

AUTOMOTIVE

## Porsche turns keys over to gamers in new competition

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*Porsche is making its 2019 911 the focal point of a new gaming competition. Image credit: ESL*

By SARAH RAMIREZ

German automaker Porsche is putting fans in the driver's seat in an esports collaboration that combines online and offline competition.

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Porsche is teaming up with Forza Motorsport and ESL, the world's largest esports company, for the 911 GT3 RS Challenge. The competition will engage gamers from around the world as they begin racing online, with the eventual winners getting behind the wheel of Porsche's cars.

"This targets the niche audience of wealthy enthusiasts of road-legal track cars," said Julie Blackley, communications manager at [iSeeCars](#), Woburn, MA. "While those who can afford the vehicle aren't likely to participate in the challenge, it reinforces Porsche's brand and creates buzz for the 911 GT3 RS."

Ms. Blackley is not affiliated with Porsche, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. [Porsche](#) was reached for comment.

### Racing challenge

The 911 GT3 RS Challenge has several stages, and includes live online and offline races.

A short film introducing the challenge blends together the gaming and Porsche cultures.

### *Porsche introduces its new esports racing challenge*

The film opens with a start screen reminiscent of early video games, asking viewers if they are ready for a new challenge with a yes-no question.

After the "yes" option is selected, the bright green GT3 Porsche transforms into a modern video game rendition. Viewers are invited to take a seat and "get a taste for racing."

As the video explains the levels of the competition, the actual GT3 Porsche is revealed and driven on a race course.

"This challenge is unique because it makes the Porsche 911 GT3 RS, which has a base price of \$188,550, accessible

to the masses," Ms. Blackley said. "This is a stark contrast to other high-end luxury autos, which typically limit access to their brands and rely on this exclusivity to drive demand."



*The winner will be able to participate in Porsche's race car driving training. Image credit: Porsche*

To participate, players must register with ESL and race in the Online Cup Qualifying Phase in Forza Motorsport 7 only driving the 2019 Porsche 911 GT3 RS. The first stage is open until Aug. 7.

From there, the field will be reduced in a virtual playoff to determine the top eight players, who will compete in the live final at the Gamescom in Cologne, Germany. Then, the top four players from the Gamescom Finals will take part in a professional driving training at Porsche Leipzig.

In the fall, the final four will meet again at Hungaroring in Hungary and race in a Porsche cup simulator in a final time trial. The driver with the fastest lap time will be given the opportunity to participate in Porsche Master Cup Training in Barcelona, Spain.

#### Gaming opportunities

By turning incorporating gaming into its marketing strategies, Porsche is once again revealing its more playful side.

The automaker recently teamed up with Lego to help establish a love for the brand early on in young car enthusiasts. The two brands are releasing a Lego set based on Porsche vehicles and are touting the partnership by bringing the automaker's museum to life at night ([see more](#)).

Through its esports collaboration, Porsche is also showing that it is a forward-thinking automaker.

Esports, which usually take the form of organized, multiplayer video game competitions, present an interesting opportunity for investors. According to [CNBC](#), the video game industry could be worth as much as \$138 billion at the end of 2018.

Luxury automakers can get in on the ground floor by incorporating more gaming aspects into their marketing and design strategies.

Last year, British automaker McLaren launched a competition to find a new simulation driver for its team. The "World's Fastest Gamer" had players compete across a variety of racing games and platforms, including mobile and gaming consoles, a tactic McLaren chose to be sure it did not limit the competition ([see story](#)).

"It will be interesting to see if automakers like Ferarri follow suit," iSeeCars' Ms. Blackley said. "For now, Porsche is blazing a trail by incorporating esports into their marketing efforts."