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## F1 Esports Pro Draft Qualifiers Confirmed

Date

19 June 2018

- 66,000 players battled it out to secure a place for the draft
- Formula 1 teams to choose their official drivers

Formula 1®, the pinnacle of motorsport, today confirmed the 40 online racers who have qualified for the next stage of the F1 Esports Series 2018, the Pro Draft. On Monday 9<sup>th</sup> July in London, representatives from the nine F1 teams participating in the F1 Esports Series will use the Pro Draft to select which drivers will join their own esports teams and compete as a professional in the latter part of the season.

Over the course of the four online qualifying rounds, 66,000 players competed to secure a place in the Pro Draft, completing 1.1 million laps. A total of 111 territories (from A for Albania to Z for Zimbabwe) were represented, competing in F1 2017, the official game of the FIA FORMULA ONE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP™, on the PlayStation®4 computer entertainment system, the Xbox One family of devices including the Xbox One X and PC, with Great Britain leading with 23% of the players, followed by USA (16%) and Germany (13%).

Mercedes AMG Petronas Motorsport, Red Bull Racing, Hype Energy eForce India F1 Esports Team, Williams, Renault Sport Team Vitality, Haas F1 Esports Team, McLaren, Toro Rosso Esports Team and Sauber F1 Team will all be offering positions in their driver line-ups as part of the series. Every team must select at least one of its drivers from the Pro Draft.

The F1 Esports Pro Draft will see the players travel from 15 countries – including the UK, Chile, Germany and Finland, amongst others – to the historic Silverstone circuit in the build up to the Formula 1 2018 Rolex British Grand Prix. There they will undergo a series of tests, assessments and interviews with the teams to demonstrate why they should be selected. The Pro Draft will be streamed online on Facebook and will also be shown live on television.

Once selected, the official esports drivers will represent their real-world teams later on in the season as they race in the three live events that will determine the 2018 F1 Esports Series Teams' and Drivers' World Champions. There will be a prize fund of \$200,000 allocated to the teams based on their positions in the team standings.



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Of the 40 players confirmed for the Pro Draft, 36 came through the Open Qualification phase: four online events on the F1 2017 game followed by four sets of races on each of the three platforms. The fastest nine players on PS4, Xbox and PC have all qualified. Two more players qualified through the Online Qualification Wildcard and are joined by Fabrizio Donoso Delgado and Sven Zürner, who both qualified through last year's competition finishing respectively 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>.

The F1 Esports Series is operated in partnership with Codemasters, the developer and publisher of the official Formula 1 video game franchise and Gfinity, one of the world's leading esports companies.

**Julian Tan, Head of Digital Growth & F1 Esports at Formula 1 said:**

"Last year's series was a great success and based on the level of those who have qualified for this year's Pro Draft, the 2018 season is shaping up to be even more exciting. The drivers will now battle it out for what is a truly incredible opportunity. With the F1 teams involved we have been able to combine the power of Esports with the magic of Formula 1, establishing an authentic series that builds on what we have on the grid. We can't wait to watch the action unfold."

**Paul Jeal, Formula 1 Franchise Director at Codemasters said:**

"We have been incredibly impressed with the speed and race craft that we have seen from our players during online qualification. We have 40 outstanding racers ready for the Pro Draft, with a near equal split on returning finalists and semi finalists from last years competition, and new drivers who are ready to experience the thrill of the live events for the first time. For our gamers to have the opportunity to join a real Formula 1 team is an incredible opportunity and we cannot wait to see them perform on the biggest stage on F1 2018."

**Mark Brittain, Chief Commercial Officer at Gfinity said:**

"The online tournament has seen a record number of competitors and the competition has been incredibly competitive. We now look forward to welcoming the top players and their potential Teams to the Gfinity Esports Arena for the Pro Draft as we enter the second phase of our activation."



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For more information on the F1 Esports Series visit [www.f1esports.com](http://www.f1esports.com).

**ENDS**

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## **About Formula 1®**

Formula 1® racing began in 1950 and is the world's most prestigious motor racing competition, as well as the world's most popular annual sporting series. The 2018 FIA Formula One World Championship™



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runs from March to November and spans 21 races in 21 countries across five continents. Formula One World Championship Limited is part of Formula 1, and holds the exclusive commercial rights to the FIA Formula One World Championship™.

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## **About Codemasters**

Codemasters (AIM:CDM) is an award winning British video game developer and publisher with over 30 years of heritage. The company specialises in high quality racing games including DiRT, GRID and the BAFTA award-winning official FORMULA 1 series of videogames.

For more information on Codemasters' product portfolio, please visit [www.codemasters.com](http://www.codemasters.com). Join in the conversation with @codemasters on Twitter or Like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/codemasters](http://www.facebook.com/codemasters).

## **About Gfinity**

Founded in 2012, Gfinity has established itself as one of the world's leading esports companies. The London-based business enjoys strong relationships with game publishers, players and the wider esports community and has built a solid reputation for delivering high quality competitions, both on-line at [www.gfinityesports.com](http://www.gfinityesports.com) and off-line, in addition to producing industry leading esports broadcasts. The Gfinity Esports Arena at Fulham Broadway, London is the home of UK esports showcasing regular tournaments across the full range of competitive games. Beyond its own tournaments Gfinity provides a full turnkey solution for brands wanting to create their own esports tournaments and has staged premium esports events around the globe for leading publishers and brands including Formula 1, Microsoft, Activision, EA, Xbox, Gillette and HP.

## **About esports**

Esports (electronic sports) is watching or playing competitive video gaming. Leading titles include League of Legends, Counter-Strike: Global Offensive, Defence of the Ancients 2 (DotA 2), Call of Duty and Rocket League. The industry is growing rapidly, with new communities developing around more and more titles. The global esports market generated US\$493 million of revenue in 2016 and is expected to make \$1.5



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billion by 2020. The global esports audience in 2017 was 191 million people, 80% under the age of 35 and 70% male (source: Newzoo). Online streaming channels Twitch and YouTube command the biggest audiences, although esports events are also now being broadcast on conventional TV. The 2015 League of Legends Championships finals in Berlin were watched by 36 million people, with a peak concurrent viewership of 14 million viewers, while at DotA 2's flagship annual championship 'The International 2016' competitors from around the world competed for a prize pot of over \$20 million.

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