Getting Started in Sim Racing Primer

You are interested in simulation racing (sim racing) but you don't know where to start or how to get started. The purpose of this primer is to provide a good starting point for you to use to make the plunge.

Like real world racing, sim racing provides the excitement of driving door-to-door competition. Also like real world racing you can spend a small amount of money getting started and as you progress in experience and increased interest, you can spend a significant amount. Sim racing is "scalable", which is good because as your experience and interest grows, there are more and better hardware and software options available to you.

Sim Racing Software Titles

Popular software sim racing titles are Assetto Corsa, Project Cars 2, RaceRoom Racing Experience, DiRT Rally 2, Automobilista, rFactor 2, and the most popular and most followed title, iRacing.com. For the second half of 2019, PCA Sim Racing will continue to use the iRacing sim platform. The pricing varies considerably and you can spend as little as $35 USD or much more depending on the title.

A suggestion. Look at the recommended column. The minimum requirements are really minimum and most drivers will not be comfortable with the low end settings very long.

Sim Racing Hardware

To get started, you will need a recent game console (Sony Playstation 4, Microsoft Xbox One) or a moderately powered Microsoft Windows 10 based PC computer.

PC computers that can run modern sim racing titles can be the same computer you use for Internet video viewing at home, or you may decide to purchase a new computer.

Each simulation software program has minimal and suggested hardware requirements that you should check before purchasing. One of the most popular programs, Assetto Corsa, lists its requirements here. The Assetto Corsa suggested hardware requirements provide a good reference what to anticipate needing to enter the world of sim racing.

Sim Racing Controllers

Along with the computer, you will want to get a sim racing wheel and pedal set. The pricing varies significantly depending on which wheel and pedal set you decide to use. Typically drivers just starting out in sim racing will get a modestly priced set from either Thrustmaster or Logitech, then move to a moderately priced Fanatec or upper-end Thrustmaster set. Price and complexity goes up from there. There is a real science to higer-end sim racing controller sets. Barry at the YouTube Channel, Sim Racing Garage shows additional levels of sim racing controls and full-motion "cockpits" such as NextLevelRacing and FastTrackSims. This Pinterest page shows the diverse cockpits sim racers have in their homes.

Now that you have a computer (or game console), the sim racing controller and software, it's time to practice! Once you're comfortable racing against the simulation's AI "drivers", you can go online (multiplayer) and race with other enthusiasts. All programs include an online multplayer component.

PCA will be hosting two racing Series and one Endurance racing event in 2019, but if you are just starting-out, PCA Sim Racing will be starting a weeknight "Drivers School" just for new racers that will work like a PCA DE with an instructor riding in the car with you and helping you progress. Look for the PCA Sim Racing Driver's School announcement in late September at the official web site, PCA Sim Racing. You can view the entire PCA Sim Racing Series 2, Series 3, and Endurance race on the iRacing eSports Network on YouTube.