

**Supercars: Scott McLaughlin reveals Newcastle 500 secret weapon**  
**James Phelps, The Daily Telegraph**  
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This is the \$50,000 state-of-the-art racing simulator Scott McLaughlin hopes will stop him revisiting a painful memory at the Newcastle 500 this weekend.

McLaughlin blew his shot at a breakthrough Supercars championship last year when he collided with Craig Lowndes. So in a bid to leave no stone unturned ahead of this year's do-or-die title clash with Red Bull rival Shane van Gisbergen, the DJR/Team Penske driver has enlisted the help of a motion-equipped computer game loaded with Formula One spec technology.



Team Penske's driver-in-the-loop simulator. Picture: AAP

McLaughlin has done hundreds of laps of the Newcastle circuit in the simulator, which has been built and designed in Australia. "I've probably done 300 laps over the last few weeks to get ready for a massive weekend," McLaughlin said. "Everything is on the line, so I've done all I can to make sure I'm ready to go the second we hit the track." Located at the DJR/Team Penske headquarters in Queensland, the Simworx Msport V2 Motion Simulator features "four degrees of freedom that includes a traction loss axis" and is loaded with the same software used by Formula One and NASCAR teams.



McLaughlin and his engineers have benefited from hundreds of virtual laps. Picture: AAP

While McLaughlin has not cut a single lap on the 2.6km Newcastle street circuit this year, he has driven a simulated 750km around the championship-deciding course since extending his lead in the title race with a dramatic win in New Zealand.

“Our Simworx Msport Simulator has been invaluable since we got it installed earlier this year,” McLaughlin said. “It lets me get my eye in before we go anywhere near the racetrack and even lets our engineers play with set-up stuff that we wouldn’t have time for at the track. “Hopefully I can be on the pace straight away (tomorrow) and set ourselves up for a good weekend.



The young Kiwi ace is looking to banish some bad memories. Picture: Getty Images

“As a result of my time in the simulator, I’m fully refreshed and know the track well. “It helps heaps to not have to worry about remembering the details of the circuit in Friday practice. We can just get stuck in straight away.” The simulator allows engineers to make set-up changes before the car hits the track, and a DJR/Team Penske computer engineer has designed software for all 16 Supercars venues. “We use the simulator both pre- and post-event,” DJR/Team Penske co-owner Ryan Story said. “We use it before the event to get an idea of where the cars are and afterwards to evaluate anything we may have learned over the weekend.



All the lead-up work means McLaughlin will be able to hit the ground running. Picture: AAP

“It is a driver in the loop simulator that allows both the drivers and engineers to evaluate the car on any given track that we race at throughout the year. “It has motion as well and uses hi-tech software, and all the pedals, shifters and wheels are set up exactly like the drivers in the car.” McLaughlin leads Red Bull Holden Racing Team driver van Gisbergen by 14 points ahead of the Newcastle 500, which begin with practice tomorrow.