



Media Information

BMW Esports

28th June 2021

Live from BMW Welt: The Esports industry assembles virtually at BMW Esports Boost – Premiere for “The Rival Rig” from RIVALWORKS.

- **Best practices, digital trends and an innovative format: Top international speakers provide new stimulus and exclusive insights into such fields as Esports and gaming culture, advertising opportunities, and future trends.**
- **BMW presents the first product from the RIVALWORKS virtual technology factory – the visionary “The Rival Rig”.**
- **Holger Hampf, President of Designworks: “It’s a once in a lifetime opportunity for a designer to work on a project like this as we were able to play to extremes in terms of technology”.**

Munich. BMW Welt was the epicentre of the Esports industry on Monday, as it hosted the first BMW Esports Boost. In a series of talks and panel discussions, the many participants from around the world were given exclusive insights into the world of Esports. Some of the industry’s most important protagonists – from industry experts and publishers to the CEOs of prestigious Esports organisations – also looked at some of the most exciting future trends. Highlights included the world premiere of “The Rival Rig”. This visionary Esports hardware is the first product from the RIVALWORKS virtual technology factory.

“Today, the eyes of the Esports community were on BMW Welt and our Esports Boost festival,” said Stefan Ponikva, Vice President Brand Experience BMW. “A big thank you goes to all our speakers, who provided a vast array of insights and inspirations in their talks and panel discussions – and, of course, to our cooperation partner Seven.One Sports. With the BMW Esports Boost, we are entering another level of our involvement in Esports: RIVALWORKS. This sees BMW immerse itself in the virtual world, with totally new target groups. With ‘The Rival Rig’, we have launched the first product from our virtual technology factory. For us, this represents the logical link between reality as a tech



company and totally new digital experiences. BMW Group Designworks has turned a bold vision into reality in an impressive manner. BMW Esports Boost, RIVALWORKS and 'The Rival Rig': Today has shown once again what a strong catalyst BMW is for Esports."

RIVALWORKS made its first appearance in the fictitious Manga series "Heroes of Rivalry", with which BMW, together with its partner teams, offered Esports fans a totally new storytelling format in recent months. RIVALWORKS was portrayed as a technology factory, in which BMW engineers researched ideas and hardware components. The goal is always to use innovative technology to promote competition between players and teams in Esports, and to take this to a new level. This has now produced its first (real) product: "The Rival Rig".

In the real world, BMW engineers developed the ground-breaking concept for this multifunctional gaming hardware, supported by the BMW Group's innovation studio Designworks. The focus was on "Gaming Performance", "Players' Health" and "Open Source". As a result, "The Rival Rig" offers many unique features to support players' performance, whilst at the same time integrating health aspects. "The Rival Rig" is also designed as an open platform, which, in the future, will incorporate ideas and stimulus from the community, as well as from gaming platforms and third-party hardware and software providers. The many stand-out features of "The Rival Rig" include the "Microclimate Control System" and "Adaptive Seating". AI-controlled interaction between integrated sensors, pneumatic air pads and electro-mechanical actuators ensure that the whole platform is perfectly geared towards the players.

As well as the presentation of "The Rival Rig", a host of top international speakers at the BMW Esports Boost used fascinating panel discussions and presentations to provide new ideas and give exclusive insights into the world of Esports. In his talk, Christopher Hana from "The Esports Observer" highlighted the characteristics of Esports as part of the gaming culture. In the panel discussion "Advertising to a community that hates advertising", participants learned the golden rules for advertising in an Esports and gaming environment. Under the heading "Boost your Esports", speakers discussed growth trends and the growing importance of mobile Esports, virtual influencers and virtual reality in Esports and gaming. Furthermore, the increasing relevance of



mainstream media like esports.com as key growth drivers for Esports was emphasised. Experts identified the shooter "Valorant" from Riot Games as the title with the biggest growth potential, as confirmed by the involvement of BMW.

Three questions for ... Holger Hampf, President of Designworks.

Mr. Hampf, Designworks meets RIVALWORKS: How did you and your team approach the challenge?

Holger Hampf: "The Rival Rig by BMW and RIVALWORKS, more than any other project before, was about pushing the boundaries of human capabilities. What we wanted to achieve is a gaming rig design that takes both technology and aesthetics in this field to the next level. Our goal was to create the most comfortable seating, hand posture and head movement situation, that allow the gamer to fully immerse herself or himself and experience a sense of weightlessness. It's a once in a lifetime opportunity for a designer to work on a project like this as we were able to play to extremes in terms of technology."

What were your sources of inspiration for this extraordinary excursion into the world of Esports?

Hampf: "We searched for inspiration in fields where humans have to take decisions in split seconds. Our design was influenced by the characteristics of spaceships and Formula 1 cars. If you think of spacecraft design and human spaceflight, you understand that astronauts have to operate very complex systems, and that they have to make decisions super quickly, often beyond what we call 'normal human capacities'. The same observations we made in Formula 1 where the physical capabilities of drivers are developed to an extreme level. We applied our learnings from these fields in a new context, all down to a microscopic level. This project really was about millimeters rather than centimeters."

For Esports enthusiasts "The Rival Rig" is the gateway between the real and virtual world. How is this reflected in the design?



Hampf: "First of all, we developed the gaming rig in very close collaboration with gamers. Only if you understand the physicality of a potential user, his or her size, weight, arm length, hand size etc. you're able to create a design that allows the gamer to fully immerse himself or herself into the digital world. Secondly, major design choices we made for the rig were influenced by the aesthetics you typically find in games. These visual worlds also influenced the ambience we wanted to create: The gaming rig can mirror what's happening at that very moment in a game through LED lighting effects that utilize the entire light spectrum – from calming moods to a brightly lit activity scenes. This means the design of the gaming rig does not only have the gamer but also the audience in mind. Esports is a dynamically growing field with an immense public audience, both online and via live staged events. We wanted to make sure 'The Rival Rig'" increases the bonding between gaming athletes and spectators worldwide. Special lighting features for example allow fans and followers to become part of the action."

"Lastly, and this is really unique, we designed a rig which is able to actually read the user and communicate with him through constant analytics of movement. This means the gamer isn't adjusting anything herself or himself anymore. If, for example, temperature builds up in his or her back, the rig would provide cool air. If there is pressure on the armrests, the gaming rig would lower the armrest and eliminate these pressure points. It is a gaming rig setup enabled by AI."

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About BMW Esports.

BMW has been collaborating with five of the world's best teams as a partner in the classic League of Legends game since 2020. Cloud 9, FNATIC, FunPlus Phoenix, G2 Esports and T1 fly the BMW colours in the biggest events in the industry. The highlight of the first collaborative season in 2020 was the Worlds, in which G2 esports and FNATIC made it to the knock-out stage of the finals in the battle of the world's best teams. G2 Esports even made it to the semi-final. The Dota 2 specialists OG Esport are a new addition to the 'United in Rivalry' squad as of 2021. The involvement in Esports gives BMW completely new touch points with a dynamic, rapidly growing community; making Esports an important future field for BMW marketing activities. BMW has prominent representatives in sim racing as well, and has integrated BMW SIM Racing into its racing programme as a standalone pillar. The BMW SIM Cups attract the world's best sim racers, who do battle for wins, titles and attractive cash prizes in virtual BMW racing cars. BMW SIM Racing teams are taking part for the first time in 2021. BS+COMPETITION, G2 Esports, Team GB and Team Redline represent BMW on various simulation platforms.

BMW Welt. The heart of all the BMW Group brands.

BMW Welt welcomes over 3 million visitors each year. With its iconic architecture, BMW Welt is the heart of all the brands in the BMW Group – BMW, the sub-brands BMW M and BMW i, MINI, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars and BMW Motorrad, which are impressively presented in their own worlds of experience. But it is not only the exhibitions and the collection of new vehicles that are highlights for car lovers from all over the world. Visitors can enjoy a year-round program of varied events covering culture, art and entertainment as well as popular event locations for over 400 external events per year. The various restaurants at BMW Welt offer a variety of culinary delights right up to Michelin star cuisine. In the Junior Campus, children and even the whole family can explore the city of the future and mobility of the future either independently or in exciting workshops.

The BMW Group

With its four brands BMW, MINI, Rolls-Royce and BMW Motorrad, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. The BMW Group production network

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comprises 31 production and assembly facilities in 15 countries; the company has a global sales network in more than 140 countries. In 2020, the BMW Group sold over 2.3 million passenger vehicles and more than 169,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2020 was € 5.222 billion on revenues amounting to € 98.990 billion. As of 31 December 2020, the BMW Group had a workforce of 120,726 employees. The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company set the course for the future at an early stage and consistently makes sustainability and efficient resource management central to its strategic direction, from the supply chain through production to the end of the use phase of all products.