Epic buys Rocket League developer Psyonix, strongly hints it will stop selling the game on Steam

Fortnite creator Epic Games announced today that it's acquired the independent game development studio Psyonix, makers of the massively popular vehicular soccer game *Rocket League.*

As a result of the deal, Psyonix says it will have access to more resources to support *Rocket League*'s competitive e-sports league and, by late 2019, will bring the game to Epic's PC storefront.

After that, it sounds like *Rocket League* will no longer be available on Valve's competing Steam store, though buyers of the Steam version can continue to play their existing copy of the game indefinitely and continue to receive support, which *Variety* is reporting includes downloadable content, patches, and all other future content.

Here's the bit that makes it sound like Rocket League's days on Steam are numbered (bolding ours):

> *"The PC version of Rocket League will come to the Epic Games store in late 2019.* ***In the meantime****, it will continue to be available for purchase on Steam;* ***thereafter*** *it will continue to be supported on Steam for all existing purchasers."*

Epic's statement is clear that there are two periods of time — the time before it comes to the Epic Store, when you can buy a copy on Steam, and the time afterwards, when the best you can

expect for sure is that your existing copy will still work.

But Epic wants you to know that it hasn't technically announced that the game will stop being sold on Steam. Not yet: "We are continuing to sell Rocket League on Steam, and have not announced plans to stop selling the game there. Rocket League remains available for new purchasers on Steam, and long-term plans will be announced in the future," an Epic spokesperson tells *The Verge*.

Terms of the deal, including how much money Epic paid to acquire Psyonix, were not made public.

"We've been working closely with Epic since the early days of Unreal Tournament, and we've survived changing tides as partners, so combining forces makes sense in many ways," Dave Hagewood, Psyonix founder and studio director, said in a statement. "The potential of what we can learn from each other and accomplish together makes us truly excited for the future."

Psyonix has worked with Epic for years on Unreal Engine technology

Epic and Psyonix have a long-standing relationship, going back to Psyonix's founding in 2001 in Raleigh, North Carolina, a short 12-mile drive from Epic's headquarters in nearby Cary. Over the years, Epic has worked with Psyonix to improve its Unreal Engine game development tool set, and Epic says the studio has been instrumental as a contract contributor in the creation of Unreal-based games like *Unreal Tournament 2004*, *Gears of War*, and *Mass Effect 3*.

"Psyonix has always been a part of the Epic family, and we're happy to make it official," Epic CEO Tim Sweeney said in a statement. "We have great respect for how Psyonix has built an excellent team and an incredible community around *Rocket League*." Epic says it anticipates the deal closing at the end of May or in early June, pending regulatory approval.

Psyonix moved its headquarters to San Diego in 2009, and it now employs more than 130 people. In 2015, the studio released *Rocket League,* an evolution to its 2008 game *Supersonic Acrobatic Rocket-Powered Battle-Car*s, to universal acclaim. The game now has more than 57 million registered players and has sold millions of copies. It's also become a popular e-sport, with its Rocket League Championship Series initially funded by in-game purchases of cosmetic items and, eventually, through deals with NBC Sports Group and Turner Sports to broadcast games live on television and streaming platforms.

Psyonix has also been instrumental in helping establish cross-platform play on game consoles, with *Rocket League* becoming a landmark title in the industry for supporting play between Xbox One and PC and PS4 and PC. Later on, as Epic's *Fortnite* began its meteoric rise thanks in part to its cross-platform features, Psyonix was one of the small handful of developers alongside Epic pushing Sony to end its policies against blocking account transfer features and cross-platform play between PS4 and competing consoles. Sony eventually relented, and Psyonix brought cross-platform *Rocket League* support to PS4 in January of this year.

Regardless of how beneficial the news is for Psyonix and Epic alike, Epic's decision to acquire exclusivity on a popular title post-release may only fuel tensions in the PC market, as Epic continues to spend considerable funds to undermine Valve's dominance in PC game distribution. In a separate blog post published earlier today, Epic revealed the first game sales figures for an Epic exclusive, saying Saber Interactive's survival game World War Z has sold more than 320,000 copies to since its April 16th release.

Correction: While Epic's original statement about Rocket League's continued existence on Steam seemed like a sure euphemism that it was getting pulled – which we stated as fact – it can also be interpreted as Epic not having yet made the decision to pull. We've corrected this story to explain that.

https://www.theverge.com/2019/5/1/18525842/epic-games-psyonix-acquisition-rocket-league-fortnite-unreal-deal