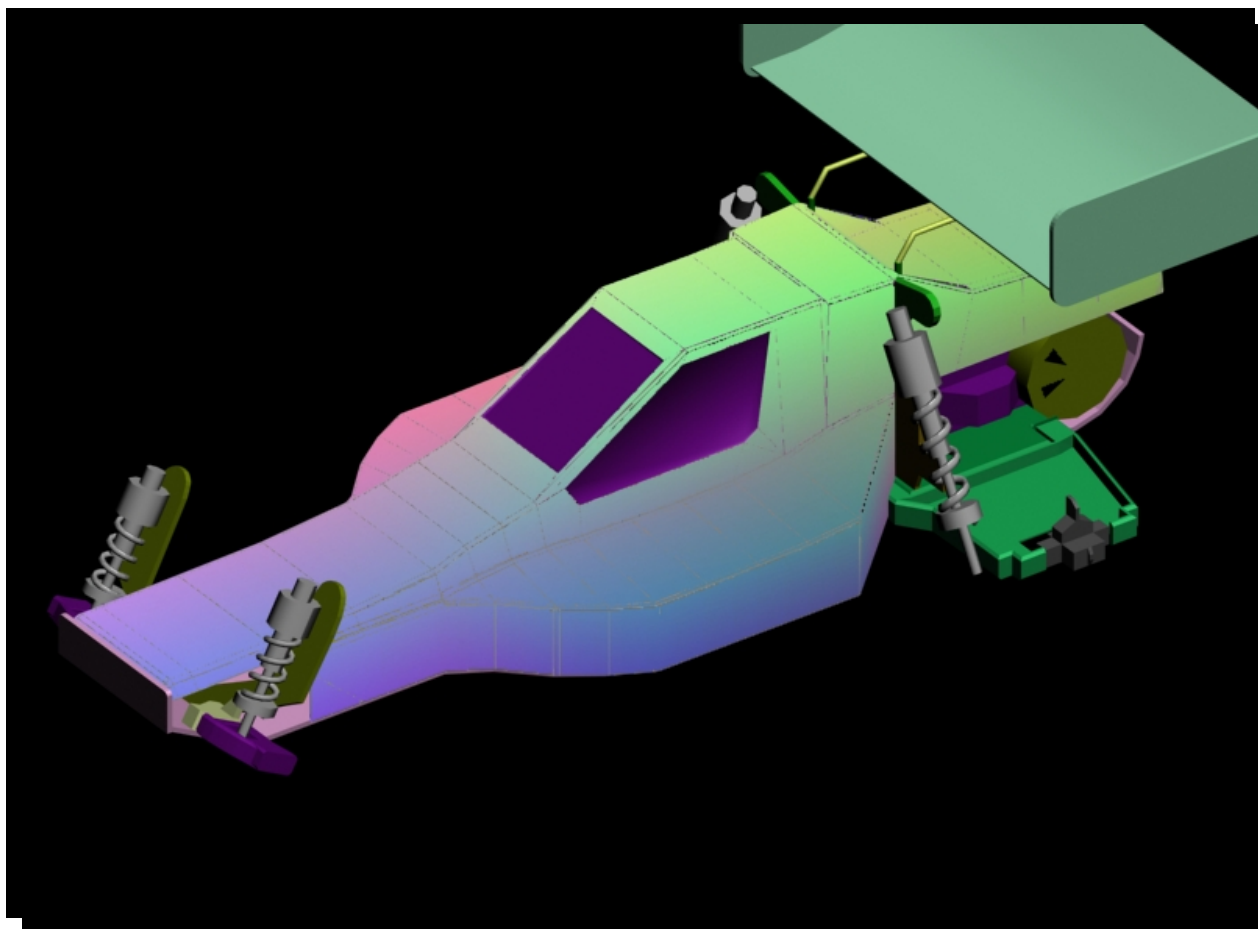


Stu and Louise ...

The Cow!

Sergio Bustamante sits side-by-side with Stuart Cowie, the most prodigious and creative modder currently active ... the man responsible for many unique mods (RC, ORR, and more) tells us about what fuels his desire ...





Sergio: Stu, rFactor has definitely grown to unprecedented levels in terms of modding, both in the tracks and car areas, yet you've been able to even take that to the next level by offering some of the best novelties around. I would dare say you've been one of the reasons why rFactor Central introduced their 'Novel' category ... I guess it has been an exciting ride for you too.

Stu: Thank you! I certainly don't claim to be what you've

made me out to be, but thanks anyway! I guess my name has grown over the years due to the amount of tracks I've released, and I also enjoy helping out others who do similar things to me. I remember when I started back in the GPL days of track editing I was posting questions on RSC every day on how to do something so simple, and the members helped me out without losing their rags. Thanks to RSC, and a few special members (Border

Reiver), I have a big interest in the modeling world. Unfortunately my actual career isn't model-based, though—I work for an optician! I am looking for a change though in this area, as I would love to do something like this as a living as it would do a couple of things for me: First, it would get my girlfriend off my back when I'm sitting in front of the computer for hour upon hour and, second, I would get up in the morning with a big smile on my face thinking I'm about to do something I love and enjoy.

Sergio: Let's take a quick look at ORR and its newest release, ORR2. The mod is certainly amazing, what were your thoughts as you were working with it, your expectations?

Stu: Well, I've done it in the past with other games, and tried to make them something they're not meant to be. Other games, it's been harder to do, but rFactor, I think, so far, has filled many of my expectations, and the mods seem to of come out pretty good by the end.

ORR takes me back to the early 1990s when I was watching stadium racing from the U.S on UK television. I immediately fell in love with this sport and wanted more and more of it. Then a sim came out called Leadfoot, and I bloody loved that game, but when rFactor came along, I knew immediately what mod I wanted to attempt, and stadium truck racing was my goal. The name ORR was thought of in later stages of the mod, whilst having a conversation with Chris Dymond who made the ORR logo.

Sergio: ORR enjoyed a great debut, and remains in many users' favorite lists: And you've also offered other great mods like the group B, the Rallycross mod—did ORR help with the amazing Rallycross mod?

Stu: Well yes and no, I guess. The actual Rallycross mod was kind of made at the same time as ORR. It just got put on a back-burner as the mod team went in different directions. My rFactor modding life started out with the

Mower mod as a track maker. Those tracks never got released, and looking back I think thank God. But they were a good learning exercise at the time, to point me in the right direction. A few weeks later, I asked in the UK Dirt forums about making a BRISCA mod. Over the next couple of weeks, a team was developed—SOM (short oval mod)—and we started work on a BRISCA mod (which is now UK F1 Stockcars for legal reasons). Whilst developing the mod, we at times got distracted, I guess, by what we had learnt, and wondered off in various directions. Especially when one of our guys had converted an RS200 from *Colin McRae*, and the whole team loved RS200s. So then we went Rallycross mad for a while, then back to BRISCAs, and then back to Hot Rods. It was a rollercoaster ride trying to keep up as all the time I was developing tracks but for the different mods.

Eventually, during my SOM days, I managed to develop some real BRISCA ovals which are now available to download thanks to a lot of help from SOM and Freew. But it was during this time I kind of left the team to work on my own project which was ORR. I say left the team, but this isn't exactly true, I'm still in contact with them as we speak, and we still help each other where we can, and still have a good bond (I hope).

So after ORR 2.1 was released, I made my mind up that I'd had enough for a while with ORR as I'd pretty much been doing ORR stuff for eighteen months, and I needed a change. I guess this is what I love about *rFactor*: You can have so many things on the go, and they're easy to go back to. So after ORR 2.1, I moved back to the Rallycross mod, and tracked down permissions from Frank to use some of his models in the HRC mod. Frank agreed, and I was now back on track: With a lot of work, and some new helpers, we started to re-build the Rallycross mod. Thanks to RFC, I tracked down Sadistiko, who offered his skills in the painting department, and also Rich Ward who had sent me a fair few Rallycross

DVDs to say the least. I love the world of Rallycross and I've followed it since I was five. So I knew what I wanted, and I was very happy with the end result. Also the World Rallycross Championship we ran on RFC was fantastic. This mod gets messy when you have too many racers. Around eight or so drivers, and it's perfect. So this worked really well, and I've never tried so hard in all my life to win a competition thanks to Zoomin who was tracking me down throughout the competition

Sergio: Once ORR2 was released, we certainly saw a lot of reaction, and it raised the level of flexibility that can be reached in *rFactor*, in many ways thanks to Pete Walsh's excellent *rFactor Central*. How much do these comments, and having such a fantastic website to monitor and interact with the users of your mod, inspire you to keep taking it to another level?

Stu: Oh most definitely, right from the very beginning back in my GPL track editing days other peoples' comments have kept me inspired to keep doing what I'm doing. I do remember back in my GPL days I used to release tracks on RSC, and get mainly get lots of nice comments, and some just saying thank you. These most definitely kept me going. At the time, I use to nip across to the *F1C* forum on RSC and read comments on there for tracks released, and think these guys are a different bunch of people. All they used to do was argue and really not say anything too positive unless it was totally amazing.

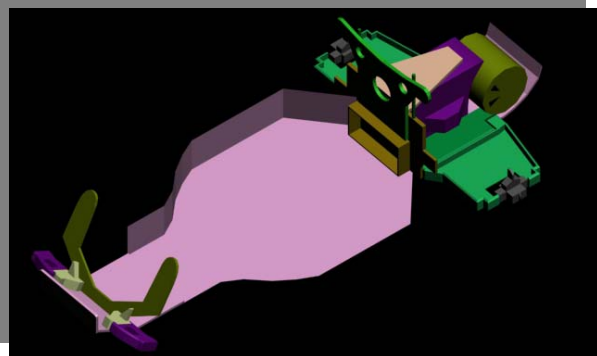
RFC has created a new set of friends, and also a great bunch of guys who now appreciate modders' work. And Pete's commitment to the page is next to none, and with his latest RFC competitions, has started a new trend of competition which everyone loves. From my point of view, before the RFC championships came along online, racing was about four hours of practice for a ten lap race. Basically online hotlapping without much racing. A great example of the opposite end of the scale was the Rallycross

championship. We had five min' qualifying sessions for a five lap race. This meant you were doing five races an hour. So for me RFC has made *rFactor*, and I log on every day to watch the new videos and find out what's new.

Sergio: One thing that I consider worth mentioning is how complete your works are. We have specific mod groups, great ones who specialize in cars, or tracks, but you are in the very elite list of modders who are able to do everything. Which came first, though, the track or the cars?

Stu: Well this one is a tough question, and probably not what you're expecting to read. Unless you know me of course! As you know, I've been making tracks for different games for many years now, and over the years I guess it's become easier and easier. With today's latest programs like 3dsMax and other third party programs, it's become a lot easier. So for me tracks are a lot more natural than vehicle editing. But in order to play what I wanted to play, I had to learn how to make vehicle models in 3ds max. I did this using the Audi Tutorial video, and started from there. To start with, I tried to model my road car which is a Mazda 323F. But this idea soon fell apart when it came to the interior.

After that, I started trying to model more simple things, and I started off with a very ugly looking stadium truck. A few weeks later, via the Tundra Forum, I found someone who had bought a stadium truck model on Turbo Squid, and he sent me a version of it. So this model was ORR with many tweaks. But I guess the unexpected part of this reply will be the fact that I don't actually enjoy vehicle modeling. It's nothing like as rewarding as track modeling. When you first load up your track for the first time, you have this buzz inside you thinking, "I can't wait to drive that corner". When you load up your new designed car, it doesn't actually have the same feeling as you're not going to actually play it. Yes you designed it, and yes it looks great on the replays, but no, it doesn't give me the same buzz.



Sergio: You've kept such a frantic pace to your releases: Tell us a bit about your Soapbox mod.

Stu: For sure, Soapbox mod comes basically from seeing a few funny clips on You Tube, and the Goodwood Festival. Something that kind of interests me, but at the same time I see as a big challenge to try to accomplish it in *rFactor*. And also liking to be original we (Matt Thompson and I) set out to accomplish. As for the tracks, well I took them to the next extreme a little, I know, but in reality a Soapbox mod isn't going to be much fun if you only reach speeds of 40MPH in *rFactor*, so I made them a little more extreme instead.

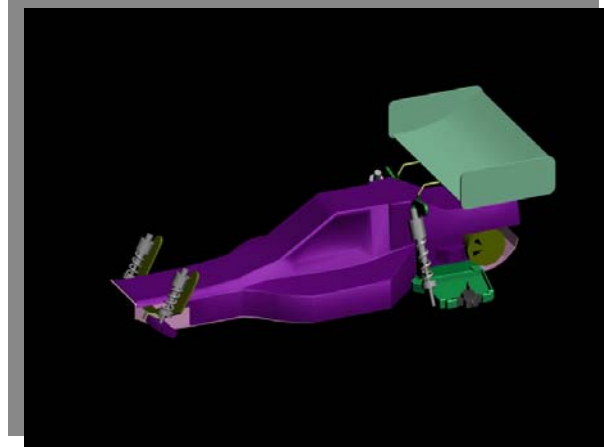
Sergio: When we ran our first interview with you, you told us of your love for Radio Control racing—and now we see that you're recreating this world for *rFactor*. The RC mod will certainly bring a lot of mixed emotions, and a lot of us are looking forward to driving it. We really appreciate the opportunity to present this mod to the community, alongside RFactorCentral, and we hope everyone can take a good drive at this next level that you've brought us. Tell us a little bit about how long you have planned this mod, who has been involved, so we can prepare in the next issue a very special, in-depth analysis of your work if you might grant us that honor!

Stu: Well I grant you! RC mod was born about April last year. I haven't been working one hundred percent on it everyday since then, mind you. During this time ORR 2, Rallycross, and Soapbox all took preference. But that was mainly down to one reason: The physics! During the Christmas Holidays, Matt Thompson and I, one night, had a few words on MSN about this mod and its physics, and he basically gave me a kick up the backside, and helped me out a lot to get something that would go a ton faster than it already did. The physics for the RC mod were most definitely the hardest we've attempted so far as they are so fast and light. Obviously *rFactor* has its complications when it comes to weight, and to get the car controllable at 200MPH-plus was going to be a challenge.

Eventually, when we were finally happy with the physics, I started adding helpers to the upgrade file so they could control the power and the bumps easier. Hopefully the RC fans have found these tweaks. The other problem was with the sounds for RC cars. Thanks to RSC, I tracked down another Matt (Matt Pesh) to help me with the sounds for this mod. I also think he did a great job as well for his first ever attempt. Whilst I'm name dropping, I would also like to say thank you to Hooty 256, Grasser, Mark Zeidler, and Mack Mechanic for all there help in the RC mod. And also Pete for putting up a test server, and the RFC RC Championship.

Sergio: Thanks Stu, as always, talking with you proves to be a great ride just like driving your mods. Any closing words for our readers?

Stu: Yeah! First off, I would like to thank the readers for voting ORR 2.1, HOF, and Dirt, mod of the year. Would also like to thank my normal crowd on MSN who keep me entertained with new stuff or daft videos! Definitely a thank you to the SOM boys. A massive thank you to Pete for all his hard work, and the RFC Competitions he has organized running my/our mods.



Well this interview comes at a strange time of life. Basically I've accomplished many projects over the last two years, and my *rFactor* to-do list has definitely shrunk. This, by the way, is a very good thing since, at times, it has gotten me down when I think how much work I have left to do. So I will be creating some new tracks in the future for various mods. At the moment, I'm not sure what! I've also just partnered up with Woffin on RFC to help him out with his track. Man, this guy has done wonders with Bob's Track Builder, and he deserves all the help I can now give him. I still have Opatija to finish off as well, but that's not too big a job. It's just been dumped on a pile for the last few weeks. So my final message would be expect the unexpected from The Cow, and a massive thank you to Louise for putting up with me Hopefully one day, Louise, this part of life will show dividends.

AUTOSIMSPORT

AUTOSIMSPORT

Consolation

BOBSIMMERMAN



Burnout Paradise

Bob Simmerman shunts his way to paradise where he hopes get some ...



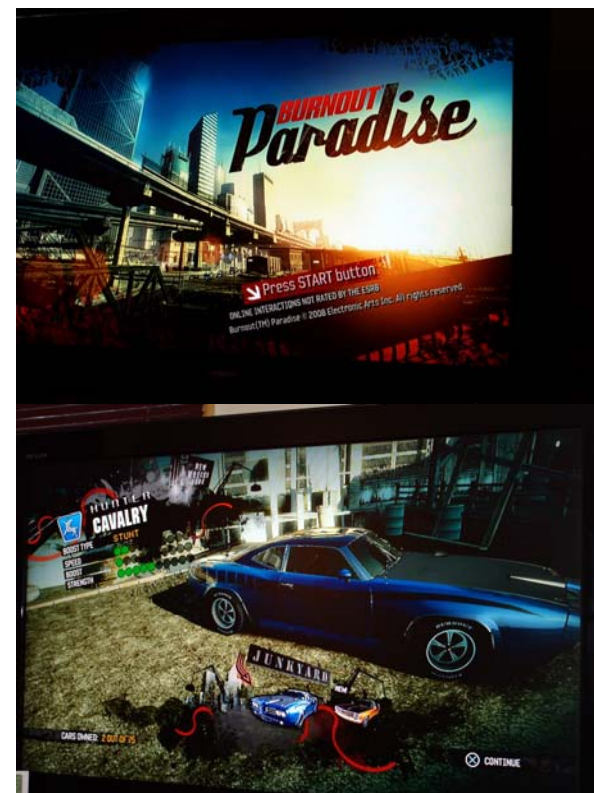


Seven thirty somewhere in Michigan, and Bob is on his way to work: "They's done make em like theys used ta!"

As usual, work on this issue has turned from 'fun' to 'misery and hell' as the deadline draws near; real-life, I should add, hasn't been a lot of fun lately either. Fortunately the close proximity of a couple of the Next Gen's finest goes a long way towards keeping me sane—and broke—which reminds me of work ... I see a theme developing here, one of insanity, and ever-decreasing circular thoughts—like tracks, really! And sims—and escape into my blessed consoles: Now, while I have yet to crack the seal on *MotoGP 07* for the XBOX 360, I more than had time for a look at the latest *Burnout* game, this time taking place in *Paradise*. I went for the PS3 version, as I read somewhere it was smoother than the other console version. I don't know how I will ever find out the veracity of this as I don't plan on buying, or renting, the same game on the other box. So take my word for it; I read it somewhere, okay?

And that leads me on to my next thought: as if the XBOX Red Rings aren't enough, I find my thoughts bouncing back-and-forth on which platform to buy what for, if you follow, bouncing around like that guy's head in the back of that car in the movie 'Jacobs Ladder', that fast back-and-forth whiplash job that is, apparently, a prelude to total madness.

For the PC, it's simple ('cause there's only one PC!), for the consoles, though, things are not so simple—not, that is, if you're mad enough to have bought both systems. For example, *Madden 08* runs at a blistering and beautiful sixty FPS on the 360, and about half that on the PS3. I won't rehash the argument of how many frames-per-second the human eye can truly discern, but I think we can all agree that sixty FPS looks a bit smoother and fluid than thirty FPS, regardless if we can so much as see above twenty-four FPS. Or can we?



Anyway, the point I'm trying to make is this—sometimes, the very platform itself offers a much different experience than another platform even with an 'identical' game. So, whatever I am trying to say, it probably doesn't make much, if any, sense—and it does very little to segue into what I really wanted to talk about, and that was my multiple hundreds of laps advantage over a certain editor of a certain magazine during last Saturday's marathon event of *rFactor F3s* at Dover, Delaware. It was a severe beating of epic proportions ...



〔 Moments before, Bob had come to a life-altering conclusion ... 〕

But back to *Paradise* ... with a capital P. This time around, there are over eighteen square miles of city, and 250 miles of roads and streets to race, crash, roam, jump, power up, and, well, you name it, it's there for the taking. Like previous *Burnout* titles, there is no shortage of things to do, and most of them border on the insane. Oh, there is Multiplayer as well, in case you're wondering.

The approach to *Paradise*, however, is a bit different from the previous iterations in the series, as there is precious little in the way of 'menu intrusion', and more in

the way of encouraging the player to pretty much tackle the game any way they see fit, which is all the rage in today's console-market. It seems as if game makers have decided that rules—and following them—is not quite their target market's forte. Either that, or creating a coherent plot, with the writers' union on strike, is no longer an option.

Of course, you must earn your way to better and stronger cars to get to the top of the pile, but you can take your own sweet time getting there. I also purchased

the strategy guide—since there are no rules, someone had to write the how-to guide to success, wealth, and scoring with that blonde at the local—but I am finding the guide more difficult to play than the game itself! Of course, this is a reflection of my life, where getting ahead seems to be always one step too far ... nevertheless, the content of the game is such that there really is a lot, and I mean a *lot*, to do before the DVD rolls to a close. Fans of the series will no doubt get a kick (sorry) out of *Burnout Paradise*, and those new to the series should have a (oh dear ...) blast as well.

For me, however, the intriguing part is the damage and crash model. Now I know someone has probably said this before but—take a look at the screenies that come with this article (a thousand words and all that) and consider this: In the dozens of hours in which I've been playing this game, I have yet to see two identical shunts. Now look at the damage again and consider what this would mean in sim-racing.

You can, this being a game, bang these things around with nary a performance penalty, but cross some mysterious crash threshold value, and what was, seconds before, a wild romp through a seedy part of town with bits of pimp hanging off your hubcaps is now a glorious display of camera angles, damage modeling, and slow motion, followed by a brilliant transition back to the gaming world.

If you were lucky enough to have a Drive Away, off you go. If your car is totaled—and you'll know long before needing to be told—then you simply respawn, *sans* boost, where the incident took place. In other words, the damage is piling up in real-time until that magic moment when control is taken away and damage modeling becomes not only cinematic, but Cray-like in rendition. The PS3 churns out what needs to be churned out, and it is quite easy to appreciate the game from this standpoint alone. While appearing to be a combination of real-time-cinematic damage effects, it is tantalizing to imagine our favorite PC simulator sporting that sort of damage.



Probably not for a while, though.

And on the console? I look at it like this—*Project Gotham Racing 3* led the way with cockpit modeling, *Forza 2* proved that ‘realistic’ physics and damage are both possible in a believable fashion, and *Gran Turismo 5* promises to give us both great physics and cockpit views, albeit without damage of any sort. I think I can safely say that the time for a serious simulator effort is, well, just about any time now, and I would certainly hope it takes place during this console generation. Will Blimey!Games show us the way to paradise with that *Falcon* deal? Or will it happen with their Ferrari license? Or will SimBin

slither into our wallet with their Lizard engine, specifically created—or so rumour has it—for the console-market? Or will a *GTR* console resurrection of some kind be The One?

Only time will tell, but the core ingredients are present, and already spinning on DVDs on both consoles. The only thing holding the console back are the developers, and the only thing holding the developers back is confidence that there is a market for simulators, and the only way anyone will ever know whether there is a market is for a developer to grow a set of balls and create a simulator.



Meanwhile, back in Tokyo ... *Gran Turismo 5* is warming up ... and its first episode, dubbed “Prologue” is scheduled for release in the U.S. and Europe this March

PS: No need to buy a console for *Burnout Paradise*, but if you *have* a console, well, you could do a lot worse than this game.



AUTOSIMSPORT
5thColumn

AUTOSIMSPORT

High Expectations

AUTOSIMSPORT takes a misguided and basic glance at the year to come ...



GOTO THE END OF AN ERA

Here's an exercise in futility: Subtract ISI from the sim-racing world, and what do you get? Since 2003, with the exception of *Live For Speed*, and *nKPRO*, absolutely nothing. As it stands, then, Image Space Inc., based in Ann Arbor, have not only carried sim-racing on its shoulders for nigh-on three years, they have been the saviours of whatever is left of this fractured community. Since the demise of Papyrus, everything—with two aforementioned notable exceptions—that has been worth racing in this community has featured some variance of the engine and graphics developed by the Michigan-based company.

GTR, *GTR2*, *rFactor*, *RACE*, *RACE07*, *GTLegends*, *Turismo Carretera*, *ARCA*, and virtually every mod produced by the community since 2005 owes it birth to ISI.

This year, however, the developers who went on to find fame and fortune fuelled by the ISI-engine—and perhaps *because* of that—are moving on up, creating custom-made engines for their soon-to-be-released sims.

This year, in fact, will see the introduction of more 'engines' than we've seen this century with no fewer than four brand-spanking new ones due. So what does this all mean for 2008? Only time, as always, will tell, but one thing is certain: 2008 is going to be the most important year in sim-racing's history. And that's not hyperbole, it's a fact, and here's why ...

**READY
GOTO IMAGE SPACE INC.
10 SCHEDULED FOR RELEASE:
20 RFACTOR PATCH [ALMOST GUARANTEED];
30 RFACTOR 2 [IMPROBABLE]**

rFactor ... we carried the world's first review of the sim, and we were crucified on the forums for having given it such a high score. Odd, then, that it remains the most popular sim for modders, and sim-racers, since its debut in September 2005.

Will there be an *rFactor2* anytime in 2008? It looks doubtful; ISI are a small development house nowadays, and there has been no indication of any work being done on the sequel. Expect, instead, further refinements of the current sim, with—as far as sim-racers are concerned anyway—weather, and DirectX10 being top of the to-do list for Gjon and co. Whether ISI agree with that is another question altogether ...

Forecast: *rFactor* will struggle this year against some stiff opposition but, with its strong and loyal base, a tried-and-tested engine along with an unequalled netcode, and entry-level accessibility for modders (some of whom have already made the transition from *rFactor* to other development houses), should remain somewhere near the top of the pecking order. We are also likely to see more young developers cut their teeth with the engine—most notable being *ARCA Sim Racing*, and *A1GP*.

**READY
GOTO BALL RACING DEVELOPMENTS
10 SCHEDULED FOR RELEASE:
20 PATCH 1.3 FOR NKPRO [GUARANTEED];
30 ADDED CONTENT [POSSIBLE]**

nKPRO: We carried the world's first review of the sim, and we got crucified on the forums for having given it such a high score. As it turns out, we got it wrong in one crucial regard: We suggested there would be a patch in pretty quick order following release, and sure, we got a patch, but it really didn't address many of the problems that came with the sim.

Yes, well ... thing is, *nKPRO* remains the most audacious simulator created this century. No, really—wait! First sim to have: flatspots, brake fade, visible tyre-wear, DOOM-mode, real-time sessions (with real-time mechanics), and a feel that remains unparalleled in any simulator ever made. As for Stefano Casillo, the genius who created it ... I hear he has developed a reputation in the community for laziness (at best) and lack of focus (or is that at best?). What, many ask, is up with the [netBike](#) thing (yes, you can download it), and what's with Stefano playing [the guitar on YouTube](#)—why, in short, is he messing about with all these side projects (while employed at BRD creating custom-built simulators for real-world racing teams), and not completing the 1.3 patch which has been delayed by well over a year.

Well yes ... thing is, though ... thing is Stefano Casillo almost single-handedly created one of the world's most immersive and fascinating sims, and that is an amazing achievement on its own: The idea that one individual can create something as impressive as *nKPRO*, in anything less than a decade ... kudos to kunos is due, surely ... And if you don't believe us, take a look at the staff credits at any of the developers' webpages: we're talking about dozens of gifted artists and coders ... not one bloke and his buddy (Marco) and a couple of mates who pitched in to help on weekends. So yes,

it is disappointing that we don't have a patch, and it is disappointing that Stefano is easily distracted—but then again, without that kind of mind, he'd never have created a *nKPRO* anyway ... so, disappointing, but the patch that has been in development for at least a year is nearing completion, and it is, by all accounts, a solid step-forward for *nKPRO*.

Forecast: Expect the 1.3 patch sometime this year, probably sooner rather than later. However, the patch alone may, sadly, do little to resurrect the damage done to the reputation of the most beautiful simulator since *GPL*. But it is a patch that will be welcomed for the small—but loyal—community who remain impassioned by Kunos' flawed masterpiece. Oh, and yes ... I still believe. Now can I have the hillclimb addon?

**READY
GOTO BLIMEY!GAMES
10 SCHEDULED FOR RELEASE:
20 FERRARI SIM [END OF YEAR]
30 PROJECT "FALCON" [GUARANTEED]
40 KART ATTACK [GUARANTEED]**

We all know the history, though it's probably much juicier than anyone is willing to say: Imagine; Ian Bell, SimBin-founder (in his bedroom, on the back of a mod), gets the rights for the FIA GT Series via Sweden's GT-legend H. Roos; together, using a leased ISI-engine, they create *GTR*, *GTLegends*, and then, somewhere during the development cycle for *GTR2*—which must have had the biggest development budget of any sim since EA Sports' *NASCAR Sim-Racing*—Bell walks away with his 'team', and sets up shop in London from where he completes *GTR2* as an outside contractor. (Or so legend has it, anyway.)

GTR2 complete, Bell now has a staff, an office, and a new development house: Blimey!Games. And it doesn't take Bell long to land the plummiest deal in the whole big world of developers, be they console or PC-based, and be they simulator or 'game' based: The licensed Ferrari sim. This being Bell, of course, that landmark deal wasn't enough, and Blimey! have announced a further two products for this year: The arcade, console-based *Kart Attack* (which will be our first look at Blimey's new engine), and the project named 'Falcon' which, by all accounts, will be an uncompromised simulator, and remains, for our community, the one to anticipate with much relish ...

Forecast: Blimey! is looking at the console market; as a result, gone is their trusted relationship with ISI, and in comes their own internally developed engine. Whatever they develop, it will, of course, be impressive—but—while Bell remains one of 'us' (in spirit, anyway), he's also the most savvy businessman in sim-racing, and he's not about to risk the reputation of his company—that has yet to develop one sim for the market—with a balls-to-the-wall simulator-only product. Expect, then, something along the lines of *GTR2* for 'Falcon', and expect pure heavenly bliss from the Ferrari sim. But much depends on the in-house engine: This is Bell's first crack at it and, in typical Bell style, he realized immediately what he needed and went after the best, capturing the wondrous talents of Eero Piitulainen (*Richard Burns Rally*), who had been working on a project called *Driver's Republic* (which we previewed in this magazine): Eero will join up with the now legendary Doug Arnao (who got his start, for those who have yet to read Steve Smith's 'Making of' in this issue, with *Grand Prix Legends*). The Ferrari sim, by all accounts, will go head-to-head with *Gran Turismo 5*, and if any of 'our' developers can make the successful transition to the console world, it will be Blimey!—now if they can bring a bit of simulation to the consoles along with them, everyone will be a winner.

**READY
GOTO SIMBIN STUDIOS
10 SCHEDULED FOR RELEASE:
20 GTR360[POSSIBLE]**

SimBin seem to be headed directly for the console market, and there are no plans—at least publicly acknowledged—to create anything for the PC in 2008. This, of course, may change, depending on what happens to their console-related plans: SimBin seem able to churn out a sim in about twenty minutes, if their 2006 effort, *RACE*, is any indication. In the meantime, SimBin, too, have abandoned their ISI-leased engine for their own in-house version dubbed 'Lizard', which they describe as, "tailored to handle racing games, but thanks to its modular structure, it is prepared to constitute the basis for any type of game".

Rumour has it that SimBin were forced to move on from the ISI-engine after it proved difficult to port onto the XBOX 360. Indeed, SimBin's foray into the console-world—which started with so much hype—has turned sour. Back in the spring of 2006, it was widely reported that publishers THQ had signed SimBin to a multiple-title deal, with the port of *GTR* to the XBOX 360 scheduled for a spring 2007 release.

Come release date, however, publishers THQ announced to the XBOX-specific CVG website that they, "{...} and SimBin are no longer working together on the GTR XBOX 360 videogame {...}"

Since then, things have gone awfully quiet on the GTR-port.

Forecast: Unless SimBin pull a major rabbit out of their hat, 2008 seems to be shaping up rather quietly for a development house that has released an average of two sims per year since 2005. Expect little action on the PC-front, and perhaps an outing for their Lizard-based *GTR* for the XBOX should a publisher be found.

**READY
GOTO LIVE FOR SPEED
10 SCHEDULED FOR RELEASE:
20 PATCH X [?] [PROBABLE];
30 S3 [SURELY!]**

The sim created by Scawen Roberts, Eric Bailey, and Victor van Vlaardingen has gone onto its latest patch as of December 2007, the so-named Patch Y. Those of us who studied the alphabet and can now recite it will immediately realize we're now one letter away from the end—or the long-awaited new beginning. *LFS* remains in S2 (of a three-phase schedule), and keeps getting stronger. What started as a fictional-based simulator back in 2003 now sports four fully-licensed cars (the latest is a Formula BMW developed alongside Fortec Motorsport), and the latest patch has been well received—at least, from those in the *LFS* community who are partial to accurate simulation. Awarded sim of the year when S2 was released in 2005 by AUTOSIMSPORT and BHMS, it has gone on to claim a significant portion of the sim-racing crowd, albeit one that remains quite distinct from the rest of the community. This has much to do with the perception, amongst the hardcore, that *LFS* remained a schizophrenic product, and not entirely sure whether it wanted to be a grown-up sim, or an arcade-game in sim's clothing. As of Patch Y, however, the developers have made it clear—if not in words then in code—that they are committed to developing their project into a hard-core simulator: Much work has gone into the clutch and gearboxes of all cars, making it, on this front, one of the most accurate simulators ever designed.

Forecast: Will 2008 be the year when S3 finally comes to life? It would appear likely as the sim celebrates its half-decade this summer. Whether S3 is launched, or whether we have to make do with another patch, one thing is certain: *LFS* has carved out a significant slice of the sim-

racing market, and their online code (along with their brilliant community-based webpage) guarantees this sim's longevity; expect, in addition, a surprise or two in the car department.

**READY
GOTO MASCHINE SIMULATIONS PTY LTD
10 SCHEDULED FOR RELEASE:
20 KARTSIM [UNLIKELY]**

This Melbourne-based company may well be the dark horse of 2008: Their *KartSim* is scheduled for a release sometime this year, and features a home-grown engine that will easily adapt itself to any type of car. Whether it will be open to modding or not has not been revealed, but one thing is certain: It looks dishy, as the screens in this month's issue makes wonderfully clear.

Forecast: Not much is known, no beta is available, and the sim remains a work in progress. But ... we have a feeling about this one ... stay tuned!

**READY
GOTO IRACING.COM
10 SCHEDULED FOR RELEASE:
20 IRACING [SPRING]**

What's there to say? Dave Kaemmer, the legend of Papyrus, John Henry's investment, Pay-to-Play, DirectX10 ... the day this one is released is a day to mark on the sim-calendar as 'historic', no matter what happens. We're talking the polar opposite of everything we've become accustomed to: iRacing.com will run a tight ship, and their sim will make it easy for the rookie to join the community—what this means for the established parts of the community, like leagues, is still to be seen.

Forecast: Will it work? And by 'it', we mean the business-plan, not the sim—that'll work, and it will be plenty good. But will Pay-to-Play fly in the sim-racing market? Only if they can capture a significant market other than the one that is currently in the scene (not big enough by half). Which means, of course, that we get to watch as John Henry and co. take our claims to the wide world and try and sell it for us. It's going to be some ride!

GPLegacy

GPLegacy has taken some large steps forward in 2007; with active partnerships now forged with Bridgestone, A1GP Mexico, and a host of real-world drivers, their race-frames and simulators are slowly nearing completion ... which, as Sergio Bustamante explains, is just the start of the adventure

SERGIOBUSTAMANTE



Antartida

It's a real pleasure to be back with this column; last year marked a most hectic season for us, and it came with a few problems of its own toward the end, most of them health related for which I've had to apologize to everyone ... but in case I missed anyone, here it is again. In AUTOSIMSPORT's last issue, we had to leave out any news regarding GPLegacy due to these issues, and it was pretty sad missing the issue that marked the turn from 2007 to 2008, as we had been preparing GPLegacy's Yearbook's Edition.

However, it's time to get back on the road! A landslide of e-mails asking why there was no news from GPLegacy—most of them coming from the part of the community who know there's been a lot cooking and asking for release dates, or whether we had forgotten about them, or offering to start online blogs, and so forth—made my recovery that much speedier. Thank you for your concern, and I assure you the ball is rolling once again; I'd really like to dedicate this year to everyone in the community who has been so committed to sim-racing, and it really was an overwhelming moment to know that we were missed in the last number.

Now enough yatta-yatta from my side, let's get on to the visual goodies!

GPLegacy Hardware Development Team? Well, it all starts soft before it turns hard.

We have a lot of people asking what's up with this 'Antartida' logo that we've been featuring in these pages since 2005. Well, let me explain briefly: The concept of Antartida was born in 1982, when, as a boy of eight, I dreamt of creating a marque that would produce the most amazing cars for racing, and for the streets. Yes, I know, I was a boy ... but then again, as you're about to find out, some things really *are* possible ... if not necessarily as you'd imagined them ...

The name ... it's hard to explain, it's more a matter of feeling than a tangible thing. There is a symbolism to it, a name that brings an image of a distant land, unclaimed, a land that endures time, therefore a land that will be there for anyone who is brave enough to explore it; as a boy the word Antartida brought some really daunting, beautiful images of a road unexplored to my mind, and I guess it just stuck.

I also wanted a name that begins and ends at the same place—yep, maybe a dull concept, but as a writer, I kept paying attention to the letters in the word—and so perhaps a bit naively, I thought that the letter 'A' at the start and at the end could describe the dream's philosophy. Then I thought of the logo, which had to be reminiscent of the letter 'A' that represents a road, both beginning and ending—except that the end is simply a start of its own. A new beginning, as it were: Yes, I guess it's now no mystery that the first two projects that we have tackled in terms of cars have this quality as well: The Antartida AurA, and the Antartida AdnamA.

One thing I have learnt through my life, and if you'll pardon my using the road analogy to death, is that getting on the road and following it along—rather than finding the cul-de-sac—is really what 'chasing' a dream is all about. It reminds me of Jackie Stewart's autobiography, titled 'Winning Is Not Enough'. It really isn't, because it's the adventure that counts, not the final outcome.



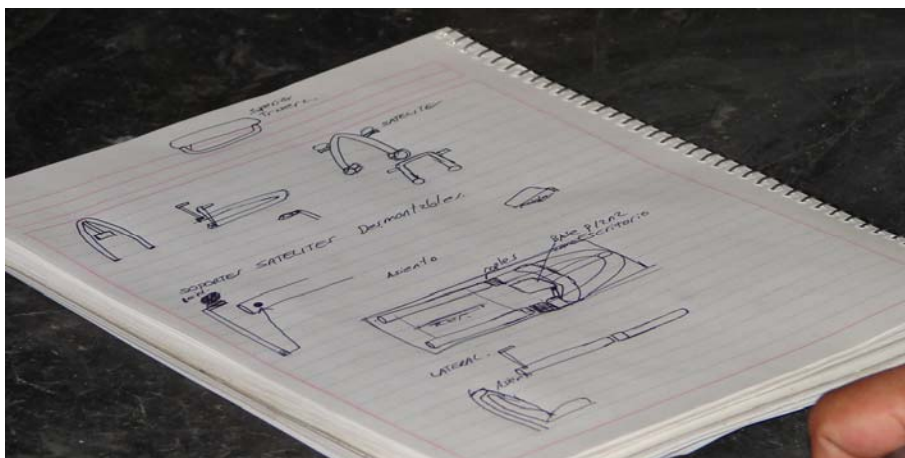
1982 Antartida's First logo

I cannot know if we'll take it all the way, to actually produce a car, but what I can guarantee is that there will always be someone pushing the project forward because dreams are contagious, you know; that's the part that people respond to the most.

The Antartida philosophy is actually crucial to the GPLegacy project; ultimately, it is everyone's project, and no exclusivity is asked from people who participate in it: Everyone is free to follow their own paths and priorities while, when they can, working on this dream.



Eduardo Borrego (Former Osella F1 Team member) tests the Omega 2



The sketches from the Omega 1, plus the few improvements

The Antartida Omega was the very first race-race we built. Its goal was to be a light, ergonomic, low-cost race-frame where the driver could be comfortable while having his steering wheel, pedals and rear speakers in one piece, a separate keyboard and mouse base which could be moved manually, and a very simple and space-saving screen-base, sturdy enough to accommodate monitors from thirteen to thirty-two inches (flat).

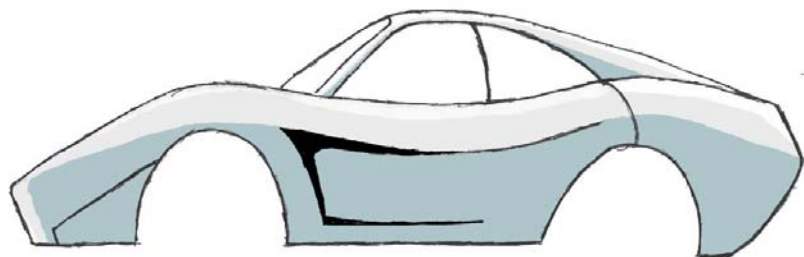
The concept was finalized thanks to the work of Jose Luis and Miguel (both preferred to have last names undisclosed), Enrique Mora, Bogart Escamilla, Alejandro Zaragoza, Gonzalo Hurtado, and Guillermo Navarro.

The model and seat would have been seriously improved, but the 'debut' of the race-frame was at the International AutoShow held in Mexico City, which required that, from drawing to the final working model, the frame had to be completed in less than twenty-four hours (yep, we managed it, as we reported in AUTOSIMSPORT at the time in a fine article written by GPLegacy's co-founder Raúl Valenzuela).

At the event, over 150 people per day tested rFactor's Hammer and rTrainer cars, with professional drivers including Eduardo Goeters, Juan Pablo Garcia, Homero Richards, Rafael Palacios, Francisco, Mauricio, Fernando, Andres Name, Alfredo Martinez, and Jonathan Briseño giving the sim a spin. The most exciting progress I can recall was the amazing work set by everyone at GPLegacy in preparation for this event, especially I would like to thank Tago Kalbri (MorroW—GPLegacy's honorary co-founder), Laurent Evenisse (^Lo), Jon Cox, Priit Saarts (priits), Mikk Kiiläspa, Viljami Mäki (Sniiki), Timo Hakala (SirElwood—GPLegacy Co-founder). And, of course, we shouldn't forget the help and support from Gjon and ISI for this event, without whom we would most assuredly have failed.

Time and activities have actually made a lot of the guys from back then lose touch and go their separate ways, but I hope that we will be reunited soon enough, and, thinking back to those crazy days, I can't help but remind myself to thank, yet again, some of the founders of GPLegacy: Magnus, Raúl (who I would, just a few days after the Auto show, have the pleasure of meeting in person), Ian Wright, Joe Mudrak, Hristo Itchov, Brett McCrohan, Fernando Cortina, Marcelo Manfredi, Beno Knezevic, and Roger Owen.

The deadline at this event taught us a lot about race-frames, and since we were already intimately involved with A1GP Team Mexico, we decided to set ourselves a bigger but still affordable goal (remember we're not a big company, nor did we have funding for GPLegacy, we were just getting started and trying to keep our heads above water by getting at least close to the investment numbers we set in).



Raymond was invited to create an Antartida of his own, and he came up with the Antartida Relena. That project, for the time being, has been waiting for completion, and I hope that sometime soon Raymond will get back to it, because his initial sketches were simply brilliant.



Concept and design of 3D Model: Fernando Prieto. Technical specs, Rotary Engine initial concept: Sergio Bustamante. DWR R3 Engine evolution concept: Fernando Prieto, Dave Henry. Interior Design, Steering Wheel, Styling: James Burroughs. In-Game evolution: James Burroughs, Dave Henry



The Aura r02 Racing bodykit: Since its features are designed for rallying, including ground clearance, a higher CoG made it cumbersome, and we needed to compensate with a sleek body to reduce drag. This was done with the help of a new virtual wind tunnel software.

Our decision was to produce the Antartida racing seats on our own, making their comfort, and ergonomics key in their construction: We didn't want to settle for anything as rigid as bucket-seats because we wanted them to be able to accommodate any body shape. This was the birth of the Antartida Omega 2 race-frame, which we fondly named the 'Antartida A1 Raceframe' since they were specifically made for the A1 race in Monterrey, Mexico. This was the first step toward the alliance that we've been building with the series, and especially with Team Mexico since early 2006.

This race-frame proved to be a most durable, reliable and heavy-duty piece of hardware that needed few modifications: And its success, I think, is demonstrated by the small contribution it made in the training of our good friend Luis 'Chapulín' Díaz for the Grand Am series, and—now—the ALMS series. It also was the mainframe used for our events in Mexico where close to 12,000 people have had a spin in them in over twenty events.

With the hardware side of GPLegacy on a firm footing (both figuratively and literally, as it turns out!), we were keen to get back to our passion: The software side of things. We have been a bit more cautious than usual in the way we have approached the 'talent' which we need for the projects, and primary in our consideration—besides talent, obviously—was the ability to imagine the project's future.

The software development side has been very important in terms of the Antartida line since we had been in talks with Gjon Camaj, who has always been supportive, and we wanted to contribute back by bringing quality content to rFactor, not only in the field of modding real cars, but also offering drivers a thrill and a useful tool for training in professional racing.

Since then, the work for the Antartida line of cars—directly for ISI—has had its ups and downs. The first car we started was actually a fantastic model that was sketched by Raymond Schram, a very good friend and, in my humble opinion, one of the best 3D modelers that the sim-racing community has created. Raymond's models have simply taken my breath away each time he's shared them with me, and his latest works with MMG have kept pushing his talent to a state of mastery and art.

While moving forward, the work set with Ghostspeed (www.ghostspeed.net) was always marked by their fantastic 3D models for renders, and the enthusiasm of GhostSpeed's leader, Pedro Rodrigues. Thanks to our cooperation—especially in the later stages of the A1Legacy (A1GP) project—Fernie Prieto and myself began talking about his passion for Rally cars, as well as for Formula cars, and that one of his hopes was to have a car that was good enough for the road while simultaneously being extraordinary for rallies. Since I had just tested a Subaru WRX on a test track, and had also been in a Mitsu EVO VII, we began a whole new project based on our common interest.

Fernie embraced the project with an amazing passion. It is thanks to him that the Antartida Aura went from its dream state into the solid model that remains the pride of GPLegacy.

The team has also relied heavily on James Burroughs (*who will be writing a regular column for AUTOSIMSPORT from our next issue—Ed*) who is not only a master of modding, track making, and vehicle making, but is also always willing to help and advise others on how to better hone their skills.

The Antartida Aura was set in-game by James, and the physics were brought to the level we were hoping for in a Rotary engine powered car (the benchmark of the Antartida models) by physics expert Dave Henry (D3 and D3Legacy) who showed us that, in conjunction with Fernie and James, the Antartida Aura was heading in the best direction.

The car was also showcased to our major sponsor, Bridgestone, and a deal has been secured where the Aura will enjoy physics derived directly from Bridgestone tyres. So we present you with some of the earliest renders of the Antartida Aura car which we hope to have completed very soon. 3D model and concept by Fernie Prieto, in-game drive-ability, graphics, further cockpit details by James Burroughs, physics by Dave Henry, beta-testing by professionals Paul Harwood, Scott 'Uly' Groom, Tim Watt, Lou Magyar, Brian Nathanson (welcome to the team), and—yours truly, who loved every minute of it!.

The team has remained under the same premise of non-exclusivity, with every member always preserving their freedom to work in the community, and we're always thankful for their help. The Antartida project also counts on the help and support from GPLegacy honorary co-founder Shaun Field, and now we're about to let the cat out of the bag regarding the latest efforts of the team for the A1GP-A1Legacy mod: our secret 'weapon', Sergey Poltavskiy. We will run an in-depth article on his current work when we present to you the current A1GP Ferrari Fiorano 599 Pace Car.

Sergey, Alexander Balanesko, and Shaun will continue to collaborate with Fernie and everyone in the team to bring the Antartida Adnama to life, and which will be introduced soon. We welcome everyone who would like to work with us for this dream enterprise, which also encompasses the Antartida C3 project, conceptualized and sketched by professional auto-industry designer Luis Monroy, and the expertise of D3Legacy, including the man to whom we all owe a big thanks for the development of our projects: Bill Tillman.

Helping us with advice and always willing to go the extra mile, I'd also like to thank Stuart Cowie, the whole DesafioVirtual team, Racetrax, and without any reserves, Pete Walsh, and Brendon Pywell, you are all crucial pieces of the project, and we're very thankful for all your support.

To close this article as the first installment about the Antartida developments inside GPLegacy, we want to announce that the Antartida Line will also be featured on the rFactor Mexico website, which will be launched soon; you can find the work in progress at www.rfactor.com.mx.

Thanks to the support of ImageSpace Inc., and especially, Mr. Gjon Camaj.

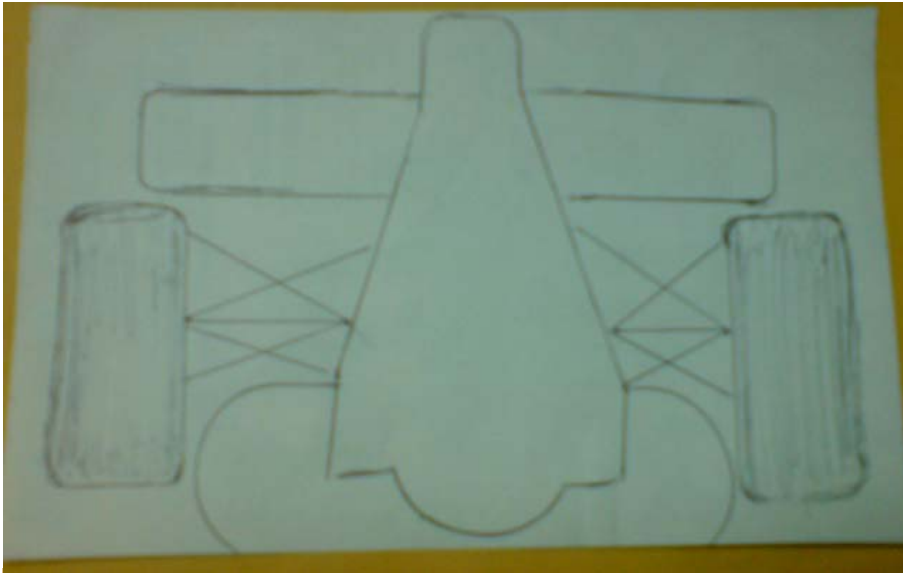
Small note: While building the prototype, we were also in close contact with the Renault RoadShow held in Mexico, and we had the R26 stored where we were building the Antartida and I promised Alex that I would show a few exclusive pics of this piece of art while being secretly tucked in after the successful Event held in the Reforma street in Mexico, so, here they are.



The Antartida Team

Bill Tillman (USA)
Luis Monroy (MEX)
Carlos Duarte (MEX)
Lou Magyar (USA)
Magnus Rubensson (SWE)
Martin Bruno (ARG)
Omar Duarte (MEX)
Fernando Prieto (USA)
James Burroughs (USA)
Dave Henry (USA)
Pedro Rodrigues (Por)
Paul Harwood (CAN)
Tim Watt (AUS)
Scott "Uly" Groom (AUS)
Shaun Field (AUS)
Sergey Poltavskiy (Rus)
Alexander Balanesko (Rus)

THE ANTARTIDA 3



The Dent

Vodka Diaries

Jon Denton finds deception in the beautiful tracks of Forza 2 ,and wonders why it's necessary to make it all so easy when there's nothing to lose should we have a 'big one' ...

JONDENTON



I was thinking about St Devote last night, you know, the first corner at Monaco, and I think I decided that, of all the corners that sim-racing has taken me through, this one terrifies me the most.

You see, in real-life, if any of us drove a Lotus 79, we would crap ourselves. Yes, I know, we all like to think we would be heroes, but the reality is that we would be in a steel shell with aluminium panels, tied to a fuel tank with our arse on the ground, and anyone who has driven any single-seater knows that this is a little discombobulating: Now imagine doing it in one that hits 100MPH in less than five seconds!

With this in mind, we merrily ignore the concept that when we rant through Eau Rouge in a GP79 sim-world daze, we are doing something that it takes a very special kind of person to do in real-life. The sheer energy going through the car through that turn is incredible—keeping your throttle-foot nailed takes not courage, but insanity! As a result, I would argue that fast corners—which most real-life drivers will say are the hardest—are made much easier by the removal of fear from the race driving diet.

However, St Devote is a right bitch. Why? Well, it is enclosed by metal barriers, the entry features a giant kurb on the left side constricting the width you have to work with (meaning the car has to stay straight in the braking area), the braking area is shrouded in shadow, and the entry point is so precise that if you turn in ten centimetres too early, you hit a wall with your right front, while ten centimetres too late will see you greet the outside wall with your left front. On top of this, if you carry just a smidgen too much speed into the turn, and make the apex while drifting across the negative camber exit, you just might prang the whole left side into the waiting wall. I think that about sums it up.

So, when it comes down to it, every time I have to get round St Devote in a GP79 car, or in *netKar Pro*—or in just about anything—I am a little bit scared that I won't make it out the other side, and I almost always end up taking too little speed through there as a result. Of course, this is necessary, on the basis that, in order to survive a race, one sometimes has to compromise ultimate speed, and not be always at one hundred and ten percent but, well, all too often I find myself booting up the hill towards Casino Square kicking myself for not being quick enough through there. I guess the only bonus is that no one can really overtake you there, unless they want an accident.

It was around the time that I was thinking this through that the power supply in my PC blew up, and I was rendered unable to drive any sims on the basis of an overly lengthy RMA procedure. This, adding to the recent bout of bad luck I have been enjoying, led me to find my way to the pub, where I was to find some friends.

During a particularly boozy evening with some close friends, however, I was able to mildly rekindle my sim passion as one of my buddies cranked up his XBOX 360 for a late night session of *Forza Motorsports 2*. Luckily his wife had gone to bed, so we had a whining-free environment in which to enjoy a bit of track unlocking (he had never so much as booted up the game), sponsored by Zubrowska vodka.

As I am sure most of you have experienced, being a sim-racer and playing *Forza* or *Gran Turismo* at your friend's house in multiplayer mode is an exercise in futility. They get annoyed by the fact that you know how to drive, and that you seemingly know your way round every circuit in the world (or rather Silverstone, Laguna Seca, Sebring, and Road Atlanta in the case of this session), and this quickly wears thin; as a result, we decided to take it in turns with single player track unlocking.

And you know what? I was impressed. When using a gamepad, it is very tough to get the tight throttle and braking control you might want—and get if you have TCS and ABS disabled—but at the same time, you sense that, on a decent wheel and pedal set, this game could well be challenging to drive; the quality of the tyre model genuinely surprised me, and even 'gamepadded' with driver aids, the experience felt well balanced.

'What? Balanced? What on earth do you mean, Denton, you fool?' Well, quite simply, I mean that any developer who is making a sim for a console has to make it *work*. It needs to be drivable on a gamepad, and drivable by people who think they know how to drive cars because they have one, and drivable by kids who think they know how cars work because they played *Need For Speed*, not to mention drivable in the sense that they don't necessarily need to handle *like* cars.

What *Forza 2* does, along with *Gran Turismo 4*, is balance the simulator aspect by giving a reasonable, if forgiving, tyre model, and allying this to a fairly simple vehicle dynamics model in the 'It will understeer a bit but always turn in, and then if you're going too fast, you will sort of four-wheel drift across the grass and be able to get back on the track without spinning!' sense, with a reasonable enough feel for power oversteer, and trail braking. Where *Forza 2* comes into its own, however, was under braking: Lock-ups were realistic, the car 'tramlining' along, and some of the movement in the chassis under heavy braking felt quite authentic. Sadly, with TCS off, the longitudinal grip given up by the driven wheels seemed all too easy to overcome under heavy lateral loads. But *meh*, we can't expect the world.

What I did not expect was to enjoy it so much, and since this is the world of consoles, it is here where the developers focus their billion-budgets on—giving a solid and enjoyable driving experience—and for the most part one can imagine driving this with a G25 (if the XBOX had such an option, which it doesn't), and being pretty well satisfied with a product that could take up a lot of one's time.

Where I did not feel content was on the tracks. Sure, next-gen consoles make things all look pretty, and this was on a hi-def TV, so it was almost at a resolution my PC could churn out, and sure, the lighting was gorgeous despite not looking quite as good as publicity screenshots. But what seemed odd was that tracks I knew very well seemed to be ... subtly changed.

The changes, usually, were in the width of the circuit, no doubt to make it more conducive to racing, and to provide more black stuff for n00bs not fall off of; but it was

the elevations that I found to be particularly sketchy, and sharp crests rarely upset cars in the way I expected. This was not the physics at work either, but rather, because the crests had been 'ironed out', Laguna Seca, and Road Atlanta being particular hilly culprits. As a result, this general 'easiness' meant that even after three hours, and a large quantity of alcohol, I could still win races on tracks I knew, and score podiums on the ones I didn't. Is this simming? Not really, but it is an awful lot of fun. Whether a console will ever be able to market and maintain a truly hardcore sim is extremely unlikely—

lessons with *Richard Burns Rally* suggest that no dev' with deep pockets will go near such a concept. But, with the *Forza* series, and the upcoming *Gran Turismo 5* approaching for PS3 owners (the PS3 having, unlike the XBOX 360, compatibility with G25s, and Fanatec's imminent Porsche wheel), there seem to be big steps forward coming in console sim-technology. I just hope they don't keep dumbing down the tracks, because St Devote is one of the things that keeps bringing me back. Driving fast is not easy; a simulator—without the fear of hurting yourself—is already simplifying things—making the turns easier is just overkill.



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AUTOSIMSPORT

Magnus Opus

Feeling The Heat ...

Magnus Tellbom, in the first of his regular columns for AUTOSIMSPORT, examines the state of penile add-ons, forum-rants, and ... the premature death of NASCAR Heat (yes, it's still warm) ...

MagnusTellbom



Patch Y

The talk of the town these days seems to be mainly revolving around the pros and cons of the newishly released 'Patch Y'. At least over at the *Live For Speed* forum. The arguments for and against is as varied as the drivers who occupy that very forum. Everything from serious matters like physics, settings and how real, or not, this and that aspect of the sim has become, to the more trivial topics like the lack of a digital speedometer in some cars, are intensely debated in threads (several pages long), and polls (to gauge popular opinion apparently).

As always, there are some well-thought-out posts, and some ... that seem to lack any thought whatsoever. The biggest noise, however, comes from the demo crowd, along with the demo-drifters, a unique species of sim-racer whose talents are limited to running, as far as I can tell, in *LFS*. And they are angry beyond what anyone thought was possible. What, you ask, has inspired their ire? Well, as of 'Patch Y', the XR GT Turbo (XRT) has been scrapped from the (yes, free) demo, replaced (oh the nerve of the *LFS* developers!) by a Formula BMW. The yelling is loud, immature, has no substance; the reaction from the licensed forum members, meanwhile, can only be described as malicious. Comments such as, 'Pay up or be quiet' hail over those who dare complain, and they are soon followed by suggestions like, 'Get a paper route and buy a license'.

I can only but agree. Whining over free content is just not kosher, is it?

As of 'Patch Y', I should also add, *LFS* is now back on track, and definitely headed in the right direction after a wobbly couple of years. Sure, there's tons of stuff left to do, but as of this patch, *LFS* takes another step—and a large one at that—away from the arcades, and an equally large step toward pure simulation. Gone is the throttle auto-blip and auto-cut, in comes clutch overheat, and damage. Gone is live anti-roll bar, and brake balance adjustment on road-legal cars (during race), and in comes proper H-pattern shifting, and sequential gearboxes. This all adds up to two things: More skill is required to keep the car in once piece and working throughout a full race, and the use of a wheel now offers an advantage. All, the majority seem to agree, as it should be.

The need for a wheel, however—and not surprisingly—has annoyed quite a few people, too. But I think their comments can pretty much be dismissed at *prima facie*: You do not drive a car with a mouse or a keyboard, and you certainly don't drive a car with an ultra-sophisticated system of pulleys and levers as you sit on top of the roof, so why the hell would you expect to drive a simulated car like this? You use a wheel because that's what God intended! And it's not like you need the best

wheel on the market—any wheel will do, and you can buy some knock-down versions without breaking the piggy bank. This, for me, is good news: in *LFS*, a wheel is now almost (but not quite) mandatory if you want to be competitive. It is as it should be.

Gee, Twenty Five!

Speaking of wheels, Christmas came and went, and I ended up with money enough to buy a certain very well known wheel with 900 degrees of rotation, three pedals on the floor, and a six-speed gear-shifter. I was thrilled to finally try this out, and it was actually unpacked and installed the moment I got home, a rarity, you will find, as you get older (always something blocking me from my fun!).

Then net result? It absolutely ruined my lap times. I have used Logitech products since the early days of *Sportscar GT*, but this was like nothing I have ever tried before. And it was not the three pedals on the floor that did it—I've been using an old set of pedals for a clutch for years, so I'm used to that. It also wasn't the 900 degrees of rotation, 'cause you do not have to use all of it—I actually recommend you don't, if you're used to the 240 degrees offered by a Wingman or a MOMO. No, it was the H-pattern shifter that did it. I've gotten so used to the sequential-style gearbox that I spent the entire first three days with the G25 missing gear shifts. I actually almost gave up for a while. But ... all is well now, and as I have become more comfortable with the H-pattern, so my times have slowly come back down to normal.

This wheel, the G25, is also subject to a pretty good rant over at the *LFS* forum: Or, rather, the rant is directed at those who sign their names with 'G25', to sort of show that they have one. The ranter thinks it's (let's say) silly, and I can only agree, but not for the same reasons as in that rant.

You see ... you may own a G25 all you like, or any other wheel that offers the same amount of immersion, but how do I know that you use it to its full potential? How do I know that you don't run it locked to a sequential shifter? How do I know you don't use auto clutch? How can I be sure that you struggle with six gears, and heel-toe braking? I can't, and therefore it's just silly to put G25, or any other wheel in your name, 'cause all it does is tell the rest of us that you have a small penis, and you're trying to elongate it with peripherals. Later in life, that enlargement device will probably be a fairly expensive car that you can't use to its full potential either!

GAMMA

And speaking of full potential, it seems that, finally, the super-project from a man called 'GAMMA' is upon us. It's basically *Sportscar GT* on steroids, but wow, *what* steroids. For some four-and-a-half years or more, this has been in the making—the oldest posts I can find about this project date back to September 2003—and 'GAMMA' has gone through a lot along the way, and at times I have written off the entire project as vaporware. Still, it seems as if it's going to be released, and it will probably use the full potential of the old *Sportscar GT*. I will have to install this old sim once again and do some proper testing, but if it is all that 'GAMMA' has promised in his posts on RaceSimCentral, I expect to be 'hard to reach' for some time. There's nothing like nostalgia to keep my butt glued to the chair for hours and hours.

Re-butt-all!

Last ... I learned a new word at Christmas (I'm Swedish, in case you missed it!). It popped up as a direct result to my 'Farewell to NASCAR Heat' article in

the last issue of AUTOSIMSPORT. The word was 'rebuttal', and I had to look it up. I learned that it is normally used in a courtroom, and in short, it's all about presenting counter-evidence. You see, although I thought I did a good job signing off as a writer for *NASCAR Heat*, the article upset what is left of that community. The uproar was full of hard (but mostly civilized) words, and a lot of upset and angry feelings. In fact, many were angered to such a degree that they decided to create their own *NASCAR Heat*-only ezine. I can do nothing but wish all the remaining editors and active users good luck—all forty of them! I wish them happy editing and a good future, and I hope that the magazine comes out great!

Aside from the ezine, though, more good news came from this piece: Cholerix updated his site with just about every piece of info needed to put your own mod into *NASCAR Heat*. This was one of the things I'd been asking for, and I commend him for doing such a great job. If potential modders pick up on that, and start producing quality stuff, there may yet be hope for the old sim. You will find that info and more on www.SpeedSims.net.

See you all next issue!



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About The Team:-RC Motorsports

By Richard Courtenay Smith (RCM Founder, Owner, SSCA Manager, Driver) and Fredrik Arbegard (RCM Co-Owner, Painter, FSR Manager, Driver)

Richard Courtenay Motorsport (www.rcmracing.net) was founded in May 2006 by Courtenay Smith. The team was started in order to compete in an endurance series with races lasting from 6 to 24 hours, that series was SSCA, and later WOSEC. The game used for those series was Sierra's NASCAR® Racing 2003 with the GTP mod of 4 cars.

The team entered the series with the Mazda® 787b in the GTP Lights class.

In the team's first race at SSCA, we finished 2nd in the GTP Lights class, at the 12 Hours of Watkins Glen Long presented by Sim-Gear. Which was a one off special event before the real championship season.

In the second race of the championship at SSCA, we finished 4th at Sebring. Later that year in SSCA in a special 3 hour event, we finished 3rd in a Sauber, in the GTP class.

We even entered the WOSEC Le Mans 2006 in November but unfortunately a few accidents plagued the team and both the Mazda cars had to retire.

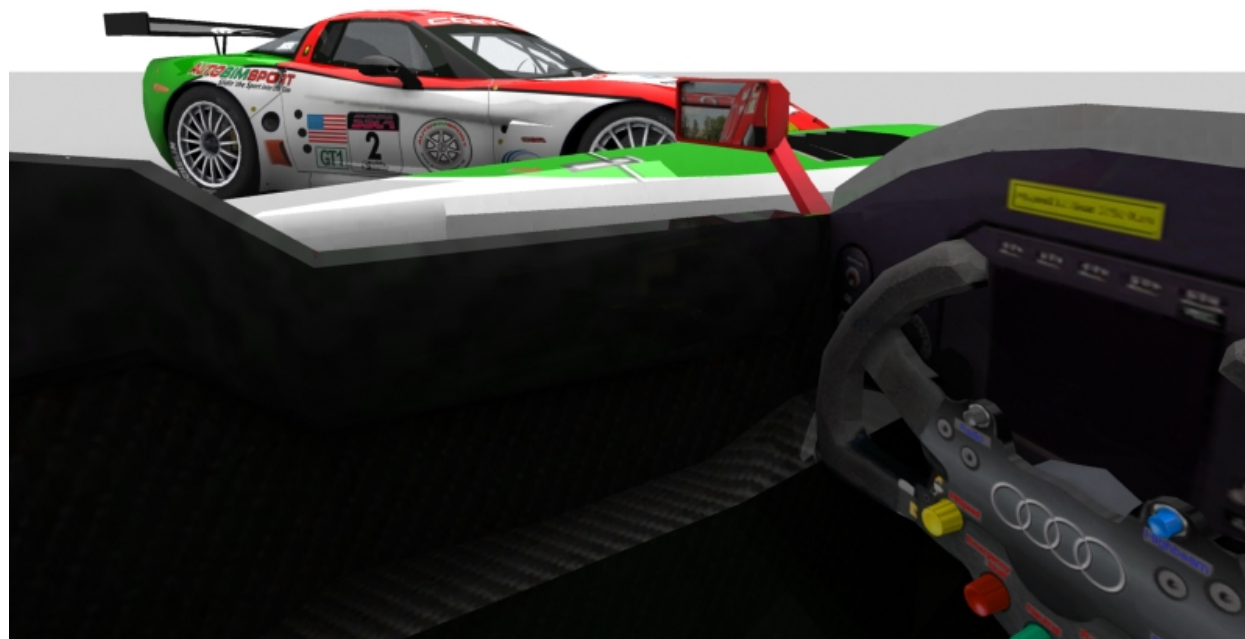
In 2007, RCM entered in full force at SSCA with 3 cars, WOSEC had closed their servers and the series was gone.

The first race of the 2007 season (the 3rd race of the 06/07 championship) was the 12 Hours of Daytona, RCM finished 3rd in the GTP Lights class.

In the championship standings, the team was now in 2nd place after Daytona.

Next race on the calendar was the 6 Hours of Sunsky; the Mazda was hit by a car in the early stages and forced to retire. But the RCM Toyota had managed to capture RCM's first win in SSCA GTP Lights.

The 2nd Mazda came 5th and the team celebrated with burnouts on the front straight.



In the championship standings, TEAM RCM neither lost nor gained a position, but remained second.

The former administrator of SSCA left and took the name SSCA with him, after some disputes.

The series was now transformed to OATAS (www.oatas.net) and their first race was the 24 Hours of Le Mans (which was the 5th race of the 06/07 championship).

With various problems for the leading team in the championship, RCM had to help Team OER as a return favor for helping RCM in the beginning.

The race was very controversial for RCM. First the Toyota which had won at Sunsky blew up for some reason, then the 2nd place in points Mazda was hit and crashed off track by a fellow racer.

Before the three hour mark, RCM had lost 2 out of 4 cars.



And it wasn't going to get better either. The Sauber which ran in the higher GTP class crashed into a wall in the sand pit. Hours later the Team OER car rolled in a curve and damaged its engine for good, DNF'ing after 14 hours of intense racing.

Although this was bad, RCM made a return in the "New" SSCA (www.sscarace.com) series which now raced in the ISI game rFactor.

During the first test race on July 7th, 2007 which took place at Watkins Glen, the team battled for 6 hours and came out as winners in the GT1 class with their Chevrolet Corvette C6.R.

In addition to that, RCM took 5th place in the LMP1 class and 4th in the GT1 class with their #02 sister Corvette C6.R car. They were also the only team to have ALL of their cars cross the finish line for that race!

At the next race in the OATAS series at a track called Karjala, RCM took revenge from Le Mans and won the race, moving into 2nd place in the standings and only 2 points behind 1st place of OATAS, while OER was 3rd, 2 points behind RCM, 4 behind OATAS. Setting up an epic battle for the GTP Lights championship at the finale round @ Watkins Glen for 10 hours!

At the OATAS finale at Watkins Glen, RCM battled hard with the 2 GTP Lights cars they had entered. The RCM Mazda crashed and flipped after 3 hours, while running 2nd

in class. So RCM focused on the Team OER Mazda which was 4th when the RCM Mazda went out, and despite some trouble and being 6 laps down after 4 hours, we fought back hard to 1 lap down after 10 hours. But unfortunately finished 3rd while OATAS finished 2nd, so the championship went to them. OER got 2nd and RCM 3rd in the 06/07 SSCA/OATAS GTP Lights championship season.

With the OATAS GTP season and championship over, RCM decided it was best to pull out and retire from GTP, and Nascar Racing 2003 was beginning to die, and the team saw no interest in it and with GTP. So the team re-organized, and re-grouped and put all their efforts and drivers into the NEW SSCA series with rFactor. After winning the first test race at Watkins Glen on July 7th, 2007, and with SSCA sticking to it and announcing another race at Daytona, RCM decided to go for it and race in SSCA. The next endurance race was at Daytona for 12 Hours, and it was on September 8th, 2007. RCM entered 3 cars again, this time 2 LMP1 Audi R8s and 1 Corvette C6.R. Unfortunately both LMP1 Audi R8s went out early due to driver swap problems, leaving only the RCM GT1 Corvette C6.R to finish. And finish it did! The RCM Corvette C6.R lead ALL 418 laps with Kevin Brents taking pole and leaving the rest of the GT1 field in the dust. Courtenay Smith, Steve Rousseau, and William Griffin, helped pilot the Corvette C6.R to it's second victory in as many attempts, with a 4 lap win over 2nd place in GT1.

After that Team RC Motorsports prepared for a NEW adventure! The month was November, and every simracer knows what that means, BULL RUN 1000!! This past year's was the 10th Anniversary of the Bull, and RCM was making its first appearance. The V8 Supercars were used with rFactor and a stellar field showed up for the Bull Run 1000 on Saturday November 17th, 2007. 40 teams were in attendance for the start, and RCM qualified its #3 Team RCM CXC Simulations/Natural Point Holden Commodore VE V8 Supercar 6th. RCM lead briefly and ran in the top 3 for the majority of the race, but near the end, RCM was lapped by

eventual race winner Torrent Motorsports, and could only hang on to their well deserved and earned 2nd place, finishing 1 lap back of 1st, and 1 lap up on 3rd. A huge day for RCM at the Bull, considering they finished, and it was the team's first attempt, and to come home on the podium, even leading briefly, was icing on the cake. RCM enjoyed some much needed and well deserved celebrations afterwards!!

With November over, and RCM signing two sponsors of CXC Simulations and Natural Point, they prepared for a busy December! First off they received news about the rescheduled 8 Hours of Nurburgring at SSICA, since the first attempt in November, the week before the Bull Run 1000, was a disaster with massive lag and warping, SSICA rescheduled to a later date. And that date was January 12th, 2008, to kick off the 2008 SSICA Endurance Series Championship. RCM was also competing in a open wheel champ car series on Wednesday nights at MIRC (www.mnrlonline.com) for Season 8. The team started off well in December, with a 2nd and a 1st by Courtenay Smith.

Then with the signing of AutoSimSport in mid December, RCM prepared for a special endurance race. This was the R.A.C.E.R. 2007 New Year's Enduro at Road America for 11 hours on Saturday December 29th, 2007. RC Motorsports entered 3 cars, the #3 Natural Point Corvette C6.R, the #7 AutoSimSport Audi R8, and the #8 CXC Simulations Audi R8 for this race.

Daniel Smektala took pole in the LMP1 class, in his #7 AutoSimSport Audi R8 for Team RCM, and shared a brilliant drive in the 11 hours with alien co-driver Klaus Kaag of Denmark, with some intense fights with Team KR3W along the way.

In GT1 Kevin Brents took pole (as usual), in his #3 Natural Point Corvette C6.R for Team RCM, and led the field with Steve Rousseau and team owner Courtenay Smith for the entire 11 hours. Dominating victory for those three, who are now 3 for 3 in GT1 Endurance race wins.

The other LMP1 Audi R8 for Team RCM, the #8 CXC Simulations Audi R8 car, started out good with Swede Fredrik Arbogard taking 6th place on the grid and holding it steady in his first stint.

The #8 Audi R8 car was running 5th in the LMP1 class with help from JT Ninja, Luis Soria, and Tony Rice. Then in the last hour, it ran out of fuel on the backstraight, and finished P5 in LMP1.

So with 2007 over and ending on a good note, RCM was ready for 2008!

First off was the SSICA opener at Nurburgring for 8 Hours on January 12th. This time the race was a success! RCM had 3 cars again, the #3 Natural Point Corvette C6.R, the #7 AutoSimSport/SRT Audi R8, and the #8 CXC Simulations/SRT Audi R8. With renewed spirit and determination after Road America, RCM had plans of carrying that success over to SSICA against stellar competition, and it did!

The #7 AutoSimSport/SRT Audi R8 qualified 4th in the LMP1 class, and moved into 3rd in the early laps with America Daniel Smektala taking the wheel. Sadly, on lap 14, while running 3rd, and having a great run, Daniel clipped the grass going into a high speed corner, spun and when coming to a stop, was clobbered by the #55 Swedish American Racing Dome, which was running in 4th spot. The #7 Audi R8 was hit hard, spun and flipped into the air, and landed off the track upside down. Daniel tried to flip it back over, but to no avail, and RCM was done after only 30 minutes in a race where a podium finish was definitely possible and showed so much promise for the 2 drivers! (To view the video click here, TO LOU OR EDITOR, the attached .avi is the video, if you can host it on AutoSimSport and provide a link, i would appreciate it!!! its small, 1.66mb .avi file! thanks!)

The #8 CXC Simulations/SRT Audi R8 qualified 7th, and had an amazing battle for 5th place with the #31 Northstar Racing Dome. During the last hour the Dome and the Audi swapped positions and Fredrik Arbogard told team

manager and owner Courtenay Smith when he got in the car for his final stint, "I will bring you home a 5th place!" And although being behind 1 lap at the beginning of his stint, and then unlapping himself, and making a quick splash and dash pit stop, he was able to pass the Dome and take home 5th place, after an unscheduled pit stop and driver swap by Northstar. So RCM was happy with the top 5 result in LMP1 after a tough, hard fought race!

In GT1, RCM entered its 2 time SSICA class defending car, the #3 Natural Point sponsored Corvette C6.R. After qualifying 2nd behind Orion, Kevin Brents made quick work and passed Orion in the first 10 laps. It would go RCM, Orion, SFH, for GT1 podium, for the next 2 hours, with the gap rarely behind more than a few seconds. Many times the 3 cars were nose to tail! Some exciting racing for sure! The turning point though was when SFH and Orion pitted on their 2nd pit stop, they did a driver swap, where as Kevin Brents of RCM didn't switch drivers, and went on for 5 stints, total of 3 straight hours. So when Kevin Brents did pit and handed over to Steve Rousseau, they had a healthy 1 to 2 lap lead over SFH and Orion. Steve handed over after a solid 3 hour stint to RCM Owner and Manager Courtenay Smith with 2 hours left in the race. The #3 had a 1 and a half lap lead with just under 2 hours left and looked in control. With 1 hour left, SFH unlapped themselves, and set charge after RCM. With 20 minutes left, and a 1 minute lead, driver Courtenay Smith made an almost costly mistake, and spun out of a slow left hand corner, damaging the front wing and spoiler. With a 1 minute lead and an ever decreasing gap, Courtenay tried to keep it steady and finish. He decided not to pit, since it would take too long and only 15 minutes were left, and he was only losing 5 to 6 seconds per lap, with a 45 second lead. He soldiered on and lucky kept it on track and out of damage, and RCM won its 3rd SSICA GT1 race in as many attempts with a 30 second win over SFH, with Orion 1 lap back in 3rd. RC Motorsports was thrilled having

completed an amazing feat, winning the first 3 SSCA GT1 Endurance races!

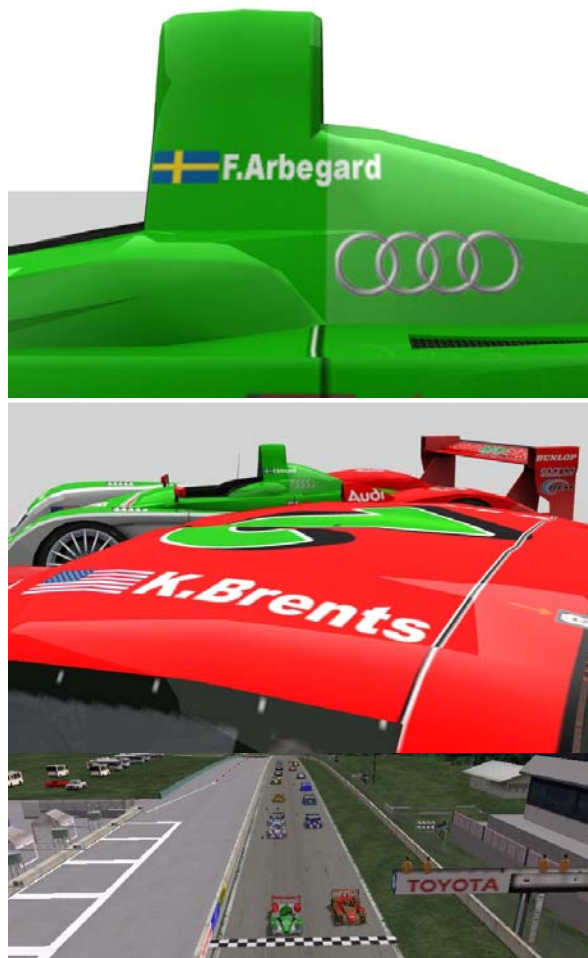
RC Motorsports also continued strong in MIRC in the Champ cars, with RCM MIRC teammate Kevin Brents winning two races, one at Chicagoland, and the other at Essington. Courtenay Smith also won two, one at Michigan, and the other at New Hampshire! So as press time, RCM has won 4 of 7 in MIRC Season 8 with the Champ Car mod! They are also in the lead in the team's standings, ahead of Torrent Motorsports Black, with Sam Giltner and Michael Theis as drivers.

RC Motorsports looks toward the future with optimism, as they prepare for the second round of the 2008 SSCA Endurance Series at Daytona for 12 Hours on March 8th, 2008! RCM will enter 4 cars hopefully, the same 3 that were at Nurburgring, and hopefully a 2nd GT1 effort, in the #4 Aston Martin, sponsor not determined as of press time.

RCM will also enter into the world of Formula One with FSR F1 World Series Pro division in 2008! The team is very excited about this and has already entered 2 teams, RC Motorsports America, and RC Motorsports Mexico for FSR F1 Pro 2008. Two race drivers, and 1 test/reserve driver per team will take part on RCM in FSR F1. This will be the team's first official Formula One effort in simracing and they approaching with optimism and excitement. As Courtenay Smith says, "we have done a lot in sports car simracing, now its time to expand and prove what we got in open wheel racing, namely F1, and there is no place better than Formula Sim Racing (FSR). We eagerly anticipate it. The drivers have already started practicing for the opening round in March at Australia."

So come check out our team website, which was launched October 19th, 2007. We have 29 current drivers and we are always looking for new drivers and talent! Plus there are many goodies on the website. Come check out the schedule page, the downloads, our amazing sponsors, Natural Point, Sim Racing Tonight, AutoSimSport, and CXC

Simulations. And our gallery page with beautiful pictures of RCM painted cars with our wonderful sponsor's logos on it! Also the team forum is on the site, so you can go check it out too!



GTR2 STES Season III, Round 5 : Nordschleife VLN 3 Hours

By Ronnie Akesson



The fifth round of the Scuderia Twente Endurance Series might have been the toughest one on the calendar, as it was last year. In the second STES season only a handful of cars managed to finish the three hours, and many worried for a similar scenario this time. The biggest change compared to last season was the new VLN track that was chosen, because it features a better pit area than the regular Nordschleife.

Almost 25 drivers were listed for the event, and the only favorite in absence was Rickard Hellsten. In the extended qualifying session, due to the 8 minute laps, it was a Norwegian driver that blew away everybody: Erling Bohmer. Erling has been fast before in the STES, but never really dominant as this time. He put his Ferrari 550 on pole, being the only one getting more than 5 seconds under the 8 minute barrier. Second in qualifying came championship leader Anders Nilsson in a Lister Storm, and third Swede PeterL in another Ferrari 550. In NGT Class pole was for Trevor Catt, in a very strong 8:26, followed in 3 second distance by Kenneth Liljeholm and third Darren Blythe.



P10. Thomas Granbacka (3rd NGT)



After the shortened pacelap the field went for a major endurance challenge starting at the first meters of the old Nordschleife itself. Erling Bohmer took off so fast, that Nilsson worried about his Lister fuel strategy to keep up with him. In the second lap the first signs of trouble began to show. Erik Nordqvist and Piotr Niedziela both retired and Scuderia Twente driver Dennis Glaasker got stuck on a high kerbstone after taking the inner raceline to defend himself from Enzo Amico, who cut his way through the field after a bad qualification. Glaasker eventually managed to get back on the track but was now last and needed an extra stop for some repairs. Fellow Scuderia Twente driver Chris Smit meanwhile did good business in NGT class. Although the NGT pack was lead by Trevor Catt and Darren Blythe he was in a good position to take valuable points for the championship.

After about a quarter of the distance in lap 6 both Enzo Amico and Christer jorhalm resigned, leaving 18 drivers still in the race. Meanwhile Anders Nilsson managed to take over the lead from Erling Bohmer with his less thirsty Lister, and in the same time Dutchman Rob Bakker took over the lead in NGT class from Trevor Catt. After the pitstops Guggen Hultman crashed his Ferrari 550 and had to retire together with Frank Baird who had till then a very strong race in his NGT Ferrari 360.

The next hour there were no incidents and everybody was in their race rhythm, an extremely important thing at the narrow roads of the Nordschleife. Meanwhile Dennis Glaasker had fought his way back in his Corvette C5-R from the back of the field to 6th spot entering lap 16. But as always in the STES the final hour is the toughest. In lap 17 Darren Blythe retired, and one lap after him Michael Harmsen from The Netherlands crashed his Corvette out of the race. A big disappointment for him as Harmsen being in fact the youngest driver in the field, was very close to his first STES finish.

Slowly the race came into the final stage, and while exhaustion was felt by all, another three to four laps had to be taken, not the easiest job on the tricky highspeed track. Erling Bohmer, who took the lead back from Nilsson was now an unstoppable force, keeping under the 8 minutes lap after lap, giving his mean contenders no change to follow. The last one to retire was Rob Bakker going strong in NGT but crashed his black 360 Modena NGT Ferrari two laps after the flag.

It was Bohmer then who took a superb victory, followed by Ola Lennstrom who took 2nd spot from Anders Nilsson in the final stage of the race. Nilsson however took a lot of points with his Lister by taking third spot and benefitting from the extra bonuspoints for the car.

In NGT it was Kenneth Liljeholm taking a good victory followed by Trevor Catt and Tomas Granbacka. The Scuderia Twente did a good job both finishing this event. GT driver Dennis Glaasker brought his Corvette home 6th and Chris Smit in the NGT Porsche came in 11th overall and 4th NGT, taking some good points for the championship.

The Scuderia Twente Endurance series is now halfway and after five races it is Anders Nilsson leading the GT class followed by Ola Lennstrom and Rickard Hellsten, who now shares his third spot with Erling Bohmer. In NGT the first position is shared by Scuderia Twente driver Chris Smit and fellow Dutchman George Pol, who took many points finishing the Nordschleife event in a Mosler getting 3 extra credits. Third in NGT halfway through is Kenneth Liljeholm.

The next event will be a 3 hour race in Darkness at the Hockenheimring on the 18th of February.