

Ocon to make Virtual Grand Prix debut in Monaco alongside Prost

Renault DP World F1 Team Driver Esteban Ocon will make his Virtual Grand Prix debut this weekend on the legendary streets of Monaco, partnering Nico Prost in the team.

Adding to the show, Esteban will take part in the race live from L'Atelier Renault, Renault's iconic Flagship store on the Champs Elysees, Paris, using his own simulator set-up.

It's the first time since 1954 that the famed Monaco Grand Prix has not been run, with the current global health situation putting paid to the opening of the 2020 FIA Formula 1 World Championship season.

But the jewel in the Formula 1 crown still gets underway this weekend, albeit virtually, giving fans their fix of glamour and excitement of Monte Carlo.

Esteban's last race in Monaco in 2018 was a successful one after qualifying an impressive sixth place and holding that position in the race to claim eight points. For this race, he will have the help of his current race engineer Mark Slade who, with three decades of experience in the sport, engineers a virtual race for the first time.

His team-mate Nico joins the team to form an all-French driver line-up for Renault for the first time since the 1984 Portuguese Grand Prix when Philippe Streiff partnered Patrick Tambay for one race only.

It also marks the return of the Prost name to the Principality. Nico, the son of four-time Formula 1 world champion Alain, will race remotely from his home in Geneva and will undoubtedly rely on his father's immense Monaco experience. Alain – currently Renault Sport Racing's special advisor – won four times in Monaco including three in a row between 1984 and 1986.

For his maiden Formula 1 Esports race, Esteban chose a venue that was inaugurated 110 years ago by Louis Renault himself and located within walking distance from the FIA's Headquarters, Place de la Concorde. With France emerging from an eight-week lockdown, L'Atelier Renault will reopen on Monday 25 May.

For the Exhibition Race (17:00 BST) prior to the Virtual Grand Prix (18:00 BST), Nicolas Longuet and Fabrizio Donoso will again represent the team.

Esteban Ocon: *"I'm really excited to be racing in a Formula 1 Virtual Grand Prix for the first time this weekend. During these past few months, I've been using my simulator at home to stay sharp and keep the passion for racing going. I'm quite new to the Formula 1 2019 game so I've been spending time with the guys from Team Vitality and with my race engineer Mark Slade to get up to speed and be as prepared as we can be for a competitive result. Monaco is a circuit I really like and it's a place – even on a racing game – where you have to be fully focused and on it. It's also going to be very cool racing from L'Atelier Renault on the Champs Elysees in Paris. That's going to be quite a unique experience!"*





Nico Prost: *"I am really delighted to take part in the Virtual Monaco GP this weekend. It's nice to do it with Renault F1, a brand that has been very important in my career and a team where I spent a lot of time in the past. Driving in Monaco is always mega. I am not a huge sim racer, but every time I play, I drive around Monaco, so maybe it is going to help me. I've planned to train quite a lot in the next few days!"*

