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## **GT ACADEMY 2010 TIME TRIAL REACHES ONE MILLION PLAYERS**

- **Nissan and PlayStation® hail early success of virtual-to-real-racer experiment**
- **The GT Academy 2010 Time Trial is live on PlayStation®Network until 24 January**

Sony Computer Entertainment Europe (SCEE) has announced that over one million downloads of the GT Academy Time Trial have been recorded in the three weeks since it went live on 17 December, 2009. GT Academy 2010 is a competition set up by Nissan and PlayStation® to unearth a real racing driver from the virtual world of the hugely successful Gran Turismo® race simulation game. Run across 15 European countries, as well as Australia and New Zealand, 19 winners will have the chance to take part in a racing driver 'boot camp' at Silverstone Circuit. The eventual, overall winner will take the controls of a real Nissan 370Z race car to compete for a full season in the European GT4 Cup.

The Time Trial stage of GT Academy has given gamers the chance to download a stunning new piece of Gran Turismo for PlayStation®3 (PS3™), offering a small taste of what is to come in the new Gran Turismo 5 due for release this year. The download features the iconic Indianapolis Motor Speedway road course, a newcomer to the Gran Turismo series. Players drive the circuit using a standard, road-going virtual version of Nissan's stunning new 370Z and a race-tuned version of the same car. Their combined lap times give them their position on their territory leader board. The fastest 20 players from each territory, when the competition closes at midnight GMT on 24 January, will then battle it out at a live national final event. Nineteen winners, from across the participating territories, will be invited to take part in the five-day GT Academy 2010 event at Silverstone to be schooled in racing technique by top-quality instructors.

"Hitting one million downloads of the GT Academy Time Trial from the 17 participating countries alone is a very important milestone," explained the creator of the Gran Turismo games and president of Polyphony Digital Inc., Kazunori Yamauchi. "We created the Time Trial purely as the mechanic to run the first phase of GT Academy 2010. The massive interest is testament to the strong GT Academy concept that offers the chance to make a dream come true. But it also clearly demonstrates the popularity of Gran Turismo. This Time Trial is only a tiny sample of what is to come in Gran Turismo 5, so it is particularly pleasing to have seen such a positive reaction to it.

"Having been monitoring GT Academy 2010 closely since its launch, I feel very strongly that our unique partnership with Nissan will again unearth an amazing talent from all the Gran Turismo fans taking part."

“Nissan has been very positive about GT Academy 2010 since the beginning, but to hit one million downloads of the Time Trial this early has exceeded our high expectations,” commented Nissan’s European Vice-President of Marketing, Vincent Wijnen, “Over one million people have been driving the fantastic Gran Turismo versions of the 370Z. That is impressive exposure for the brand and the car. Ultimately, GT Academy will be judged on the success of our winner driving the real 370Z GT4 car in the European GT4 Cup. But with such a huge pool of talent I am confident that we will again find a very special driver. “With a few weeks still to go until the deadline, it is not too late for anyone who has not yet tried to get onto their PS3 and give it a go.”

News and views about GT Academy 2010 can be found on a variety of platforms including: [www.facebook.com/GTAcademy](http://www.facebook.com/GTAcademy), <http://eu.gran-turismo.com/>, and [www.twitter.com/GTAcademy](http://www.twitter.com/GTAcademy)



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## **Additional Notes:**

### About GT Academy 2010

GT Academy 2010 uses the virtual world of the PlayStation® Gran Turismo® game to find a real-world racing driver. The stakes are high, with an intensive race training programme and a season-long drive in a full race-spec Nissan 370Z in the European GT4 Cup as the ultimate prize.

GT Academy 2010 is the second instalment of this incredible competition. In 2008/09, Lucas Ordoñez, a 23-year-old Spanish student, graduated from his PlayStation®3 (PS3™) to become a full-on racing driver via the GT Academy. Lucas is living proof that the answer to the question posed by PlayStation and Nissan - "can the world of virtual racing unearth a real racing talent?" - was a resounding "yes".

The GT Academy competition is open to participants who are over 18 from the following territories: Australia; Austria; Belgium; France; Germany; Ireland; Italy; Netherlands; New Zealand; Portugal; Spain; Switzerland; UK; and Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. The Terms and Conditions of entry stipulate that anyone who holds, or has held, a national or international race license will not qualify for GT Academy. This rule is aimed at maintaining the purity of the "virtual to real" concept. (Terms & Conditions available at [www.eu.playstation.com/terms](http://www.eu.playstation.com/terms))

## **GT Academy 2010 is divided into five key stages:**

**Stage One** - Entrants download the Gran Turismo time trial via PlayStation®Network, accessed through PS3. They record their timed laps in two virtual cars – a standard Nissan 370Z and a race-tuned version. Times in each participating territory will be logged on a leader board. Participants can post as many entries as they like.

**Stage Two** – The holders of the twenty fastest online times from each participating territory will qualify for a national final event held to select the fastest one or two Gran Turismo drivers who will proceed to the next phase.

**Stage Three** – 19 finalists, chosen from each of the national finals events, will head to the world famous Silverstone circuit for the GT Academy itself - a five-day, comprehensive race driver 'boot camp'. They will have a chance to develop new driving skills in an array of Nissan, and other, hardware, while also being judged on fitness and mental attitude.

**Stage Four** - For the two competitors that display the talent, fitness, aptitude, drive and determination to succeed in motor sport, the action will hot-up even further. A UK-based intensive driving and racing programme will prepare them to qualify for an international racing license.

**Stage Five** – There is only one place available for the driver with the most potential to compete on an international stage. The overall GT Academy 2010 champion will race a full season in the European GT4 Cup in a Nissan 370Z prepared by RJN Motorsport. The opening race is currently scheduled for May, 2010.

## **About Gran Turismo®**

With more than 53 million units sold worldwide, the award-winning Gran Turismo® franchise for the PlayStation®, PlayStation®2 and PlayStation®3 is regarded as the best and most authentic driving simulation ever created due to its true-to-life graphics, physics and real-life cars and tracks. Since the inception of the Gran Turismo franchise, famed creator Kazunori Yamauchi and Polyphony Digital Inc. in Japan have revolutionized the racing category as we know it today. His offerings provide the gamer with the most true-to-life driving simulation within the industry and a unique medium for motor manufacturers to showcase their products.

## **About the Nissan 370Z**

Nissan's new 370Z continues the bloodline of previous Zs by offering an authentic rear-wheel drive sports car experience, with enhanced performance and handling thanks to its more compact dimensions and attention to weight-saving.

In the first full redesign of the iconic Nissan Z since its re-introduction in 2003, the new 370Z now sports a shorter wheelbase, greater use of lightweight body materials, a new engine with more horsepower and a new 7-speed automatic transmission with paddle shifters, as well as the world's first synchronized down/up shift rev control system for the manual transmission.

But to get the full measure of the new model, now designated the Nissan 370Z, one need look no farther than the purposeful, athletic design which retains the Z's basic DNA, but adds a purposeful muscularity. The new 370Z remains true to the Z's original philosophy, offering accessible performance, true sportscar handling and athletic, agile design.

