



# RELEASE

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## VBL Grand Final: Umut Gültekin is German eFootball Champion

Umut „RBLZ\_Umut“ Gültekin is the 2021 German eFootball Champion. At this weekend’s VBL Grand Final by bevestor, the RB Leipzig player won not only the title and trophy but also prize money of €40,000. In the final of this year’s season of the bevestor Virtual Bundesliga organized by DFL, ESL and EA SPORTS, Gültekin beat Dylan „DullenMIKE“ Neuhausen with a total result of 3:1 (2:1 on Xbox One and 1:0 on PlayStation 4).

"I am very, very happy, I gave everything for this moment! It's been a tough road since November. It went well for me in the whole tournament, but ‘DullenMike’ was another strong opponent in the final", said Gültekin following his victory on Sunday evening. The 18-year-old, who is currently taking his exams for his university entrance qualification, made it to the VBL Grand Final for the first time. He had qualified for this directly thanks to the good performance of his club RB Leipzig in the VBL Club Championship. Having already gone without defeat in the VBL Club Championship, he managed to do the same during the three days of the VBL Grand Final.

Andreas Heyden, EVP Digital Innovations DFL Group: ‘I’d like to warmly congratulate Umut Gültekin on his victory. Securing the trophy took more than just a winning performance across the three-day VBL Grand Final. Each player already had around seven tournament months under their belts, requiring consistently high levels of performance and everyone’s utmost dedication. We would therefore like to thank all the players and clubs as well as our partners – above all EA SPORTS, ESL Gaming, ProSiebenSat.1 and bevestor – for all the success we have achieved together this season.’

In the VBL Grand Final, 32 players met in an online tournament in EA SPORTS FIFA 21, having qualified via the VBL Club Championship by bevestor (the competition in which eFootballers from the clubs in the Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2 play against each other) and the VBL play-offs by bevestor. The prize money pool was €100,000, more than double last year’s value.

This year’s VBL Grand Final was the end of the ninth season of the Virtual Bundesliga. The VBL, which was founded in 2012 as a partnership between DFL and EA SPORTS, remains to this day the only eFootball competition of a professional football league to be directly integrated in the EA SPORTS FIFA game series. The VBL has enjoyed steadily growing popularity since its launch, with around 130,000 participants taking part last season in Germany. In 2018, the decision to launch the VBL Club Championship with the clubs of the Bundesliga and Bundesliga 2 in addition to the VBL Open competition for individual players was taken in response to the increasing popularity of the VBL, the growing relevance of eSport in general and the DFL’s focus on football simulation games. The DFL has also been cooperating with ESL Gaming, the world’s largest eSport company since 2020. With its expertise in building up and expanding ecosystems in conjunction with digital sport, the DFL would like to further develop and professionalise the VBL.

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