

## Electric Race Car Debuts on Las Vegas Strip

Hannah Dreier, Associated Press



LAS VEGAS (AP) — A new kind of race car made its debut January 6, 2014, with cartoonishly loud revving, the smell of burning rubber, and not a trace of exhaust.

That's because the new FIA Formula E Championship car is all electric. The championship is the first series exclusively for electric cars.

Organizers gave racing aficionados their first glimpse of the car in action at a makeshift racetrack behind the Mandalay Bay hotel-casino on the Las Vegas Strip.

A setting sun illuminated the towering casino's gold-tinted windows as Brazilian driver Lucas di Grassi showed off the capabilities of the Spark-Renault SRT\_01E, pulling off tight turns, breathtaking accelerations and sudden stops.

The car, designed by Spark Racing Technologies, can reach more than 150 mph.

"We are a championship on a mission, and the mission is to have more electric cars on the streets all around the world," said Formula E CEO Alejandro Agag, looking sleek among the nerdy tech crowd in an elegant blue sports coat and slightly unbuttoned white dress shirt. "People love motorsport, but now they also care very much about the environment. So together, it's a great combination."

The unveiling of the high-tech car was timed to coincide with the annual Consumer Electronics Show, a giant gadget expo that began in Las Vegas on Monday.

Organizers took the car on a trip down the Strip at dawn Sunday to capture the first footage of it in motion, surprising the few tourists who happened to be staggering out of casinos at 4 a.m.

Formula E is slated to begin next September and run through June 2015 on street courses that cut through major world cities, including Beijing, London and Los Angeles.

The series is expected to consist of one-hour races. The car batteries will last up to 25 minutes at a time, so drivers will have to switch cars during the race while their batteries recharge.

Last month, actor Leonardo DiCaprio announced that he was getting into the environmentally friendly race-car business. The leading man is partnering with Venturi Automobiles to enter a team in the championship.

Other teams include IndyCar's Andretti Autosport and Dragon Racing, ex-Formula 1 team Super Aguri, Audi-backed Abt and Richard Branson's Virgin.

Teams will have two drivers and four series-provided, single-seat cars in the first season. Renault has signed on as the car manufacturer, but series officials expect three to five manufacturers in the second season. Michelin is the tire supplier.

Fox Sports has signed a multi-year deal with the FIA Formula E Championship and the International Motor Sports Association.

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