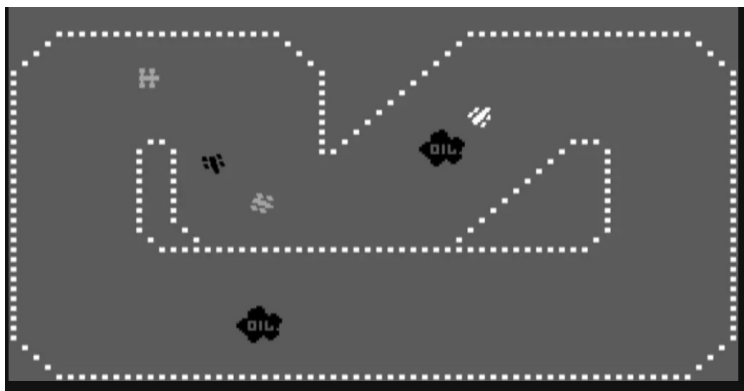


MY BRIEF HISTORY ON SIM RACING

Alex Helyer - Team Captain - NSQ SIM Racing

I've always been into cars. As a toddler, I could tell the make and model of cars at night just from their headlights. I remember imagining myself in my matchbox cars, as I played with them, and I would spend hours, just sat in my dad's car behind the wheel, pretending to drive.

I first experienced "sim" racing when I was at a holiday park, and got to hang out in the amusement arcade. **Sprint** was the first one I got to play on, and those oil slicks were a nightmare for the car's handling...



As time went on, technology was improving and the racing got more realistic.

Pole Position was my next favourite game. This was more like real driving to me, as a kid. I actually had traffic to get around and if I failed, there was a pretty dramatic explosion.



When **Outrun** was released, that was it for me. I sat in that cockpit, awesome soundtrack blaring through the system, I could imagine myself blasting along the American freeways in a droptop Ferrari Testarossa. The whole thing moved as I went around corners. I'd never experienced gaming like this. I was in heaven.



Fast forward to present day, and we have **Sim** (Simulated) racing, with the software technology to accurately simulate real auto racing, with real-world variables such as suspension settings, tire wear and grip, downforce, fuel usage, and real world tracks which are laser scanned to give an accurate representation with weather also playing a factor on how the cars handle.

Combine that, with the ability to race against other humans in an online world, using a VR Headset, what's not to like about it.

There are many different **sim racing** applications, such as **Assetto Corsa**, **rFactor**, **Project Cars** and **IRacing**, to name but a few. Depending on which platform you have, you may be limited to which application you can run. **Xbox**, **PC**, and **Playstation** are the main contenders.



I was introduced to **IRacing** back in 2013 by my friend, who also happens to be a Porsche owner. He was telling me about it at work, and it sounded like something I would enjoy.

He lent me a wheel and pedal set and I downloaded the trial version of **IRacing** onto my laptop. That was it. I was hooked.

I went through the **IRacing** “**Race craft**” lessons and then started to progress my career. Everyone starts with a rookie license and I knew I wanted to go the “**Road Racing**” route, (I’ve never been a fan of Oval racing) and so I did a few seasons with the Mazda Miata class.

When I finally got my ‘D’ License, I went into the Skip Barber open wheel class, and ran that for a few seasons. I never got a 1st, but did manage a few 2nd and 3rd places, and managed to advance to my ‘B’ license.

Eventually, life got in the way and I moved out of state, leaving my gaming PC behind, I let my membership lapse.

In February 2019, The **PCA** announced it would be working with **IRacing** to hold the first officially sanctioned **PCA National iRacing simulation racing series**.

I watched the [trailer](#) for it and just had to be a part of it. I brought my gaming pc to California, along with everything else, and renewed my **IRacing** membership and got practicing.

During the practices, I noticed my times were a lot slower compared to everyone else, and I asked on the forums why that could be. As it turns out, everyone uses a **VR (Virtual Reality) Headset**. I was using a single monitor.

I didn’t think it could make that much of a difference, but I ordered the **Oculus Rift** from amazon just in case...

When it finally arrived, I quickly got it set up and jumped into IRacing to see how good it actually was.

I was not disappointed. After spending the first 15 minutes sat in the pits in awe, taking in all the textures and realism, I went and knocked 3.5 seconds off my lap time on the first practice lap with this VR headset on. Not bad at all.

Statistically in **Iracing**, I'm about average. I usually qualify towards the back of the pack and then battle my way up through the field. I'm improving every race, and this past event **PCA's Virtual California Festival of Speed**, I finished my race in 7th, out of a field of 30+.

This has been my best result since I've got into the **PCA series**, and I'm just happy to finish my races. Its all about the participation. I get the same adrenaline rushes, as I do on a real track, and when I'm done with my race, I've usually worked up quite a sweat and my hands are shaking. Its great!

My Equipment

Asus H170-Pro Gaming Motherboard

ASUS GeForce GTX 1060 TURBO-GTX1060-6G

Oculus Rift VR Headset

Fanatec Porsche GT3RS Steering wheel

Fanatec CSR Elite Pedals

Subaru Forester Seat



Sim Racing

[Events Calendar](#)[Reference](#)[Racing Series](#)