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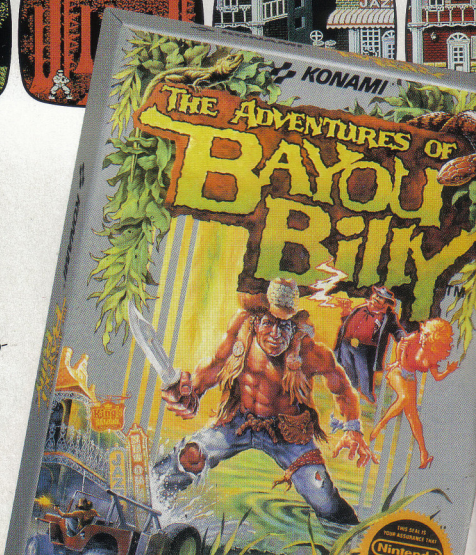
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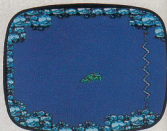
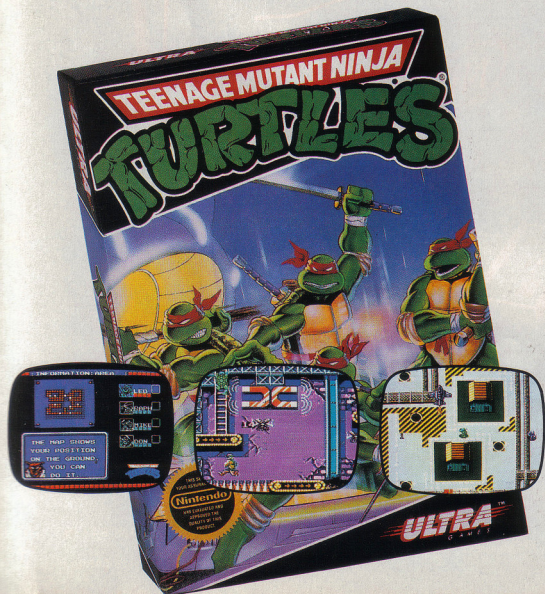
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JULY ▼ 1989

## FEATURES

## 18 IT WAS AN ENGINE, BUT NOW IT'S A TURBO

by Lee H. Pappas

The American version of the PC Engine is here. It's called the TurboGrafx-16, and it's hot!

## 24 SEGA CES OVERVIEW

by Andy Eddy

Here's a look at the games soon to be available for the Sega Master System, and a peek at their new 16-bit console!

## 28 COLOR DREAMS MAY BE NINTENDO'S NIGHTMARE

by Andy Eddy

This innovative company is making high-quality games for the NES, and with their help, you may be able to also!

## 44 R-TYPE STRATEGY GUIDE, PART I

by Lee H. Pappas and Andy Eddy

Having trouble in outer space? You won't be for long, if you take our worthwhile advice.

## 54 ZELDA II: THE ADVENTURE OF LINK STRATEGY GUIDE, PART I

by Clayton Walnum

To help you survive this intricate adventure, this month's installment will cover the first areas you'll face.

## 64 ELECTRONIC PENNANT FEVER

by Arnie Katz and Bill Kunkel

Don't be caught in left field! Steal a look at some of the latest and greatest diamond software.

## 72 TAKING A SPIN WITH DON MATTRICK

by Bill Kunkel

Listen in from the pits as our persistent interviewer takes this game designer out for a *Test Drive*.

## 80 COMPUTER-GAME STRATEGIES

by R. Bradley Andrews, Arnie Katz and Bill Kunkel

This month, our team of crack gamers dole out helpful hints on Powerstyx, Road Raider and Carrier Command.

## REVIEWS

## 32 VIDEO-GAME REVIEWS

Blades of Steel, Anticipation, Bubble Bobble, Tetris, Alex Kidd: The Lost Stars, Othello, Stealth A.T.F.

## 86 COMPUTER-GAME REVIEWS

720°, Galactic Conqueror, Final Assault, Crazy Cars, Zany Golf, Ancient Art of War at Sea.

Cover: NEC's TurboGrafx-16 is as sleek and stylish as a foreign sports car.

Photography by Ladi von Janaky.

Photographed against the incredible Esprit Turbo, provided by Lotus-Lamborghini of Beverly Hills and Lotus Cars U.S.A. Inc.



## DEPARTMENTS

Editor's Letter	6
Reader Mail	8
News Bits	12
Easter Egg Hunt	52
Inside Gaming	74
Game Doctor	78
Advertiser Index	83

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**O**ur April issue contained a sneak peek at the amazing new gaming system, the PC Engine, and by far, this article has been our most popular to date. We received many phone calls asking for more information—some people even offered to buy our PC Engine from us. (No way!) We followed that sneak peek with coverage of the PC Engine's CD-ROM unit in the May issue, and again, you responded enthusiastically.

You asked for it, and now you're getting it. As you read this, NEC is gearing up to sell the American version of the PC Engine in U.S. stores, having formally introduced the unit at the summer CES on June. We're proud that NEC chose VG&CE as the magazine in which to announce the American release of this amazing gaming system.

From our viewpoint, the important thing about the release of the TurboGrafx-16, as it's being billed in America, is that it's the first entry in the new generation of gaming machines, bringing with it the next battle in the video-game war.

Presently, Nintendo's NES holds approximately 80% of the current market share, with Sega and Atari splitting the remaining 20%. The methods Nintendo used to obtain their present position, while admired by certain financial experts, has irked a great many. This is evidenced by a number of lawsuits, in addition to the rumors that some third-party licensees have jumped the NES ship. Indeed, there are a great many people who relish the new opportunities that NEC's TurboGrafx-16 will bring to the video-game market.

And the war has just begun. Also by the time you read this, Sega will have introduced the American version of their 16-bit Mega Drive console, the Genesis. Atari has stated that they, too, are preparing a 16-bit machine, most likely adapted from their ST line of 16-bit computers. Similarly, we've gotten word of other companies that are constructing "new technology" electronic-gaming machines.

The main question is whether the stranglehold that Nintendo has on the industry, a position they didn't gain necessarily by having a superior system, can be broken. After all, from a purely technical standpoint, the NES isn't the best machine out there; it's just that it seems to offer the hottest arcade titles. And the price is reasonable.

Price is an interesting issue. With the added graphic and sound power that the new machines like NEC's TurboGrafx-16 and Sega's Genesis offer, they will be sold at a price nearly twice that of the most basic NES. Will millions of families who already own a game console want to spend that much money on a second system, one that is incompatible with their present machine?

Believe me, I don't have the answer. This business has proven too crazy and unpredictable to even guess at what may happen. No one predicted the crash in 1984, and no one can guarantee 1989 or 1990 won't have some nasty surprises. We can only cross our fingers and hope that they won't. The best advice I can give is to keep reading VG&CE; we'll keep you up to date on all the latest developments. Also, if you have any comments on our magazine, send them along to us. We're always happy to hear about the ways electronic entertainment affects your lives.

Most of all, thanks for reading.

—Andy Eddy, Executive Editor

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## THUMBS UP AND THUMBS DOWN

Dear VG&CE:

Your magazine is the best of its kind. I enjoy reading it, especially the Sega game articles. I was very happy seeing the "Alex Kidd Strategy Guide," with all those maps and hints—I never knew it had a continue feature! Thanks for that valuable hint.

I think you missed something because you had four secret answers listed at the end, but only mentioned two of them in the article. Please explain because I don't want to lose any hints.

—**Georgie Berrios**  
Guayama, Puerto Rico

*Whoops! Because of a late change where we ended Part 1 of the "Alex Kidd Strategy Guide," the photos containing secret answers #3 and #4 from the April issue ended up getting cut. As you have probably noticed by now, these two hints ended up as secret answers #1 and #2 in the May issue. Our apologies for any confusion this may have brought.*

*Thanks for spotting that, Georgie, and for the compliments also.*

## A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE

Dear VG&CE:

I love your magazine. It covers everything fair and square, and is a delight to get. I am wondering, though, why you have not covered or mentioned the lawsuit between Nintendo and Tengen that occurred in January.

I purchased two of Tengen's games

(*Pac-Man* and *Gauntlet*) before the license was revoked, but only recently purchased *R.B.I. Baseball*. To my surprise, it was a totally different cartridge—black shell, a somewhat different shape and, also, on the box, cartridge and manual are the words "Manufactured by Tengen." After reading numerous local newspaper articles about the "lock out" device Nintendo put in their machine to keep unlicensed games out, I held my breath as I slipped it into the machine. Presto! It worked like a charm.

The one thing I am unhappy about is the cardboard sleeve they provide with the cartridge; they could have made it plastic. Since the cardboard sleeve doesn't fit in the ten-game cartridge containers I have, I dumped it and replaced it with a regular Nintendo-cut sleeve.

I do know that Nintendo doesn't like this one bit, and will most likely prohibit the sale of these non-Nintendo-made cartridges somehow, but I am writing this letter to assure any first-time buyer of Tengen unlicensed cartridges that they will work in your NEC machine.

Do you know if they are still planning to make *Tetris*?

Keep up the great work!

—**B. J. Major**  
Tacoma, Washington

*Due to our three-to-four month "lead time"—the time it takes for an issue of VG&CE to be put together, printed and put on store shelves—you wrote your letter before seeing our May issue. The*

*May News Bits is where our first note on the Tengen/Nintendo legal battle showed up. With the almost weekly updates and additions to the suits, it would be hard for us to keep you up to date on them. We'll try to report on major happenings as they occur. Sorry to say that the newspaper is your best way to keep abreast of these lawsuits.*

*Certainly there are other events that are adding to the uproar in the video-game world. For example, this issue of VG&CE contains a sneak peek at a company that is skipping a licensing agreement with Nintendo in their quest for a piece of the NES pie, and they claim to be entirely legal with their products. The TurboGrafx-16 should take away some of Nintendo's market also. These developments prove that innovation is a key to successful business.*

*Speaking of innovation: While I won't venture a guess at how the courts will decide the Tengen/Nintendo cases, I do know that Tengen is indeed continuing with their production of "reverse engineered" carts for the NES. And, yes, Tetris is a reality (see our review on page 36). Tengen continues to advertise in VG&CE, and, though their products are unlicensed by Nintendo, we will continue to cover them in reviews and articles.*

*All letters considered for publication should be addressed to Reader Mail, VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Letters will be edited for style, clarity and space considerations.*



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The evil genius Dr. Doom has stolen a U.S. nuclear missile, and threatens to detonate it over New York City if his demands aren't met. The lives of five million innocent people rest on Doctor Doom's two arch-enemies: Spider-Man and Captain America. But this time Doom has created an army of robotic guards, and assembled the most formidable group of Super Villains ever, including Electro, Machete and The Hobgoblin to carry out his sinister plans.

You play the part of both Spider-Man and Captain America, invading Dr. Doom's fortress to save New York from Armageddon. You'll see authentic-looking comic book pages "tear open" for actual combat scenes, where you'll use Spidey's wall-crawling and web-slinging powers — or Cap's amazing shield — to defeat Doom's emissaries. Should you survive all this, you'll then face the evil Doctor Doom himself, an armored madman obsessed with revenge.

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- Varying levels of difficulty keep the game constantly challenging!
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# ISLAND



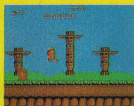
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- Game pro from Texas -



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*"The graphics are better  
than anything else"*  
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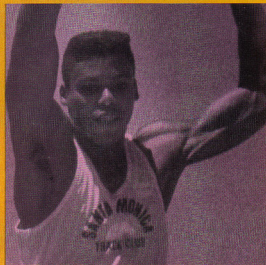
Compiled by Joyce Worley

## GameTek Signs Carl Lewis

Olympic Gold Medalist Carl Lewis signed an exclusive contract to star in GameTek sports software. Lewis, who won six Gold Medals and one Silver in the 1984 and 1988 Olympics, will be featured in on-screen track-and-field events, as well as packaging and advertising for the software company.

Lewis made history by winning Gold Medals in the Long Jump in two different Olympics. Players in the GameTek competitions can match themselves against this superathlete in field and track events.

GameTek's President Irv Schwartz explained the company's decision to sign Lewis as the company spokesman for the sports games:



"Our association with Carl Lewis allows us to plan a series of exciting electronic games with great family appeal. After all, Carl won the World Athlete of the Year award three years in a row. His image, his reputation and his credibility will put these new games way out in front."

## Compu-Nazis Challenge Europe

The West German government maintains a stringent policy toward computer games with a military theme, but that hasn't stopped a nasty network of neo-Nazi hackers from filling the underground software market with programs which would gladden the heart of Hitler himself. Bonn has banned such U.S. hits as *Silent Service* and *Rocket Ranger*, but it can't halt the stomach-turning trade in programs like *Hitler Dictator*.

Hobbyists sympathetic to the Third Reich

are circumventing the ban by distributing through bulletin boards and disks bought and sold in schoolyards. Once the programs are posted on bulletin boards, there is no way for authorities to track down the perpetrators.

The games, as expected, are exercises in Nazi propaganda, heavy on the racism. In these alleged simulations of Nazi conquest, the player makes decisions about how many Jews to send to the crematoriums and other, similar targets of interest to diseased minds.

## British Road Rally Drives to U.S.

Top Ten Software is making its American debut with a top road-race game that reenacts a famous English road rally. *Lombard/RAC Rally*, a joint venture between Mandarin Software, Red Rat Software and the Lombard/RAC Rally team, is an attempt at a faithful recreation of the demanding race.

Play begins at the starting line, behind the wheel of a 300-hp Group A Ford Sierra RS Cosworth. Four different driving conditions feature road, forest, mountain, fog and night driving that demand the player go from steep descents into hairpin turns. An on-screen driver's arm is shown actually changing gears and steering the car through the torturous course.

Cars can be repaired or new features can be added in the workshop. The driver can even take part in TV interviews to earn money for supplies.

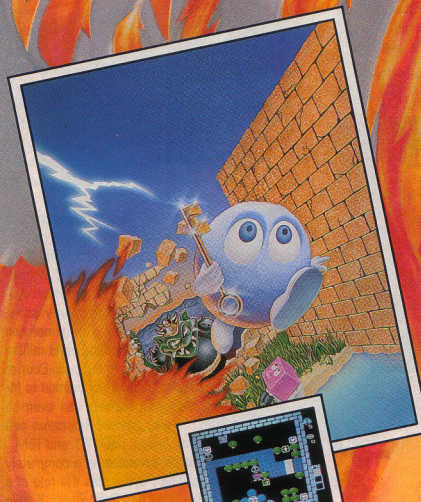
*Lombard/RAC Rally* hit number two on the



United Kingdom Gallup ST charts within one week of going on sale. It is available in the U.S. for the Atari ST, Amiga and IBM PCs (and compatibles), at \$39.95.



# HAL America Brings You 2 Hot New Games!



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**Challenge Your Wits With LOLO:** The excitement sizzles with this one. Can you help LOLO save the princess LALA from the Great Devil? You must guide LOLO through a series of 50 different mazes filled with evil spirits. Each maze offers an ingenious triple challenge: dodge the evil guardians, move the maze objects in correct sequence, and solve the lethal puzzle by collecting the power objects. A game the whole family can enjoy, LOLO, from HAL America, is designed to improve your thinking skills.

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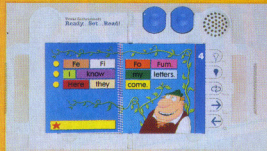
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## T.I. Tabletopper Teaches Tots

Texas Instruments' tabletopper for kids ages 3 to 7, combines phonics with sight-reading to help youngsters learn to read.



"Ready...Set...Read!" makes kids understand how letter combinations sound and how different letters produce changing sounds.

The unit comes with a four-book beginning library. Each 12-page volume contains activities and learning games, starting with letters and letter sounds in Book 1, words and letter sounds in Book 2, rhyming words and sentence building in Book 3, and letter substitution and phonics in Book 4. Children are guided through the activities by speech that synthesizes a mother's voice.

## Take It With You, With Transporter

When Mom says, "You can't take it with you," here's a good answer! Your NES Game Paks are easy to take along with the Suncom Transporter 12. It holds 12 Game Paks, and units can be stacked or nested up to a 36-game capacity.

For a shorter trip, the Transporter 4 is a gray padded bag that holsters at the waist, or hangs from a shoulder strap. It holds four Game Paks for storage or travel.

Both units retail for \$6.99 at most computer dealers.



## Cinemaware Spotlights Euro-Software

Cinemaware has launched a new label, "Spotlight Software," to introduce products that do not fit into their interactive movie and sports format.

According to Cinemaware president Bob Jacob, the company experienced great growth last year, which makes this expansion possible. They decided to participate in more entertainment categories, which is the reason they decided on the new label.

The first title due for American distribution under the Spotlight banner is *Deathbringer*. (This was formerly published in Europe under the title *Galregon's Domain*.) This game, which explores dozens of castles, features state-of-the-art graphics throughout. The gamer must have conversations with all the denizens, in order to find the clues and solve the game. It's scheduled for Amiga, Atari ST, C-64 and IBM PC.

*Federation* (formerly called *Federation of Free Traders*) is a space-exploration, combat and trading simulation featuring solid, filled 3-D graphics. It simulates a journey through space, with variable weapons, navigation system and communications with other vessels, plus a shipboard computer. The gamer can visit and land on an astounding eight million planets, as they work up from Space Courier to Admiral. During travel from location to location, the onboard computer can even be programmed to play games. *Federation* will be released for Amiga, Atari ST and IBM.

*Dark Side* is an adventure in a completely 3-D universe. The player takes the role of a space explorer who has landed on a hostile planet which he must explore alone. The game is scheduled for Amiga, Atari ST, C-64 and IBM.

Jacob also announced that MirrorSoft, the English company, has become an affiliate label. Cinemaware will bring over games published under that company's ImageWorks banner which seem particularly suited for the American market. The first title scheduled for U.S. release is *Speedball*. This is a futuristic sports simulation that combines elements of basketball with roller derby in a high-action entertainment for Amiga, Atari ST, Commodore 64 and IBM.

## Top Coin-Ops for March 1989

Figures provided by RePlay Magazine, based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.



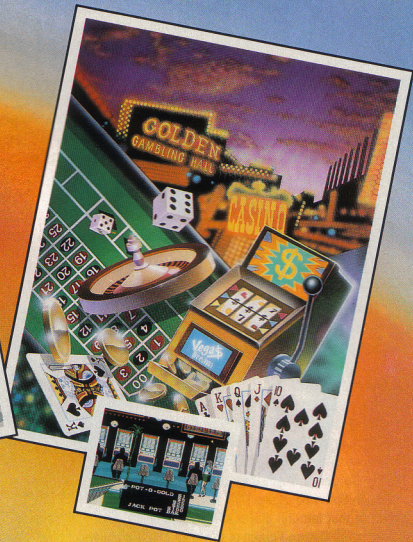
### Best Upright Video Games

1. *Narc* by Williams
2. *Cyberball* by Atari
3. *Team Quarterback* by Leland
4. *Chase H.Q.* by Taito
5. *RoboCop* by Data East
6. *Double Dragon II* by Technos
7. *Tecmo Bowl* by Tecmo
8. *Quarterback* by Leland
9. *Final Lap* by Atari
10. *Double Dragon* by Taito

### Best Software

1. *Ninja Gaiden* by Tecmo
2. *Ikari III: The Rescue* by SNK
3. *Cabal* by Fabtek
4. *Superman* by Taito
5. *Thundercross* by Konami
6. *Shinobi* by Sega
7. *V'Ball* by Taito
8. *Capcom Bowling* by Capcom
9. *Championship Sprint* by Atari
10. *Roadblasters* by Atari

# 2 More Hot New Games From HAL America



## **AIR FORTRESS**™ *A Great Adventure Game:*

Stand by for launch. Your mission is to save the planet Farmel from the evil **Air Fortress**. And you're in for a hot time. You have to fly between defense structures, fight off defense forces, pick up bombs and energy cells to help you—and that's before you go in! Can you knock out the central nuclear power source of each complex before you run out of energy? Great! But the game's not over yet. Get ready as the fortress generates its second set of eight, tougher defense complexes. You'll use all your skill before you save the planet Farmel in **Air Fortress** from HAL America.

## **VEGAS DREAM** ★™ *A Great Party Game:*

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## Emulator Turns Amiga to C-64

Software Insight Systems (Andover, CT) has released version 2 of *Go-64!*, a three-in-one product for Amiga owners who wish to use Commodore 64 software and peripherals.

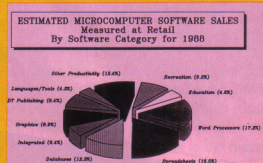
The C-64 Emulator has enhanced graphics capability from the earlier version, and is compatible with multitasking. It also contains a peripheral interface, so that Commodore 64 printers and disk drives can be connected to the Amiga. The file-transfer utility included makes it easy to copy files between C-64 disks and Amiga disks.

*C-64!* retails for \$49.95 and requires 512K RAM, although the manufacturer recommends 1 meg. It works with Amiga models A500 or A2000 as is, and, using a special adaptor cable offered for \$19.95, the Amiga 1000.

## '88 Software Sales Up; Games Dominate

According to data released by the Software Publishers Association (SPA), consumer software sales totalled more than \$465 million in 1988, a 26% increase over 1987 sales. Of this total, recreation software accounted for 57% of all consumer software sales. General home software, such as graphics and finance programs, accounted for 21%, and home-education software comprised 23% of the 1988 total.

MS-DOS recreational software sales are higher than any other format, totalling approximately 44% of all consumer software sales. The balance of sales in '88 includes 26% to Apple II, 16% to Commodore 64/128, 7% to Macintosh, and 6% to all other formats, in-



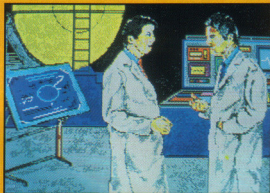
cluding the Amiga and Atari ST.

International software sales are also on the move. In 1988 American software firms totalled approximately \$815 million in retail sales of consumer software outside the U.S. and Canada.

## Save the Future by Altering the Past

*Guardians of Infinity: To Save Kennedy*, published by Medalist International, casts the player as a 21st Century "temporal physicist." As the time continuum unravels, the player can trace the cause of the crisis rocking that future era, to the assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963. The scientist must travel back in time with a crew of agents, on a mission to stop the assassination and reverse the decay of the time continuum.

Paragon Software created the text-graphic adventure that lets the player meet some of the most well-known figures of the '60s. The player has conversations with Jacqueline Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Pierre Salinger and Lee Harvey Oswald. A climactic face-off with President Kennedy is the last chance to convince him not to go to Dallas.



Over 128 historical figures are included. The manual contains biographies of them all, plus a 90-page novella that describes the events leading up to the trip.

*Guardians of Infinity* is marketed and distributed through Medalist International, a division of MicroProse.



## Chase The Sky in Max-Speed Simulator

Maxis Software's *SkyChase* is billed as the fastest, smoothest jet simulator on computer. It features 3-D wire-frame jets that bank, turn and soar in realistic ways at the top speed of any flight simulator to date.

*SkyChase* pares away all the difficult take-off and landing maneuvers. Instead of simulating these skill-demanders, the program specializes in the operation of the plane during flight. It optimizes speed, and provides aerodynamically accurate performances of the jet fleet. The seven-plane fleet gives the compu-pilot plenty of choices: FA/18 Hornet, F-14 Eagle, F-15 Tomcat, F-16 Falcon, MIG-31 Foxhound and MIG-27 Flogger. Finally, for real speed freaks, there's a paper airplane that outraces all the others.

The wire-frame jets fly over a grid-patterned ground, and the grid alters to help heighten the simulation of speed, elevation and depth. Gamers control the throttle and an arsenal of weaponry in head-to-head combat against the computer or against another human opponent. In fact, it's the combat against another computerist where *SkyChase* is most dramatic.

The flight simulator is currently available from Maxis for Amiga and Atari ST, and an IBM version will be released later this year.



# Magic Johnson's BASKETBALL

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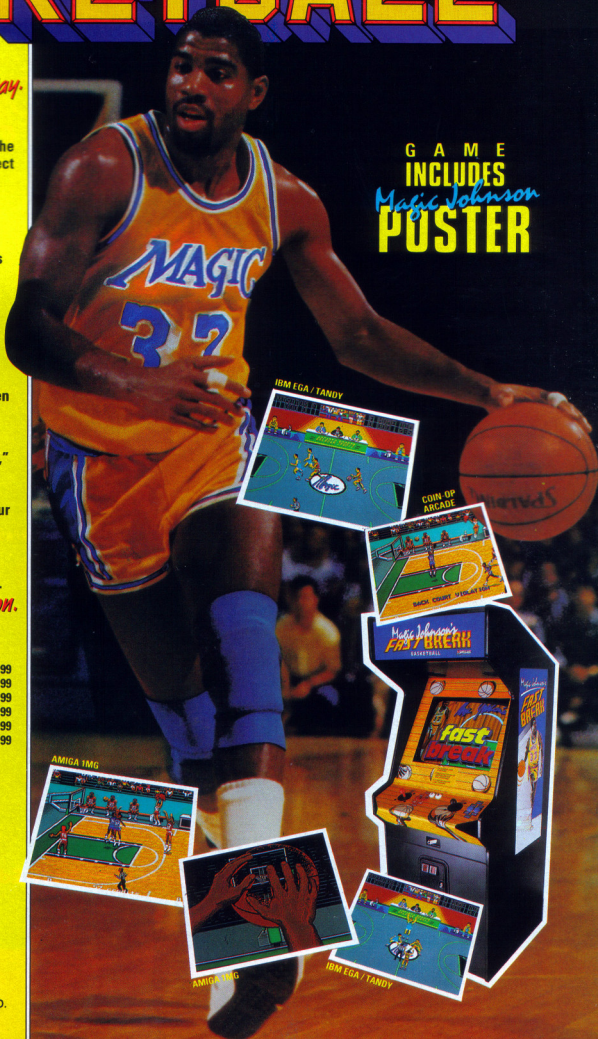
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*Magic Johnson*  
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If you've been a regular reader of this magazine then you'll know this new product by its Japanese name: PC Engine. Due to be released in the United States sometime in August, with a retail price of \$199.99, the TurboGrafx-16 includes the same features that has made the PC Engine a winner in Japan.

At the time this article was written (mid-April) the TurboGrafx-16 had captured 50% of current video-game console sales in Japan, outselling all other systems. The total number of PC Engines sold through April was 1.5 million units, according to the NEC Corporation in Tokyo.

The TurboGrafx is part of a new wave in game machines, referred to as the 16-bit class. Also in this 16-bit class is the new Sega Genesis (see page 26), the awaited Super Famicom from Nintendo, a rumored game system from Atari (likely based on their ST computer) and a new entry, the Koinix Multi System, from England.

With a processor (the brain of the game machine) running four times faster than the one in Nintendo's NES, the TurboGrafx-16 can move graphic images on the screen up to eight times faster, with nearly ten times as many colors as the NES; the perceived resolution (clarity of pictures) is much greater. The TurboGrafx uses an 8-bit chip, but with 16-bit graphics. NEC sites the greater number of colors as one of the TurboGrafx's greatest assets.

The NEC also boasts stereo output with far superior sound-effect and music-generating capabilities. The difference between sound and music on the TurboGrafx, compared to the current game systems is like listening to an old 78 record, then hearing a compact disc.

And speaking of compact discs, as we reported in our May issue, NEC is planning to release their CD-ROM player soon after the rollout of the TurboGrafx-16. Though the list price of \$399 may seem high, keep in mind that this system will also play 3-inch or 5-inch CDs through your television or stereo system. And as we also mentioned it comes with the CD-ROM system card that gives this player features found only on the most expensive compact disc players.

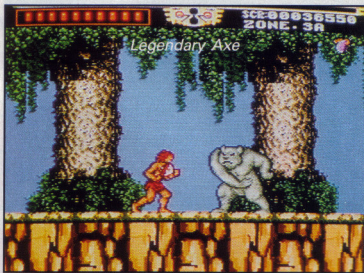
This CD player also plays a new format of compact disc using its built-in CD-G decoder. These new CDs still play music, but they can also display still pictures and graphics on your screen. This is a feature that few current CD players are equipped with.

The \$399 price includes the TurboGrafx-CD player, system card, docking station with additional computer memory and a carrying case that can hold CD cartridges, power supply, controller and, of course, the TurboGrafx and CD player.

The TurboGrafx-16 game system

multiplayer games), and the TurboBooster, which converts the game system's output into separate audio and video signals. A deluxe table-top controller called the TurboStick, similar to the NES Advantage, will be introduced as well.

Also to be packaged with the TurboGrafx-16 is *Keith Courage in Alpha Zones*. In this appealing game, you control a young character on the screen as he plays in the countryside. At certain stages he is zipped away by a rainbow beam, transformed into a powerful robot and placed in an evil



comes packed with the TurboPad. This controller is your standard hand-held game pad made popular as standard equipment with the NES and SMS game consoles. But this version comes with a pair of three-position switches. These switches let you adjust the speed of fire buttons, giving two rates of auto-firing in addition to manual blasting.

Optional accessories for the game system include the TurboTap, an adapter that allows up to five controllers to be plugged into the game system (for

underground world to battle his way back into the normal world. *Keith Courage* should appeal to most game players.

When asked to compare the TurboGrafx-16 with another game system, we can't. It's as far above the NES in graphics and sound as the NES was above the Atari 2600. While Nintendo's stonghold is quality games with lasting value, the TurboGrafx continues in the same mold. Indeed the names of many of the game companies also appear on PC Engine products in Japan.



adventure. At press time the Americanized title of this game was not yet decided on. This is one of the most humorous games we've ever played, and we hope the U.S. version comes close.

*Legendary Axe* is one of the better games on the TurboGrafx-16. The graphics are true arcade-quality, and the game play is outstanding. You take on the role of a skilled ax warrior, who must make his way through multiple levels to face the evil Flare. This is one game every TurboGrafx owner should have. It's also an excellent showcase of the game system's capabilities.

At the time this was written, four golf games were available in Japan: *Power Golf*, *Winning Shot*, *Golf Boys* and *Naxat Open*. NEC was just finishing the selection of what game would be released here, and was leaning toward *Power Golf*. All of these games make good use of the game system's graphic abilities, though they differ on play implementation.

Also available in Japan are two baseball games: *Power League* and *World Stadium*. NEC, opting for high realism, chose *Power League* (which

NEC is working on getting new companies into the development fold for the TurboGrafx. We've received confirmation that Cinemaware and ICOM Simulations are creating software for the machine. Cinemaware has also just signed with a Japanese publisher to release a CD-based version of one of their most popular titles. ICOM is a lesser-known company, but their software is also popular. For example, they're the group responsible for *Shadowgate*, *Deja Vu* and *Uninitiated*, released by Mindscape.

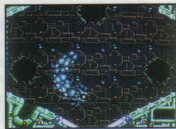
At press time NEC was planning to establish the TurboGrafx-16 with at least ten titles. Here is a description of what is confirmed to be released.

*Alien Crush* is a spectacular two-level pinball game with detailed alien-type backgrounds. Several bonus screens add to the sophistication, and the music in the background is equally impressive. I've never been into video pinball very much until now.

*Kato & Ken* are two popular Japanese characters who romp their way through this detailed graphic arcade/



Alien Crush



Vigilante

# BUBBLE BOBBLE™ IS DINO-MIGHT!

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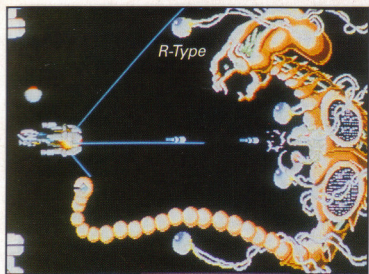
These are two hungry dino-mights and they've got bubble fight'n fun down tight.

Bubble Bobble™ is totally addictive action. Computer Entertainer Magazine says "it's impossible to resist...you want to play over and over again." Bubble Bobble™ has been Europe's #1 game for over 3 months. You'll scramble through 100 screens of laughs as your brontosaurus buddies, Bub and Bob, blow you away with endless action. If you're lookin' for fun, these dudes are the ones.

For more arcade quality fun at home, grab Taito's other action packed hits for the Nintendo Entertainment System.® Operation Wolf,® the awesome prisoner rescue mission and the world's number 1 arcade game. Renegade,™ the fast paced street-style Karate brawl. And coming soon, Sky Shark,® the arcade's meanest air battle.

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will carry the name *World-Class Baseball*) to release in the U.S. and we agree with them. This game allows two players to compete against one another, or one against the computer. You get the best seats in the stadium, behind the catcher, or an overhead view. Digitized voices add to the realism, along with realistic scoreboard images and player movement. On this game and golf, when a ball is hit high it "comes

toward the player" and looks as though it is ready to break through the screen. I've caught myself ducking a few times!

One of the best arcade-to-home translations we have ever seen comes in the form of *R-Type*. If you want to see how good this game system is over the current game machines, compare *R-Type* on the Sega Master System with the TurboGrafx version. It's

not just better graphics or improved sound and music, but the actual game play is enhanced tenfold. There is crisper detail and minimal flickering. In Japan this game was released on two cartridges because all eight levels couldn't fit on one game card. At press time NEC told us the new, increased memory cartridges would now hold the entire game and may be released in that form to U.S. consumers. If you are into space shoot 'em ups, this one's for you.

*Victory Run* is a high-speed driving game, similar to Sega's *Out Run*, that simulates the "Paris to Dakar Road Race." You race through Europe and Africa in your bright red sports car, negotiating turns and small hills, while avoiding other vehicles. Each country features different road characteristics and scenery, as well as night-driving situations.

*Vigilante* follows in the footsteps of the popular Kung-Fu games. The goal is to take it upon yourself to rescue a hostage from a group of evil thugs. Along the way you can pick up useful weapons to aid your mission. The graphics are detailed, though the game tends to be repetitive.

What really impresses us, however, of the 35 cartridges for the TurboGrafx-16 we now own, is the consistently high quality of the games. NEC is only looking to bring over to the U.S. the best of the best.

Frankly, we can't wait! ☺



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# Sega Shows Off Their New Stuff

By Andy Eddy

Last month we looked at the quantity of games that Nintendo and their licensees would be demonstrating at the Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago. As you read this, all of these video-game developers are winding down from the show, though they are gearing up for the long road ahead—the actual release of the products they showed.

Sega is also gearing up for the long road, but theirs is a tougher road. By their own estimates, they've only pulled in about 10% of the current video-game market. So they have to keep plugging away at Nintendo's stronghold on the market, and their role at CES was as aggressive as ever.

In the next two pages, we'll be looking at the products that you can expect to see for the Sega Master System in coming months, not only from Sega but their licensees too. Sega owners will see a lot of familiar names in the list, brought back as sequels.

## Sega

**World Games**—Computer owners will recognize this title as a translation of Epyx's PC game. In it you compete in a variety of events from all over the world: Log Rolling, Caber Toss and Bull Riding, among others.



Sega's latest SMS games, top to bottom: *Wanted*, *Passing Shot*, *Wonder Boy III: The Dragon's Trap*, *Alex Kidd: High Tech World*; at left: *Casino Games*; at right: *Spellcaster*.

**Wanted**—This is a Light Phaser game with a western theme. You're the marshall who must take on and rid the town of bad guys.

**Passing Shot**—Here's an aerial-perspective tennis contest that features one- or two-player competition, either against each other or against the computer. The game also has a password feature to make league play a possibility.

**Dynamite Dux**—This is a translation of an arcade game just coming to the U.S. You are a brawling duck, battling and scrapping in an effort to rescue your kidnapped girlfriend.

**Captain Silver**—In this game, originally from Data East, you're searching for treasure. During that journey you cross paths with bloodthirsty pirates, but you gradually collect parts for your sword, which add to your combat strength.

**Cloud Master**—Another arcade-game translation, though the original hasn't yet been seen in the U.S. On your quest to become the "Enlightened Old Man of the Mountain," you'll have to defeat the five levels of monsters who are trying to stop you.

**Basketball Nightmare**—This game is a weird one, designed with a dose of loony imagination! Though it features a basketball theme, it's B-Ball with a





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Now this white knuckle arcade thriller from Taito® is ready to fly on your Nintendo Entertainment System.® You won't believe the five incredible levels of action.

We bring even more arcade excitement into your home with other action packed hits like Bubble Bobble,™ the addictive dinosaur romp, Operation Wolf,® the awesome prisoner rescue mission, and Renegade,™ the knock-out street-style karate brawl.

Take off for the guts and glory of taming the skies with the high flying action of Sky Shark.® Don't be left on the ground.

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twist: You coach a team of humans against various monsters in bizarre settings. For example, the court might be a graveyard, and the bouncing ball may be a gruesome eye.

**Wonder Boy III: The Dragon's Trap**—As a sequel to *Wonder Boy in Monster Land*, this one should be hot! It features password reentry, and the ability to change the title character into different creatures.

**Ultima IV**—Based on Origin Systems' computer game, it's an RPG (Role-Playing Game) in a medieval setting. Richard Garriott, the creator of the *Ultima* series of games, was consulted in the creation of this cartridge.

Also on display, Sega will have: *Walter Payton Football*, a game that uses an aerial view of the field; *Casino Games*, featuring blackjack, poker, slots and more; *Alex Kidd: High Tech World*, the third installment to this popular series of games, where Alex tries to get to the arcade before it closes; and *Spellcaster*, an adventure RPG that crams action and text adventure into a four-meg cartridge with password reentry.

### Activision

Activision will not only have their existing Sega titles—*Cyborg Hunter*, *Rampage* and *Bomber Raid*—but they will show one new game called *Galaxy Force*. In this Japanese arcade success,



Galaxy Force by Activision.

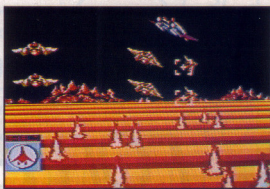


you must navigate space to the underground passageways of the enemy. The game features five levels of play packed in a 4-meg cartridge.

### Absolute Entertainment

Sega's most recent licensee, previously known for their inventive games for Atari game consoles, is planning to show two titles for the SMS. *R.C. Grand Prix* brings radio-controlled car racing to the screen. The more you win, the better you can make your car—the prize money you collect will allow you to purchase new engines, tires and more.

Their other game, *James Bond 007—Countdown to Meltdown*, takes the world-famous secret agent around



Based on an intense Sega arcade game, *Galaxy Force* by Activision will knock your socks off.

the globe in an attempt to prevent a nuclear accident from contaminating the Earth's water supply. Scaramanga, one of Bond's fiercest adversaries, has created a puzzle for Bond to solve; if 007 isn't successful, the reactor will overheat and cause a meltdown.



Sega is set to release the first 16-bit game console to America later this year. It is known in Japan as the Mega Drive, but the U.S. version will be called Genesis. The picture below is how it will appear; it is very similar to the Mega Drive.

(continued on page 42)



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# KUNG-FU HEROES



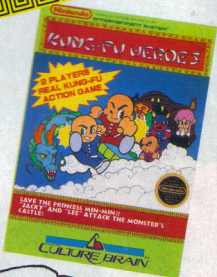
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*Oh, no! The Princess Min-Min and all the treasures have been taken by the evil enemies. Two Kung-fu experts, Jacky and Lee volunteer to save the Princess. Defeat the enemies with the best of your Kung-fu skills and bring peace to the Land.*



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The gunmen from the demon circle use powerful fire bazookas! Even the mighty Kung-fu player will be tested in opposing the firearms.



●DEMON CATS' CASTLE  
The demon cats clan comes to attack! If you get shot by the Medusa Beam, you may be paralyzed and become stone.



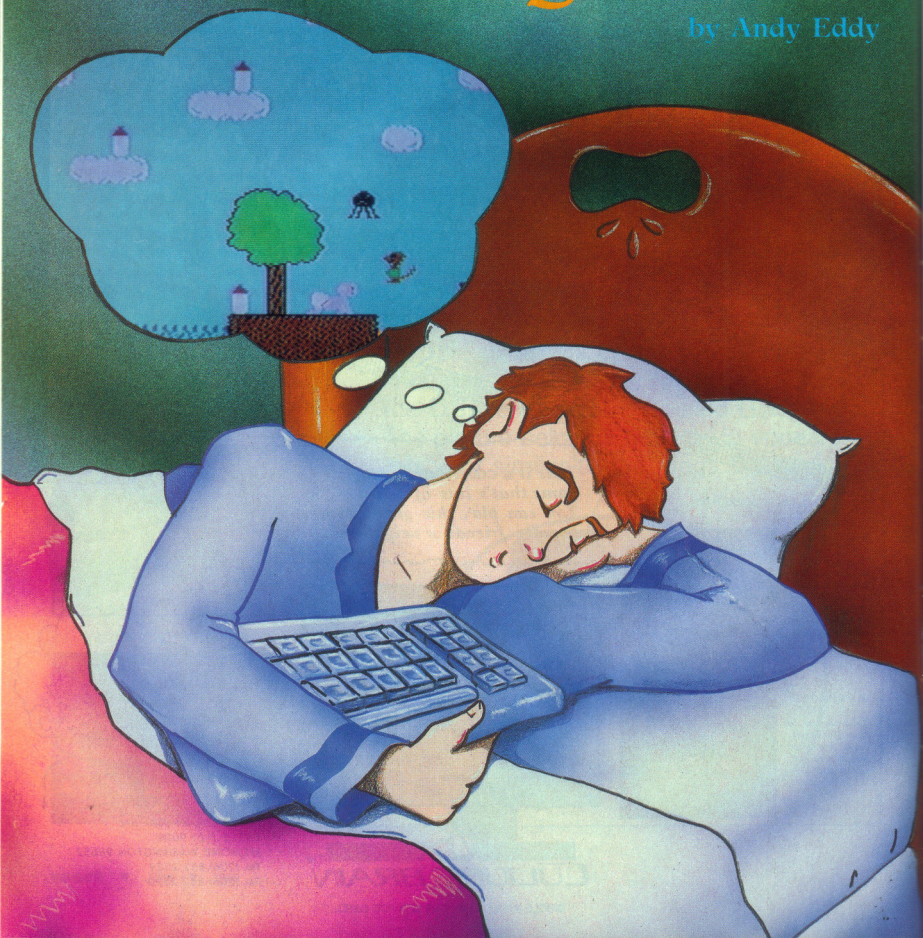
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# COLOR DREAMS

## May Be Nintendo's Nightmare

by Andy Eddy



Outside of Los Angeles, in a town called Brea, is a company with lofty aspirations. In fact, the company name, Color Dreams, is a good representation of what it has devised. If everything goes as it's designed, those dreams may end up the color green—as in money.

The company is planning to take the video-game world by storm, by creating NES cartridges outside of Nintendo's control. Only one other company, Tengen, is circumventing Nintendo's licensing process, and is embroiled in legal battles because of it. But Eddy Lin, marketing director for Color Dreams, says that the process his engineers have initiated has gone through intense scrutiny by lawyers to minimize the risk of lawsuits. The cartridges are a different shape, the circuit board inside the cartridge is brand new and, most importantly, they have engineered a way around the "lock out" chip that has been the source of great debate. This chip was intended to prevent companies from making cartridges without Nintendo's approval. But Tengen's and Color Dreams' processes, while different from one another, have managed to get around the hurdle. (Both companies refuse at this point to divulge how they've accomplished it.)

Aside from the lock-out chip, there are a number of ways that Color Dreams has made its development more exciting. Firstly, it is making programs that push the NES hardware to operate at its maximum performance. For example, the NES has built-in speech capabilities—though they aren't used often in current game cartridges, because the costs are measured in the sizable amounts of memory used to create quality vocals. For this reason, Color Dreams is looking at optimizing technology, to allow better speech synthesis without using large chunks of memory.

It also intends to sell cartridges for about \$10 less than Nintendo-approved cartridges—which translates to store prices in the range of \$19.95 to \$29.95. This plan will bring about higher quality software at a lower cost; a competitive situation that will pressure Nintendo and its third-party licensees into working harder.

The most exciting development will come about in the future though. Af-

ter the Color Dreams name is better known to U.S. consumers, it will attempt to take the concept a step further by adding a faster processor—basically, another computer—to the cartridge circuit board. The majority of the calculations necessary to create more colorful images and better detail in the pictures and sound can be done in this more efficient processor, instead of relying on the slower NES hardware. This simplifies the programming of software with constantly changing, "bit mapped" graphics, like point-of-view adventures and flight simulators, bringing further realism to video games.

While the added chips will make the cartridges more expensive, the extra



*Captain Comic* is based on a popular shareware game on the IBM PC.



The key to Color Dreams' development system is a circuit board that connects an IBM PC to the NES's cartridge slot.

cost will likely be offset by cartridges with multiple games inside them. The end result will bring an increase in the use of digitized sound and graphics, less flickering and more color—in other words, software rivaling higher quality game consoles, if Color Dreams has its way. For example, instead of the palette that the NES allows now—approximately 50 to 60 colors, with the ability to put about 25 on the screen simultaneously—Color Dreams is planning to give programmers and artists 1,000 colors to choose from, with the ability of approximately 325 on screen at the same time.

What makes this news so amazing is that the company only started its NES-software development in January, 1989, involving many 12- to 15-hour workdays in an effort to quickly complete games that are ready for market. And by the time you read this, an introduction of some of its products will have been made at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago. At this time, 15 games are being worked on. Here's a peek at some of the titles being developed (though these are only working titles and may change before they hit the market):

**Outpost**—This multilevel game has you battling terrorists on a space station, while searching for the parts that are missing from your damaged ship's turbine. It mixes arcade and adventure action by having the player switch between light-gun and control-pad segments.

**Captain Comic**—Based on a popular PC shareware game, this adventure takes the lead character through varying scenes, in search of treasures, all the while avoiding persistent adversaries.

**Code Blue**—Everyone hates traffic; until now, that is. As an ambulance driver you have to make it to each emergency, doing whatever you must to get there quickly: cruising on the sidewalk, going through red lights, motoring on the wrong side of the street, finding shortcuts and more.

**Pegasus**—You are the mythical flying horse, taking flight against witches, warriors and dragons in medieval times.

**Warbotics**—As a robot, you can transform yourself into five different forms, and use seven kinds of weapon. You'll battle a slew of enemies over flatland and rough terrain.

**Atlantis**—You're forced to travel through the fictional land, which is wracked with the effects of earthquakes, volcano eruptions and turmoil.

All of the people we spoke to about the Color Dreams project expressed the same opinion: They are interested in bringing video-game programming back "home," because they feel that American programmers are better than their Japanese counterparts. (Currently, much of the development of software for video-game consoles, even if it is conceived in America, is farmed out to Japanese game-development houses.) Dan Lawton, the technical ad-

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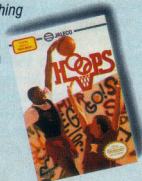
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visor for Color Dreams, feels that video-game companies have gotten lazy, and that this project will push the whole industry to strive for better quality.

To help them in the quest for quality, Lawton has created a development system that turns an IBM PC into a programming workstation for the NES. A circuit board was designed, which plugs into the NES cartridge slot at one end and connects to the serial port of the PC at the other. With that in place, booting up their development software on the PC gives you the tools in modular form—a drawing program, a digitizer, a music and sound program, as well as a generic cross-assembler (for writing the code) and a custom linker to put it into a form that the NES will understand. If you want to test a routine you've written, you can run it from the development program and watch the effects on the monitor hooked to the NES. You also have every ability to halt execution to make corrections.

Having a development process like this allows the quick passing of works-in-progress between programmers, artists and project managers because programs are disk-based, with no need to "burn" test chips. To make it more efficient, Color Dreams has set up a bulletin-board system for instantaneous transfer of program files, as well as to provide to all involved the ability to pass messages, queries and assistance to each other quickly. This freedom has enabled Color Dreams to hire artists and programmers with no consideration for geography. For instance, aside from those in California, there are people as far away as Massachusetts and New York working on the project.

The project mixes the kind of innovation and youthful zest that was found in the first generation of video-game development back in the late '70s. Two programmers I spoke with, Eric Margolis and Jeff Williams II, who are working on the *Outpost* game, are hopeful that this will give them their big break into the lucrative world of cartridge-based software. Even though they are in their early 20s, they've logged experience with Miles Computing, known for *Harrier Strike Mission* and *Fool's Errand*.

They demonstrated the capabilities of Lawton's development system, but also noted that the process is still in

transition. Lawton provided the source code, which gives people on the project the freedom to make enhancements or corrections that will help the process go smoother. Williams called the work that Lawton has done on this project "genius," but certainly the short time frame has given the team members little opportunity to *polish* all the tools. Again referring back to the first days of video gaming, the Color Dreams project could be seen as a neat "hack."

Aside from the engineering side of the project, Color Dreams is going to license the process to other prospective software producers, in the same sense that Nintendo does with its third-party licensees. What this does is open up the pool to more programmers and artists for development of new games.

The most ambitious undertaking, though, is the development of a library of programming routines, that make the game development go much smoother. Not only that, but it gives nonprogrammers the capability of creating games by typing together these routines as simply as stacking building blocks. Eventually it could let the player create his or her own games, a concept that was only touched on in games like the *Pinball Construction Set* (Electronic Arts for computers), *Lode Runner* (Broderbund for computers and NES) and *Penguin Land* (Sega for the SMS).

It's possible, as we saw in the first generation of video games, that a new series of software products will be developed in garage-based programming houses—a change from the current situation. Whether this will bring about a glut of cartridges, similar to the one that caused the Video-Game Crash of 1984, is anyone's guess. The consumer is looking for high quality, and the developments that Color Dreams has brought to light will be a checkmark in the plus column.

Obviously Color Dreams is looking at the big picture, with this initial project being just the starting point. Though Sega has produced four megabit cartridges recently, Color Dreams is looking at eight meg as a possibility, which will bring about expansive adventures and detailed arcade games, with an emphasis on stunning sound and graphics.

Yes, sir, this next year ought to be an interesting one. ♪

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## Reviews

### Blades of Steel

Konami

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$39.99)

When I first heard of this video game coming out for the NES by Konami, I assumed that *Blades of Steel* was some sort of medieval adventure game since I had not seen a picture of the actual game, only read of its name. Well, it turns out that *Blades of Steel* is really an arcade hockey game designed by the same folks who brought you last year's immensely successful *Double Dribble*.

From the opening title screen, which shows a shining logo, a voice proclaiming the Game Pak's title and the digitized sound of metal clashing, you immediately experience the anticipation that you're about to play something unique. It's an anticipation that isn't disappointed.

*Blades of Steel* can be played by one or two players. In one-player mode, you can pick between "Exhibition" or "Tournament" play. In Tournament, you'll be challenging computerized teams for the Konami Cup. Two players each choose from a list of eight cities—Canadian and American—to represent on the ice.



In *Blades of Steel*, fighting is an integral part of the game and helps to determine possession on many rushes up the ice.

The game starts off with a face-off. The referee drops the puck, and the team that first gets control of it puts the other team on the defensive. Although the computer automatically switches to the player nearest to the puck, you can select control among your five players. And you're also responsible for manipulating your own goalie. Playing this game can sure put a strain on your thumb.

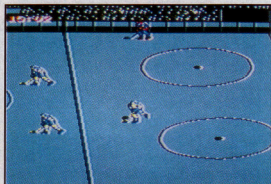
What sets this video version of hockey apart from others are its fight and penalty/overtime scenes. A fight will usually break out when you have one of your players continually check or slash an opponent. Unless the referee breaks up the confrontation—most of the time he wisely chooses not to—the game switches over to a fight screen. The opposing players throw their hockey mitts aside and begin duking it out as the crowd in the stands cheers. This is one fight that you can't let your player lose; the loser goes to the penalty

box, giving the other team a power play.

If, by some chance, the referee *does* stop the fight in time, the penalty/overtime scene comes up—a direct view of the hockey goal. Here, the slapshooter must shoot the puck into the goal while the goalie tries to block it.

As in *Double Dribble*, the hockey players in *Blades of Steel* are realistically illustrated and smoothly animated. Their movements as they speedskate about the arena emulate what you would see in a real hockey match.

The speed, excitement and strategy of real hockey is apparent in Konami's *Blades of Steel*, one of the finest NES sports games.



A variation of the familiar soundtrack from *Double Dribble* is played here. Fans of that game will also recognize the referee's whistle, but there are plenty of other sound effects in *Blades of Steel*: the clap of the slapshot, the hockey players' skates scuffing on the ice, and who can forget mentioning the digitized voices shouting "Face-off," "Fight" and "Pass it?"

I know this will sound canned, but *Blades of Steel* is the best electronic hockey game there is—for a video game or computer system. Personally, I like this one better than any other NES sports Game Pak. There's no doubt about it: last year's *Double Dribble* was the sports video game on the NES; this year it'll be *Blades of Steel*.

—Howard H. Wen

Konami, Inc., 815 Mittel Drive  
Wood Dale, IL 60191, (312) 595-1443

## Anticipation

Nintendo

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$39.95)

Amidst the hype surrounding the arrival of their long-awaited *Super Mario 2* and *Adventures of Link* cartridges, Nintendo has found the time to quietly release one of the most unique games available for the NES. The basic concept of *Anticipation* is similar to that of a certain popular TV game show: players try to be the first to guess what is being drawn on the screen. In

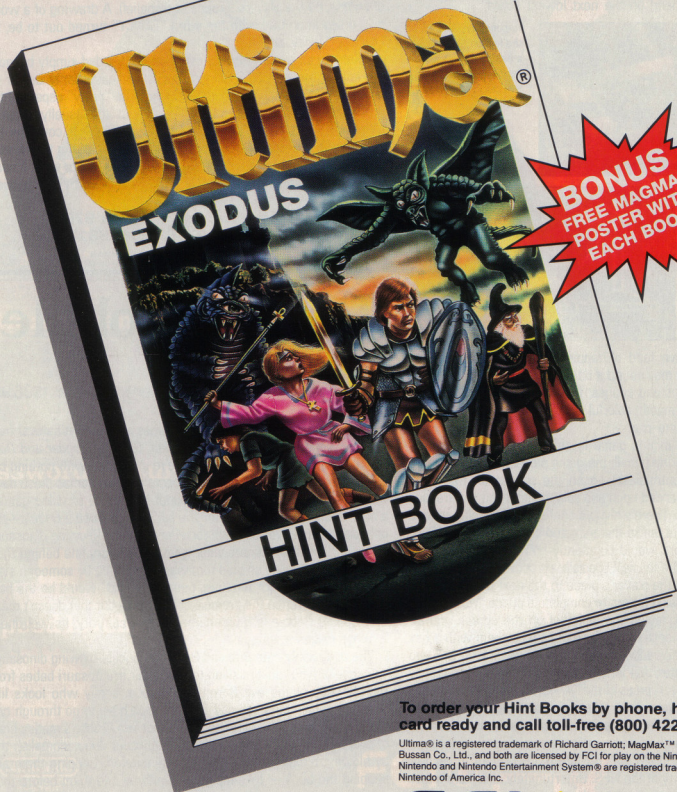


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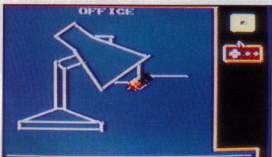
this case, the computer is the designated sketcher, connecting the on-screen dots to reveal a puzzle in the category identified at the top of the screen. For example, a puzzle in the "Travel" category may reveal itself to be a car, a ship or even a tractor. As the game progresses into higher levels of difficulty, fewer or no dots are displayed and the name of the category may also be hidden from view.

*Anticipation* takes the time-honored format of a board game, with the players represented on the screen as game pieces. Contestants may compete against each other or against computer-controlled opponents. There are as many as four different playing surfaces, which the players reach by solving one puzzle in each of the four color groups on each board. Higher-level boards feature special squares: colorless "feature squares" (which allow you to fly around the board, stopping on the space of your choice) and "drop-out squares." The latter are actually gaps in the board's surface; if you land on one, you fall through and land on the next lowest board.



Helping dismiss the concept that the NES is aimed at children, *Anticipation* can be enjoyed by players of all ages.

*Anticipation* is one of the few NES cartridges meant to be played by a party of gamers, though two can compete just as easily.



Now if you've grown fond of zapping Octoroks and stomping Koopa-Troops, all this may sound a bit dry. *Anticipation* has its fair share of flashy graphics and sounds, though. In fact, you may find the catchy music and smooth, colorful animation to be more interesting than the basic game play.

Virtually everything in this game is animated; the pictures are drawn by a huge, hovering pencil; the game pieces hop around with seemingly unbridled enthusiasm—even the spaces on the game board spring up when landed upon and spin towards you to introduce the drawing sequence. There's always something bouncing up and down on the screen, not unlike the animated cartoons of the 1930's, in which the characters would constantly bob their heads or tap their feet in time with the music. Especially attractive are the "energy beams" which levitate the player's piece to the next board, and the unique method of choosing letters to complete a puzzle. Most games accomplish this by displaying the alphabet on the screen and allowing the player to choose letters by highlighting them with a box or a brighter color. *Anticipation* uses a small arrow as a cursor, and as it rests beneath a letter, that letter bobs up and down like a greedy kid on Santa Claus' knee. A press of the "A" button causes the chosen letter to leap from the line-up to take its place beneath the puzzle. "I warned you," chides the computer, if your guess is incorrect.

The overall appearance of *Anticipation* is one of professionalism; it's obvious that the program was not written overnight to cash in on the current popularity of the NES. Unfortunately, there are a few minor deficiencies to consider. Intended to be a "party game," *Anticipation* allows up to four players to compete simultaneously, in which case the two NES controllers must be shared. This is not a real problem until the drawing sequence, while the computer is

waiting for a signal from a player who thinks he or she can solve the puzzle. At this time, the two people who must share a single controller are entitled to one-half of that controller, and they must sit practically cheek-to-cheek in order to keep their fingers poised over the appropriate buttons. Of course, this may or may not be an issue, depending on how well you know (or would like to know) the person you're sharing the controller with.

The other problem is with the pictures themselves. There's seems to be a lot of repetition, which is unfortunate if you're a new player competing against a veteran who has seen all the puzzles before. It just doesn't bode well for the game's longevity. Also, some of the puzzles are downright bizarre; certain pictures appear under the name of a seemingly unrelated category, which is misleading. A "Whatchamacallit" category, which seeks to illustrate certain well-known phrases and expressions, often yields ridiculous results (followed, of course, by the players' groans of disbelief). A drawing of a woman's dress imprinted with the word "FANCY" turned out to be, incredibly, "fancy dress!"

All criticism aside, *Anticipation* is recommended simply because it's one of the first NES games that is not necessarily easier for children than for adults. Adults can enjoy the "party" aspect of the game's competitive play mechanic without the usually superior reflexes and hand-eye coordination of the young. It could be the first step in encouraging consumers to stop dismissing the Nintendo Entertainment System as a "kid's toy" and to realize what it could be: an entertainment system for all ages. —Chris Bieniek

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## Bubble Bobble

Taito

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$36.99)

There are hardly any "cute" games anymore. Whatever happened to the days of *Pac-Man*, *Q\*Bert*, *Frogger* and *Donkey Kong*? It seems that we're inundated with nothing but commandos, karate men and killer robots in video games these days.

Just when I started worrying about the future of video games, a new Game Pak comes out for the NES called *Bubble Bobble*—the only video game I've seen that focuses on bubble-blowing dinosaurs.

As with virtually all cute video games, the story line behind *Bubble Bobble* reads like an idea that was thought up by someone staring at a TV screen for too long. I guess "weird" would be the best adjective to describe the premise of this one—but that doesn't mean that *Bubble Bobble* is a bad game. On the contrary, its weirdness is what makes it unique.

The undeniably cute Bub and Bob—the bubble-blowing dinosaurs, you see—are out on a mission to save their brontosauri babes from the clutches of the evil Baron von Blubba, a guy who looks like an albino whale on a bad day. Bub and Bob have to go through two worlds, containing 113 screens, and defeat von Blubba's motley crew of beastie buddies on every level. The dinosaur duo accomplish this by blowing bubbles at von Blubba's henchmen, trapping them and popping the bubbles by jumping or ramming into them before their enemies can escape. Bursting the bubbles with a beastie inside changes it to a piece of fruit or other prize that Bub or Bob can eat for extra points.

I don't expect any of the above to make much sense. But in the

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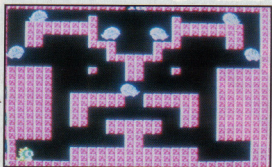
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computer-generated world of video games, nothing has to—nor should it. Video gaming is a surrealistic experience, and *Bubble Bobble* exploits this fact wonderfully. However, the bizarre nature of this game might turn off a number of NES addicts used to moving electronic Rambos on the television screen. Pity them.

But that doesn't mean that Bub and Bob don't have special



Taito's *Bubble Bobble* will keep your bubble-blowing dinosaur busy with over 226 different levels to get through.

weapons. On the contrary, they have a large assortment to choose from. Candy, parasols, treasure boxes, shoes and necklaces are just a few of the items possessing powers available for the dinosaurs to use against von Blubba's beasties. No, you won't find a machine gun or grenade here—but there is a bomb for those of you with a militaristic thirst to quench.

Not only is *Bubble Bobble* one of those NES games best played with two people, you almost *have* to play it in pairs in order to successfully finish it. This is not for the video-gaming loner but rather those looking for a simultaneous two-player challenge. If you're searching for such a game, then *Bubble Bobble* should fit your bill.

This video game's only setback is its musical soundtrack. Though there are many good sound effects that add to the overall game play, the same theme plays over and over again through all 226 screens, even when you pause it. After hearing the same tune being cranked out like a repeating music box, I turned off the TV's volume and listened to my Walkman while playing. I'll admit that this is more of a personal gripe, but, to tell the truth, I honestly couldn't find anything else to complain about.

Every once in a while, a new video game comes along that completely denies us critics the opportunity to trash it. *Bubble Bobble* is such a game; anybody who doesn't like it probably doesn't like video games in general.

—Christie Hewlett

Taito Software, Inc., 267 West Esplanade  
North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7M 1A5,  
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# Tetris

## Tengen

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$39)

At first glance *Tetris* looks like one dull game, but once you try it, you'll find it hard to put your game controller down. I've been hooked on this game ever since I saw it many months ago, becoming a hermit *Tetroid* in the process.

The game looks simple enough. You start with an empty bin into which drops one piece at a time. The pieces come in five geometric designs: a straight line, a T shape, a box, an L shape and a zig-zag, each made up of four small blocks. The L shape and zig-zag have a reverse image of each, so that in total there are really seven

different shapes.

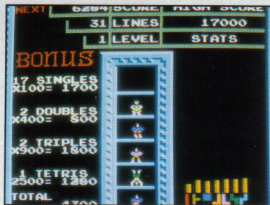
By rotating each piece into the best placement possible so it meshes with the pieces already in the bin, you try to complete rows. When a row is complete with no gaps across, it disappears. Clearing multiple rows with one-piece placement brings more points, with the ultimate being the elimination of four rows, called a "Tetris." As with similar strategy games, the action speeds up as you go along. It ends when, because of too many gaps, your bin fills up to the playfield.

In the one-player game, you use the left-hand portion of the screen, while the computer keeps track of how many of each piece you have received, displaying them on the right side. Other options let you play against the computer—which is surprisingly easy to beat—or against another player. The two-player game is the best way to go, with each player using one side of the screen; but a cooperative level allows two players (or one person and the computer) to team up on one big screen. The cooperative mode probably won't hold your interest very long: The computer is too slow as a partner, and a cooperative two-player game isn't nearly as fun as competing against one another.



*Tetris* looks so easy to beat, but the challenging puzzle-like game will drive you to play game after game.

Tengen's version of *Tetris* lacks colorful graphics, but adds nice touches like animated dancers and bonus intermissions that set it apart.



What this version of *Tetris* lacks are the detailed colored backgrounds that the home computer versions feature. What you gain instead are neat little intermissions with score bonuses—a big plus in my book—and little dancing Russian figures. The latter provide a little bit of atmosphere and authenticity, because the game was originally authored in Russia by a researcher and an 18-year-old programmer.

Tengen's version of *Tetris* has the best graphics of any home version of the game. The blocks are textured, which gives them some depth. The speed at which the blocks fall is also somewhat under your control, a feature not found in most of the computer versions. And the game allows you to select from four Soviet-type tunes, or none at all if you get distracted by video-game music. Starting at higher levels with an individual player handicap is also selectable.

If you are looking for something different and challenging, plus the rare ability to allow two players to compete simultaneously, then *Tetris* is for you. It's also a departure from the endless string of scrolling shoot 'em ups that are being released these days. Frankly,

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# Alex Kidd: The Lost Stars

Sega

For the Sega Master System (\$39.95)

It's always a risky venture to release a sequel to a popular game. Because of the success of the first version, people may expect too much from the second, and as a result be disappointed. It's especially risky to release a sequel that isn't even in the same genre as the original—as is the case with *Alex Kidd: The Lost Stars*. Where the original game, *Alex Kidd In Miracle World* was a careful mix of arcade and adventure, *The Lost Stars* is pure arcade.



Sega provides the player with solid arcade action in *Alex Kidd: The Lost Stars*, the latest installment in the Alex Kidd series.

This time around, Alex Kidd must recover the 12 stars that were stolen by an evil creature named Ziggurat. And it seems that this is not the first time that the stars have been stolen. Many years back, one of Alex's ancestors, Halifax Kidd, found himself faced with the same quest as Alex. Though Halifax managed to recover the lost stars, Ziggurat vowed to return and finish what he started. And so he does.

The lost stars are inside 12 Miracle Balls which have been hidden, two to a world. It's up to you, as Alex, to combat the many evil beasts that will try to stop him. Bonus tokens, some of which don't appear unless he jumps in just the right place, give Alex extra powers, such as high jump and shoot. There's also a bonus token that will add time to Alex's life meter. These time tokens are especially important because if Alex's clock runs out, he loses a life.

The graphics in *The Lost Stars* are interesting and original. One of my favorite animation sequences is a dog that spits out letters spelling "BOW WOW!". The letters, as well as the dog, are, of course, dead to Alex Kidd.

Although there are 12 levels of play in *The Lost Stars*, there are really only six different locations in which Alex can travel. When he finds the Miracle Ball in the sixth level, he begins over at the first location, but with a higher difficulty setting. This is one of the most disappointing aspects of the game, especially considering how many different locations there were in the original *Alex Kidd*. Players have the right to expect 12 unique worlds in which to play. Maybe

Sega has some lazy artists. Maybe the game's development was behind schedule and so a shortcut was taken. Who knows?

Another disappointment for the avid video gamer is the ease with which the player can finish the game. My five-year-old managed to play through all 12 levels with only a few days' practice. This is due to an unlimited "Continue" feature, an engineering flaw that seriously limits the game's longevity.

Alex is on the case to recover the 12 stars that have been stolen by the nasty Ziggurat, all the while combatting creatures galore on his quest.



In summary, *Alex Kidd: The Lost Stars*, although flawed, is a good arcade game with original and colorful graphics—a concept that the younger kids, particularly, will enjoy. However, the game may be a disappointment to fans of the original Alex Kidd adventure, who will expect (in the words of Monty Python) something completely different.

—Clayton Walnum

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# Othello

## Acclaim

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$39.95)

A minute to learn... a lifetime to master." That phrase does a good job of summing up *Othello*, a popular board game now available for your NES system. Most of you are probably already familiar with this Japanese game of high strategy, but if you're not, be prepared to be amazed at how complex a simple game can be.

I know that last sentence sounds like a contradiction, but it's not. You see, the rules for *Othello* are deceptively simple. Players take turns placing chips on the board, each move causing one or more of their opponent's chips to be flanked by two of their own. The flanked chips are then "flipped" to the flanking player's color. Game play couldn't be any simpler.

Once you get into *Othello*, however, you'll be amazed at how far-reaching a single move can be. One misplaced chip could set up the board for a coup by your opponent, with so many of your chips being flipped that the entire outlook of the game will change. On the other hand, the more of your opponent's chips on the board, the better your chances are of flanking large numbers of them with a single move.

Acclaim's translation of *Othello* allows one-player games against the computer or two-player games, human against human. Before a game begins, several options need to be selected, including a one- or two-player game, the length of the game in minutes and, in the one-player mode, the difficulty level. In the computer-vs.-human mode, you may also choose to play either black or white. Once the options have been selected, each player enters his name, and the match begins.

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Commodore Magazine's Best of 1988 Buyer's Guide

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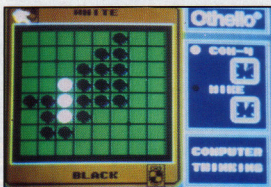
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The game's controls—an all-important element in the translation of a board game to a computer—are simple and easy to use. You move an on-screen hand to point to where you wish to place your piece, and, if the move is legal, the computer places the disk and flips any of your opponent's pieces that have been flanked. Should you attempt an illegal move, the game tells you to "Try again."



Acclaim has taken the tough board game of *Othello* and turned it into an equally enjoyable and challenging video-game cartridge for the NES.

The on-screen clocks display the amount of time each player has consumed. As soon as it becomes a player's turn, his clock begins advancing, with the time being accumulated over the entire length of the game. Should any player's clock run out, his opponent automatically wins.

The game ends when the board is filled with disks, when one of the clocks runs out or when neither player can make a legal move. At this time, the number of chips for each player are tallied and the winner's name displayed.

One handy feature included in this electronic version of *Othello* is the ability to cancel the last set of moves. In the case of a one-player game, selecting this option will cancel both yours and the computer's last moves, with no verification necessary. But in the two-player game, both players must agree to the cancellation.

Like chess, *Othello* is a game of pure strategy—there is no luck involved. But, unlike chess, *Othello*'s simplicity makes it perfect for the entire family. Though the strategies required to master this game are tough to learn, the game can be enjoyed by even a young child.

If you like strategy games, this one is recommended.

—Clayton Walnum

Acclaim Entertainment, Inc., 189 South Street  
Oyster Bay, NY 11771, (516) 922-2400

## Stealth A.T.F.

Activision

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$39.95)

Every so often, a game comes along that causes aching shoulders, bloodshot eyes, a broken joystick or two—and some satisfyingly high scores. *Stealth A.T.F.*, a remarkable new entry from Activision, is just such a game. If you like flying shoot 'em ups, my best recommendation would be to skip the rest of this review and run out to buy this one. You won't be disappointed.

*Stealth A.T.F.* puts you in command of a fighter plane in some of the world's hottest trouble spots. You have three kinds of weapons at your command: machine guns, missiles and "stealth," which makes you undetectable by radar and immune to the enemy's missiles.

The game is rather simple to play. You "throttle up" on the runway, then pick up speed. Your trip down the runway is viewed from the side, and at the proper time you pull back on the stick to lift off and raise your landing gear. The view then switches to the

cockpit.

This is where the real fun starts. Enemy planes come at you in pairs, firing at you with everything they have. Your mission is to shoot them all down. The first level has you facing four adversaries, which increase by two with every level. If you line up an enemy in your sighting cursor, an indicator will appear to notify you that the missile has "locked on." You can then launch a missile, and, if the enemy fighter doesn't do some real fancy flying, the missile will hit with a satisfying explosion.

Using the machine guns is quite a bit harder, but this is a skill you had better master. You need to line up your sighting cursor on the enemy planes and hit each one five times to down it. This is one place where *Stealth* imitates real life: The enemy doesn't just sit out there waiting to be shot down. On the contrary, they fly very well, and are extremely hard to hit. You need to anticipate their maneuvers and "lead" them with your shots. Further, some of the enemy pilots are more evasive than others, making them that much harder to blast.

Of course, the opponents don't just try to avoid your fire. They shoot back, especially if you encounter them head on, and each hit costs you 10% damage. Accumulate 100% damage and you lose one of your three planes. If a missile is detected, you get an audible warning as well as a panel indicator; but if you hear that warning, you'd best roll for all you are worth. The only way to avoid a missile is to outfly it.

Pressing the START button engages your stealth feature, but it also disables your own radar, so you can't see the enemy planes'



Get in your fighter plane, throw on your helmet and take off into the dangerous skies in Activision's *Stealth A.T.F.*

positions. The stealth feature can only be enabled for a limited time.

Strategy is so important in *Stealth A.T.F.* Just facing the enemy fighters head-on is a way to ensure very short games. You are rewarded with medals and promotions with each successfully completed level, and a score is calculated based on how many enemies were shot down with your guns. There is also a bonus for unused missiles and fuel.

The graphics, animation and sound in *Stealth A.T.F.* are "top flight." Each new locale has its own set of graphics, from the parched desert of the Middle East and Libya to the lush green fields of Europe to the snowbound hills of the Bering Straits. One battle even has you taking off from a carrier and fighting over water. The enemy fighters are highly detailed and the oncoming missiles—when you can see them—are extremely deadly, complete with a flaming tail streaming out behind. The game has a bouncy music track, which can be shut off in favor of engine noise, the stutter of machine guns and the "swish" of passing enemies.

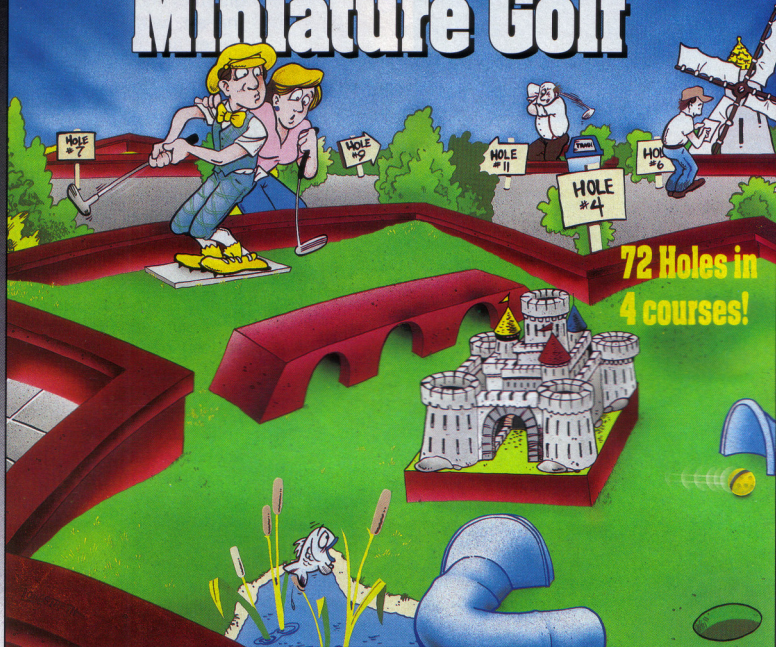
*Stealth A.T.F.* is an excellent game. It is highly playable and will keep you coming back again and again. It has been awhile since a game has drawn me in and kept me interested for as long as this one has. Combined with the superb graphics and high-speed animation, it represents a first-class gaming experience.

—David Plotkin

Activision, 3885 Bohannon Drive,  
Menlo Park, CA 94025; (415) 329-0500.



# Hole-In-One Miniature Golf



**72 Holes in  
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Hole-In-One Miniature Golf combines excellent sound, quality graphics and superior playability with realistic ball play to give you the best miniature golf game made!

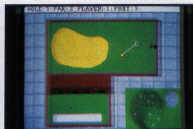
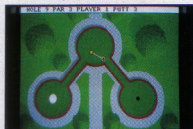
Utilizing the mouse (point and click) interface, DigTek Software has created a game that will challenge adults yet is so simple to play that children can play as easily as adults from the very first game (the joystick is supported as well). This game supports up to 4 players making it one of the few games that the entire family really can enjoy together.

Hole-In-One Miniature Golf is 72 Holes of pure fun in 4 separate courses that give you classic miniature golf as well as hilarious fantasy holes. The sounds of the crowd, the ball action, and special effects all add to the fun and realism.

*"An absolute gem of a game..."* — INFO MAGAZINE

*"Hole-In-One Miniature Golf... is absolutely fantastic!"*

— COMMODORE MAGAZINE



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Super Thunder Blade



Altered Beast



Space Harrier II

Sega has plans to convert many of their titles to this exciting system. As of this writing, we've played *Altered Beast*, *Super Thunder Blade* and *Space Harrier II* on the Genesis, though sources tell us that *Alex Kidd* and *Baseball* are upcoming. The graphics and sound are state of the art, with lots of digitized voices and realistic effects.

The brain of the Genesis is a 68000 microprocessor; a chip that can be found in such computers as the Atari ST, Amiga and Macintosh. This makes the Genesis a very powerful machine, with the ability to handle large amounts of calculations—a big help for creating smooth, detailed animation and flicker-free visuals—in a short period of time. In fact, there is also the possibility that Sega will offer add-on peripherals, such as a keyboard and disk drive.

There is room for further expansion, by way of ports on the circuit board. One of the first accessories that Sega plans to bring out for the Genesis will be a modem, which could conceivably allow two players to link their game systems over the phone. It wouldn't be too hard to imagine head-to-head combat in airplanes or on the baseball field without either player moving from their respective homes.

Next month, in the August issue of VG&CE, we'll bring you the full story on the Sega Genesis—when it will be available, how much it will cost and what games you can play on it, as well as the under-the-hood details that will make the Genesis a force to be reckoned with. We'll also feature a contest that will give you the chance to win one of the first Genesis game systems off the line! ♪

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# MASTERING

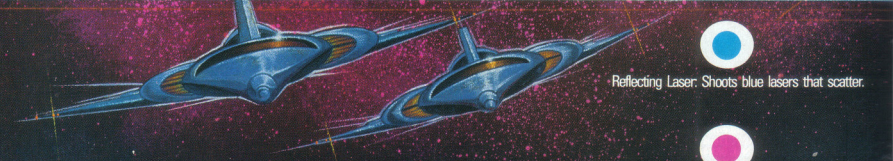
by Lee H. Pappas and Andy Eddy.

*R-Type* is a challenging space shoot 'em up that first appeared in the arcades. Although the Sega translation is the first to appear for game consoles, there also exists an Atari ST version from Europe and an arcade look-alike/play-alike for the PC Engine in Japan.

The game consists of eight levels. This issue we'll look at Levels 1 through 4, plus the hidden bonus round. Next month we'll finish our coverage with Levels 5 through 8.

Game play is similar to any number of scrolling space games, where your rate of movement forward is constant—you can't backtrack to sections already gone by—and you can freely move around the available screen area. If you have a Sega turbo controller, the game will be easier to get through, though you need to switch the turbo feature off to use the Laser Blaster.

Most games of this genre feature basic weaponry at the start, with the offering of "powerups" during battle; *R-Type* is no different. There are six types of power-up capsules available during the game:

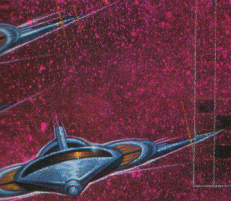
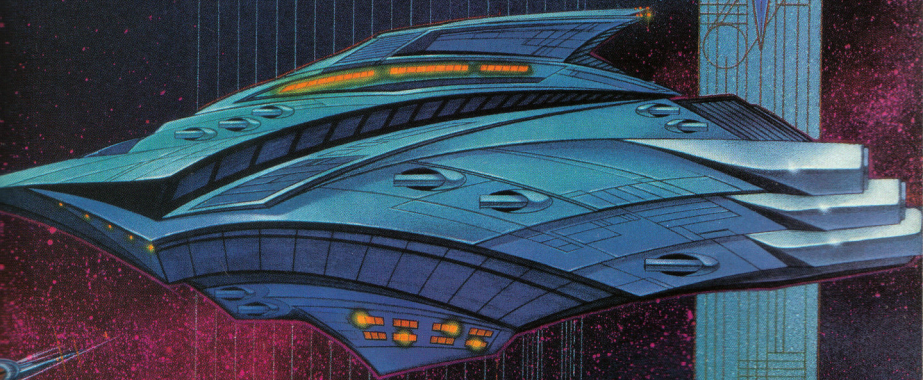


Reflecting Laser: Shoots blue lasers that scatter.



Anti-air Laser: Powerful beams that destroy anything in their path.

# R-TYPE



**Bit Unit:** Two shields that protect the top and bottom of R-9.



**Anti-land Laser:** Beams that travel along the top and bottom of the landscape until they strike a target.

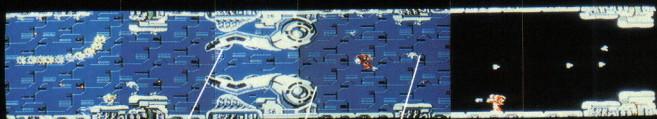
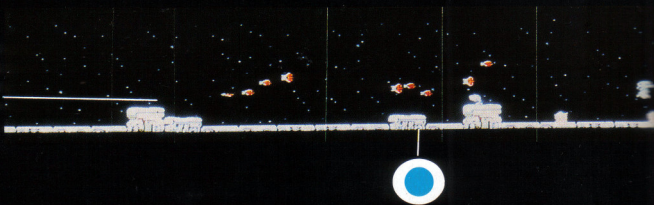


**Speed Unit:** Increases the speed of R-9 (your ship) for faster directional control.



**Twin Missile:** Missiles that automatically lock on a target.

This stage is vital for powering up! Here your R-9 spaceship acquires twin missiles, Bit 1 (top shield) and your Droid Unit. These will make getting through the game easier. If you miss any of these, you may want to start over.

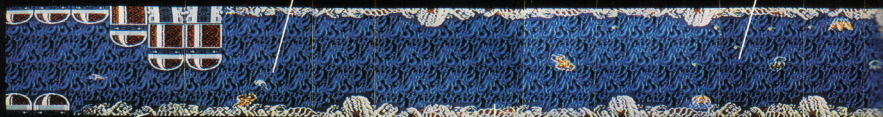


M



One of the toughest aspects of *R-Type* is maneuvering your ship without overcontrolling it. When you're moving your ship forward or backward, it's too easy to hit a solid, stationary object or wall.

S



Too many Speed Units will give your R-9 over-control, making it easier to slam into objects unintentionally. If you picked a Speed up in Level 1, think twice before you grab another one.

Flying with your Droid on the front of your R-9, until the end of this level, may help.

Don't get the Anti-air Laser Force Units because the Anti-ground Lasers are more effective.

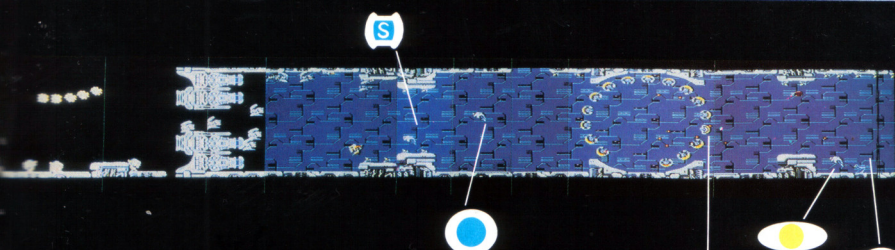


Get both Anti-land Laser Force Units. The first gives you the new weapon, while the second speeds it up.

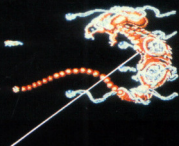
Knock out the engine first...

...then the bottom pod...

...and then finish off all the guns here.



Use your Laser Blaster to destroy the blue "eye."  
This will wipe out all of the gun turrets.



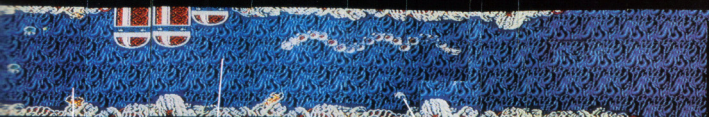
Fire the Droid into the spot where the head appears and keep firing. Whenever the head pops out use the Laser Blaster on it. You should be able to destroy the beast with only three or four Blaster shots.



The "Ring of Death" is one of the first stumbling blocks you'll reach in Level 1.



The creature at the end of Level 1 is not too hard to beat if you can avoid his slashing tail and energy blasts.

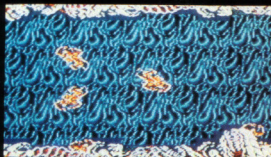


At this point reconnect your Droid in front if you flew separated. You *must* get the Reflecting Laser Force Units when they appear.

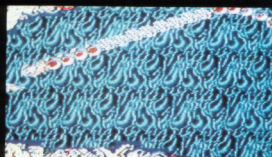


Position the R-9 here and continue to fire Lasers.

Pick up Lasers and destroy all the guns, then put your Droid in front. When the cylinder retracts, after the blue balls finish shooting out, go in and zap the eye when it appears.



With these strange creatures flying across your flight path, you'll have your hands full staying alive.



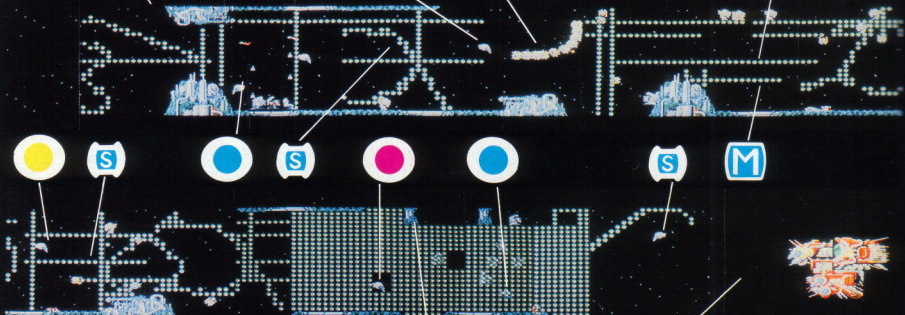
Not only will this snake slink its way around the screen, it will persistently send out missiles to blast your ship out of the game.

Put your troubles—and your Droid—behind you.

Keep your Droid in front...



...until you are here, then switch it behind.



Move your ship through the wall of dots, then back against this spot to get to the Bonus Level.

Stay to the right, then fire your Droid into Monpaira when it appears. Continue firing shots, using your Laser Blaster. There are three sections, each with an eye that must be hit. Dodge Monpaira's shots while you blast away with your Droid. The eyes are susceptible to your Laser Blaster when the enemy ship separates.



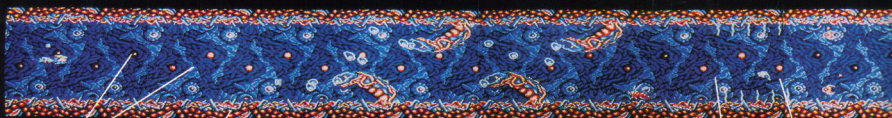
If you place your ship here, you'll not only finish this section off quickly, but you'll also be safe from the snake.



Level 4 is the hardest part of the game to successfully get through, particularly when these beasts leave trails all over the screen.

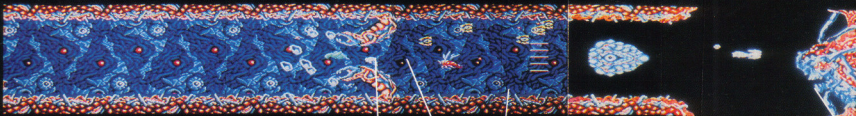


The key to finishing off these aliens is to focus your firing on the green lenses on each segment.



There are lots of Speed Units in this section, and it isn't too hard to get them unintentionally.

Watch out for the bugs that shoot out a fan of projectiles at you. With all that's going on, it's hard to avoid getting hit.



Aim your Laser Blaster and Anti-air Unit at the creature's mouth to destroy it.





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CIRCLE #122 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

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CIRCLE #124 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



### Gyruss

(Ultra for the NES)



Here's a tip that James Mora of Los Angeles, California, came up with. When you see the title screen, hit the following sequence to get 30 free ships: A, B, R, L, R, L, D, D, U, U. Timing is critical, so you may have to do it a couple of times before you get it right. Note that this is the opposite of the *Gradius/Contra/Life Force* hints we've printed previously. Nice find, James!



Starting with this issue, we're going to grade our tips on a scale of one to five joysticks. The more joysticks are colored in, the more valuable the hint!

Our search for Easter Eggs never ends, and you can make a few bucks by helping us! Just send your hints and tips to us at VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. ATTN: Easter Egg Hunt. The author of each new tip we use will receive \$10. Write neatly, and be sure to include your name and address!

Here's a key to the abbreviations

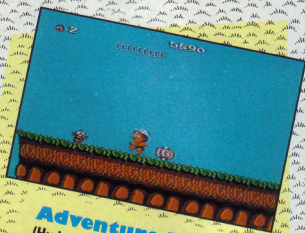
- |          |           |                |
|----------|-----------|----------------|
| U = Up   | L = Left  | A = "A" button |
| D = Down | R = Right | B = "B" button |

### Adventure Island

(Hudson Soft for the NES)



Peter Siamidis of Montreal, Quebec, Canada gave us a valuable continue tip for this tough scrolling game. If you jump right before the "G" sign at the end of Area 1 (see picture above), you'll find an egg with the Hudson bee in it. If you pick up the bee, you'll be able to continue unlimited times by hitting L and START when your game is over—actually, we discovered that if your controller is in any position other than center, the continue will work. You can only get the bee on your first game—hitting the reset button won't bring it back. Thanks to Peter for that hint.



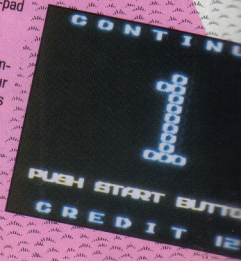
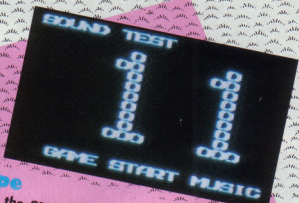
### R-Type

(Sega for the SMS)



To hear the different sounds used in the game, roll the directional controller counter-clockwise at the continue screen, which will bring up a sound-test screen, which will troller left or right will scroll through the console's index numbers. Hit the control-pad button to start the sound.

There is also a method of upping the number of continues you can have. When your game ends and the continue screen starts counting down, rotate the directional controller clockwise. You'll hear the sound of the counter increasing, and you'll receive up to 12 continues.

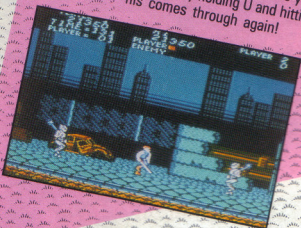


## Trojan

(Capcom for the NES)



Another Easter Egg from Dennis Lee from Union City, California, gives you the ability to continue by holding U and hitting START. Dennis comes through again!



## Shinobi

(Sega for the SMS)



We've received a hint from Bob Stell of Blue Springs, Missouri, which allows you to pick screen, hit D and the #2 button simultaneously, then pick your mission and screen numbers on the screen. That ought to help some players get to those hard-to-reach spots!

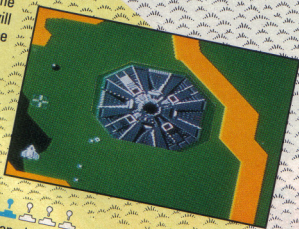


## Xevious

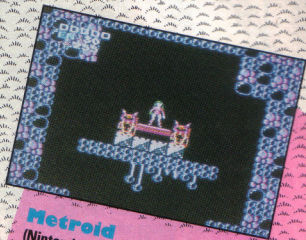
(Bandai for the NES)



Dan Johnson, of Oak Creek, Wisconsin, gives us a tip for getting an extra ship. Shortly after you reach the first set of spinning walls, you'll reach a lake. If you dump bombs into the lake, such as the location shown in the picture above, a flag with an "S" on it will appear. Flying over the flag will tack on a free ship! Good work, Dan!

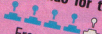


Dan also gave us a hint for getting past the initial Ando Ageanesis Floating Fortress in Xevious. If you wait until your ship stops moving forward, just before you reach the fortress, hit START to pause. Again hit START to continue the game, but instead of sticking around past the fortress, you'll be able to move to fight the fortress, you'll be able to move. Dan tells us to be careful, though, because it'll still pump out shots at you.



## Metroid

(Nintendo for the NES)



From Steve Bland of Sherherdsville, Kentucky, comes this tip to get all your weapons and turn Samus into a woman from the start. If you enter the password JUSTIN BAILEY and start the game, the strange transformation will occur. Thanks for that one, Steve.





TANTARI DESERT

RUTO TOWN

NORTH CASTLE

MIDORO PALACE

MORUGE SWAMP

MIDORO SWAMP

SARIA TOWN

DEATH MOUNTAIN

# Escapades in Hyrule

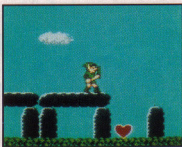
## A Player's Guide to *Zelda II*

by Clayton Walnum



**N**ever having played the original *Zelda* (okay, sue me), I can't tell you how *Zelda II: The Adventure of Link* stacks up to its predecessor. What I can tell you is that once I started in on *Zelda II*, Mario and Luigi themselves couldn't have dragged me away from my Nintendo Entertainment System. *Zelda II* isn't a game, it's an experience—with enough interesting locales, adventure and action to keep even the most jaded gamer glued to his control pad.

On top of that, *Zelda II* is one of the most challenging games I've come up against. For most people, it would be difficult—if not impossible—to solve the game without a little guidance and a few clues. That's why I, your



Many surprises are hidden throughout Hyrule. You must search everywhere.

humble VG&CE Master Gamer, chose to write this series of articles, even though it has proven to be one of the most difficult projects of my career.

How difficult has this project been? Let's put it this way: The photographic maps supplied here, along with the ones you'll be seeing in the next two issues, required so many screen snapshots that I bought stock in Kodak. I knew that, due to increased sales of their color film, the stock was bound to go through the ceiling.

But you're not interested in listening to me whine about how tough this article was to put together. You're here because you want to know how to get the best out of this sensational game. So let's get to it. (If you are, for some strange reason, interested in hearing me whine, give me your address, and I'll send you a tape.)

### Read This First!

Nothing will do, of course, but that we should begin one of these in-depth strategy guides with the usual warnings. And so, without further ado...

**Warning:** In order to provide a helpful and comprehensive player's guide, this article covers *Zelda II: The Adventure of Link* in great detail. Because they are not likely to remember many of the hints presented here, people who are using this article as a review to help them decide whether to buy this game, may look over the information here with little risk.

However, if you are currently playing *Zelda II*, we advise you not to read this entire guide right away. Prematurely reading too much of this article could adversely affect your gaming experience, because you may read secrets



The stone idol in each palace is watched over by a savage guardian.

that would be more fun to discover for yourself during actual game play.

Don't say we didn't warn you.

### The Beginning Link

The first hour or so you play *Zelda II* should be dedicated to increasing your new character's strength. This is important if you're to have any chance of beating the nasty creatures that'll be found lurking the hallways of Parapa Palace where you must place the first of six crystals in the stone statue. One way to increase your strength is to fight the beasts roaming the forests, plains and deserts of Hyrule. Another way is to discover the hidden treasure bags. If you're lucky, a defeated monster may drop a treasure bag, but this doesn't happen too often.

No matter how you get your experience points (and fighting is the only sure way, since there are just a few hidden treasure bags to find), you need to collect the number of experience points shown next to the word NEXT in the upper right of your screen. Once you reach that number, you'll be able to raise the level of your Attack, Magic or Life. This is absolutely necessary for survival.

But before you leap into battle, travel to the town of Rauru (don't ask me how to pronounce it; every time I try, I sound like a



Fairies will restore Link's life meter.

dog with a toothache) and get the magic shield. With it, you can cut by half the amount of damage done to you in battle.

Next run up to the southern edge of Tantara Desert, where you'll find a small clump of trees. Hidden there is a treasure bag that'll allow you immediately to raise your Life level by giving you a quick 50 experience points.

Now armed with your magic shield, you're ready to explore the countryside and fight the local meanies. As you fight, you'll begin to accumulate more experience points. But keep in mind that some of the creatures are worth more points than others, and if you want to gain experience levels as fast as possible, you should learn to defeat easily the higher value enemies and then search them out.

Don't forget that both towns, Rauru and Ruto, have places where you can be healed. If you keep your battles close to town, you run little risk of losing a life. When your life meter starts getting low, just go into town and



In each town, Link will find a wise man who will teach him a new skill.

get healed. Then it's back to battle. Once you get used to this system, you'll be able to increase your levels without losing a single life.

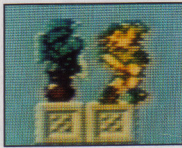
During your early explorations of northern Hyrule, do not enter any of the caves. Because you don't yet have the candle, the caves will be dark, and you won't be able to see the creatures that will attack. If you should ignore this advice, you will find your game quickly over.

### Your First Destination

Once you've done some exploration, it'll become obvious to you that you're not going to be able to get anywhere without the candle. All the pathways leading from northern Hyrule pass through dark caves that are loaded with meanies that have no difficulty seeing you, even though you can't see them.

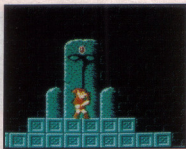
The candle can be found in the depths of Parapa Palace, located on the outer fringes of Parapa Desert. Luckily, even though the cave leading to Parapa Desert (in the upper-right corner of Hyrule) is dark, it contains only one enemy. It's easy to get through the cave and into Parapa Desert.

Here's a hint that'll help you get to the cave without first being attacked in the forest: As you know, monsters won't fight you when you're standing on a pathway. You can take advantage of this cowardice. Quickly step off the path into the forest and then back onto the path. The monsters will appear as soon as you step off the path. But by the time they get to you (if you're quick; you need to practice), you'll be out of harm's way. When the monsters go away, run through the woods to the cave. You should have plenty of time to get there. This technique will help you get



Some of the statues in the palaces hide surprises. Here Link has found a red magic jar.





At the end of each palace, Link must place a jewel in the forehead of a stone idol.

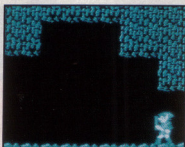
to Parapa Palace with as few hits as possible, and it will also be handy in later parts of the game, where it's critical that Link stay in good shape.

Once you're in Parapa Desert, don't head directly for the palace. Instead, take the path you'll find in the southeast corner of the desert. At the end of that path (you'll have to cross a nasty bridge first), you'll find a hidden grove wherein is hidden a heart container that'll lengthen your life line by one square. Obtaining this before entering Parapa Palace, will increase your chances of success in the palace.

### Parapa Palace at Last

Now you're ready to test your new skills against the mysteries of Parapa Palace. In that gloomy and dangerous place you must accomplish two tasks: Find the candle and place the first crystal in the stone statue. Of course, for the beginning player, that's much easier said than done. You're first going to have to learn how to fight the various monsters you'll run into there. But don't despair. If you have trouble with a particular creature, consult the creature list accompanying this article to get hints on the most effective way to combat your opponent.

And don't forget that you've got a magic shield. Learn to use it effectively, and your three lives will last a long time. Also remember to save your game each time you run out of lives. That way if someone happens to accidentally pull the plug on you, you won't lose everything you've worked so hard for. (And make sure to hold in the Reset key, as described in the manual, when turning off the game. Failure to do so could cause your saved game data to become corrupted.)



Without the candle, the caves are darkly treacherous.

To the beginning Link, Parapa Palace may seem large, but it is quite small when compared with the other palaces in *Zelda II*. This is a *huge* game, and you'll definitely need maps in order to help you plan your moves and to help you find your way through the long and confusing corridors. We've supplied maps to save you from drawing them yourself, but it'd be best not look at them until you really need to. It's much more enjoyable to explore the palaces and discover their secrets on your own.

### Using Magic

In order to play *Zelda II* well, you need to use your magic in the most effective manner possible. Rule one is to never waste even the smallest amount of magic. For example, as you fight the servants of Ganon, you will often be rewarded with magic jars that will restore part or all of your magic. (The red ones fill you up completely.) It's a natural reaction to snatch up a magic jar the instant it appears, especially when in the heat of battle—but don't! Finish your battle and then take a minute to think about the best way to use the jar. If your magic is low, then just grabbing the jar is okay (unless it's a red one), because it's unlikely that it will contain more magic than you actually need.

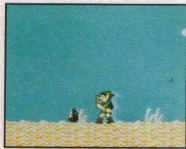
If you find yourself with a red magic jar, you should immediately cast every spell you can, even if you don't think you'll need them. Because the red magic jar will fill your magic completely, no matter how low it is, any spells you cast before grabbing it will be freebies. Why take a chance on not activating your magic shield when it'll cost you nothing to be safe? Sooner or later, this technique will pay off—I promise.

The same strategy applies when your magic is almost full and you find a blue magic jar. It's wasteful to grab more magic power than you can hold. Cast a spell first—then pick up the jar.

As you gain more magical abilities, it's important to know which spells work best in which situations. Sometimes you'll need a couple of different spells, but will have enough power to cast only one. In those cases, it's good to know which spell will give you the greatest advantage. If you pay close attention to the effects of the magic, selecting the right spell will become second nature.

### When Not to Place the Crystal

As you know, the last thing you must do to complete a palace is place the crystal in the stone statue. But don't be too quick to do this. Why? When you place the crystal into the statue, you get richly rewarded. For one thing, your Life and Magic lines are completely restored. But more importantly,



Red magic jars are precious to Link, as they will restore his magical abilities.

you're given whatever points you need to reach the next level of your Attack, Magic or Life.

Let's say that after defeating the statue's guardian, you've got 400 experience points, and you need 500 to reach the next level. Why replace the crystal and get a measly 100 points? It's much better (assuming you have enough lives left to do it) to leave the castle by the way you came in and get those 100 points by way of battle. Once you've attained that next level, you can go back into the palace and *then* place the crystal. Sure, you'll have to refight some of Ganon's minions there, but once the guardian is gone, he's gone forever (assuming you save your game, of course). If the last level you attained was at 500 points, then the next one will require 700 points. (They keep going up and up and up. . .) Even if, by the time you get back to the statue, you've racked up another 400 points, you're still much better off. Instead of gaining only 100 points, you can now get a quick 300! And remember that the further into the game you get, the more replacing the jewel is worth. Using the technique described above, you can gain thousands and thousands of experience points that you'd otherwise have to fight for.

### The Maps

This month we present maps of the first two palaces, as well as maps for the towns of Ruto, Rauru (somebody hear a dog?) and Saria. Some of the caves are mapped, as well, but only the ones that contain objects of unusual value. It would take too many magazine pages to map them all.

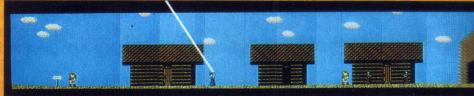
Next time, we'll provide you with maps for some of the other palaces, towns and caves—so stay tuned!



Dissolving bridges keep Link on the run.

Hint: "Use keys in the palaces they are found in."

RUTO TOWN



Hint: "Get candle in Parapa Palace. Go west."

You can get healed here.

Hint: "If all else fails, use fire."

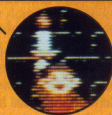
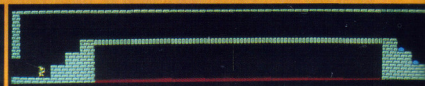
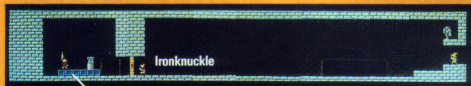
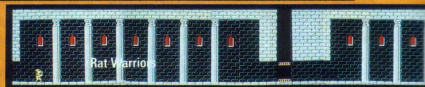
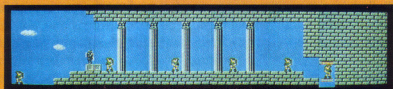


RAURU TOWN

A wise man in the cellar of this house will give you the magic shield.

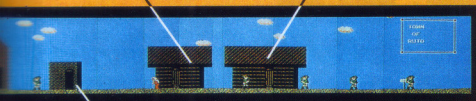


PARAPA PALACE



Your magic can be restored here.

Get your life restored here.



Error lives here.



Some of Ganon's followers are difficult to defeat.



Rat Warriors: These guys can be defeated easily by even the weakest Link. All you have to do is time your swing right.



Bouncing Faces: Contact with this strange object will not only take away some of Link's life, but also a portion of his magic ability. Without a high attack level, Bouncing Faces are hard to destroy. But a single hit with Link's sword will render it harmless for a second or two—enough time for Link to get out of the way.



Bago-Bago: These nasty flying fish can quickly wear down Link, because they come at him in quick succession, spitting rocks on the way. The rocks can be deflected by Link's shield, and a quick, low sword stroke will kill them. But they'll keep coming! Sometimes it's best to run.



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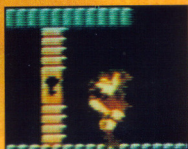


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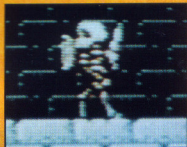
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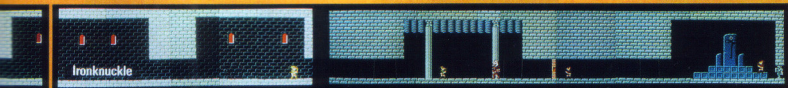
Bit Bot



Locked gates in the palaces require the right key.



Stalfos: Use your sword to swing at these skeletons' legs; they are so lousy with a shield, they won't even bother to protect themselves. However, just like many of Ganon's followers, the Stalfos comes in different types. Some of them leap about, forcing you to develop good dodging skills if you hope to survive.



Ironknuckle



Hint: "Master is in the woods N of river." (You need to ask the Bit Bot several times to wake him up.)



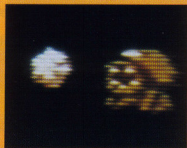
SARIA TOWN



To cross this bridge, you need to have a note from Bagu. You'll find him in the woods south of Midoro Swamp.

Your Life meter can be restored here.

THE CAVE NORTH OF MIDORO SWAMP

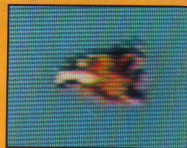
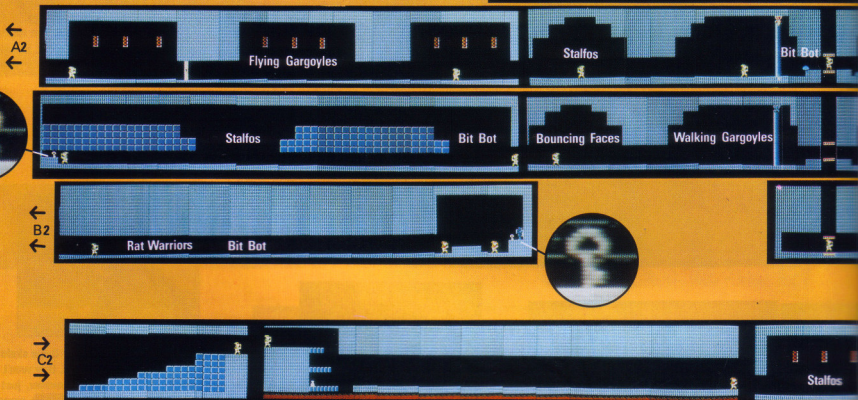
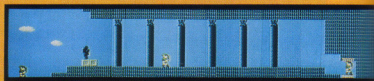


Octorok: Ever hear of a ground octopus? Well, you have now. Octoroks like to jump up and down and spit rocks while they're doing it. They're relatively easy to defeat, though—as long as you keep deflecting their rocks with your shield.



Strange creatures roam the countryside and palaces of Hyrule.

MIDORO PALACE



Moby: A fast-flying bird, these creatures drop from the sky and streak toward Link with deadly accuracy. The trick is to time your sword swings carefully. It doesn't take much to kill them, but you have to be fast. To make matters worse, these nasties like to appear while you are engaged in battle with other enemies.



Walking Gargoyles: These rock spitters are fairly easy to beat, but blocking their rocks can be tricky. Link's shield is effective, but sometimes you'll find one of these things both in front of and behind you. Which way to turn? In this case, jumping over the shots can be effective.



Bit Bot: By far the most common creature in Hyrule, these jelly-like organisms are easy to kill by swinging low with your sword. They come in two varieties: red and blue. The red ones don't move much, but the blue ones like to leap about, and so are more dangerous.

THE CAVE IN TANTARI DESERT



Get your magic meter filled up here.

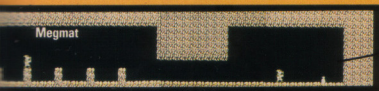


Look around, you'll find the mirror here.

Return this lady's mirror, and you'll be able to get a valuable Life spell from the wise man in her cellar.



**Red Ache:** These red bats swoop down and change into fire-breathing demons—a most unpleasant surprise. But, if you can hit them, they're easy to beat with your sword.



**Blue Ache:** The rapid swooping of these cave-dwelling bats make them difficult targets. Luckily, they cause only minimal damage to Link. One hit with a sword is usually all it takes to dispatch them—but hitting them is the hard part.



**Flying Gargoyles:** Apparently under some sort of spell, these stone gargoyles swoop up and down in groups, making them difficult to avoid. Just like the Bouncing Faces, it takes an extremely high attack level to destroy them, but a hit with Link's sword will freeze them in place for a second.



**Hammer Thrower:** This savage-looking beast likes to throw chain hammers—and not just one at a time, either! The trick is to get in close, so that the chain hammers go over your head. Then, as long as you don't let the Hammer Thrower jump on you, you should be able to take him down with a few swipes of your sword.



**Goriya:** These creatures look like walking wolves. They attack using boomerangs that, though they will bounce off Link's shield, are difficult to avoid. You must get in close and dispatch the Goriya with your sword. Try to block as many of his boomerangs as you can, but you're bound to take a couple of hits.

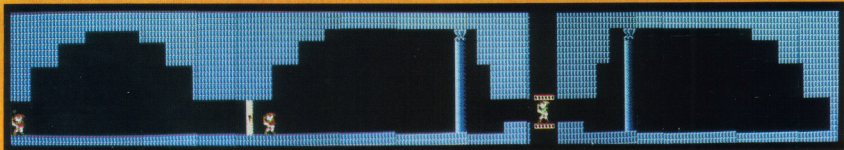
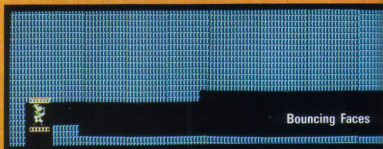
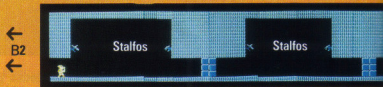
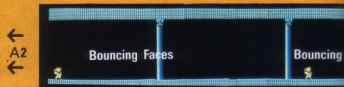


**Ironnuckle:** These knights come in several different types, some harder to defeat than others. The best way to handle them is to stand in one place, and when he approaches, jump straight up, swinging at his helmet on your way down. If you get the rhythm just right, you'll be able to stay out of reach of his sword, which is important because Ironnuckle can do a great deal of damage with it.



**Deeler:** You'll find these creatures in the forests of Hyrule, where they'll move up and down from the trees. It takes a well-timed sword blow to take them out, so you'll have to practice. Deelers, like Bit Bots, come in both red and blue varieties, the first of which will stay attached to its thread. The blue ones, however, will drop to the ground and leap about, making it difficult to defeat. You'll want to kill the blue Deelers before they manage to leave their threads.

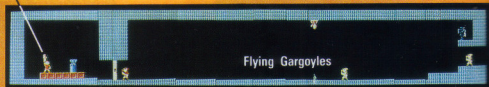
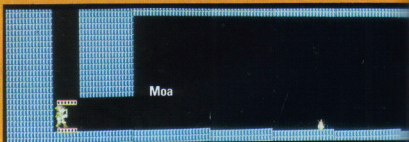
**Geldarm:** These worm-like creatures live in the desert, where they come up from the ground to block Link's way. To kill them, kneel down and swing your sword at the base of the creature. With your first hit the Geldarm will start to go back into the ground. When its head is level with you, you can kill it easily with a couple of swings. Geldarms aren't dangerous as long as you don't touch them, but it's a little tricky staying out of the way of the desert's flying rocks while you're fighting them.



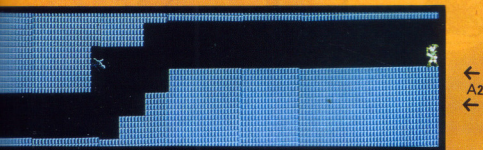
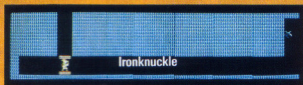
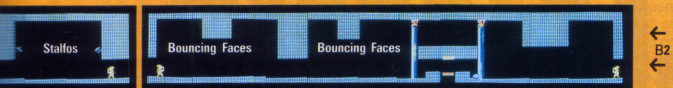
#### Defeating Horsehead

Deep in the dusty corridors of Parapa Palace, you'll come upon the first of the guardians, Horsehead. If you don't know his weak spot, he can be difficult to defeat, but with the tricks you'll read here, he'll be putty in your hands.

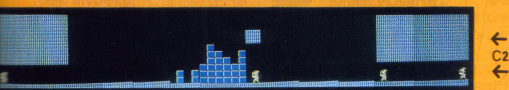
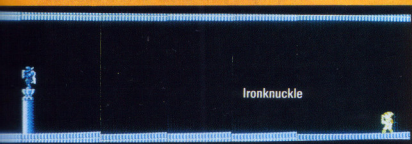
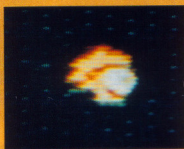
When Horsehead first attacks, move all the way to the left-hand side of the screen. As he approaches, leap upward (that's *upward*, not forward) and slash at his head with your sword. You'll soon discover that you have a far greater reach than he does, and by continuing your leaping and swinging, you'll be able to do him great damage while at the same time you stay out of reach of his club.



**Megmat:** Though they look like cats with bibs (they really do), Megmats are actually fast-moving and -bouncing rats. They usually attack in groups and move so quickly, they're difficult to hit. The only trick here is practice, practice, practice.



**Moa:** As if an octopus that lives above ground isn't enough, now we've got flying eyeballs. The Moa can be extremely dangerous due to its unpredictable and swift flying. Some forms of this creature are invisible unless you happen to have a cross and other forms like to drop fire on Link. It takes a skillful swordsman to defeat these servants of Ganon. Frequently, it's best just to run away.



**Molblin:** These beasts, which look like a cross between a bulldog and a bear, attack with spears that, depending on your level of play, may be thrown or jabbed with. A couple of cuts with your sword is all it takes to defeat Molblins, but watch out for that spear. If the Molblin is throwing his spears, you're best bet is to move up close to him as fast as possible. His spears will bounce off your shield, and you'll be able to get in some good swings.



**Lower:** This beetle seems slow moving at first, but as soon as you step in its path, it'll turn and quickly attack. Swing fast and low with your sword, and you'll have no trouble with this guy.



#### Defeating Helmethead

You'll find Helmethead hiding out in the hallways of Midoro Palace. He's much more difficult to defeat than Horsehead, but once again, if you know the tricks, the task will be much easier.

When Helmethead attacks, he not only swings his sword, but also throws fireballs. If you're good enough, you can block the fireballs with your shield, but you'll need more tricks than that to defeat this guardian.

He's called Helmethead because he wears two helmets, both of which have to be knocked off before you can do him any damage. To knock off the helmets, jump up and hit them with your sword. When you've knocked both of them off, his bare head will be exposed, and you can use the same moves to destroy him. Be aware, however, that each of the helmets you knock off will continue throwing fireballs. Make sure you have your magic shield activated and keep an eye on your Life meter. It'll be tough to defeat Helmethead without taking at least some damage.

# ELECTRONIC



## Action Games for Armchair Managers

by Arnie Katz and Bill Kunkel



**B**aseball is more than just America's national pastime, it is one of our country's obsessions. There is no town so isolated, no habitation so cut off from society, that the news of diamond deeds does not penetrate. As many people recognize Orel Hershiser as recognize President Bush.

The computer- and video-game field feeds baseball mania with an awesome array of action, action-strategy and simulation titles. It is an understatement to say that there is an electronic baseball game for every fan from once-a-year World Series rooters to diamond disciples. Actually, there are closer to half a dozen alternatives to suit every degree of interest and expertise.

Every designer has his or her own ideas about how to translate baseball to the gaming screen. Two basic approaches have captured most of the audience: arcade and statistical replay.

In arcade baseball contests, the player directly controls the on-field athletes with the joystick, mouse or keyboard. The timing of the hitter's swing, the jump a runner gets after a batted ball and the fielder's catching and throwing are based on the speed and timing of the user's orders.

At the other extreme of the sports-gaming spectrum is the statistical replay. This utilizes a mathematical model to reproduce the real-life performances of individual ball players. It is common for publishers of such games to issue annual disks with a complete set of major leaguers based on the previous actual season.

The gamer functions as the manager/general manager in stat-replay games. Once the roster is filled, the batting order set and the designated pitcher takes the mound, the computer administers the result of each interaction based on the abilities of the players involved.

Theoretically, season replays that use the same personnel in the same manner as in the corresponding real game should yield individual and team statistics more or less identical to the actual totals and percentages. This almost never happens because few armchair managers are content to ape the strategy of their favorite team's pilot.

The first statistical-replay computer games were noble failures. Limited memory made it impossible to incorporate enough variables in the statistical base or provide attractive

audiovisuals. That has all changed now. Today's stat simulations look and sound as good as arcade games.

### In the Beginning . . .

The first electronic baseball games, like the coin-ops that preceded them, were light on strategy and heavy on manual dexterity. In *Baseball* (Atari 2600), *Major League Baseball* (Intellivision) and *Baseball* (Odyssey2), the joystick controls athletes that are no more than human-shaped cursors.

Scott Orr, the father of action-strategy sports, lifted real-time baseball to a new level with *Starleague Baseball* (Gamestar for all systems). For the first time, all of the on-screen ball players did not have identical abilities. Some hitters slug homers, while others make better contact. Similarly, *Starleague* presented moundsmen



Earl Weaver goes head to head with the game that carries his name, *Earl Weaver Baseball*.

with different assortments of pitches.

*Starleague Baseball* was the first of a series of Orr-inspired, action-strategy titles. It was succeeded in 1986 by *Championship Baseball* (Gamestar for all systems). Its vertically divided screen presents two views of the action: a close-up of the batter/pitcher confrontation and an overview of the diamond. Although this title is no longer in active production, it may still be available in some stores, and represents an excellent software value.

### All-Star Action

The reigning world-champion, action-computer baseball game is *Hardball* (Accolade for all systems). Although *Hardball* has some artificial intelligence, its outstanding action kept it near the top of the best-seller list for more than three years after publication.

*Hardball* employs multiple windows to track the progress of plays. Prior to each pitch, the screen depicts the hit-

ter/hurler showdown from behind the mound. A small window in a lower corner has a simple overhead drawing of the diamond. When the bat meets the ball, the main display shows the appropriate half of the field as it would be seen by the catcher.

Full statistics are provided for every name on the two-team rosters provided with *Hardball*, though all the athletes are imaginary. The stats slightly influence performance, but the numbers are secondary to the gamer's joystick skill.

In *Hardball*, the pitcher picks the type and location of each delivery. At bat, the player decides which part of the plate to protect and when to trigger the swing. This fine control of the action is responsible for making *Hardball* the choice of those who want uncompromising arcade-action baseball.

*Pete Rose Pennant Fever* (Gamestar for Commodore 64 and IBM PC), the latest descendant in this royal line, follows play from multiple angles like a television broadcast. It gives this one- or two-player contest a uniquely realistic look, yet the constantly shifting point of view can also disorient managers.

*PRPF* rates authentic major-league players in numerous skill areas. For example, each pitcher possesses a different combination of speed, stamina and control. Position players are judged in batting, running, fielding and throwing.

League play is an important feature of the game. The system allows the computerist to take an expansion franchise and build it up into a pennant winner. Of course, it is also possible to play one game against either a life opponent or the robot manager.

The critical jury is still out on this title. Some think it represents the ultimate in artificial-intelligence-assisted, arcade baseball. Skeptics claim that it is burdened with too many numbers for what is, fundamentally, an action contest. Those who want an eye-appealing action program with familiar player names and a league format should definitely try a session of *PRPF*.

*Sporting News Baseball* (Epyx for Commodore 64), like *PRPF*, has real names, a league play mode and plenty of statistics of debatable impact on play. *SNB* can be enjoyed as a totally computerized simulation, a showdown between two human gamers or solitaire against the machine. The program relies heavily on the stats in the all-

computer mode, but gaming skill is the main factor in any contest that involves a human participant.

The game disk includes all 26 major league teams and a roster of all-time greats. Prospective general managers can trade players and set up draft leagues. *Hardball* scholars can study actual big-league trades by comparing the performance of the affected team with and without the deal.

The crowded main screen shows the plate umpire's view of the batter and pitcher. Large boxes on the left present the ball-and-strike count and the current number of outs. A line score runs across the top of the screen, and information about the batter and pitcher fills windows on the right. If the ball is hit, the appropriate infield or outfield screen, which shows a portion of the field as it might look to someone sitting in the upper deck, replaces the batter/pitcher screen.

*SNB* is better for casual fans, than serious students of the national pastime. Its easy-to-play system lets action fans put familiar names through realistic paces without forcing them to learn all the intricacies of a full simulation.

### The Video Diamond

The Japanese play baseball better than any country in the world except the United States. Unfortunately, the quality gap between the two nations makes the Nipponese major leagues look like Double A to stateside fans. At this point, the gap between American-designed baseball games and those invented overseas is every bit as great.

This has hurt video baseball for the NES and Sega, all of which were designed in Japan. Although several titles are reasonably entertaining, sports video-game connoisseurs still await the



Electronic Arts' *Earl Weaver Baseball*, shown here on the Amiga, mixes arcade action with the strategic aspects of managing.

definitive baseball cartridge.

*Bases Loaded* (Jaleco for the NES) is a distinct improvement on most of the team-sports video games we've seen so far, including Nintendo's own *Baseball* cartridge. Like *Hardball*, it emphasizes the interaction between pitcher and batter. Unfortunately, *Bases Loaded* doesn't recreate the situation with as much depth and accuracy as Accolade's celebrated computer disk.

The main problem is that it is hard for the batter to judge the position of the ball relative to the plate. The horsehide is easy to follow as it leaves the pitcher's hand, but the depth of field collapses about halfway to the plate. The toss seems to hang briefly in mid-air before suddenly appearing in the catcher's glove. It is also hard to pick up the umpire's ball and strike calls, because his dark blue suit blends blue into the similarly colored background.



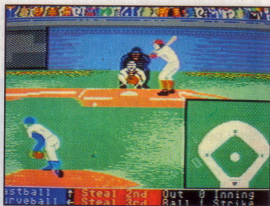
Inspired by *Starleague Baseball*, *Gamestar's Championship Baseball* provides a split-screen view of the diamond action; C-64 version shown.

Even the computer-controlled team strikes out far too often.

Once the ball is hit, the perspective shifts to an angled overhead view of the relevant portion of the field. The graphics are attractive in both modes. The individual player's animations are very realistic in some cases, such as the relays to the plate from the outfield.

Twelve teams composed of imaginary players, most with no stats or ratings, are available. Too bad there isn't a dime's worth of difference between any of them. The sole statistic provided for the user is the pitcher's ERA (earned run average), and its validity for an action game is certainly questionable.

*Bases Loaded* offers solid graphics, voice synthesis for audible ball and strike calls and a very intensive hitter/pitcher simulation. It could use a revision to eliminate many annoying



Accolade's *Hardball* has been on the best-seller's list for over three years because of the freedom it gives the armchair manager.

flaws, but it still delivers the best baseball action in the video-game field.

*R.B.I. Baseball* (Tengen for the NES) is the only baseball video game sanctioned by the Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA). This means that no other cartridge is authorized to use the real players' names and statistics. That ought to make *R.B.I. Baseball* more popular with young joystickers, but it doesn't have much effect on the course of play.

The graphics are cartoonish and block-like. Participants see the action from the home-plate umpire's perspective. Vertical windows at the sides of the screen monitor any base runners. Once the ball is hit, an overhead shot of the diamond fills the display.

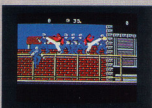
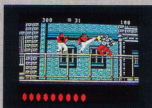
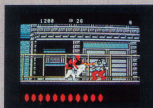
*R.B.I. Baseball* is almost pure action despite the simulation trappings. It covers most of the sport's vital elements, but it neglects the little touches that would make it seem much more like the real thing.

*Great Baseball* (Sega) is the only cartridge based on the national pastime for the Sega Master System. As in Bob Whitehead's *Hardball*, the gamer watches each play unfold as though he or she were standing next to the shortstop. A window shows the field from straight overhead.

*Great Baseball* is neither a pop-up nor a home run. It's an enjoyable, straightforward action game with no pretensions toward accurately replicating the major league environment.

*Major League Baseball* (Nintendo) was the first baseball cartridge released for the popular NES machine, and is authorized by MLB. In the strange world of licensing, this means that *Major League Baseball* can utilize the real team names, but not those of individual players. (That requires a separate license from the MLBPA.)

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The multiwindowed playfield packs unusual eye appeal. Prior to the pitch, the gamer's seat is in the lower stands behind home plate. This close-up makes it easy to control the pitcher's throw and batter's swing. Rectangular windows along the left and right edges of the screen print the game information and show the areas around first and third bases. If the hitter connects, the display "pulls back" to show more of the field. Loosely based on Nintendo's "Vs." coin-op series, *Baseball* is an easy-to-play game that glosses over some of the nuances of Abner Doubleday's creation. Those who love sports action will forgive such omissions and enjoy the thrill of hot diamond competition.

### Stat Simulations for Micro Managers

Statistical-replay baseball predates the introduction of home computers by many years. Richard Seitz marketed *APBA Baseball*, a nonelectronic board game, in the early 1950s. Relatively primitive simulations, like *All-Star Baseball*, were introduced as far back as the 1930s.

Tabletop baseball simulations suffer from the same limitations as hex-grid military board games. They require the player to generate many random numbers, administer a large body of rules and handle all associated bookkeeping.

The computer liberates stat managers from result boards, dice shakers and all the other paraphernalia of old-



Gamestar's *Pete Rose Pennant Fever* shows the game from different angles, much like a television broadcast does.

fashioned, stat board games. This allows gamers to concentrate on strategy and tactics without getting bogged down by convoluted play mechanics.

The small memory of early home computers resulted in baseball simula-

tions that really couldn't compare to the nonelectronic variety. They lacked the extensive databases and elaborate mathematical models of the board games. The same limitation also squeezed the available programming space so much that stat games had very sparse sound and graphics compared to arcade-style disks of the same period.

Neither of these barriers hampers to-



Taking its name from the popular tabloid, Epyx's *Sporting News Baseball* offers many variations on the computer baseball genre.

day's baseball-simulation designers. The major titles now vie with the board games for accuracy, and with the best action disks and cartridges for beautiful playfields, fluid animation and authentic, day-at-the-ballpark sounds.

*MicroLeague Baseball* (MLSA for IBM PC, Commodore 64 and Apple II) introduced full-screen animated visuals to the computer stat-replay category, and it is still one of the prettiest sports games available for 8-bit systems. Author Barry Morstain originally wrote the program for a mainframe. He made compromises to fit his algorithms within the available RAM, but he preserved the essence of this wonderful one- or two-player competition.

The routine of play keeps both managers in the thick of things, whether at bat or in the field. After one pilot chooses the type of pitch and positions the infield, the other plans running strategy and decides whether the batter should swing away or bunt.

The result of the play then unfolds on the full-screen diamond. A scoreboard in deep center presents a written play-by-play and color commentary. Either manager can consult roster screens with fairly complete statistics whenever desired.

Thanks to the simulation's modular construction, *MicroLeague Baseball* fans can add features and teams to the basic system. The general manager/

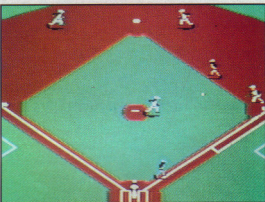
owner disk, for example, lets the gamer start new teams, swap players and modify all statistics and ratings. The publisher also offers a statistics compiler, an archive disk for storing teams and dozens of disks with great teams and complete seasons of the past.

*MicroLeague Baseball* is probably the best computer simulation for head-to-head play, although its automated "baseball buddha" manages against a human in the solitary mode. No program is as involving and fast-paced, and there's just enough realism to give gamers the feeling that they are really calling the shots from the dugout.

*MicroLeague Baseball II* (MLSA for Atari ST and Macintosh) is less than a sequel, but more than a mere translation of Morstain's original title for more powerful brands of home computers.

Many of the changes are essentially cosmetic. The field and players are better drawn and animated, the music is richer and the sounds are more realistic. The program also adds factors like park effects, artificial turf, rainouts and injuries, but the play result formulas are almost identical to those in regular *MicroLeague Baseball*.

The interaction between the statistics and the mathematical model inspires what criticism *MicroLeague Baseball* and *MicroLeague Baseball II* get from simulation managers. Neither version has separate ratings for base stealing and base running, true lefty-righty, hitting-percentage breakdowns, pitchers' fatigue, range factors for



*Sporting News Baseball* takes the 26 major league teams, putting many of the all-time greats in your control.

fielders, positioning of outfielders or a specific bunt rating. Both programs portray baseball with overall accuracy, but they lack the minute shades of distinction among ballplayers' abilities that characterize the most rigorous statistical simulations.

*Pure Stat Baseball* (Software Simula-

tions for IBM PC, Apple II and Commodore 64, originally published under the subLogo banner, is a field day for would-be managers. Ed Daniels' game doesn't look as good as *MicroLeague*, but it bows to no other simulation when it comes to its mathematical model.

The game includes lefty-righty platooning, detailed outfield defensive strategies and enough other statistical elements to make the electronic athlete seem as good as the flesh-and-blood major leaguers.

*PSB* pays more attention to fielding than its rivals. The range factor and throwing ability have separate ratings. This makes defensive specialists like Ozzie Smith much more valuable than they are in games that merely correlate defensive expertise with fielding percentage.

The graphics are unusual, though not quite up to the standard of *MicroLeague*. The perspective, which shifts depending on whether a lefty or righty hitter is at bat, will be familiar to anyone who has ever sat in a box seat. The abrupt jump from foul line to foul line is a little startling at first, but does not cripple the product.

The player and ball animation are the weakest parts of the program. Flies just don't arc naturally, and the outfielders look like the Three Stooges when they chase down a triple.

*PSB* is particularly good for solitary play, because its canny computerized manager provides tenacious opposition. The play mechanic is workable head-to-head, but it lacks the battle-of-wits feel of *MicroLeague*.

Software Simulations plans to have a sequel, *Pure Stat Baseball II* (IBM PC and Commodore 64, with Amiga to come) in stores shortly after opening

day. Besides the expectable assortment of graphic improvements, the statistic base adds many new factors, including each hurler's propensity for inducing ground balls or fly balls. (VG&CE will have a full review when it is actually published.)

Tabletop gamers, apprehensive about exchanging their beloved dice for a computer console, may find *APBA Major League Players Baseball* (Random House for IBM PC, Apple II with two drives) familiarly reassuring. It is more of a simulation of the non-electronic *APBA Master Game* as baseball itself. Even the arcane letter and number ratings of the pasteborder version are dutifully presented on the monitor screen.

Playing *APBA* is more like listening to a game on radio than being out at the park or even watching it on televi-



Trading and drafting players gives *Sporting News Baseball* managers the ability to alter their teams' strength.

sion. Extensive play-by-play commentary, printed one line at a time to heighten the drama, lets participants in this two-player simulation know what's happening. The small playfield is little more than a posting board for tracking base runners.

Each game is fairly long, up to an hour. That's at least 50% longer than

other major computer simulations. Devoted fans of *APBA MLPB* feel the huge number of play possibilities, accuracy and the support of the APBA Game Company are worth more than visual frills.

The quest for statistical perfection leads some stat gamers to *Full-Count Baseball* (Lance Haffner Games for IBM PC, Commodore 64 and Apple II). Forget sound and graphics, forget juicy menus full of strategic options. This is a laboratory for testing baseball theories, not a showdown between diamond tacticians.

*FCB* allows few in-game decisions from the sidelines, because such interactions introduce variables. Once the manager sets the line-up and designates the pitcher, *FCB* virtually plays itself. Those who derive their enjoyment from studying baseball, rather than from managing simulated teams, have a handy tool in this well-programmed product.

### The In-Betweenner

*Earl Weaver Baseball* (Electronic Arts for IBM PC and Amiga) bridges the gap between arcade and simulation. Eddie Dombrower's game lets the user customize the routine-of-play to include as much arcade-style control or statistical modeling as they desire.

It can be played either against live opposition or versus a computerized Earl Weaver. Another option allows the computerist to play pitch-by-pitch or batter-by-batter. Rookie managers who don't know what to do in certain situations can turn for help to master strategist Earl Weaver.

The graphics, while very good, are not up to the best pure-arcade baseball titles. Instant, slow-motion and

(continued on page 84)

## Leagues: The Inside Story

It's easy to get overconfident if you only play against your brother or the computerized manager in statistical-baseball games. Competing with a group of other baseball experts is the real test of managerial savvy. Nothing compares to a well-run, multiseason league for both competition and sociability.

There are many types of leagues. Some favor using the original teams, but this has a couple of shortcomings. It eliminates the chance to play general manager as well as field boss, and it means that one manager is likely to get all the local favorites.

Hi-lo leagues provide more scope for would-be GMs, while it keeps major-league teammates together on the gaming screen. Each franchise owner receives a pair of stock teams, which he or she then combines into a single squad.

King of the electronic diamond is the draft league. This format removes any barrier to trades and gives participants the chance to utilize players from all 26 big-league clubs. Since most computer-baseball leagues have only six to ten managers, draft leagues weed out the lesser lights, leaving the big names. Managing well-known players is more fun than guiding anonymous ones.

Some leagues spice up the player pool with some Hall of Famers. It isn't realistic to mix Babe Ruth and Dwight Gooden, but it certainly is entertaining to watch modern and classic stars face each other. There's no perfect size. Issuing more than eight franchises opens the door to logistical problems in getting everyone to the meeting, while a loop with fewer than four teams lacks sufficient variety. The availability of equipment may force the decision.

A 162-game season produces statistics that can be directly compared to actual major-league totals, but a season of any length can be fun. When establishing the number of games in a season, consider the level of commitment each choice involves.

Decide the schedule length by figuring out how many meetings the league can hold during the season and multiply by the number of games per session. Don't forget to add a meeting for the league championship and another for draft night.

Finding members for the new league is easy. After checking among friends, post notices on your school bulletin board, ball card emporium or game store. Some companies, like MLSA and Software Simulations, publish newsletters for their fans that carry announcements of new leagues. —A.K. and B.K.



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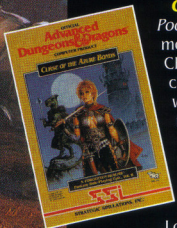
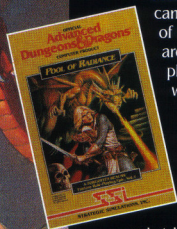
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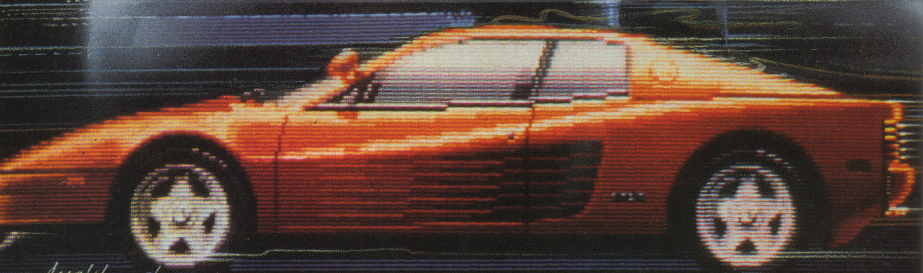
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# Taking A Spin

with  
**Don  
Mattrick**

Meet the  
Leader of the  
Test Drive Team

by Bill Kunkel



*Auckland*



Let the record show that the man behind the creation of *Test Drive* (Accolade) first got the idea for the hit program while driving along the Coqui-halla Highway. Don Matrick, head honcho at Distinctive Software, Inc., was tooling along California's most famous speed highway in his Porsche when he fell to musing on the subject of driving games. There were so many out there, but none of them really traded on the experience of driving. Don knew what it felt like to drive a hot sports car. So he considered the possibilities.

"I really do like sports cars; I'm an enthusiast. I was just looking at the view, and I started thinking: this is the view that everyone sees when they drive." Yet it had never appeared in a driving game.

*Test Drive* was one of those hits that took the software industry by surprise. It was initially perceived as just another driving game. The ability to offer users a variety of high-performance dream machines in lieu of the usual generic racing vehicle was seen largely as yuppie bait. But what really made *Test Drive* distinctive was its unique perspective. For the first time, users could see on screen what would appear to them from the driver's seat of a hot sports car: the dashboard, glove compartment, radar detector, stick shift and steering wheel—gripped firmly by a pair of gloved hands—as well as the windshield and rearview mirror. This innovative point of view gave *Test Drive* the kind of cachet usually reserved for sophisticated flight simulators. It also met a vital criterion for any successful entertainment program, in allowing the user to experience something that, because of the limitations of reality, they might not otherwise have the opportunity to enjoy.

Which is not to say that *Test Drive* doesn't have game elements. The player must make a preset average speed on each leg of the drive, for example, lest they be declared unfit to drive a sports car. "We see it as being a simulation with game play and game components," Don explains. "There's strategy, in the sense of knowing when to shift gears, and it has game-play logic, but within a simulation structure."

Matrick's design group, Distinctive Software, Inc., has been creating games now for over six years. Before *Test Drive*, their best-known original release

was the cult hit *Evolution* (Sydney), which attained sufficient popularity on computer to be eventually published in ColecoVision video-game format.

Distinctive Software, Inc. is comprised of 20 people, including 13 programmers, four artists, one audio specialist and two project directors. Typical of contemporary design philosophy, DSI is a group of specialists working together as a team. Don also has another ear in the software water; his Unlimited Software is a leading producer of game conversions. Conversions are secondary versions of existing titles. If the original version of a game is programmed on the Amiga, for example, the publisher may want to hire independent contractors like Unlimited to produce the Commodore 64, Macintosh or MS-DOS rollovers.

In the wake of *Test Drive*'s success, DSI has turned out a string of related products. The primary new release is *Test Drive II: The Duel* (Accolade). "It picks up where *Test Drive* left off," Mat-

trick explains. "We improved some areas and followed some of the suggestions we got from players. People wanted more scenery, more competition and more statistics that showed their position relative to the other drivers." *Test Drive II: The Duel* pits a Ferrari F40 against a Porsche 959 in a head-to-head dream race.

"We've also done a disk [that interfaces with] *Test Drive II* and features five new cars." *The Supercars* (Accolade) includes five late-model dream cars: an '88 Lotus Turbo Esprit, Ferrari Testarossa, Porsche 911 Ruf, '88 Lamborghini Countach 5000S and Chevy '89 Corvette ZRI. Then there's *California Challenge* (Accolade), a six-lap race from the Oregon/California border to Santa Barbara, passing through Eureka, Rockport, San Francisco and Carmel along the way.

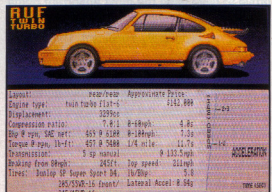
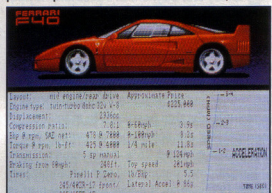
Another recent DSI creation is *Grand Prix Circuit*, also published by Accolade. "This is a Formula One racing simulation," says Don. "It's also more of a pure simulation; it rewards people who know how to drive fast." *Grand Prix Circuit* features an interesting strategic wrinkle in that the player must pick the racing team they will head (McLaren, Ferrari or Williams).

Don is a little vague about future plans, which is hardly surprising in an industry as tight-lipped as entertainment software. He talks about doing more sports-oriented simulations, "the kind of software that we enjoy."

Like most designers, Don enjoys playing games by other creators. "It's important to look at other people's work," he explains, "but you can't be too swayed by it. There's a tendency sometimes to play something you like and say, 'Well, I wonder how this would be if I changed this one thing.' There's nothing wrong with that, but you're basically doing someone else's game with a new twist, and we try to avoid that."

What kind of games does he like to play? "Anything that's done well and has depth. I like games where you can tell the designers had fun when they were doing it. I like *Tetris* quite a bit. I also love a lot of simple, old arcade games. The only thing I tend not to play are text adventures."

That makes sense. After all, it's tough to envision the Mario Andretti of game software plowing through Zork. 🎮



Matrick's quality work shines through in Accolade's *Test Drive II: The Duel*. *Test Drive II* and its accessory disks; shown here on the Amiga.

# COMPUTER GAMING 2000 A.D.

by Arnie Katz

Writer, editor, lecturer and game designer Arnie Katz knows the field from every perspective. Each month, his column gives readers an inside look at the world of video and computer gaming.

Today's headlines read "software shake-out." Changes in consumer preferences and competition from "new generation" video-game consoles are driving some old-line computer-game companies to the financial wall.

That doesn't sound like the ideal climate in which to make a slew of predictions about computer games, but appearances are sometimes deceiving. Let's put things in better perspective before hauling out the crystal ball.

Entertainment software sales rose 10% during the 1988 Christmas holiday season. This wasn't the 25% jump that overly optimistic executives predicted, but it is hardly a disaster. Unfortunately, some game companies have been operating as though that 25% was a minimum guarantee.

Overshipments and a glut of mediocre titles left more than \$80 million worth of disks in the distribution pipeline in January. That is a serious problem, but probably not a lingering one.

Periodic market-share shuffles are expectable, normal and even desirable. They happen in every field as it matures. DeSoto cars, the Dumont Television Network and Reingold beer are examples of once-popular brand names that are no more than nostalgic memories. Pioneers inevitably fall by the way-

side as the ideas that caused their initial success grow stale.

The computer-software shakeout may claim a few familiar names, but don't be fooled: The overall trend is still positive. The "Top 5" companies are trimming their corporate sails, cutting payrolls and slashing development budgets, but newer publishers are stepping forward to claim leadership positions. In many cases, the upstarts are achieving, or even exceeding, those coveted 25% sales gains.

So computer games will survive and thrive in the 1990s, even if a few individual outfits take a financial beating. The real question is: What kind of games will tomorrow's leading software publishers provide for our enjoyment?

The computer games of the next decade and beyond will stress the experience of gaming, rather than high scores. Even hot action contests will immerse the player in an encompassing, interactive reality.

*Defender of the Crown* (Cinemaware) and *Flight Simulator III* (Microsoft/subLOGIC) may prove to have been the most important home computer games published in the 1980s; that is, the most historically significant. They appeal to eyes, ears and hearts, as well as to minds and reflexes. *Flight Simulator* and *Defender of the Crown* create total play environments.

Accomplishment, not score, is the main goal in both titles. *Flight Simulator* rewards excellent pilots with an enjoyable, accident-free flight, not a bunch of points. Similarly, the goal in *Defender of the Crown* is to unify England, not reach a high level or amass a score that looks like a long-distance telephone

number.

This trend will change a few familiar conventions. Don't expect to get three or five "lives" in most 1994 games. Experience games are strictly pass/fail; the player completes the assignment or fails.

Players won't type anything more complicated than their names, even for an adventure. All text and illustrated adventures are dead. They won't return even when parsers can handle every word in the dictionary. An all-inclusive parser would end objections to having to guess the right word, but typing is antithetical to involvement. Menu- and icon-driven adventures provide a more immediate and direct experience.

Technological advances in home computers support the shift from score-oriented games to goal-oriented ones. The primitive games of the 1970s and early 1980s had to make score the goal, because they had nothing else that would motivate the player.

Minimal visuals, beep-and-boop sounds and simplistic play action do not intimately involve most players. The player doesn't feel a true sense of accomplishment. Score is a way to measure achievement. The pride in a high score substitutes for the satisfaction of a gripping vicarious experience like a good novel, movie or TV show.

Today, 16-bit computers are becoming a force in the home market. By the early 1990s, they will be the standard. Five years from now, the next generation of home computers will dazzle us with still more stunning audiovisual effects and memory power.

Designers use everything the hardware allows. Expanding the graphic, sonic or memory potential of the computer encourages the author to find something to fill the larger canvas.

Play-action can't be made more and more complex without exceeding the gamer's capacity to execute. A computer could theoretically present a simulation of World War II in which each counter represents a single soldier, but no one could directly control all those pieces. One human could not make all those decisions.

Current games give the player as much to do as most can handle. Future entertainment programs will achieve greater complexity by investing more memory in the user interface. It doesn't matter how intricate the sub-structure is, as long as it doesn't make the player's duties more difficult.

Statistical replay baseball simulations illustrate this. Ed Daniels' *Pure Stat Baseball* (Software Simulations) has a more detailed database and uses more elaborate formulas than Daniels' earlier *World's Greatest Baseball Game* (Epyx), but one is about as easy to play as the other.

Prepare to avoid some "too real" simulations. Some misguided designers will pour on the minute details in the name of realism until the system screams, "Disk full!" That could be a lot of detail in a one- or two-megabyte program, enough to overwhelm and overwork any player.

The simulation designer is like a painter, not a photographer. The most entertaining simulations filter reality, not just rubber stamp it. The designer isolates the significant aspects of the situation and glosses over the dull stuff. The availability of great goods of memory may blind a few designers in the 1990s. Fortunately, low sales of such overdone products will keep them from crowding out the playable ones.

It almost goes without saying that tomorrow's funware will have better sound and graphics. The success of the Amiga demonstrates the potency of these elements. Designers can add audiovisual effects right up to the limit of available memory without making the finished game any tougher to play.

Sound and graphics hit players in the gut, not the head. The better the pictures and music, the more irresistibly they pull the player into the game's pseudo-reality. Improving this aspect of games reinforces the experiential nature of the games.

When a 1989 game includes a few words of synthesized speech, it's a big event. Each precious syllable costs tons of memory, so designers choose their words carefully. When

the next wave of home computers triples memory capacity, though, games will chatter like a nervous star on Johnny Carson.

Players will also talk to the games. Speech recognition is still in its infancy, but it will trickle down to the home market within the next few years. Some adventures, sports simulations and strategy games will be controlled entirely by the participants' voice commands.

The catch phrase for the 1990s will be "artificial intelligence" (AI). The trailblazer here is *Balance of Power* (Mindscape). Everyone knows most computer games are played solitarily, but only Chris Crawford has done something about it. The robot adversary in his *Balance of Power* is a more challenging and resourceful opponent than any human foe.

Artificial intelligence will have the greatest impact on sports games and military simulations, but even the aliens in arcade games will move and fight much more intelligently. It will also make computer role-playing adventures virtually equal to the nonelectronic type. The automated dungeon master is still a decade away, but AI will upgrade non-player characters in the next few years. Conversation, negotiation and character interaction will augment fighting monsters and foiling traps.

The newest peripheral is the compact-disc player. Its ability to store and retrieve an awesome amount of graphics could literally change the way games look in the next decade. Multicel, computer-assisted animation and digitized video, both impractical due to current memory constraints, will blossom in the 1990s.

These techniques generate finished artwork faster than laboriously programming every screen. When the compact drive blows the lid off the RAM cap, developers will gravitate toward these methods for doing visuals.

Predictions in the computer field almost always center on when new technology will arrive. That's important, of course, and we'll get our new machines by the middle of the decade, but it is only half the story.

The disappearance of old technology is just as crucial as the introduction of new hardware. The need to cater to outmoded computers keeps designers and developers from pulling out all the stops for the new machines. When 8-bit systems drop out of the market, 16-bit games will improve dramatically. It is a shame how many otherwise great ideas get tabled because they won't work on a Commodore 64 with tape drive.

And when those super games roll into the stores, VG&C will be here to put them under the critical microscope. And with any luck, I'll still be writing this column. ♪

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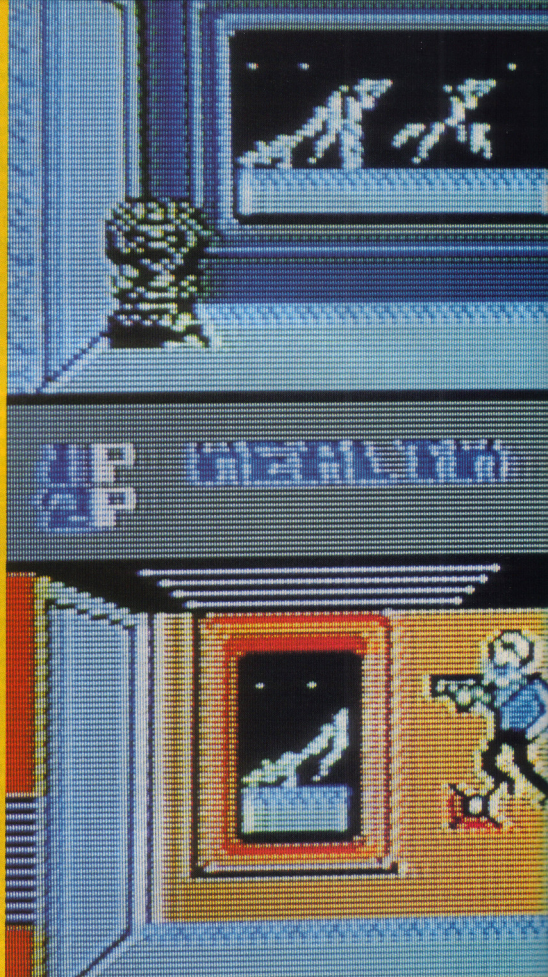
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# The Straight Story on the Game Scene

by The Game Doctor

**Y**ou know, the Game Doctor is really a pretty mellow fellow. I've been in this business almost a decade now, and the burning issues of the day take on a historical perspective when you've seen it all before—several times over.

Suddenly, however, your favorite Program Practitioner finds himself embroiled in controversy about the Atari ST. Not an issue of VG&CE comes and goes without your humble G.D. receiving abuse in the mail from some ST user.

I would, therefore, like to make the following testimonial: I love the Atari ST. I am, in fact, typing the words you are now reading on an Atari ST. With the exception of its weak sound chip, it is a marvelous game machine.

**buy MS-DOS machines, anyway? They belong in a museum of the computer Dark Ages!**

**Also in your review of Rocket Ranger, you failed to mention the ST version. Although this version isn't available yet, you mentioned versions not available for other computers in the review section.**

**Getting back to the Game Doctor, your answer (and even publishing the letter in the first place) goes against numerous editorials in your sister magazine ST-LOG! I hope you will be as fair to the ST in future issues as you were in your first issue. The ST has a bright future ahead (and if) Atari starts to advertise. Get with it, guys!**

400/800 were, and ST computers are, excellent machines. The reasons for their failure are complex and difficult to pin down, but the facts are not.

Of course I was referring to the Tandy 1000 when I wrote, "One of the reasons that Tandy exploded into the computer market is because the public has confidence that if their computers break down, Radio Shack will fix them." I didn't say it was the only reason or that every model computer Radio Shack produced would be successful. It is a fact, however, that the first time (since the TRS-80) Tandy produced a marketable machine, it sold like hotcakes. You attribute this to price, yet the ST is even more economical, and it has failed to gain a place in the market!

Denigrating the MS-DOS machines doesn't really further your argument. Why do people buy them? Because they work and because the public has confidence that the manufacturer will fix them when they don't. That this was a powerful marketing tool is self-evident by the computers' success.

Although I didn't write the review in question—the Game Doctor is no in-kind-stained wretch, after all, but a man of medicine who merely dabbles with the word processor—it is true that Cinemaware does have an ST version of *Rocket Ranger* scheduled for release. This was certainly no plot by the reviewer to slight the ST. Cinemaware planned to drop the ST version, but has since decided to develop the game because of the European market potential.

Believe me, I understand brand loyalty, but your last paragraph was out of line. In the first place, to suggest that there is some "party line" among various L.F.P., Inc. publications is naive at best and insulting at worst. Do you seriously believe VG&CE reviewers consult

**Q:** I like VG&CE, I really do. But after reading the February issue I have a few complaints. The reply to the "Atarian's" letter was much too negative! The ST isn't doing the best in America, but saying how terrible it was that no new games are coming out is incorrect. Many companies support the ST, including: SSI, Epyx, Mindscape, Broderbund, Spectrum Holobyte, Cinemaware, Datasoft, Rainbird, A-H, FTL, Three-Sixty, Thunder Mountain, Psygnosis, Taito, Titus, Data East, Sierra, Infocom and Paragon. Besides, I've read in *ST Informer* magazine that Atari plans to market the ST more aggressively in the late first/early second quarter of 1989.

You also mentioned "Tandy exploded into the computer market" because they had service centers. Really? What good has this done the Color Computers? They don't seem to be booming! If you mean the Tandy 1000 series, I agree a little more with you, but the main reason is cost, I would suspect. And why, anyway, is the American public so idiotic as to

**A:** Okay, Carl, let's get down to it. Of the companies you mentioned, the vast majority only "support" the ST in that they deal extensively in European software, both buying and selling. Because the ST market in Europe is healthy, most games there are released in ST form. When Epyx, Mindscape, etc., buy a European game for U.S. release, the ST version already exists, so of course they sell it. Sierra supports all 16-bit systems since they don't make C-64/128 versions, and need all the sales they can get.

Many of those publishers you mention (such as Psygnosis, Rainbird and Titus) are, in fact, European themselves. My point was that there is almost no development for the ST in the U.S. by U.S. publishers. What little ST software is developed is due only to the larger market potential abroad. This is because it is perceived as a failed system in this country. Atari has yet to produce a successful personal computer for the U.S. market. This has little to do with the quality of those computers, since the

past *ANALOG* and *ST-LOG* editorials before venturing an opinion? Do you urge some sort of conspiracy to ignore the problems of the Atari ST in the U.S. market? Are we supposed to "support" personal computers by lying about their success and not printing letters that ask hard questions, the answers to which we might not all like to hear?

**Q:** I have trouble making single-sided/double-density diskettes double-sided. I own a C-64 with an old, flip-up opening 1541 disk drive. My friends, who all own the new style, turn-switch opening 1541, can make them double-sided by the opposite hole-punch method. Is it my disk drive? If so, is there anything I can do without purchasing a new disk drive?

—Jim Batson  
Clarksville, TN

**A:** First off, I should explain that all disks are double-sided in that both sides of 5¼-inch floppy disks consist of the same medium. The only difference is that the flip sides of single-sided disks have not been inspected and users do not have access to them. Traditionally, users convert single-sided disks to double-sided by punching a hole on the left side of the disk, matching the slot on the right side.

As to your difficulty with formatting: Yes, it is indeed because of your disk drive. That particular model, according to a Commodore specialist with whom I consulted, does not have the ability to read/write staggered tracks, which is required to format the flip-side of a single-sided disk. Short of purchasing a new drive, I'd recommend you spend a few bucks for extra floppy disks and use them single-side only.

**Q:** We own two Nintendo Entertainment Systems, but sometimes they don't work. When I put a game in and push the power button, it just shows a blank screen. What can I do?

—Ken Yuen  
Harbor City, CA

**A:** Sounds like you might be cutting it a little close in your rush to get that NES cooking, Ken. Make sure you have already inserted the cartridge before you hit that power button. If the problem persists, I would recommend a product from Gamebusters Intl. called *Doc's Fix-A-Game*, which cures flashing on/off, blank screens and scrambled pictures on the NES.

**QUICKIES:** Chris Purviance of Danville, Illinois, is looking for software for

the venerable Vectrex Arcade System (a/k/a Vectrex Graphic Computer System). If any reader knows where to find a cache of cartridges, let us know and we'll pass on the word.

As far as the Doc knows, these items are no longer available on a retail basis, Chris, but it was one heck of a game system! 📌

And that about does it for this issue. We'll be back next time with more Qs and As. If you have any questions, send 'em to: **The Game Doctor**, P.O. Box 020541, Brooklyn, NY 11202-0012.

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# A Traveler's Guide to Road Raider

**Mindscape**

Versions: Amiga, Atari ST, Commodore 64

You're a driver on the dangerous roadways of the future, scavenging through the remnants of civilization and waging war with everything else on wheels! The object of *Gray Matter's Road Raider* is to survive while searching the remaining active buildings in each city in an effort to locate a passport to the Arena.

Some players may want to map the landscape, but getting through the first level is fairly straightforward so long as the player follows a fixed circuit. The city, for example, can be broken up into three zones. There is the middle area, home of Pandy's Pork Palace, where the player starts out. Then there is the north area, dominated by Ed's Goo Slu Emporium. To the south is the Five 'N Dime Mighty Mall, City Hall and the Arena. We recommend travelling the circuit in this sequence.

## Points of interest

Let's take a look at each of the active buildings, all of which contain an endless supply of goo slu-addicted zombies, whose radioactive touch is deadly.

**Pandy's Pork Palace**—Once inside, head straight up to the northeast corner of the building and grab the Radar, which is the single most important piece of paraphernalia in the game, with the possible exception of the Arena passport. Once the player has it, the radar window at the bottom of the playfield is activated. This allows him to see other vehicles, active buildings, gas stations and navigable blockades (see section on "Blockades") for approximately a block in all directions.

There are two First Aid kits in Pandy's, one mere yard north of the entrance point. Don't touch it! Passing over a First Aid kit causes hit points to be subtracted, and at this point in the game, the player-character hasn't had

a chance to accumulate any. If necessary, grab the kit before leaving. Otherwise, leave this one here in case your character absorbs a lot of damage at Ed's Goo Slu Emporium.

**Ed's Goo Slu Emporium**—Avoid the chambers immediately above and below the entrance point; they hold no objects of value. You must shoot through some of the radioactive green slime in order to access the best chambers. Move to the bottom of the



Emporium and head east. Shoot through the penetrable green slime and clean out the chamber beyond, while avoiding the hit-point-inflicting zombies as much as possible.

**Five 'n Dime Mighty Mall**—This is where the Arena passport is hidden. There are also many small caches of food, drink and ammunition, so check every nook and cranny, many of which are blocked by green slime.

**City Hall**—A real warren, this is the one building which needs to be mapped. Then the player must either study the map or else pause the game frequently while referring to it. City Hall contains three First Aid kits, so don't worry if your player-character is in ragged shape going in.

Don't even bother entering City Hall without three or four keys, minimum, as there are

many, many chambers to check out, most of them worth exploring.

## On to the Arena!

Once you leave City Hall, continue north, but watch for the gun emplacement at the north end of this road. When you reach a navigable blockade (see section on "Blockades") two rows wide and three deep, penetrate it on the left side (since a cannon has the right side lined up in its sights) and drive north. Watch out for the mine. Detonate it and proceed east with caution as there are several mines on both sides of the road. At the end of this road is the Arena, but you will only be admitted if you have a passport.

In the Arena, the player switches to a new vehicle and engages in a game of deadly bumper cars with numerous opponents. Watch out for the sections of roadway which open to swallow unwary autos.

## Blockades

Like the green slime, some blockades can be penetrated and some cannot. Navigable blockades are somewhat lighter than the impenetrable type, but the best way to discern between them is with radar. Navigable blockades are invisible on the radar screen.

There are two types of blockade: debris and crushed buses. Heavy debris can never be penetrated, whereas some bus blockades are navigable and some aren't.

The object of the game is to track down the madman who has foisted the addictive foodstuff Goo Slu upon a hungry post-holocaust population. After moving successfully through the Arena, the player-character emerges in the next city. This shares the same game structure as the first city, but at a higher level of difficulty.

## Gas stations

Each of the city's three areas has access to a gas station. Here the player can trade



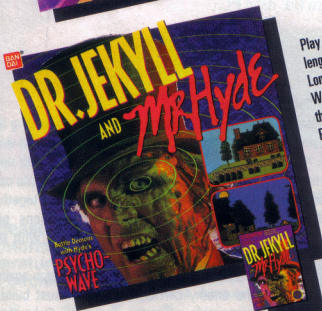
# '89 Game Power from Bandai



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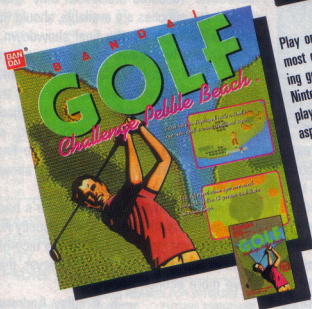
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in food for fuel, repairs, new weapons and/or ammunition. It is necessary to make periodic pit stops at these gas stations in order to upgrade and restore the player-character's weapons and vehicle.

Finally, here are a few all-purpose hints:

- Learn which rooms contain only a single key and don't waste time on them on future adventures.
- If you get as far as City Hall in good shape, save the game.

• There are two types of radioactive slime. The deep green stuff is impenetrable, but the lighter green can be shot away. Many of the best chambers are blocked by this penetrable slime, especially in the Five 'N Dime Mighty Mall.

- Buy a shotgun or even an assault rifle as soon as possible! The better the gun, the greater its zombie-killing range and the quicker it punches through penetrable green slime. The same goes for mounting a new

cannon on the vehicle.

- Drive slowly until you are familiar with the road. The slower the car is moving when hit, the less likelihood of serious damage.
- Watch out for the gun emplacement located at the south end of the East Road (the strip that runs vertically down the east end of the city). Stay on the inside lane, wait for the gun to fire, then turn west and put the hammer down!

—Bill Kunkel

# Commanding Carrier Command

Rainbird Software

Versions: Amiga, Atari ST, Commodore 64, IBM PC

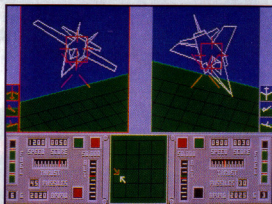
The order of the day, for any new player of *Carrier Command*, is to become intimately familiar with the commands available. This is best accomplished by practicing with the controls in the early stage of a strategic game. Once the player knows what each command screen does, he can begin to learn the basics of flying the Manta fighters and driving the Walrus Amphibious Assault Vehicles (AAVs). A player should also use this chance to practice planting a new command center on a neutral island.

After this basic training, a player should hone his combat skills by attempting to take the first island in the action game. Once this skill is learned, true game play can begin.

It is important to set a destination point prior to launching a vehicle. The Walrus AAVs have a nasty tendency to crash back into the ship if this is not done, since they, as well as the Manta fighters, are automatically set on autopilot after launch.

There is one fairly quick way to take an island: First, as the carrier nears an enemy island, prepare two Manta fighters and one Walrus AAV. The first Manta should be loaded with missiles, and the second with two missiles and a laser pod. The Walrus should

be armed with a laser pod and a virus bomb. The first Manta should fire all of its missiles into the Aircraft Hanger, thus destroying it. The second Manta can then take off. It can use its two missiles to destroy any remaining aircraft, and the laser to destroy any surface-to-air or surface-to-surface missile sites.



Meanwhile the Walrus can clear a path, then head inward to launch its virus bomb into the front of the command center, thus converting the island to the player's side. If necessary, the laser should be used to destroy any defenses in its path. A player can simply destroy the command center, but this wastes valuable time. It is far better to take over an existing center and gain immediate

production.

To take a neutral island without sending the whole carrier, send a Walrus equipped with a command-center builder and a manta with a long-range communications pod. While care must be taken to keep the two close together during the trip, the communications pod allows them to remain in contact with the ship.

Prior to the ultimate shooting match against the enemy carrier, the player must build a reasonable resource network. Only then, when many supplies are available, should the commander head for the final showdown.

There are two ways to find the enemy carrier. Look for him close to a recently captured island, or simply take one of the computer's border defense islands. It's a good idea to make this the resupply island, so supplies will be close at hand for the final battle. Very shortly the enemy carrier should show up to retake the island.

Taking or destroying the computer's base island will slow him down, but is usually not worth the time and effort. A simple face-off, when well supplied with lots of reserves, may prove more economical.

—R. Bradley Andrews

## Advertiser Index

Advertiser	Page #	Reader Service Card #
Access Software	94	138
Acclaim	49	122
Acclaim	50-51	123, 124
Bandai	81	130
Beeshu	43	121
Beeshu	85	132
Cape Cod Connection	95	140
Culture Brain	27	113
Curtis Mfg.	31	—
Data East	BC	143
Data East	67	125
DigiTek	41	120
Discovery Software	39	119
Doc's Hytech	79	129
E.T.M.	87	133
Faxtron	93	137
FCI	33	115
FCI	35	116
HAL America	13	107
HAL America	15	108
Hudson Soft	10-11	106
Jaleco USA	30	—
Konami	1FC	101
Konami	4	102
Mastertronic	17	109
MicroProse	9	104
MPI Home Video	97	141
Mr. Cartridge	75	131
Paper Mayhem	75	127
Pedersen Systems	89	134
Play It Again	92	136
Strategic Simulations	70-71	—
SunSoft	76-77	128
Taito	21	110
Taito	23	111
Taito	25	112
Taxon	91	135
Tengen	98-1BC	142
Titus	7	103
Velocity Development	37	118
Video Relay	94	139
Z Bag	3	117

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# Power Styx

DigiTek

Version: Amiga

The more things change, the more they remain the same," said the sage. And even though he said it in French, it has relevance to the American computer-gaming scene. Many publishers have struck gold by taking a classic play mechanic, adding a few rules elaborations and dressing the whole package up in state-of-the-art graphics.

*Power Styx* is an abstract territorial-acquisition game, similar to Atari's *Qix*. The player draws lines on a rectangular playfield to produce enclosed areas which turn color. The player must fill the stated percentage of the playfield, usually 75%, with such shapes to advance to the next, more difficult playfield.

The most important change for serious line scribes is that *Power Styx* drops the older title's variable drawing-speed option. The DigiTek title assigns the action button to a completely different function. The user must press it briefly to move the diamond-shaped cursor from a previously drawn line. Forgetting to push the button when you want to draw a new line is the quickest way to lose one of those three precious lives to the enemies who zip along the lines.

The absence of variable speed also eliminates one of the most popular tactics, especially among players with more guts than hand speed. Drawing a quick first line that vertically bisects the playfield is much harder to bring off successfully in *Power Styx*. The whirling pattern of geometric shapes moves very rapidly, and it takes precise timing—with

a little luck—to cross the field before it makes fatal contact.

*Power Styx* also introduces bonus and penalty objects that appear at one edge of the playfield and slowly cross the screen from left to right. The "instant win" icon is the grand prize, but the speed-up token virtually assures



victory, especially on the two easiest levels. Conversely, the "lose a life" pictograph is clearly a good one to avoid. If the roaming geometric foe constantly steals a life whenever you go for a bonus, start waiting until the object of your desire is closer to the edge of the playfield before snatching at it. It's true that picking off icons just before they exit usually doesn't add a lot of territory, but the safe snag of an extra life or more rapid movement is ample compensation.

The multidirectional control system allows the player to draw irregular shapes. Would-be abstract artists may find the lack of symmetry appealing, but it definitely makes

it a lot harder to win and score.

Keep the scribed lines as straight and regular as possible. This makes it easier to keep track of the line-running enemies, but it allows the cursor to move around the field more quickly and easily.

Momma told you not to gulp your food. The same restraint is the road to victory in *Power Styx*. It takes a little longer to clear the screen and see the fancy illustration, but the chance of success is greater.

Drawing a series of small boxes along the edge of the playfield is a good way to start. It creates "passing tracks," which are handy for avoiding foes that cruise the lines, while also effectively shrinking the size of the playfield at the same time.

Once irregularly sized boxes ring the playfield, watch the rover carefully. Cross the width of the field (from the top of the display to the bottom or vice versa) to slice off a big section with minimal risk when the rover moves in the opposite direction or gets "caught" in one of the artificial cul-de-sacs formed by the placement of the first few areas.

A big attraction of *Power Styx* is the unpredictability of some elements, like the rover. An opportunistic approach is more helpful than an ironclad "perfect plan." *Power Styx*, despite its simple rules, offers great scope for on-the-fly strategy backed by pinpoint steering. ♣

—Arnie Katz

(continued from page 69)

frame-by-frame replays and TV-style interludes between half-innings give *EWB* the look of a televised sporting event.

No baseball game has better sound. The opening rendition of "The Stars and Stripes Forever" (in the Amiga edition) is the best ever heard on a computer game. A synthetic voice announces each batter, just like at the ballpark.

Trimmings like these make *EWB* highly enjoyable for casual fans who want action plus a taste of stat simulation in a single package. Electronic Arts plans to issue a revised version,

*Earl Weaver Baseball 1.5*, to improve some of the program's weaker areas.

## What About "Next Year"?

Electronic baseball, both action contests and simulations, will remain a fertile field for video- and computer-game publishers for many years to come. At least two major games are scheduled to debut in the next year, *Pure-Stat Baseball* and *TV Sports: Baseball* (Cinemaware). It is almost certain that several more games, which probably are already in development, will also appear.

The work of baseball scientists like Bill James, Tom Boswell and Pete

Palmer has revealed many previously obscure aspects of America's favorite sport. New statistical baseball games will surely reflect some of their discoveries.

Video-baseball games will progress too. More powerful consoles will allow even better sound and graphics than in current carts. The impending shift of some video-game design to stateside companies should also spur work on more baseball software.

The games described in this article will help all Walter Mitty's answer the annual siren call to take up bats, gloves and balls. The electronic pennant beckons. ♣

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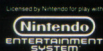
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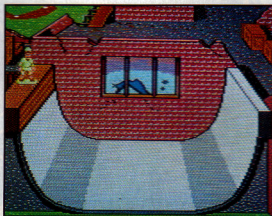
### 720° Mindscape

Version: Commodore 64 (\$29.95)

The game 720° is a solid adaptation of the Atari arcade game that brought the joys of skateboarding to the computer-game universe. As with the coin-op, the C-64 version of 720° was designed as the ultimate theme park for joystick jammers. In addition to the sprawling Main Park, with its obstacles, ramps, sidewalk and blacktop, the layout includes four specialized event areas and a quartet of shops selling everything from helmets to knee-pads.

The player starts out with \$100, to be used to buy equipment and a skateboard. Points are accumulated by performing spins and jumps in the Main Park, while avoiding cars, motorcycles, Frisbees and the world famous "Skate or Die" bees, who turn up when the player is almost out of time. Points are used to gain access to the four different event areas located at various points throughout the park: Downhill, Slalom, Jump and Ramp. After completing all four events, the player advances to the next skill level.

Based on the successful arcade game, Mindscape's 720° places you in a wild skateboarding competition, though from the safety of your computer desk.



This little piece of skateboard heaven also contains four shops, each selling a specific piece of equipment: skateboards, helmets, shoes or pads. The player can make only one purchase from each shop on any given level. A new skateboard permits higher jumps, and the shoes improve speed, while helmets and pads protect the jammer from being wiped out in a crash.

Jumps and spins are the basic medium for obtaining points. On spins, the more the player-character spins, the more points the player earns. A single spin is a 180° worth 100 points; a double spin is a 360° worth 200 points; a triple is a 540° good for 300 points; and the ultimate, a 720°, is a quadruple spin valued at 500 points.

With the exception of the Ramp event, which is seen in a modified side perspective, 720° uses an angled overhead viewpoint in

all events and in the Main Park. The graphics are sound, if unspectacular, and the player-character animations are excellent. The Main Park is the most visually impressive part of the game, with its realistic layout, giant ramps and amusing obstacles. The three downhill events, on the other hand, don't have much to distinguish them.

The three downhill events are the Downhill, the Slalom and the Jump. The Downhill is a race against time, down a series of connected ramps built on stilts over water. The ramp sections are slightly separated, so the skater must jump from one to another. In the Slalom, the player-character also skateboards downhill, this time passing through a series of gates positioned along a solid rampway. The Jump event also sends the skateboarder down a ramp, but this one has both bonus markers (land on them for extra points) and water hazards, which must be vaulted with perfectly timed leaps. Obviously, these events are much too similar. They produce a visual redundancy that keeps 720° from being memorable.

The Ramp event is the standard semicircular "concrete tidal wave," familiar to all fans of skateboarding. The skater starts out by riding down along the curve, building momentum, then shooting up the other side, into the air. While in the air, practiced jammers can execute spins, handstands, slides and skating handstands for points.

Beyond the uninspired downhill events, the biggest problem faced by 720° is the fact that it must compete with Kosaka, Landrum & Bunch's classic C-64 version of *Skate or Die* (Electronic Arts). Although the 1986 copyright notice tells us that Atari's skateboarding coin-op predated and probably inspired *Skate or Die*, the brute fact is that *Skate or Die* does virtually everything better than 720°.

Thus, 720° is a modestly successful program and diehard skateboarders will probably want to check it out. But the sport was recreated better in the earlier program.

—Bill Kunkel

Mindscape, 3444 Dundee Road  
Northbrook, IL 60062, (312) 480-7667

## Galactic Conqueror

### Titus

Versions: Amiga (\$44.95), Atari ST (\$44.95),  
Commodore 64 (\$39.95), IBM PC (\$44.95)

The fate of the galaxy is again in the hands of one fighter pilot, as *Galactic Conqueror* is highly reminiscent of the old *Star Raiders* scenario. A map of the inhabited galaxy shows the encroachment of rebel-captured planets on a central base, and

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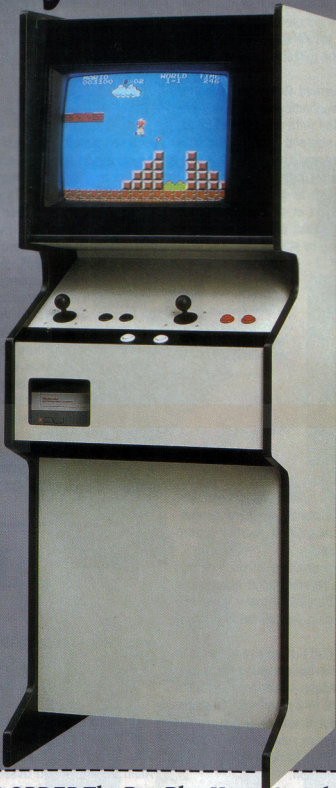
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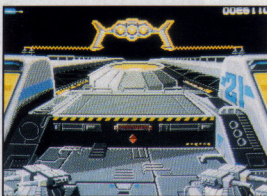
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the intrepid hero must do battle wherever possible to hold the enemy back.

However, these similarities are superficial; *Galactic Conqueror* diverges from the older title significantly. The primary object is to protect Earth's foremost military base, Gallion; and to make this feasible, the fighter pilot has unlimited lives. Even this lengthened lifespan won't help much to eliminate enemy forces from each planetary location in a strategic and efficient manner. The pilot has to master the techniques and weapons available in the super-fighter, the Thunder Cloud II. To help the computerist, the accompanying handbook recommends some winning strategies. It also provides a brief background of the rebellion and details about the military equipment available to the hero and to the opposition.

It's a good thing the fighter pilot is armed with such superior information. The enemy is much more sophisticated than any encountered in *Star Raiders*. They are armed with a variety of ships, robots, mines and missile launchers. The size and nature of the enemy fleet at each rebel-controlled base is available through a surveillance probe implemented via the report map.

A three-tiered battle scenario replaces the dangerous hyperspace jumps of previous games. The battles start at ground level, then go into the upper atmosphere, and finally take place in space. All feature essentially classic shoot-everything-in-sight game play, with minor variations.



The graphics in the Amiga version of Titus' *Galactic Conqueror* are awesome, making you feel you're actually in the heat of battle.

There is no complicated cockpit simulation to learn. The fighter, maneuvered by joystick or keyboard arrows, is in center-screen, and enemy mines, missiles and meteorites constantly erupt from somewhere in the line of flight. The player uses either joystick button or the space bar to fire at the opposition.

Thunder Cloud II is equipped with a protective shield, but this is destroyed if hit often or hard. An on-screen gauge reports the condition of the shield, and when the protection finally goes, the pilot is teleported at once to the mothership. An unlimited number of fighters is available.

The mothership drops the Thunder Cloud II from space for each tier of battle. On the ground level, missile-launching craters—invariably accompanied by hovering missiles—and various robots and mines appear over the close horizon. In a nice bit of graphics, the ship's shadow sometimes paces the action when the Cloud dives to strafe a crater. Once rebel ground forces are subdued, the mothership picks up the Cloud, zaps it and its shields back into good shape, and launches it into the atmospheric mission.

This throws the ship into full dogfight mode. The planetoid's horizon spins wildly around the Thunder Cloud II, as more mines and missiles, now accompanied with enemy fighters and other paraphernalia, pop out of the middle distance.

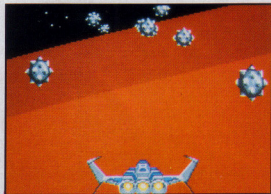
After the ship's refurbishment to repair all damages, the third tier takes the battle into space. This is the Cloud's opportunity to clean up the last of the enemy troops in that locale and possibly get a shot at eliminating one of the four Imperial enemy ships. Then the player consults the map to find the next place to head off the rebel forces.

All computer systems use the function keys to pause the game

in process, interrupt a fight to look at the map, store or restore a saved map of a conflict situation or end the game.

The Amiga version is graphically rich in both detail and atmosphere. The mothership is awesome, and during battle over an

You'll face enemy ships, missile-launching craters and meteor showers in your quest to save the universe in *Galactic Conqueror*.



occupied planet, the scenic details are quite attractive. Not only is the coloration of ground and sky different from planet to planet, but a moon may swing through the sky when the fighter is headed in appropriate directions. The probe map has a glorious starfield, plus an appropriately high-tech readout on enemy ships and equipment. The enemy is voracious. Every view of the star map seems to show an overwhelming forward movement by the rebel forces.

The graphics on a PC (or compatible), limited to CGA colors and resolution, are correspondingly less smooth. Targets have a disappearing habit of disappearing when hit before an explosion appears on screen. There is no visible shield gauge, and the star map is incomprehensible. However, there are EGA and Hercules graphics options available. There's also a Tandy 1000 graphic option, but this seems to be identical to the CGA setting.

*Galactic Conqueror* is fast-moving and easy to play, though strategically daunting. But the basic game play tends to get repetitious. It's the graphics that really make the difference here, giving the game variety, and making it more pleasurable for the gamer.

—Ross Chamberlain

Titus Software, 20432 Corisco Street  
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## Final Assault

Epyx


Versions: Amiga (\$19.95), Apple IIGS (\$19.95), Atari ST (\$19.95), Commodore 64 (\$19.95), IBM PC (\$19.95)

**F**inal Assault is not a war simulation or reenactment of the last stand at the Alamo, but rather a unique mountain-climbing simulation. This game, developed in France by Alain Violon, Harold Ovsec and Michel Roywer of Infogrames, provides the opportunity to take on the adventure and thrill of mountaineering with none of the risk. *Final Assault* introduces the concepts of mountain climbing, teaches the use of different types of mountaineering equipment, and defines the terminology of the sport.

The manual begins with a description of the Alps and a brief but interesting history of mountain climbing. The packaging presents photos of the Atari ST game screens, and these are beautiful. However, the IBM version's graphics are also quite good. *Final Assault* supports CGA and Hercules graphics modes on the PC, and it will run on EGA systems as well, in the lower-resolution CGA mode.



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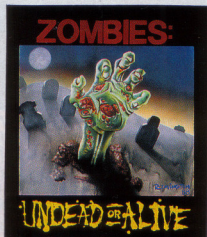
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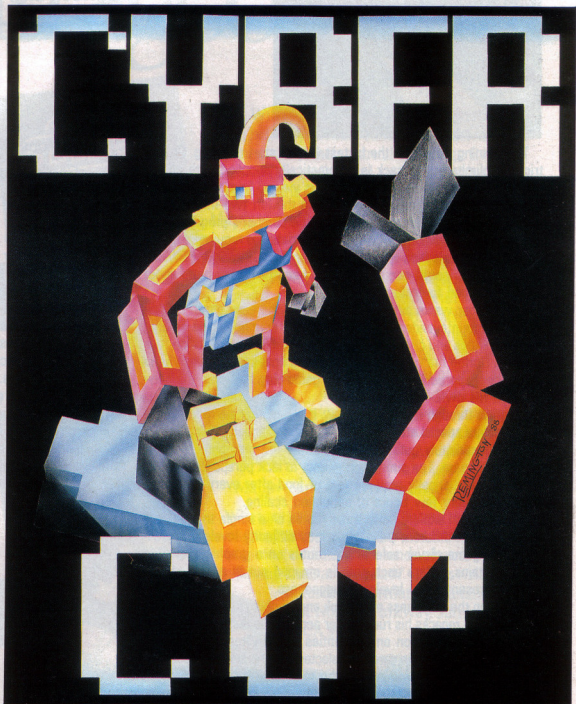
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Although the PC version was tested for this review, a quick look at the Atari ST version of *Final Assault* revealed slightly better graphics, playability and much better sound due to the Atari ST's comparatively advanced music capabilities. The Commodore version seems to contain all the same game elements, but of course the graphics don't compare with those of its 16-bit cousins.

After graphics and play mode (keyboard or joystick) selection, the title picture of a mountaineer hanging perilously from a mountain side is followed by the introductory music. The space bar stops the music and sends control to the opening menu. From here the user selects a training session, resumes a previous climbing effort, or chooses to hike one, two or three courses in this excursion.



The complexity of mountaineering is quickly realized as you take your climbers to the peak in Epyx's *Final Assault*.

The training session is the fastest way to start climbing. On this trip, the climber's rucksack is automatically supplied with all the necessities for the outing. The climber is viewed from side perspective, with the main play area occupying the left two-thirds of the display. To the right is an overview of the climber's progress relative to the mountainside. When special attention is required, a close-up of the climber's face appears to the far right. He shivers, sweats and has "idea icons" pop up near his head to supply hints about what is needed for safe progress.

The climber walks over snow and ice in the easy parts. He can scale icy mountainsides after attaching his crampons, but smooth climbing shoes and chalk are required for efficient progress on rock facades. During the training session dialog boxes pop up with hints on the best approach. During regular game play, however, the player is on his own.

Progress through the game is slow. It seems that every few steps taken require special attention. First the mountaineer gets cold, then almost immediately gets too hot, requires the crampons to climb on ice and so on. The simulation seems to lack perspective at this point. It unrealistically requires rest or food after every few steps instead of every few hours of simulated scaling.

The user can explore up to three routes on a single trek in a full game, and six different trails of various difficulty levels are available. The game player selects the routes on a graphic display of the mountains, where each path is mapped out in a dashed line. Icons represent three levels of ruggedness.

Based on the harshness of the trek and climbing conditions ahead, the user then repacks his rucksack or accepts the defaults presented. The proper combination and quantities of such items as ice pins, ropes, food, etc. must be carefully selected and the icons representing each item are fully explained in the manual. There is a trade off between weight (and associated rapidity of tiring) and safety. If the climber takes off without the proper equipment, he risks a serious mishap.

The PC version of the game uses a joystick or the keyboard. Joysticks for the PC require a calibration sequence, or the user has to put up with holding the stick at an awkward angle. This calibration procedure is lacking in *Final Assault*, so it is more playable from a keyboard. It seems a bit odd that the user interface consists of

dialog boxes and a "mouse pointer," yet it has no mouse support.

The pointer moves far too quickly under keyboard control on a fast PC, making it difficult to establish selections. The game appears to be much more playable on a slow XT-compatible PC system than a speedy AT.

The lack of high-resolution graphics and proper joystick support is somewhat disappointing, and detracts from the game's many strengths. It all combines for an ordinary, but not extraordinary, gaming experience that could have been much better with just a few improvements.

*Final Assault* is a genuinely unique game, and it deserves high marks for this. It provides many hours of entertainment that is educational and informative, as it couples a challenging and dangerous sport with armchair comfort. —Matthew J.W. Ratcliff

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## Crazy Cars

Titus

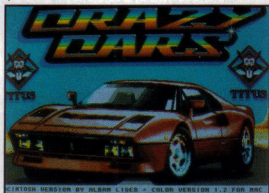
Versions: Amiga (\$39.95), Atari ST (\$39.95),  
Commodore 64 (\$39.95), IBM PC (\$39.95),  
Macintosh (\$39.95), Macintosh II (\$39.95)

**C**razy Cars is a totally "pedestrian" remake of a dozen or so earlier auto games using the *Pole Position*-type perspective and play mechanic. Players maneuver a Mercedes 560 across several landscapes in hopes of beating the clock and trading up to a faster vehicle.

*Crazy Cars* uses a simple four-command play system for steering. Moving the joystick forward, or hitting the corresponding key on the keyboard, increases the car's speed; pulling the stick back slams on the brakes. The car is steered left or right by moving the joystick in the appropriate direction.

On all but the Amiga version, the game is broken down into three scenarios: Arizona, Florida and Space Shuttle. *Crazy Cars* on the Amiga includes an additional three stages: Mountain, Malibu and New York. There are no significant play variations among these scenarios. The major difference is the background visuals.

Titus has taken the *Pole Position* perspective and brought it to computer screens everywhere with *Crazy Cars*.



The player is a participant in a cross-country race and must complete each of three laps within the preset time limit to qualify for the next lap. Completing three consecutive laps entitles the player to trade in his or her vehicle for a swifter buggy. The first trade-up is to a Porsche 911, and the second nets the player a Lamborghini Countach. Hitting either another car or the side of the road (it is

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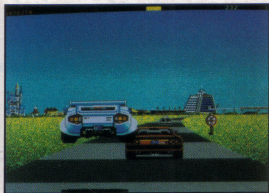
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impossible to leave the highway) slows down the player's car. The terrain consists of the highway, with its simple turns and bumps, and the shifting background graphics that decorate the horizon line. The highway is not realistically drawn in any of the versions. Instead of a white line down the center of the road, the highway scrolls forward in the variably shaded patches that are all-too-familiar to veteran computer gamers.



Catch air in your expensive sports car as you race against the clock in Titus' *Crazy Cars*.

*Crazy Cars* doesn't promise anything new, but the Amiga and ST versions at least offer pleasant graphics. The IBM PC version, tested on a Tandy 1000, however, was a nightmare. The car is slotted into the screen as if out of a cut-and-paste program, complete with a square, black frame. Although this border disappears when the car swerves left or right, having it come and go like a cubical Cheshire cat is even less desirable. There aren't even any other vehicles on the highway at the stages we tested!

Bottom line: there's nothing in *Crazy Cars* that Gamestar didn't do better almost a decade ago with their 16K *Baja Buggies*.

—Bill Kunkel

Titus Software, 20432 Corisco Street  
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## Zany Golf

### Electronic Arts

Versions: Apple IIGS (\$39.95), Amiga (\$39.95), Atari ST (\$39.95), IBM PC (\$39.95)

**W**ow. *Zany Golf* by Will Harvey and his Sandcastle design team is not only the early lock for Computer Game of the Year, it is a masterpiece—the finest product Electronic Arts has published in years.

What does *Zany Golf* have that earlier miniature-golf simulations lacked? Stunning graphics, a brilliant interface and internal consistency, all reprocessed through a filter of wild imagination. Imagine Rube Goldberg, Walt Disney, Rod Serling and Timothy Leary collaborating on the construction of a putt-putt course, and the result would probably look a lot like Will Harvey's *Zany Golf*.

Successful simulations duplicate the romance and excitement of an experience, while smoothing out its rougher edges. *Zany Golf* perfectly captures the ambiance of miniature golf, from the texture of the artificial turf to the varnished gleam of the hardwood floor, while eliminating awkward or physically impossible shots. Unlike real courses, you'll never have to putt through your legs here, shoot one-handed or wedge the club against the perimeter board. To strike the ball, the player positions a cursor on it, clicks, then draws back an invisible clubhead to determine the impact of the stroke.

Each of the course's nine holes are seen from the same perspective, a two-thirds viewpoint so realistic it almost feels like you're standing there. Every hole is preceded by a slick-looking title card and a single-screen drawing of its layout. The actual greens extend

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over several screens, but the golfer can access the entire hole by scrolling in the desired direction.

The course presents a catalog of layouts, from the traditional (Windmill, Walls) to the exotic (Fans, Magic Carpet, Pinball, Castle)



Miniature-golf lunacy is brought to your computer in the strange but wonderful *Zany Golf* by Electronic Arts.

to the weird (Hamburger, Anthill, Energy). Several of these holes include elements not possible in the "real" world, like the moving hole in the Anthill layout and the *Marble Madness*-like Magic Carpet.

Even among so many virtues, *Zany Golf*'s visuals stand out as its most impressive feature. The color, texture and style of the drawings perfectly invoke a technicolor miniature-golf course from somebody's wildest dreams. From the introductory screen—a downward scan of the course's signpost—to the final hole—a complete mad scientist's lab full of puzzles, mazes and dangerous equipment—*Zany Golf*'s graphics project a pastel neon cool that is irresistible.

Will Harvey and his Sandcastles have created a fantastic game in *Zany Golf*, a perfect blend of the classical and the innovative that begs for future course disks.

—Bill Kunkel

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## Ancient Art of War at Sea

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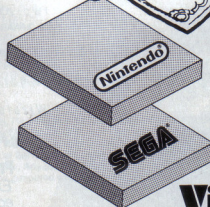
Versions: Apple II (\$44.95), Macintosh (\$44.95), IBM PC (\$44.95)

**B**roderbund's latest release in the *Ancient Art of War* series covers one of the most romanticized periods of history, the Age of the Fighting Sail. Countless movies about these wooden ships have told us about the iron men that commanded them. The *Ancient Art of War at Sea* mixes elements of derring-do from these idealized visions with strategic planning and tactical action to produce an enthralling game.

The basic game features 11 different campaigns. In each of these the player competes with one of the six available opponents in an attempt to rule the seas. Both historical and fictional encounters are included, and an on-disk campaign generator allows the player to expand on these basic scenarios.

The three varieties of available ships represent the three major types that sailed during this era. Frigates are the fastest of the group. Though lightly armed and armored, their swiftness makes them very useful. Ships of the Line are slower, but form the backbone of the fleet. They carry a large number of cannons and even one carefully fired volley can wreak havoc on an opponent. Flagships, the third type, are slightly more powerful and serve as the headquarters for the admirals that direct the fleet. Squadrons group from one to three

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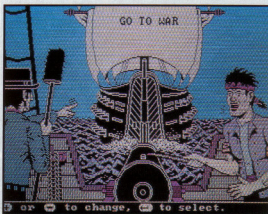
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of these ships to form the primary maneuver group.

Winning a game usually requires sinking all opposing flagships or capturing the enemy's crown, but sometimes an overwhelmed enemy will simply surrender rather than face more destruction. These objectives require moving one's forces with a good strategic plan in mind, and tactical control to out-maneuver the enemy in close combat.

None of the six opponents are pushovers. Even the easiest—Thor Foote, reckless tactics and all—provides a challenging game. The other five, based on true historical personalities, are even more difficult. Some, like the legendary Lord Horatio Nelson, are nearly



Broderbund's *Ancient Art of War at Sea* tests the player's ability to captain a ship into battle against tough adversaries.

impossible to beat even by the most skillful player.

Control of game functions is straightforward. The mouse serves this function well in the Macintosh version. The other versions use the keyboard equally effectively. The campaign creator uses the same type of interface and allows the quick creation of a new scenario.

The main play screen features an overhead view of the playfield with a command area included at either top or bottom of the screen. Special messages, such as ship sightings, also appear in the command area. When a ship-to-ship encounter occurs, the player switches to one of the two tactical views to control the action. The far view shows a broad overview of the entire tactical situation, allowing the player to maneuver his forces in preparation for close contact. Then the player changes to the close view. This zooms in on one area of the map to show the ships in detail, permitting more precise maneuvering. Should two ships come in close enough contact to allow it, the player can go to the boarding screen and command an attempt to take over the enemy ship and even engage in hand-to-hand combat.

The player can sit back and let the computer carry out nearly any action. Although this technique is sometimes useful to prevent sensory overload, the skillful commander will still want direct con-

Though you can let the computer take control over the action, you can take the reins yourself to compare the effects of your own tactics.



trol over most encounters, bringing to bear his or her own experience and tactical skill.

Many game factors are adjustable. Ports can be set to repair ships quicker, the level of the player's crew can be chosen, and even the speed of game play can be altered. These options allow a player to customize the game to taste.

Dave and Barry Murry, the designers and programmers of *Ancient Art of War at Sea*, combined talents with Lawrence Ertel on the lavish instruction manual included with the game. It is extensive and explains the controls of the game and proper fighting tactics for the period. The manual also provides historical background material to give the reader a better understanding of this important time. The information included in the handsome booklet makes good reading for landlubbers or seafarers. It brings to life a romantic era, introduces characters and equipment, and provides even old salts with a vast amount of data to enrich the playing experience. However, just in case all that reading is not to your taste, the manual also comes equipped with a quick-start reference card to keep the action moving. Also, the graphics are intricately detailed and provide a nice backdrop for the ongoing action.

The game, although very enjoyable, is not without flaws. The simple goal of capturing the enemy's crown is not really related to the true action in this era; its inclusion is more an expedient to game play. Limiting squadron sizes, while necessary if the player is to have any control, does not allow for faithful reenactment of the large-scale actions common in that era. Ships in the game tend to act more like separate entities than like the unified formations that typified a successful navy.

Fortunately the game's strengths far outshine its weaknesses. The Murry brothers successfully built upon their previous work to produce a game of high calibre. It is one of the few entertainments where a player might consistently lose, yet still want to come back for more. And victory, when it comes, is ever so sweet, which makes the whole experience worthwhile. —R. Bradley Andrews

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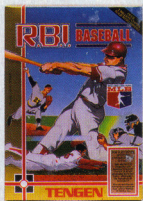


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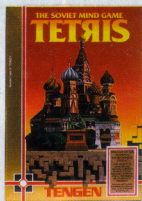
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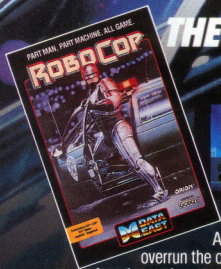
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