



Ford Gets Serious About Gaming, Launches Motor Racing Teams to Compete in Increasingly Popular World of Esports

- Ford is to launch its first ever esports teams to build on its real-world racing heritage by competing at the very highest level on the virtual racing stage
- Recruitment for national teams – under the Fordzilla name – begins at Gamescom, in Germany. Star players will also be selected for a crack European team
- Ford is continually exploring digital and real-world synergies and believes gaming could help shape how we all get about in future, for business or pleasure, as passengers and drivers

COLOGNE, Germany, Aug 19, 2019 – Across the world, millions of people every day get behind the wheel of a virtual Ford vehicle and enjoy racing against friends and as part of online communities. Now the company is going to be seeking out the best online racers to form its first ever esports teams.

Starting at Gamescom, Europe's leading trade fair for digital games culture, Ford will recruit national Fordzilla teams for France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK – as well as a European team consisting the star players from each national team.

“We at Ford have a racing pedigree that others can only envy. Now is the time to take that know-how and apply it to the world of esports – capturing the imagination of a new generation of virtual racing drivers, inspiring them to take a ride in one of our Ford Performance vehicles,” said Roelant de Waard, vice president, Marketing Sales & Service, Ford of Europe.

In 2019, [the global esports market](#) is expected to generate revenues of \$1.1 billion, up 26.7 per cent year on year; the audience will reach 453.8 million, made up of 201.2 million esports enthusiasts and 252.6 million occasional viewers. Contrary to the popular stereotype, [the average gamer is in their early thirties](#).

Ford is increasingly intrigued by synergies between gaming and mobility and how they could help shape the way in which we all get about in the future – whether that is as commuters, as passengers in autonomous vehicles or simply enjoying the thrill of performance.

“The distinction between real and virtual worlds is blurring. Gaming is now a part of mainstream culture. Top gamers challenge professional race drivers in real life and many of our day-to-day activities are ‘gamified’, from using fitness apps to collecting loyalty points for a free coffee,” said Amko Leenarts, director, Design, Ford of Europe. “Harnessing the passion and expertise of the gaming community will help evolve our thinking around what future journeys will look like – something that we are all committed to and really excited about.”

In 2017, Ford became the first manufacturer to host a stand at Gamescom, which boasts more than 1,000 exhibitors that attract hundreds of thousands of visitors every year, and last year, the company pioneered the first-ever vehicle reveal at the show – unveiling the Ford Ranger Raptor, the performance version of Europe’s best-selling pickup.

Among the games that Fordzilla will compete on is the award-winning *Forza Motorsport 7*, developed by Microsoft Game Studios’ Turn 10 Studios. The Forza franchise is the best-selling racing franchise of this console generation and is home to one of the largest racing communities in the world. Millions of people worldwide play Forza games each month with 1 million players choosing Ford vehicles.

“We are pleased to see *Forza Motorsport* continuing to be the game of choice for big brands like Ford as they launch esports initiatives,” said Justin Osmer, Sr. Manager of Partnership Development at Turn 10 Studios, the creators of *Forza Motorsport*. “With millions of fans playing *Forza* games, we’ve seen significant growth in the numbers who want to compete, or simply spectate, in esports and it’s great to see a long-standing partner like Ford Motor Company bringing even more opportunities to participate.”

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