

21 November 2006

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[RACE - The Official WTCC Game](#)

It's WTCC racing time!

The big leap from European Championship to World Championship brought an increase of 67.5% in attendance at the tracks and an incredible grow in TV viewers from 61 million for the 2004 FIA ETCC to the amazing amount of 319 million for the 2005 FIA WTCC. As the World Touring Car Championship becomes a global event it was only obvious there would soon be an official game for the fans. So Eidos and Eurosport decided to team up as partners and promote the game developed by SimBin Development Team AB, a Swedish company focused on racing simulations (you may have heard of GT Legends and GTR - FIA GT Racing Game both released in 2005). Hence was (probably) born a new series in the industry that makes its debut this autumn with RACE - The Official WTCC Game.

Concept Trying to recreate a realistic overview of the 2006 season, RACE comes well prepared with the ten official tracks, the cars and drivers that took part in the event. So here we are presented with 6 world renowned brands competing with a total of 9 car models and lining up 58 drivers. And this is just the main class. One of the supporting series brings to the fans a beautiful reminder of the class of '87, offering the chance to drive two classic models - the Alfa Romeo 75 Turbo or the BMW e30 M3. The other gift class is the Mini Challenge 2006. This beginners' class comes with over 30 team specific Mini Coopers. The drivers that kept you (2 to 4 days a month) in front of your TV from April the 1st to the recent November the 19th are now offering their car to you to take it for a ride and see if you can make a good impression in this world event. Andy Priaulx (BMW 320si), Jorg Muller (BMW 320si), Augusto Farfus Jr (Alfa Romeo 156), Yvan Muller (SEAT Leon) and Gabriele Tarquini (SEAT Leon) are just five of the 58 drivers that you can race against. To make the gaming experience as realistic as possible several game modes are available. The Quick Race sets up in a hurry a two-race format challenge. This is the fastest way to get to see what the game has to offer as you only need to choose a track and a car before competing. The Race Weekend allows you to participate in all the preparations for the selected venue, that is two practice rounds, a qualify round, the warm-up and finally the two races. The next level of complexity would be the Championship that follows the complete WTCC calendar and regulations. All speeding sports also involve records. So it was a desirable feat for the game to allow you to challenge time itself. Starting with the open practice mode you can train to compete against yourself (your best time that is) in the time attack mode or even try to beat the real lap record in the Driver Duel mode. The last two present your opponent as a ghost car (be happy even if you manage to stay shortly behind the real driver's mechanical beast). Being an official game, RACE had the opportunity to take advantage of the full access to the backstage of this sport. Hence the player is allowed to customize most of the car settings from tyre pressure to springs and ride height and more, this can be done even for each tyre and suspension. Of course it's best you let these be for starter, but feel free to experiment once you get a little acquainted with the driving. **Gameplay** Monza, Magny Cours, Brands Hatch, Oschersleben, Curitiba, Puebla, Brno, Istanbul, Valencia and Macau invite you to get a closer view on the touring car championship. I'd advise you to take a deep breathe before adventuring into the driving zone. As the developers try to provide us with an as realistic game as possible, they tend to allow you a lot of customizing options, yet the default settings are steep enough to be quite a challenge for you to control your car in a proper manner. My tip to you, select the car you like most and take it easy. Drive slowly at first (just as if you took your first real life driving lessons) and then, as you gain more confidence, speed up little by little. Don't worry about learning every circuit, you'll be able to master any curve as long as you manage to instinctively know your car. You'll soon be able

to forget about the small arrows that appear in the middle of the screen every turn recommending you a certain gear. And it's a good thing you can ignore them as not every circuit comes with this kind of help and some don't really apply (I even tried drifting on a certain turn, yet I found no viable way to take it in more than the first gear rather than the fifth as it was specified). I found the BMW cars (320i and 320si) to have the strongest stability control, proving to be the most maneuverable in the accommodation period. All other models seemed to drift off the track in a totally uncontrollable fashion, yet after a few more hours of experience with the BMW 320si I slowly got to the bottom of things with the other rides as well. Now if you need even more stability you may try the Mini series as the little starlets are much less furious on the road and allow you to make better use of their breaking system. Don't think a Mini Championship is an easy victory. No. You need a lot of training and course knowledge before actually winning as the almost inexistent differences between these cars make them equal rivals and the only real asset to the team is the talent of the driver (meaning you). Three levels of difficulty are available - novice, semi-pro and pro. The novice is granted with the stability control option and a lower opponents' strength. Everything else can be adjusted. The damage sensitivity can also play a decisive role in the difficulty of the game. Crushing into your opponent (as much as unfair-play as it may seem) can sometimes slow you down just in time to take the turn. Yet if the damage is set to a greater value this could lead to counterparts bending and eventually ripping apart from the car. There are accidents that (just like in the real sport) can lead to powerful enough collisions that get you out of the race as your team is unable to repair the big amount of damage in a short enough time. Now there is a damage icon displayed next to your fuel warning icon and water temperature, yet I have never seen it in action and trust me, I did devastate my car (along with several others, of course). Come to think of it, the water icon proved useless too - I guess it wasn't hot enough outside this season. But I did run out of fuel and took a victorious stop at the pit. Well, RACE brings the touring car championship to the screens of fans everywhere. They promised that the handling resembles the real process so much that if you can make it in the game, you just might possess the necessary qualities for the actual job. Indeed the pro level of difficulty provides a great challenge. Lap after lap you'll try to improve your best time and still keep focused on the road, for no matter how naturally your opponents react, you are not allowed too many mistakes. You may find yourself in lead after some exhausting 9 laps. Don't let that get to your head and don't treat any dangerous turn with overconfidence even if you are almost 20 seconds ahead. You never know when you might just smash your car so bad that it is beyond repairing. Win and you can proudly see yourself (well, your name) as on a Eurosport transmission taking the winner's lap. **Video** While the car design is nothing to be ashamed of, being in fact pretty close to the real stuff, it gives away the impression of unfinished work as the bindings tend to be much more underlined than expected. As I saw the refined screenshots to GTR2 I expected RACE to look at least as good as that, but aside from occasional car body parts that scatter when a high damage sensitivity is set and the once in while sun light reflections in the car's paint nothing really convinced me that this is the same developer. The events only take place during daylight and there are only three weather conditions available - dry, rainy and heavy rain. You'd expect to see only two meters ahead of you on a heavy rain, yet all you get is a little less light (a somewhat grey environment) and a few rain drops on your windshield (visible only from the cockpit of course). I guess it would have lost a little contact with the real sport if they added any more variety to these settings. The track design at least sticks to the real thing. Famous circuits from 3 continents uncover all their secrets to you. What really bothered me was that after spending hours to win the two-race events (even on different difficulty settings) I was only granted with a congratulations message (same thing if I even managed to win the championship). I mean, where's the champagne? Where are my fans encouraging me? Where are my defeated opponents sharing the podium with me? Where's my team celebrating? That's it - "Congratulations. You have won the race."? Well, at least I get a winner's lap... and live instant replays whenever I want (last 30 seconds in a

Eurosport like replay). Cars are the only lively things in the game. You can barely notice the spectators while the pit stop is just a matter of seconds that you spend with the cockpit view and a small timer. While loosing yourself off the track you may encounter however several TV cameramen or the friendly flag waving personnel (I tried to hit one of them but these guys are scared of nothing). Oh, oh! I did manage to scatter the few cones and some indicators across the track (on a short distance, true, but still they moved and moreover they were there the next lap as well). The nice addition however was that every Driver Duel begins with a short video from the lap record holder of the moment wishing you luck in outmatching his time. This brought a welcomed feeling of realism and a good opportunity of watching the best drivers encouraging you - their biggest fan. **Sound**What sound? Oh, yes! Some dramatic song accompanies you as you get to the track, afterwards there's only the sound of hard tuned engines and, from time to time, your team let's you know (from the pits) what dangerous accidents took place on which sector of the track and the damages your car received (and if it can be repaired or you'll have to abandon). That's about it with the sound. You'll enjoy the engine's purring for hours. What's more, there is a slight difference between the sound you hear from the cockpit and an outside view, as the outside will resemble much more to the sound you are accustomed to from the TV transmissions.

MultiplayerRACE allows the player to challenge human opponents through a LAN network as well as on the online dedicated servers. Up to 24 competitors can line up at the start. So prepare to dare your friends and see which of you has the best driving skills and approaches best the world renown racing tracks. Which is more, you can even post your best times and compare your results with world wide amateur drivers. **Conclusion**In time, as the world touring car championship expands its borders and allows more variety, the series that RACE gives now birth to will probably evolve accordingly and really be worthy of standing next to the other two official FIA world championships - Formula 1 and WRC. For now the game appeals mainly to the fans of this sport despite being extremely promising. It follows reality in every aspect and provides the player with challenging levels of difficulty as well as captivating race modes. But only ten tracks might not be enough for the rest of the virtual amateur drivers.