Rocket League’s free-to-play transition is a red card for its Steam listing

Rocket League / Aurich Lawson

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Sometime “this summer,” the popular car-soccer video game *Rocket League* will become fully free to play on all existing platforms. In order to pull this off, however, the game’s publishers at Epic Games are making a curious change to its PC version: it will be delisted from Steam.

If you have not already purchased the game’s existing PC version, priced at $19.99, the only way to claim its free version once it launches will be through the Epic Games Store. Tuesday’s announcement from game developer Psyonix did not include a firm estimate of when this “summer” switchover will happen, and Psyonix representatives did not confirm a time frame when asked directly by Ars—so if you don’t already own the game and feel wedded to Steam, consider this a final “summer” warning. Anyone who has already purchased the game on Steam will still be able to download and play the free-to-play version through that interface—and receive updates, patches, and access to existing content and unlocks.

“Long-term plans” are here today

Existing players on any platform (Steam, EGS, Nintendo Switch, PlayStation 4, Xbox One) who pay for and log in to *Rocket League* before ~~its F2P transition~~ the end of today, July 21, will receive a bundle of free “Legacy” content, mostly consisting of new and existing cosmetic options for the game’s roster of cars. (This means owners of the game’s disc version must log in ASAP to claim said goodies; after the switchover, your paid disc copy of the game won’t trigger any special status.) This includes a few packs of cars and decorations that used to be sold as traditional DLC, before Rocket League delisted all discrete DLC packs in favor of an in-game, *Fortnite*-like store full of limited-time sales options.

With this update, the game will add a form of cross-platform support for statistics, cosmetic purchases, unlocks, and more, all tied to an Epic Games account. Exactly how this will work, and how it will interface with the existing Steam version, remains unclear; “more details on account linking will be shared in the future,” Psyonix’s Tuesday update says.

Core gameplay appears to be unaffected by the free-to-play transition, since the most obvious changes with such a business model—a storefront full of cosmetic purchases, and a paid, cosmetic-filled “battle pass” progression system—have already been added to the game. The news follows Epic Games’ purchase of Psyonix roughly one year ago, which raised questions of whether the game might become an Epic Games Store exclusive on PC. At the time, the developers offered a vague assurance: “*Rocket League* remains available for new purchasers on Steam, and long-term plans will be announced in the future.”

Rocket League‘s original stratospheric spike in popularity arguably came because of a 2015 launch on PlayStation Plus—back when that paid subscription service offered brand-

new indie games day-and-date with their retail launch. (The game languished when it previously launched as a PS3 indie, titled *Supersonic Acrobatic Rocket-Powered Battle-Cars*, in 2008.) PS Plus has since cooled on that promise of hot new indies; Xbox's rival Game Pass service has largely picked up that mantle with its own bullish launches of first- and third-party games as part of its paid subscription.

This article has been updated with a correction about the game's "Legacy" requirements.

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