

## New Bahrain Esport GT season to begin on Aug 21

● Registration for electronic racing series' second campaign to be held from August 8 to 11

● Championship to feature five rounds starting August 21, with pre-qualifiers on August 14

● Cash prizes of over BD1,500 throughout the season up for the taking

TDT | Manama

The second season of the Bahrain Esport Gran Turismo Championship, the first-of-its-kind electronic sports series in the Middle East, is scheduled to flag off on August 21, the Bahrain Motor Federation (BMF) has announced.

The new campaign is set to be held under the patronage of BMF president Shaikh Abdullah bin Isa Al Khalifa.

It follows the success of the inaugural championship, which wrapped up late last month following six highly competitive and exciting rounds.

The Esports competition helps contribute to encouraging people to stay at home amidst the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis, which is one of the key measures to help mitigate the virus' spread, in line with the directives of the Government Executive Committee chaired by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister.

Participants compete in the Gran Turismo Sport video game for the Playstation 4 platform.

The new season is open to all interested racers of all ages.



Shaikh Abdullah bin Isa Al Khalifa

Registration is scheduled to take place from Saturday to Tuesday next week. For those wishing to sign up, or for more information, visit [begtc.az-urewebsites.net](http://begtc.az-urewebsites.net).

The second edition of the championship is set to feature five meetings, with cash prizes and trophies or medals set to be awarded to the top three finishers of each race. First place gets BD50, the runner-up takes home BD30 and third place receives BD20. A BD10 prize will also be presented for setting the fastest lap.

Meanwhile, the overall championship winner will win an additional BD500, while second place will get BD300 and third BD200.

Prior to the season-opener, a one-day pre-qualifying event will be held on August 14.

The second round is scheduled for August 28, while round three is set for September 4. The fourth event will be on September 11, followed by the championship-finale on September 18.

Shaikh Abdullah is inviting all those wishing to participate to register for the championship through the series' website.

The BMF chief expressed his thanks to the sponsors of the first season, including Bahrain International Circuit, Batelec, DHL, and Al Hawaj.

The series is being held within the framework established by the International Automobile Federation (FIA) on Esports, which is growing in popularity due to the current times.

# Podium success!

Bahraini-British racing team 2 Seas Motorsport take two podium finishes in opening round of 2020 British GT Championship

TDT | Manama

Bahraini-British outfit 2 Seas Motorsport enjoyed a fantastic debut race weekend in the 2020 British GT Championship, after both driver pairings scored podium finishes in the season's opening races at Oulton Park in Cheshire, England, over the weekend.

After starting on the second row of the grid, Angus Fender and Dean Macdonald (sharing the team's no 9 car) took a hard-fought third-place finish overall in the meeting's first event; while the second race saw teammates Jack Mitchell and Jordan Witt (team's no 10 car) move up the order to secure the final podium spot in the silver class in an incident-filled race, which ended behind the safety car.

Following their hugely successful debut, 2 Seas Motorsport team co-owner HH Shaikh Isa bin Abdullah Al Khalifa commented, "An absolutely fantastic result for the team, and to achieve podium finishes for both cars on our debut weekend is something I am hugely proud of—especially against such a strong grid."

"Qualifying on the front two rows of the grid was a huge achievement, and it was great to be battling for the race win within only a few laps against much more experienced competition."

"I'd like to thank the whole 2 Seas Motorsport team which worked tirelessly to put us in the best position going into the weekend. To claim an overall podium on our first ever event, and a further class podium really is the icing on the cake."

A thrilling qualifying saw Witt and Fender ending the session second and third, respectively, as McLaren Customer



The no 9 car of Fender and Macdonald in action in the round's first race

Racing teams locked out the front two rows of the grid. It was one of the closest qualifying results in the championship's history, with Witt's lap time of one minute 34.548 seconds only beaten by 0.001 seconds.

Qualifying for the second of the weekend's races saw Mitchell and Macdonald battling each other, and Mitchell narrowly out-qualified his teammate by another very tight margin.

The opening race saw Witt in the no 10 McLaren and teammate Fender at the wheel of the no 9 hold their respective grid positions and keep the pressure on the leader in the opening stint.

Approaching mid-distance of the 60-minute race, Witt was in a strong position and gaining through every sector before the leader and Fender both pitted, giving the no 10 clean air and an opportunity to open a gap before handing over to Mitchell

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HH SHAIKH ISA BIN ABDULLA AL KHALIFA  
2 SEAS MOTORSPORT TEAM CO-OWNER

for the second half of the race.

As the pitstops played out, Mitchell maintained the race lead and started to build a gap to the chasing pack, while Macdonald ran solidly in fourth.

However, a 10-second stop-and-go penalty halted Mitchell's charge, eventually dropping the no 10 down the order but in-turn promoting Macdonald to

third. A further speeding infringement compounded the initial penalty with Mitchell coming home in 12th. Macdonald held on and battled to the chequered flag, claiming an overall and silver class podium on the team's debut.

In the second race, the two 2 Seas Motorsport McLaren 720S GT3s lined up in a repeat formation from the earlier grid. On lap 20, Fender was forced to retire the team's no 9 car after receiving heavy impact from debris caused by an incident, which saw the safety car deployed. Then, with just over 15 minutes remaining and Fender still stranded out on track, the race concluded with Witt and Mitchell promoted to fourth overall and a first podium in the silver class for the pair.

The season resumes with the second meeting scheduled for August 15 and 16 at Donington Park in Leicestershire.

## Bernal triumphs in pre-Tour mountain test

AFP | Paris

Defending Tour de France champion Egan Bernal marked out his territory yesterday climbing to a summit finish victory on stage three of the French Route d'Occitanie.

Bernal's Ineos teammate Russia's Pavel Sivakov was second at 10 seconds and Astana's Aleksandr Vlasov third 17 seconds behind less than a month ahead of the rescheduled Tour.

The Colombian punched the air joyously as he soloed over the finish line to rapturous applause from the fans who had defied the vehicle ban by walking or cycling to the mountain summit finale.

Bernal also clinched the overall lead of the four-day race, on a stage typical of those found on the Tour with around 40km of hard climbs.

"This is a test day for all the favourites of the Tour," France's Thibaut Pinot said ahead of the stage in which he finished fourth 31 seconds behind the



Colombia's Egan Bernal celebrates after his win

23-year-old winner.

A household name in his homeland since winning last year's Tour, he warmed up for that by taking overall victory in the Paris-Nice and Tour de Suisse, and looks a nailed on favourite to win this season's race.

Four-time Tour winner Chris Froome was dropped at the bottom of the final climb and ended the day over five minutes adrift of Colombian Bernal.

French climber Romain Bardet, who fell heavily on Sunday, was 1 minute 18 seconds off the winner. After negotiating the narrow lanes in the Pyrenean foothills the race went up the 10km of the Col de Peyresourde at an average of 7.5%, then ascended the slightly longer Col de Beyrede at 7.2%.

Die-hard cyclo-tourists and those fit enough to go up on foot had defied the 24-hour traffic ban on the day's final climb.

## Lampard calls for 'fair' treatment for tired Chelsea

AFP | London

Frank Lampard has called on the Premier League to give Chelsea a fair start to next season, saying the September 12 launch date is "too early" for his players.

The Blues lost Saturday's FA Cup final 2-1 to London rivals Arsenal but are still not finished with the current campaign.

Lampard's side take on Bayern Munich on Saturday in the rescheduled second leg of their Champions League round-of-16 tie, trailing 3-0 from the first leg.

Even if they exit the competition, Chelsea will have just 35 days before the new season is due to begin.

Manchester City are also still in the Champions League, the final of which is scheduled for August 23, while Manchester United and Wolves are involved in the Europa League, which ends on August 21.

It is understood that when Premier League clubs agreed a



Frank Lampard

September 12 start date, it was also clear there would need to be at least a 30-day break for Chelsea and any of the other teams playing in the end-of-season European competitions.

Lampard lost Willian and Ruben Loftus-Cheek on the eve of the FA Cup final to injury and Cesar Azpilicueta and goalscorer Christian Pulisic during the game to hamstring problems.

"Even in a worst-case scenario, we don't go through against Bayern, the 12th feels too early for me for the players to start playing again," said the Chelsea boss.

“The players need a break. That is why we have pulled two hamstrings and had players pull out of the game before this. I would like to think the Premier League would look seriously at that”

FRANK LAMPARD

"The players need a break. That is why we have pulled two hamstrings and had players pull out of the game before this."

Lampard implored the Premier League to make sure clubs start the next season with a level playing field.

"I would like to think the Premier League would look seriously at that," he said.

"Hopefully they give us a fair start next season. We deserve to be (given a fair start) as a Premier League club competing in the Champions League."