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ISSUE #216

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### 34 | D.O.A. Girls Gone Wild(er)

Maybe you can only think of 18 reasons why you want to play Dead or Alive Xtreme Beach Volleyball 2. But the head of Tecmo's Team Ninja studio, Tomonobu Itagaki explains why his latest game has more to offer than just fun on the beach.

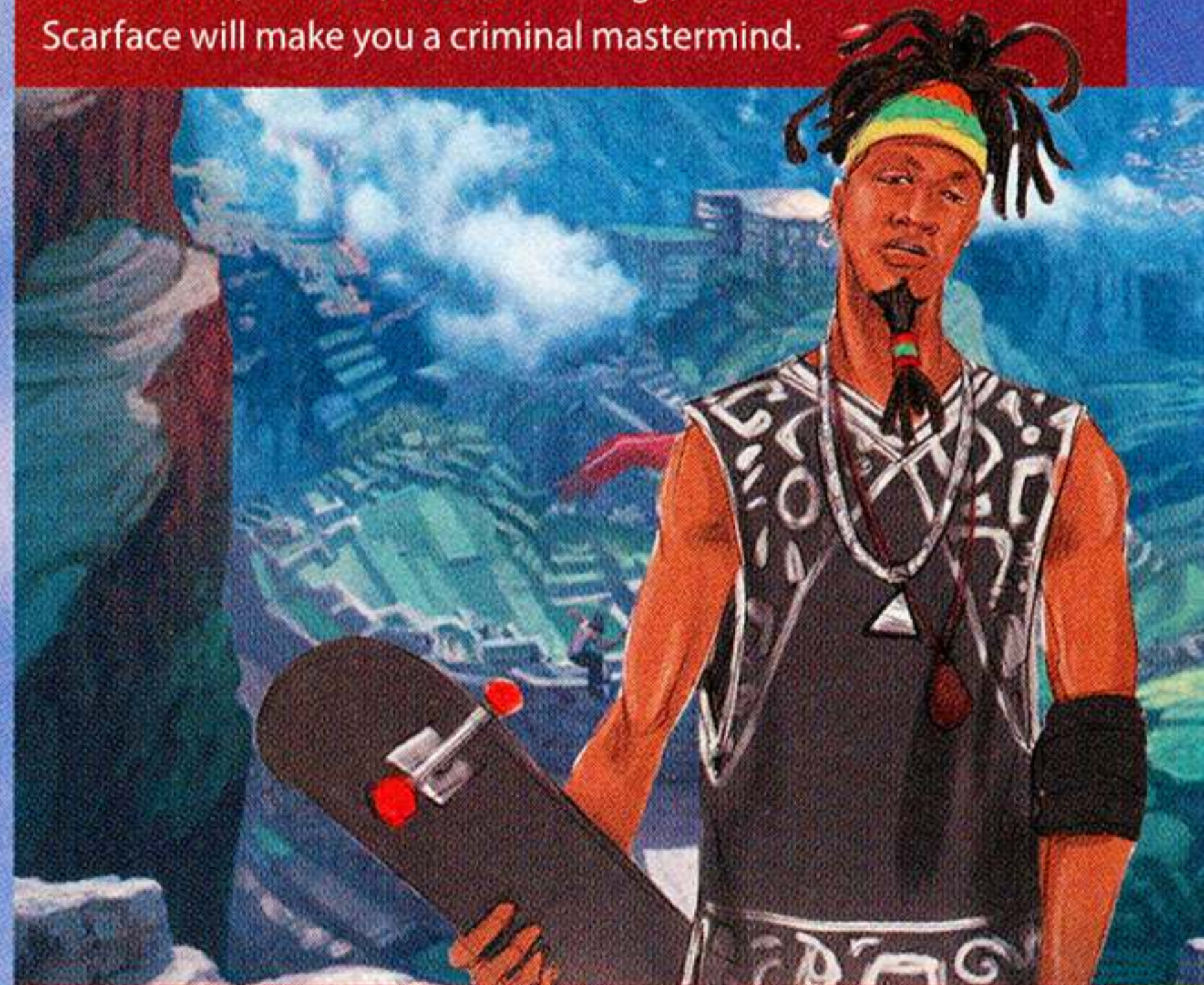


Cover art: Tecmo



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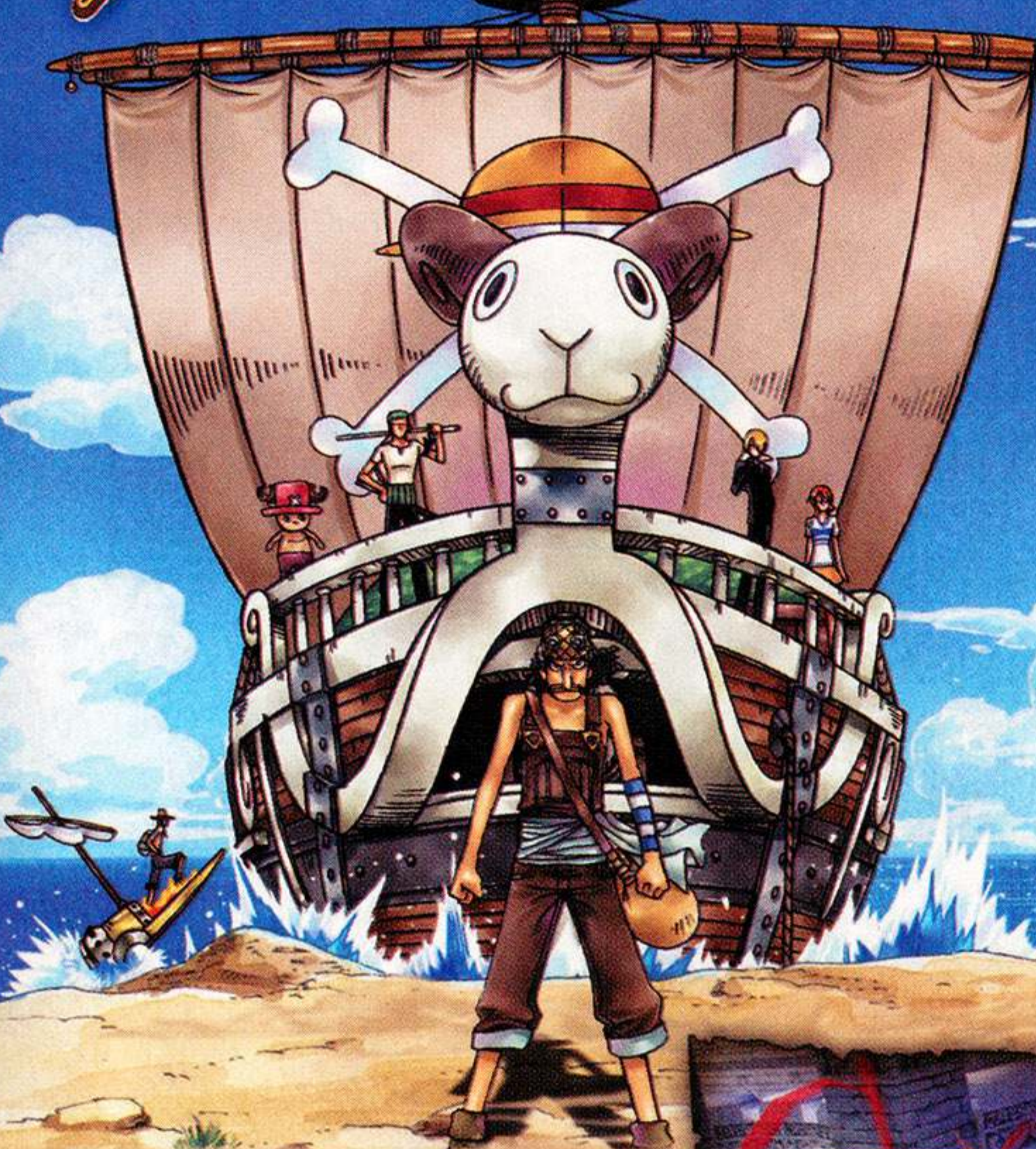
Here's a first-person shooter that just might blow away the competition. Let us Prey.



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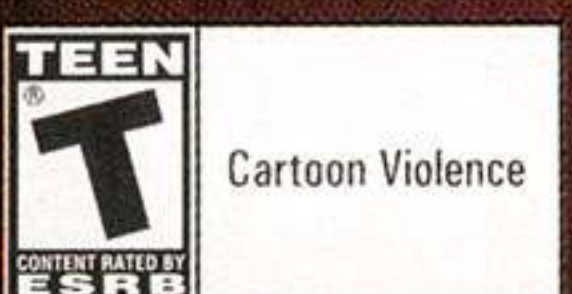


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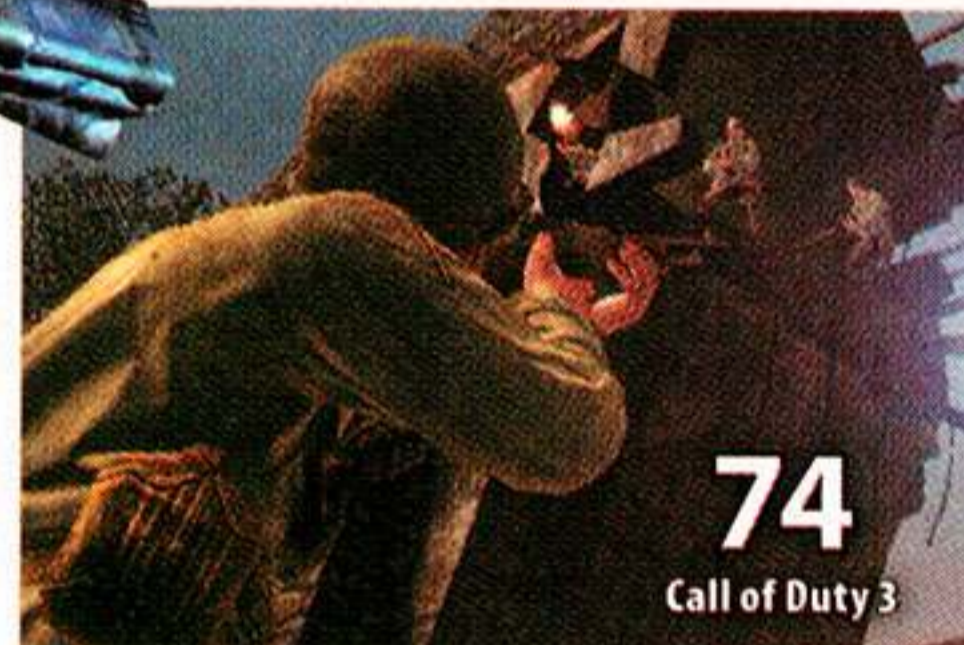
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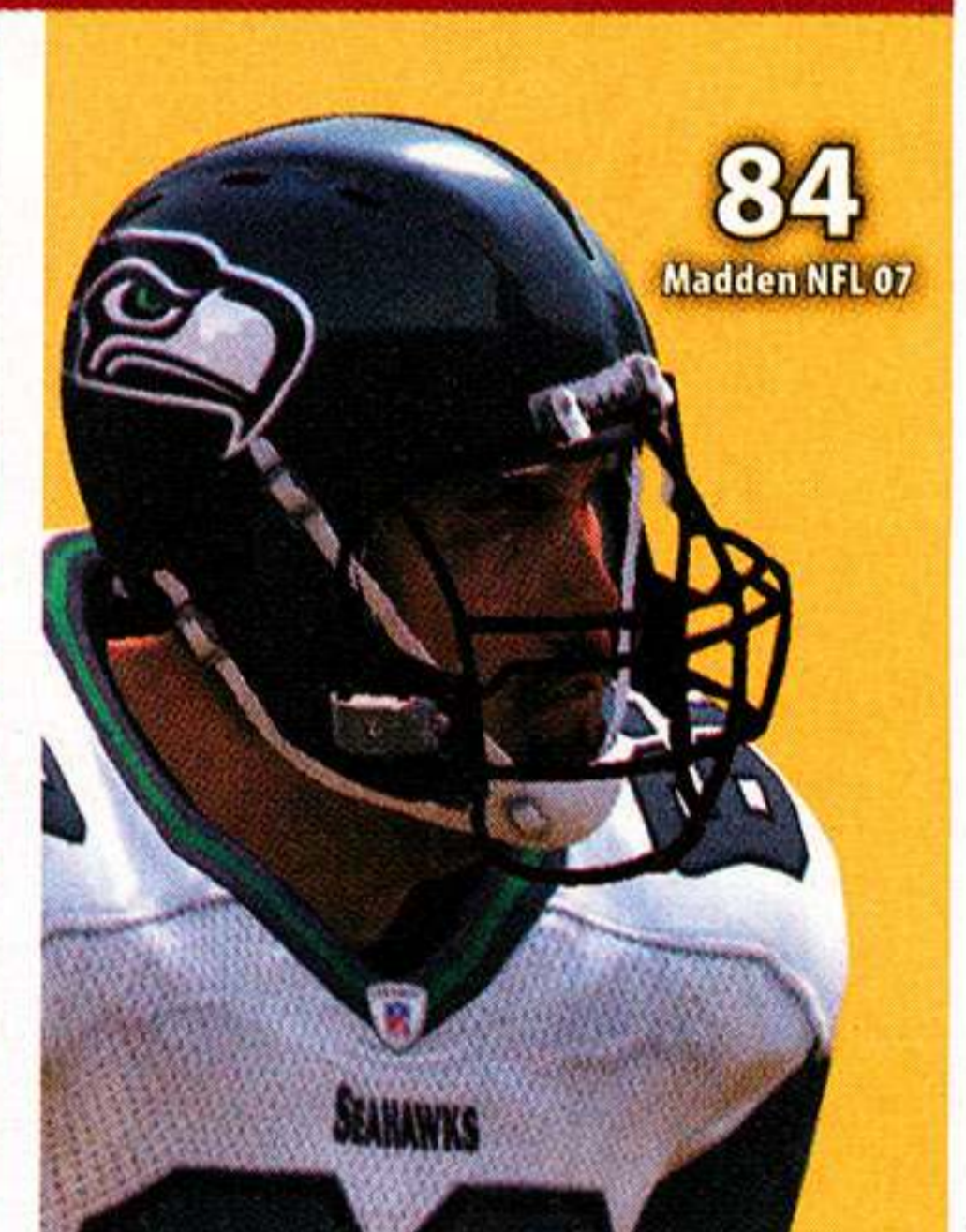
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# HEAD 2 HEAD

## Let Them Eat Cheesecake

**D**ead or Alive Xtreme 2 may strike some as a tasty bit of video-game cheesecake...and it truly is. But who knew back in 2003 (except maybe Tecmo's Tomonobu Itagaki), when the women of DOA shifted from kicking our butts to kicking sand in our faces, that Xtreme Beach Volleyball just might become the harbinger of new trends in gaming.

Game systems may be getting more complex, but that's not keeping game companies from preparing to embrace the average Joe—not "Joe Gamer" but just plain "Joe." Nintendo, of course, has been most publicly championing the move to open up games to the masses even literally committing its next generation of video-game entertainment, the Wii, to become a sort of "people's" game system.

You can see it happening in the software, too. RedOctane's pick-up-and-play Guitar Hero blew up in 2006, and now everyone wants to be a rock and roll star. Release lists are packed with titles to entice the common man: Brain Age, Family Guy, Pirates of the Caribbean, Lego Star Wars, World Series of Poker, World Pool Championship, and another round of Dance Dance Revolution.

Genres traditionally popular with the broader audience are feeling the shift, too. Sports games are more popular than ever, and this year, racing games constitute the largest single category of games on the horizon. The ESA must welcome the respite.

With the new era of video gaming prepares to kick into high gear with the PS3 and the Wii launches this fall, maybe now's a good time for the GamePros to enjoy a little sun on the DOA Xtreme beach—it's about to get much more crowded.

The GamePros  
Oakland, CA  
letters@gamepro.com



## PS3 Pummeled By Pricing

May 9, 2006, E<sup>3</sup>...Nintendo re-names the Revolution the Wii, but to the dismay of most gamers, we hear zero big news from Sony regarding the PS3.

May 10, 2006, E<sup>3</sup>...gamers eagerly await the PlayStation 3 price point. Suddenly, it all goes downhill when the announcement is made that the standard PS3 will be \$499 with the upgraded version costing a whopping \$599! The millions of gamers who anticipated the glory that the PS3 would bring to the next-generation console wars were shocked and devastated. Appalled by Sony's outrageous price point and suffering from severe bouts of depression, gamers throughout the universe turned to the next best system for the money...the Xbox 360, now being looked upon as the savior by those who were crushed under \$600 of pure sadness. The skyrocketing price of the PS3 has greatly diminished the appeal of one of the most

highly anticipated gaming consoles in recent memory.

► Talen—Via Internet

## Preorder Precautions

I want the PS3 as much as the next gamer, but I'll resist the urge to preorder it because even though Sony is more reliable, more experienced, and has had its system in development longer than expected, it is bound to have bugs. All gamers should know that these virtual creepy crawlers rear their nasty heads even in the most well-designed gaming systems. People preordered the Xbox 360 and wiped it right off the store shelves. However, after only a few weeks, horror stories about 360s crashing, over heating, and scratching game discs began to surface. Similar bugs will probably occur in the PS3. Be patient, wait a couple of weeks, maybe a month, and check the abundant gaming forums to see if any kinks in the PS3 system are being reported. I hope my fellow gamers of the world avoid the



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mistakes that others have made in the past.

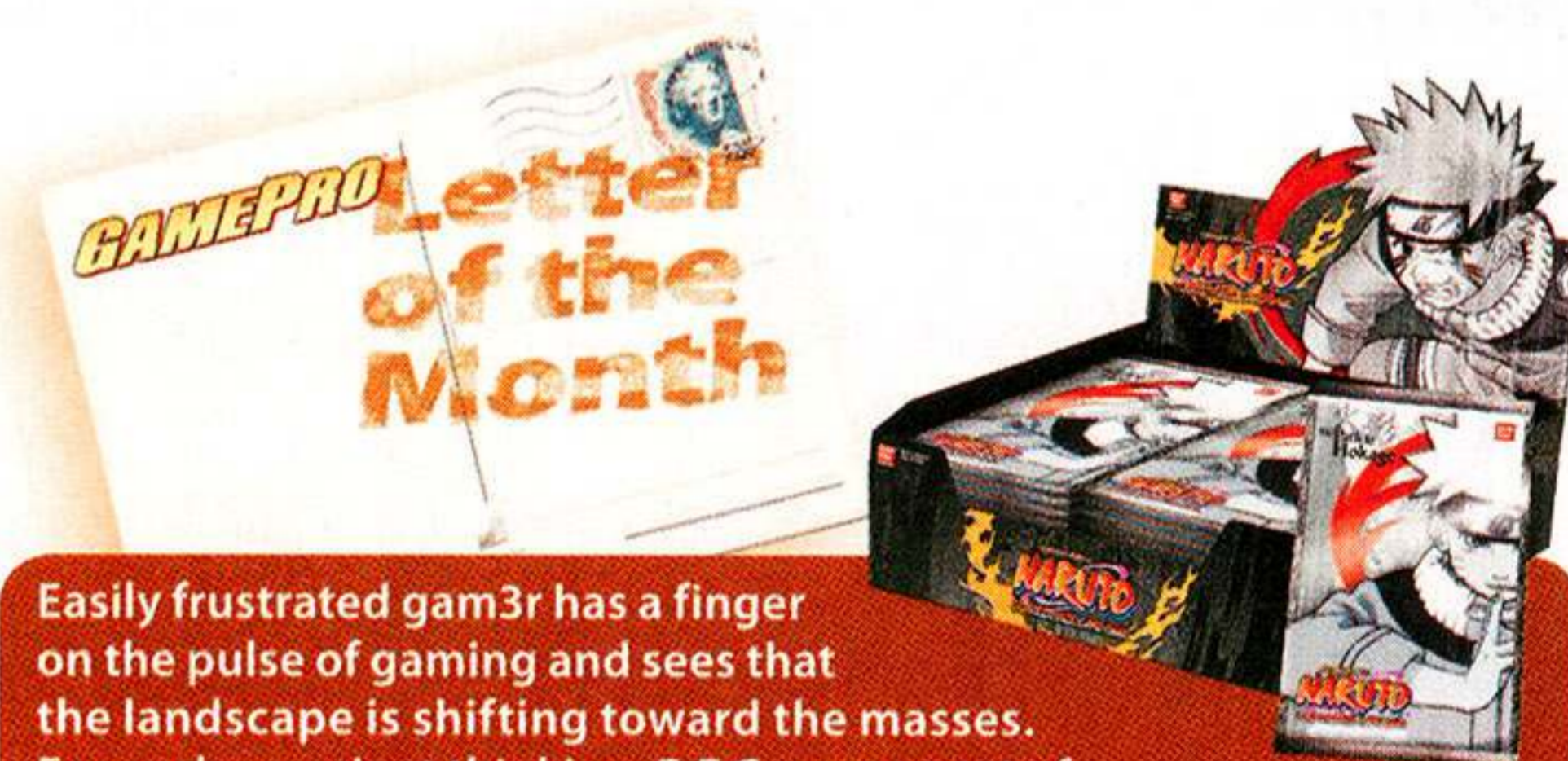
► Trinidad—Via Internet

Sage advice, and most gamers should have sufficient time to see what happens. It's already clear that even if you preorder a PS3, you'll wait several months to actually get one—just like with the Xbox 360. Sony's shipping

just 2 million to North America at launch, a veritable drop in the bucket.

## More Wars

**Why are most war games set during World War I and World War II? Yes, those were the biggest wars ever fought in human history, and yes, it's ever so fun to destroy Nazis, but fighting similar battles**



Easily frustrated gam3r has a finger on the pulse of gaming and sees that the landscape is shifting toward the masses. For such prescient thinking, E.F.G. earns a set of Naruto "The Path to Hokage" booster packs.

## Keeping Challenge in Check

I've been playing video games for years now, and even though some gamers may disagree with me, game developers must understand that insane challenge is not the key to making a game great (or fun)! In the past, with games like Centipede, Pac-Man, Galaga, and countless other quarter-munchers, one of the biggest factors was to present an immersive, entertaining challenge, that would keep you coming back for more until the tokens ran out or your eyes started bleeding from not blinking. Most of the greatest games in recent times (Half-Life 2, Halo 2, Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas, The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion, and others) have not presented a challenge that most gamers could not get through on their first or second try, nor did they need to. The fact is that gamers enjoy these games because they create immersive worlds to explore and interesting enemies to defeat. Casual gamers and even many hardcore gamers like myself expect a temporary escape from reality or just something fun to keep our minds off work or school for a while, not the endless repetition of (here it comes) an incredibly frustrating, insane challenge.

► easily frustrated gam3r—Via Internet

Good point. Arcade games were built for mass-market consumption, while console games are built for long-term home play. However, the pendulum is swinging back. The mantra in the industry these days is "games for the mass market," so in the future, expect to see more titles tuned thusly. But we have to say that if you breezed through the games you mentioned above, you are truly hardcore. We admire your mad skills, and contemplating your notion of what constitutes "insane challenge" leaves us shaking in our booties.

MIDGAR DIED...





PlayStation®2

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# HEAD 2 HEAD

over and over again gets boring. Why don't game designers make war games based on different conflicts like the Vietnam War, the Civil War, the Revolutionary War, or even some war fought by a country other than the U.S.? They could even make a war game where aliens invade the Earth. Why, why don't they change the settings to mix it up a bit?

► Chris—Via Internet

The history of war games is no mystery. Conflict: Vietnam, Men of Valor, and Battlefield Vietnam tackle that police action. Romance of the Three Kingdoms, Dynasty Warriors, and even the weird Odama take place in Asian countries. Three little franchises called Doom, Halo, and Quake are tops among space wars. Alien invasion looks to be well covered by Resistance: Fall of Man for the PS3 and Gears of War for the Xbox 360, not to mention Half Life and Duke Nukem. There are even alternative reality war games, such as Castle Wolfenstein and Metal Slug. Only the Civil War and the Revolutionary War have never successfully invaded console systems.

## Anime Angst

You know what really gets on my nerves? The way some companies milk anime sequels! There are

plenty of good anime games in Japan by the time an anime debuts on U.S. TV, but do we get the freshest, most complete games? No! They start the U.S. out with the older, first games of a series and then gradually release the sequels. The Dragon Ball Z series finished in Japan a long time ago, but we get the Budokais 1-3, which feature lame stories and don't have all the characters. But you might as well throw all those away when Budokai Tenkaichi 2 or Super Dragon Ball Z arrive because they feature everything the old games did. Why even make games that aren't cramped? What a waste of time!

► Philip Hanan—Lexington, KY

*Rice Burner responds:*

Philip, those are some pretty bold statements full of simplistic, brash, illogical conclusions. Anime games, whether they're fighters or not, have to follow a certain franchise logic. The game is bound by the established universe of the progenitor anime series. Hence, characters and story arcs that have not yet been touched on by the domestically translated anime versions are pretty much off limits. Releasing games with characters and story plots that haven't been released over here would only

spoil the series and confuse gamers. Regarding the Dragon Ball Z: Budokai game franchise, where the parent anime series has been discontinued, each title builds upon the successes of the others. Without the original Budokai, the sequel would never have materialized. The game development staff would never have had the time to put all the characters, modes, and attacks together. Product development is about innovation. It's about building something and then improving on it in a never-ending cycle. Would you really want a game industry where every product development team just made a single game and then moved on to other things?

## Big Hand for Little Handhelds

Whatever happened to big handhelds and controllers? I'm a 6-foot-5-inch tall, large human being who owns a DS and a PSP. Admittedly, I love the original Nintendo DS, but the only reason I bought it was because it was large and I could hold onto it, although it's still too small. The PSP is an atrocity as far as size and control locations go. My fingers collide on the back, my

knuckles hit the shoulder buttons, and my hand cramps because my thumbs are too long. The only handhelds that are still comfortable to me are the old clunky, grey Game Boy and the Sega GameGear. The only console I've never had a problem with is the Xbox with its



super large original controller—but they stopped making it! Game companies, despite the appeal of small, cute electronics, need to make larger handhelds and controllers as well or face losing less dedicated gamers who share the same problem as me.

► Chris Hand—Via Internet

## Ask the Pros

You got video-game questions? We have answers.



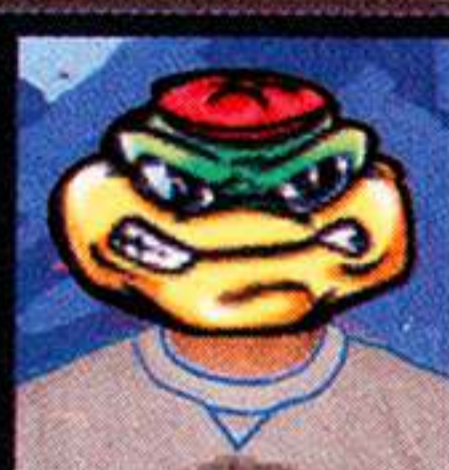
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Sports

**Q: PS2 new releases are \$50 per game. How much will PS3 games cost?—Shaniaup**

A: More than likely, first-party PS3 games will cost \$59.99, which is a \$20 jump from first-party games on the PS2 that usually retail for \$39.99. Obviously, the boost in price is due to the soaring costs of developing games for Sony's next-generation console. Even more worrisome is the speculation that third-party PS3 games will retail for \$69.99, holding out the possibility that special-edition games could cap out at almost \$80! Although no official price announcements have been made yet, count on at least a \$60 average,

which matches the standard Xbox 360 price tag. If Sony goes too far over this mark, it stands to lose a lot of friends!—Mr. Marbles

**Q: Does Microsoft have plans to release a larger hard drive for the 360, and is there even the slightest chance that it will allow future games to utilize HD-DVDs?—OmegaBlack20**

A: Microsoft will definitely release larger hard drives for the Xbox 360—it's only a matter of time. When the base cost of 30 or 40 GB drives reaches all-time low prices, Microsoft will make the switch. As for your HD-DVD question, the

answer is: no. Microsoft has clarified its position on this several times—the HD-DVD add-on drive is for movies only.—Johnny K

**Q: Will the Wii be able to link up with the Nintendo DS?—trak9**

A: The Wii reportedly will have DS-to-Wii connectivity via Wi-Fi, however, Nintendo has yet to reveal what that connectivity is exactly. There are several unverified reports that the Wii may be able to download demos for the DS and that the DS will be able to display DS and GBA games via the Wii.—Rice Burner

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# HEAD 2 HEAD



Illustration: Francis Mao

## Goldilocks and the Three Systems

When I look at the three new systems I'm reminded of Goldilocks sitting down to try the porridge at the home of the Three Bears. Sony's prices are scorching hot, especially when you consider the games don't look much different, if at all, from Microsoft's. Maybe I'll get a PS3 when the price drops and use it as a Blu-ray DVD player, if that format catches on. I can't wait to get the Wii in my hands and play with it, especially with the big Nintendo franchise games, but the graphics leave me a bit cold. Which means Microsoft is looking just right. It has got a good price point for games that look great, and it's getting the kinds of games that I want to play. Mmmm...porridge!

► Erin Hoffman—St. Paul, MN

## Communicate



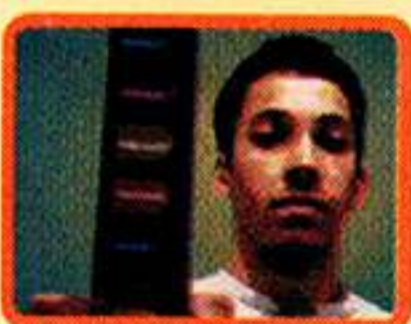
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E-mail the *GamePro* editors at "editor's name"@gamepro.com or check out their blogs!

## READER REVIEW

### Metal Gear Solid Digital Graphic Novel (PSP)

If you're not a fan of the Metal Gear series, you'll probably rather pass on this one. It's not a game, but the story line is awesome, and the digital graphic novel makes a great transition from the comic book to UMD—*CowboyKiller*

FUN FACTOR  
4.0

### The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion (Xbox 360)

One doesn't need a 150 IQ to get into this game. It's easily accessible to all gamers whether they're into armed combat, casting magic, stealth, or simple exploration. If you ignore Oblivion just because you don't think you'll understand how to play it correctly, you're missing out.—*kingconker64*

FUN FACTOR  
5.0

### The Outfit (Xbox 360)

Mercenaries meets Call of Duty seems like a mix that can't possibly end up badly. Add in a comic mentality and you can't miss. Sadly, Relic did. Trying to drive a Jeep in this game is actually harder than it is in real life.—*BootScaper*

FUN FACTOR  
2.5

### Hitman: Blood Money (PS2)

This is by far the best Hitman game I've ever played. It was great, and I'll delete my save file just to play it again.—*havik*

FUN FACTOR  
5.0

Agree? Disagree? Or just think you can do better? Write your own user reviews at [GamePro.com](http://GamePro.com), and maybe you'll see your opinions here next.

# ART ATTACK!

J. Edminston, Ontario, Canada

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# BUYERS BEWARE

Summer is always a dry spell when it comes to gaming, but that doesn't mean issues facing gamers are in short supply. This month, we bring to light the DS Lite's dead pixels, examine World of Warcraft's realm transfers, and discuss AMD's generous price cuts on processors.



## DOA DS

The robust launch of the DS Lite in June bodes well for the continued success of Nintendo's handheld. One slight hiccup, however, was the numerous reports of dead pixels found on DS Lite screens. Granted, dead pixels are common, in varying degrees, in all electronics with screen technology, but the original DS appeared far less prone to the problem than the Lite has so far. So what could be the cause?

More than likely, it has to do with the new screen the Lite uses compared to that of the original DS. Newer technology tends to have initial growing pains as flaws in production are worked out over time, so the issues with dead pixels are likely a one-time deal that has tapered off since the Lite's launch.

But what can you do if you find a dead pixel? When it comes to the DS Lite, it's rather simple. Nintendo has a great policy of including a one-year warranty with each DS, so simply contact customer support about the problem, and they'll send you a brand new DS in exchange for yours.



## Processor Price Plunge

Looking to buy or upgrade a computer in the near future? It might be a good idea to hold off on any purchases until the end of summer. That's when AMD will begin to phase out many of its processors in preparation for its next generation of CPUs. What does that mean for you? Much cheaper components, that's what. Most of the top-of-the-line processors, such as the FX series of chips, won't see a dramatic drop in price, if any drop at all, but almost all of the single- and dual-core Athlon 64 processors should see prices fall from five percent to almost 50 percent. Intel is expected to follow suit with deep cuts around the same time, but there are few details on how far their prices will drop. Prices naturally fall over time, but AMD's broad and sudden price reduction makes this summer a good time for budget-conscious gamers to buy or upgrade a computer.

## From Here To Silvermoon

**Arg! I am one of the countless World of Warcraft addicts, but I can't stand the horrible lag and annoying players on my server. My complaints to Blizzard have ended in frustration and no change in my situation. I've put too much time**

and energy into my characters just to start over on some other server, but I feel like I need a change. I'm sure there are others out there who have similar problems, but it seems like the only solution offered to us is to re-roll on another server.

## ► Frustrated Night Elf Druid—Via Internet

It would seem Blizzard has heard your pleas, fellow Night Elf. The company has recently implemented a paid character transfer for those of you who want to get away from the slideshow-esque gameplay and puerile banter found so prevalently on heavy population servers. At \$25, the transfer isn't

cheap, and as of press time there were only a select group of realms available to transfer from, but the list is sure to grow over time. Even so, it's certain to give determined players like you a level of control over the environment in which you play and let you get the best out of those undead Stratholme runs.




Illustration: Francis Mao




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# STEREOTYPES

THAT WHOLE "EVERYONE'S DOING IT" THING  
WHEN IT COMES TO BEING A TEENAGER  
AND GETTING HIGH?  
JUST ANOTHER STUPID STEREOTYPE.



Sony's PlayStation 3 controller: not ready to rumble.

# DUAL SHOCK SHOCK

Did you know that the PlayStation 3 controller will not have a Dual Shock feature? You might be surprised as to why....

Technology firm Immersion first grabbed headlines in late 2004 when a federal jury ruled that Sony had infringed on the company's force-feedback patents when it designed the PlayStation 2 Dual Shock controller. Sony was ordered to pay \$82 million to cover the damages. Almost two years later, Sony is still fighting Immersion in court. We spoke with Immersion's CEO, Vic Viegas, about the situation with the PlayStation 3 controller and the prospects of future rumble support.

## On Sony's decision to remove rumble support from the PlayStation 3 controller:

"To really get a good answer, you're going to have to talk to Sony. I don't know what went through its decision process, but from all the surveys and user studies we conduct, the market is clearly telling [Sony] that rumble technology is, at a minimum, what's required in today's gaming world. The competition is investing in vibration, and Sony has publicly stated in a press release that it is removing [rumbling] from the controller because of conflicts with the motion-sensing technology. We feel that this is a problem we could fix, and we have at least three different ways to do so.

"I'm not sure, but at \$600, it's unlikely Sony is trying to cut too much cost. I don't think the cost of a small actuator is going to make much of a difference. I don't know why [Sony] would do it, other than the potential risk if it were to lose the lawsuit—it could be facing an injunction, and it may be afraid of that situation."

## On community reaction to Sony's announcement to cut rumbling from the PS3:

"What's amazing is the people who know about it. The gamers who know are vocal—they're very upset: they're disappointed that they're

paying a fair price for high-definition graphics and high-fidelity sound. I think they expect vibration technology at a minimum. The notion that a PlayStation 2 game (running in backward compatible mode) would be running without vibration would clearly be losing a key feature."

and hear the hotdog vendor barking out from the stands, he also wants to feel that bone-crunching tackle—he wants to feel like he's in the game. It's not enough to see and to hear, you need to feel."

Pursuant to the introduction of this new six-axis sensing system, the vibration feature that is currently available on DUALSHOCK® and DUALSHOCK®2 controllers for PlayStation and PlayStation®2, will be removed from the new PS3 controller as vibration itself interferes with information detected by the sensor.

## On playing the original Metal Gear Solid on the PS3 sans rumbling:

"[Without rumbling technology in Metal Gear Solid] you'd be playing almost as if there were no sound and no graphics, you'd be blind [in some ways] without that feature.

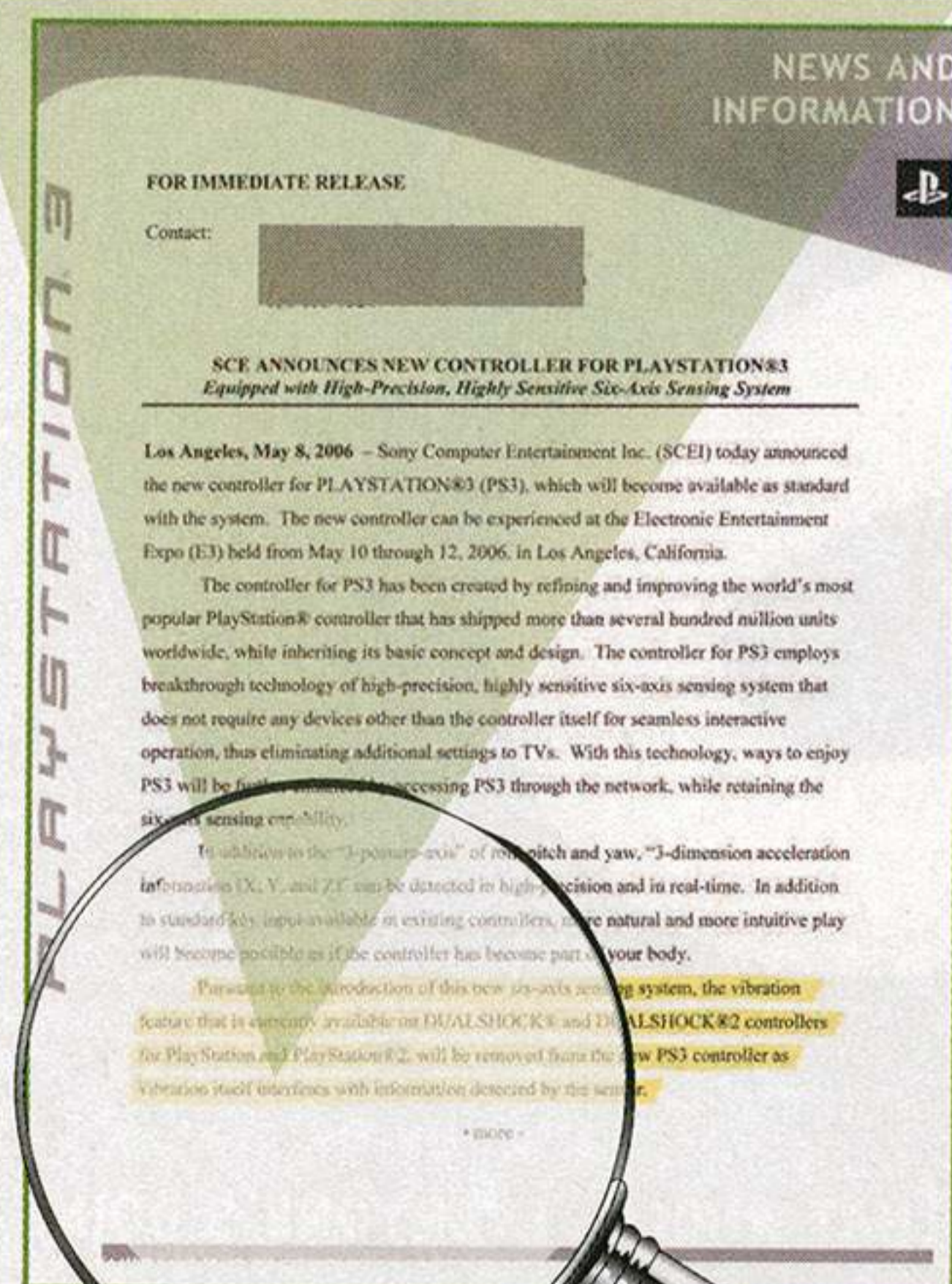
"The creator of Metal Gear Solid (Hideo Kojima), when notified that rumble would be removed, said he was sad and disappointed, because he knows how integral it is as part of the gameplay. So the developers are unhappy, the gamers are unhappy. And it's clear that even a while after E3, there are still plenty of people who don't even know [that Sony cut rumbling from the PS3 controller.]"

## On the possibilities of a redesigned, rumble-compatible PS3 controller:

"If there was no code in the game, I would think it would be difficult for that particular disc to enable rumbling [after the fact]. To add rumbling to new games, or games that haven't yet been produced, would be very easy."

## On the future of force feedback in gaming:

"When a consumer is expecting to be able to see a blade of grass in a Madden football game

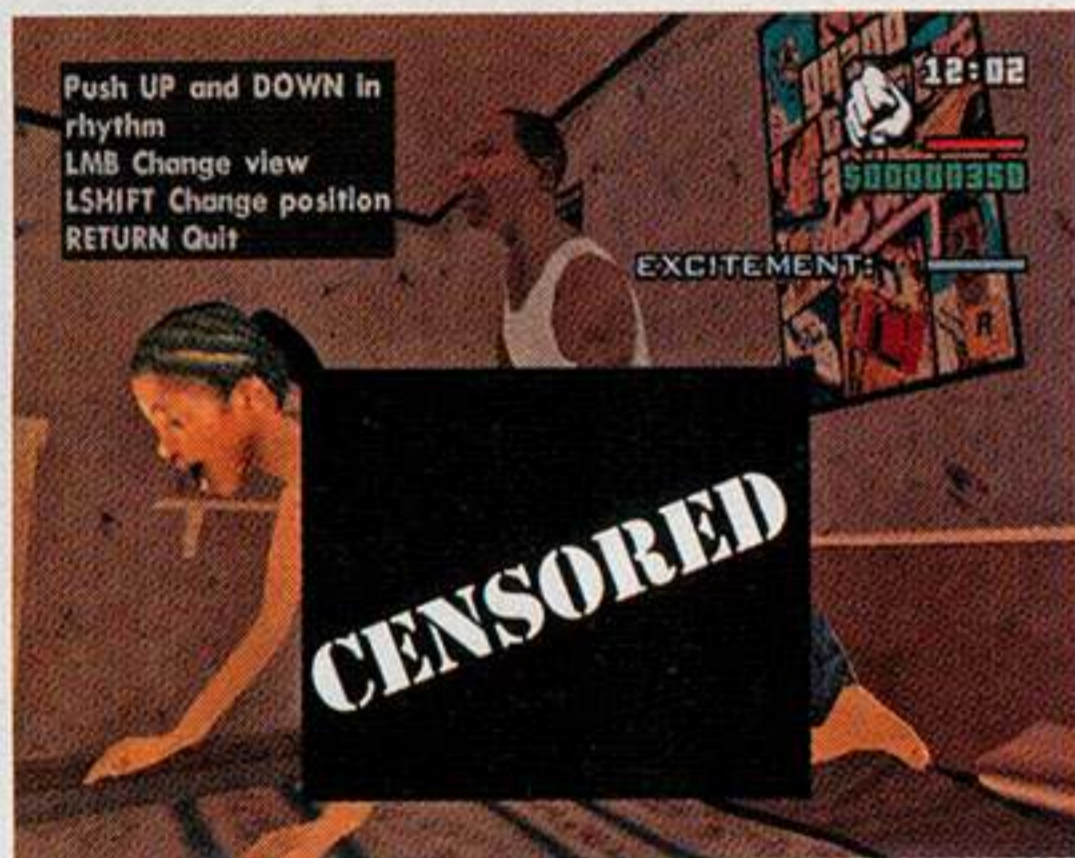




## Grand Jury Subpoenas GTA

The fallout from the infamous "Hot Coffee" scandal isn't over yet. Take 2 Interactive announced recently that it had received grand jury subpoena over the hidden sex games in Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas.

The subpoenas, issued by New York's district attorney, request information from Take 2 Interactive regarding the Hot Coffee sexual content included in GTA: San Andreas. According to Take 2, the subpoenas request any documents or disclosures concerning "the knowledge of the Company's officers and directors regarding the creation, inclusion, and programming of hidden scenes (commonly referred to as 'Hot Coffee') in Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas." In a statement, Take 2 said that it "has



Another strike against Grand Theft Auto?

not been advised that it or any specific individual is presently a target of the investigation." The statement stressed that the company was cooperating by handing over all requested documents.

The news didn't help Take 2's stock prices, though, which drooped to \$10.30 per share in response to the news.

## Retro Corner

10 Years ago (September 1996)...

...in GamePro

- **Doom 64** (Williams Entertainment/Nintendo 64) was the cover topic of our 130-page September 1996 issue. The game was part of an eight-page feature, "The Nintendo 64 Blasts Off!" The feature also covered the Ultra 64's launch in Japan, first controllers for the unit, and other games in development.
- **Star Gladiator** (Capcom) and **Namco Classics: Pac-Man, Rally-X, and DigDug** (Namco) were Hot at the Arcades.
- No game got a perfect rating; **Ridge Racer Revolution** (Namco/PlayStation), **Namco's Museum Volume 1** (Namco/PlayStation), **Fade to Black** (Electronic Arts/PlayStation), **WWF Wrestlemania: The Arcade Game** (Acclaim/PlayStation), **Gun Griffon** (Sega/Saturn), **Need for Speed** (Electronic Arts/Saturn), **NBA Action** (Sega Sports/Saturn), and **Legend of Oasis** (Sega/Saturn) all received high marks. Shadow (of **Eternal Champions** fame) couldn't save **X-Perts** (Sega/Genesis) from getting the lowest score in the issue—a 1.5 Fun Factor.
- Vapor trail: **Aeon Flux** (Viacom New Media/PlayStation) received a half-page First Look preview; however, the game was never released (it was based on the animated series).

...in Gaming

- The Nintendo 64 was released on September 29 in the United States for \$199.95. The unit was originally supposed to retail for \$250, but Nintendo decided to drop the price; it sold half a million units in one day. (In comparison, it took



Super Mario 64



## Hitman and Lara Croft go Mobile

Gamers who like to do more than talk on their cell phones can now guide Agent 47 to a successful hit or play poker with Lara Croft on the go. Eidos is releasing three games that feature its popular franchise characters. Hitman: Blood Money Vegas and L.A. both have two episodes with 16 levels each. The objective is the same as that on the console titles: Use a variety of weapons and disguises to take out targets as dictated by the mysterious DIANA. Vegas is available now; L.A. hits in September.

Card players and Tomb Raider fans will find Lara Croft's Poker Party of interest. Choose from 12 characters out of the Eidos universe—including Hana from Fear Effect, Red from Whiplash, and Lara herself—and play a variety of card games, including Texas hold 'em rules. Poker Party is available now.



Lara Croft's Poker Party



Hitman: Blood Money Vegas

the Saturn 300 days and the PlayStation 90 days to sell the same number of their consoles.) Two games were available at launch—both from Nintendo—**Super Mario 64** and **Pilotwings 64** (retailing for \$70 each). **Cruis'n USA** was promised for launch, but the game was delayed due to quality-control issues.

- The 3DO Company restructured with Trip Hawkins taking on the additional role of creative director. Having quit making software for the 3DO console, the company turned its focus to making multiplayer games for the Internet.
- Acclaim laid off 70 employees (approximately 20 percent of the company's workforce).
- Sony Computer Entertainment of America celebrated the first anniversary of the PlayStation with a giant press party in New York. It had plenty to celebrate as the PlayStation went from zero market share to being the number-one best-selling system in the world. Up to the one-year benchmark, the PlayStation sold 2 million systems in the U.S., 7 million systems worldwide, and 9 million pieces of software.

...in Sales

Here are the top five-selling games of September 1996:

1. Super Mario 64 (Nintendo/Nintendo 64)
2. Madden NFL '97 (EA Sports/PlayStation)
3. Tekken 2 (Namco/PlayStation)
4. Pilotwings 64 (Nintendo/Nintendo 64)
5. Crash Bandicoot (Sony/PlayStation)

Source: The NPD Group/Point-of-Sale

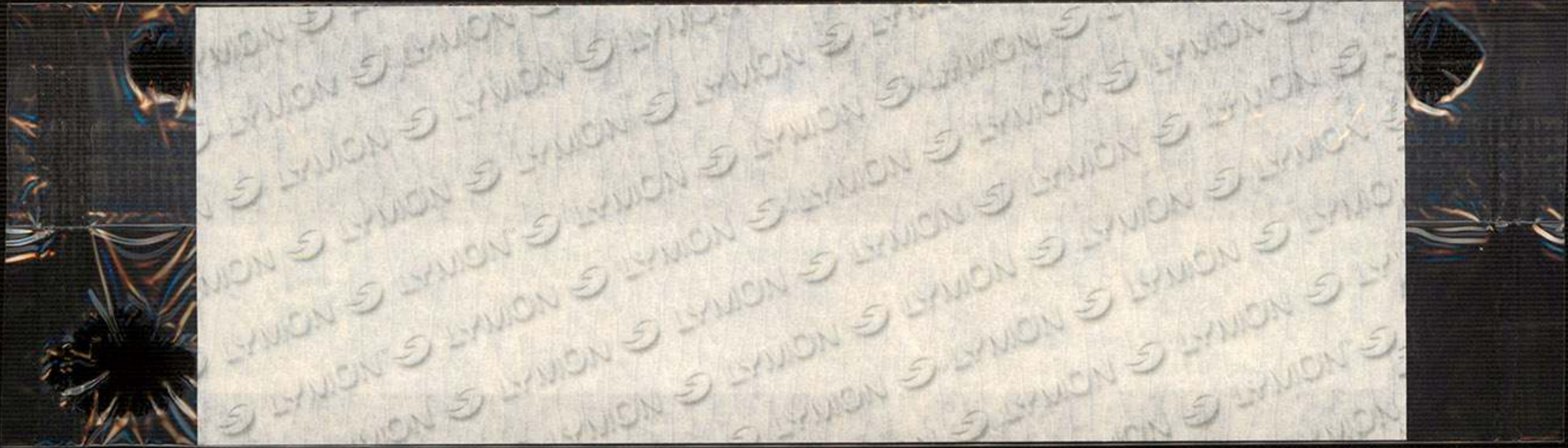


Madden NFL '97



Tekken 2





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**OBEY.**

**OBEY.**

# PlayStation 2 Outselling Xbox 360

The PlayStation 2 has been consistently outselling the Xbox 360 since Microsoft's new console hit the market seven months ago. Using data collected from The NPD group, online site Ars Technica found that the PlayStation 2 is substantially outselling the Xbox 360.

According to its research, "Microsoft has averaged 246,000 console sales each month in the US, while the PS2 has seen an average of 473,000 units—a number bolstered by an estimated 1.5 million sales in December alone. Leaving out December, Sony's average drops to 302,000 per month, still outpacing the Xbox 360 by a healthy margin." The PlayStation 2's strong sales can be attributed to the much affordable \$129 price point and the overwhelming game library it has to support it.



The PlayStation 2 is outselling the Xbox 360 by a considerable margin each month.

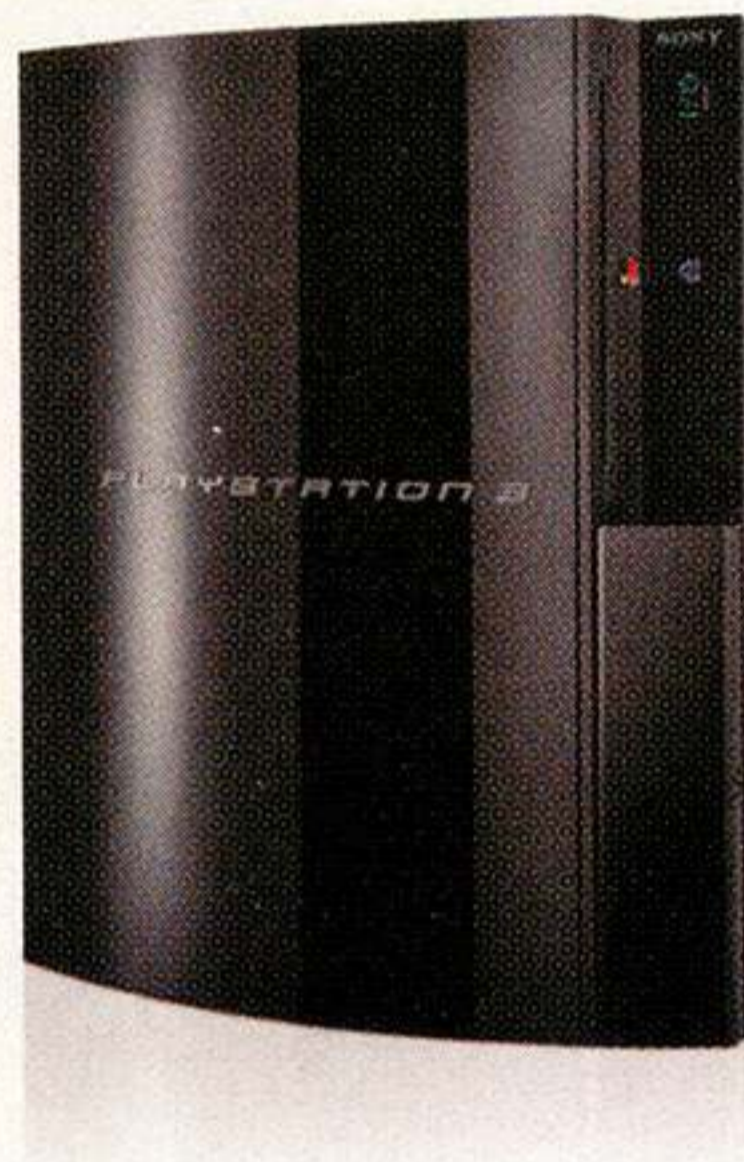
# Blu-ray Disc Burner in PS3?

Japanese gaming site PC Watch scored an interview with PlayStation 3 mastermind Ken Kutaragi. In the interview, Kutaragi hints that the company may upgrade the PS3 with more advanced technology, such as Blu-ray disc writing, in the future.

In the interview, Kutaragi describes the current PlayStation 3 models as more basic in nature, hinting that the hardware could be expanded. Likening the PS3 to a computer more than a video-game system, Kutaragi discusses how future versions of the PlayStation 3 might include more RAM or even a different Cell chip configuration. "The PS3 is a computer, so there are no 'models,' only 'configurations,'" Kutaragi explains. "We're trying to make that clear...we think it would be okay to (expand) the configuration once a year. Dell would do that, as well as even Apple."

Responding to the question of whether a PS3 with stronger computing power would ever come out, Kutaragi says, "it's possible. If the stuff we want to do increases, it will come to that." Kutaragi then again compares the PS3 to a computer. "With PCs, if they hold the (same specs) for 2 years," Kutaragi continues, "they get obsolete. Don't computers change? A 60 GB hard drive will become inadequate, and memory could become inadequate. There are a lot of possibilities."

Kutaragi also dropped a potential bombshell: the possibility of Blu-ray disc burning in a future PS3 version! "In the future, if there are new advancements in PCs, we may want to write to Blu-ray drives." It's far from a certainty, though, and Kutaragi admitted that Sony might not take that path.



What new features might an enhanced PS3 have?

# Yakuza's Hollywood Connection

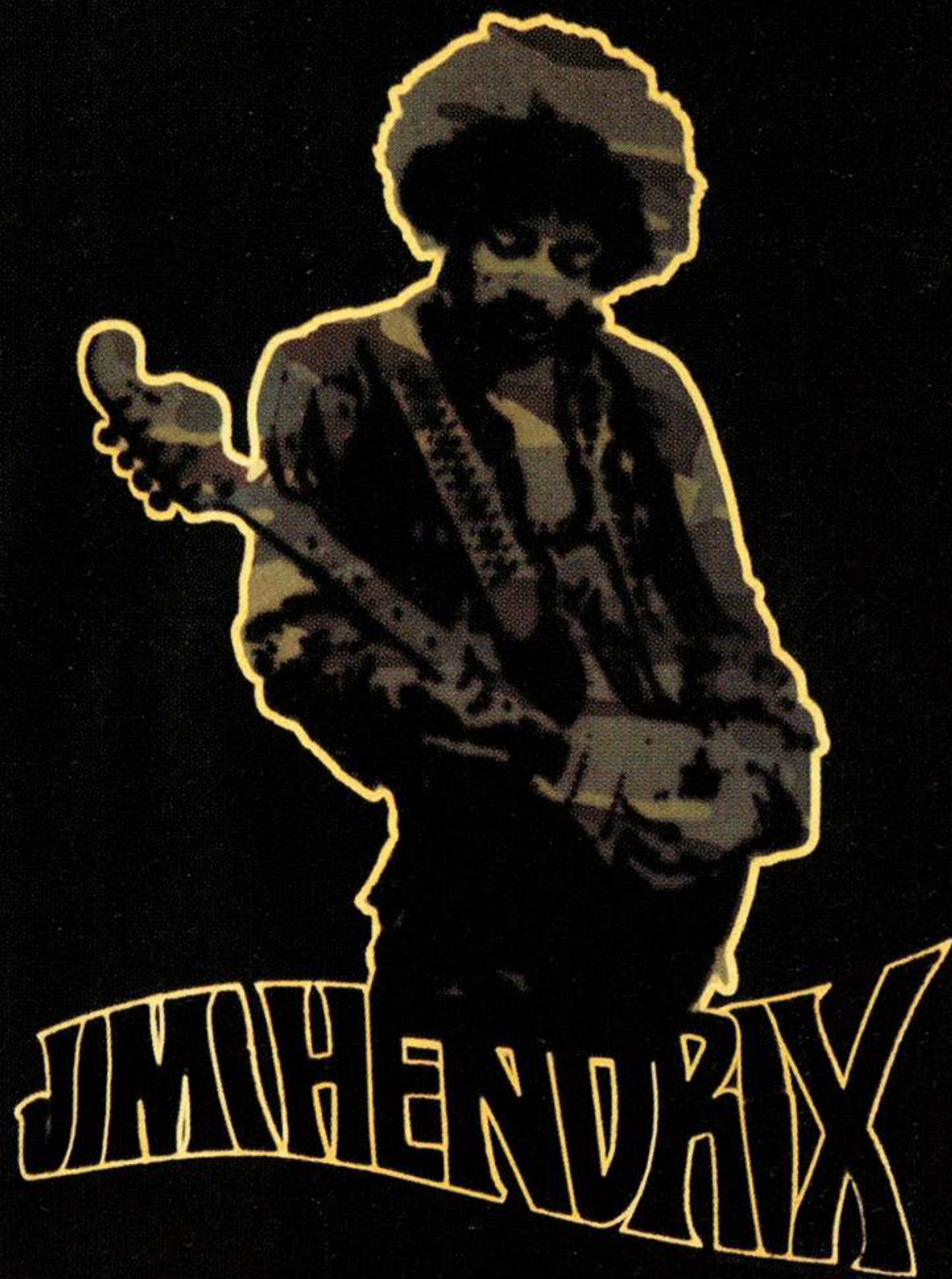
Sega's upcoming crime game, Yakuza, will be infused with Hollywood talent. Michael Madsen (*Thelma & Louise*, *Reservoir Dogs*), Michael Rosenbaum (*Smallville*), Eliza Dushku (*Bring It On*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*), Rachel Leigh Cook (*Get Carter*, *She's All That*), and Mark Hamill (*Star Wars*) will voice various characters in the game.



Actress Eliza Dushku will voice the character Yumi in Sega's upcoming crime game.

Vintage tees

# HISTORY



SCHOOL YOUR WAY **WAL★MART®**



# THE 11 MOST GROUNDBREAKING CONTROLLERS OF ALL TIME

## THE ZAPPER

(By Nintendo)

11



If only *Time Crisis* were around during the *Duck Hunt* days.

The Zapper shipped with the original Nintendo Entertainment System, bundled with seminal light-gun game *Duck Hunt* as its early companion. But it was games such as *Hogan's Alley*, *Gumshoe*, and *Operation Wolf* that helped to make it a success. Though the Zapper wasn't the only light gun to hit console systems, it was without a doubt the most successful, both commercially and culturally. And besides, had Nintendo never released the Zapper, we may never have seen the greatest light-gun game of all time—the classic arcade shooter *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*.

## SNES

(By Nintendo)

8

Nintendo didn't always believe in minimalism. By moving to a six-button layout, the Super Nintendo controller *tripled* the number of face buttons of its predecessor, the 8-bit NES. At the time, this was a revolutionary move: few games used even three buttons, let alone six. But time proved Nintendo's wisdom, and as the fighting-game craze swept the 16-bit consoles, other companies were forced to release their own six-button controllers. The SNES controller also earns the nod for introducing another, less glamorous innovation that we all take for granted: shoulder buttons.



More buttons = more options

## DREAMCAST

(By Sega)

10

The Dreamcast, released in 1999, is almost as notable for its failures as its successes. One key Dreamcast feature, however, still lives on: its analog trigger buttons. The Dreamcast's pioneering triggers, which give the user a more tactile sense of control in genres like racing or shooting, were a distinctive innovation that other game manufacturers rushed to copy. Though the Dreamcast was discontinued in 2001, its groundbreaking analog triggers have since become an industry standard with the Xbox 360, Xbox, GameCube, and now PlayStation 3 all using some variation on this control scheme.

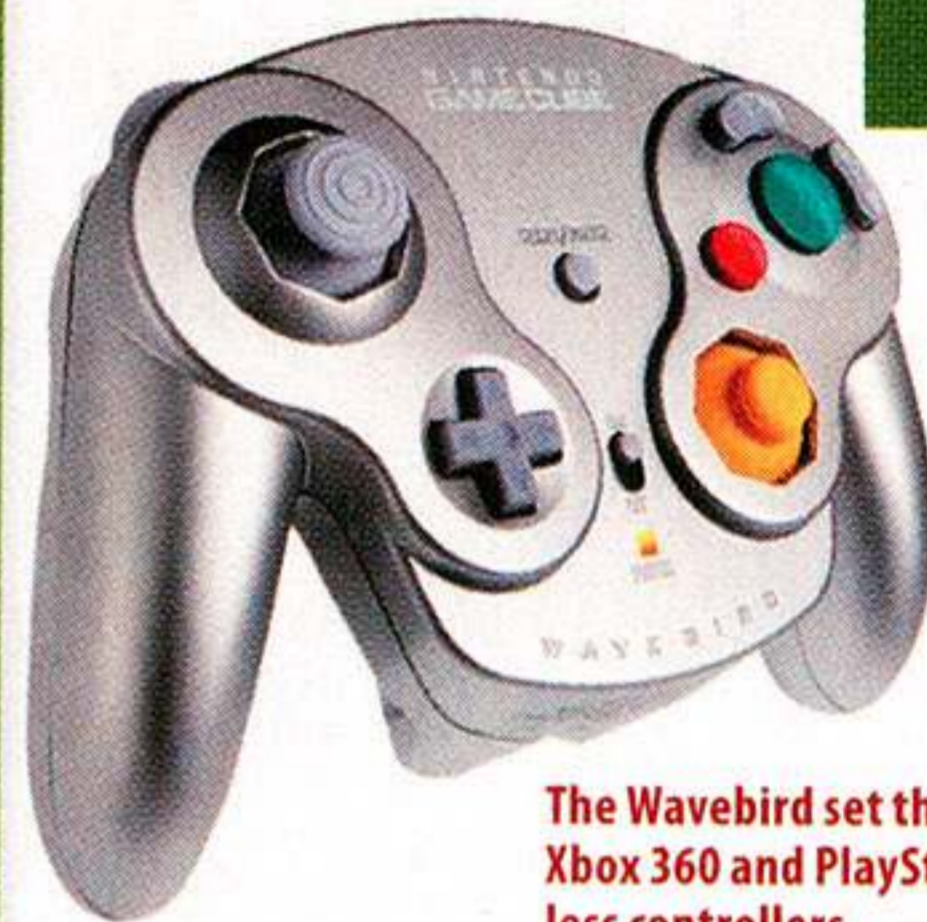


YAEDEX (Yet Another Eerie Dreamcast/Xbox Similarity)

## WAVEBIRD

(By Nintendo)

9



The Wavebird set the stage for the Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3's wireless controllers.

The Wavebird was the first successful first-party wireless controller to really make a statement with home consoles. The Wavebird looked like a regular GameCube controller and was constructed from the same material as the OEM controllers, though its bottom was slightly bulkier. But because the Wavebird used radio frequencies instead of infrared to connect to the GameCube, the controller could function at distances of more than 30 feet! There are reports of the Wavebird's signal negotiating around corners and penetrating walls without a noticeable effect on gameplay. The only downside is that Nintendo had to sacrifice rumble support because of the obvious drain on battery life. Drag.

## ATARI 2600 JOYSTICK

(By Atari)

7

Alongside the NES controller, the Atari 2600 joystick is still one of gaming's most historic hardware icons. The 2600 is the grandfather of console game systems, and aside from the NES, no other console had the staying power and recognition of the 2600. The joystick itself was simple yet effective with a shaft and a single red button. That's it—no fancy motion sensing, no tiny embedded portable gaming systems, and certainly no ergonomic handgrips. The 2600 emulated the arcade joystick experience at home, at feat that was considered revolutionary at the time because it made games like *Asteroids*, *Centipede*, *Joust*, and *Space Invaders* playable from the comfort of your couch.



Simple yet effective, the 2600 joystick was the choice controller for countless arcade ports.



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## NINTENDO 64

(By Nintendo)

6

**It may look bad, but it felt goo-o-o-d.**

Clunky. Awkward. Massive. All are accurate descriptors of the Nintendo 64 controller. But we'll add one more: groundbreaking. The Nintendo 64 controller was hampered by a truly bizarre three-pronged design, which was designed to empower players to choose from several different grip styles, but mostly succeeded in confusing gaming neophytes. The Nintendo 64's key innovation, of course, was the analog stick. It wasn't a very good analog stick, mind you, as it was relatively imprecise and had the annoying tendency to scrape against its mounting, shedding flurries of plastic dust. But as with many of Nintendo's interface innovations, the analog stick has since become a gaming standard.

## PLAYSTATION DUAL SHOCK

(By Sony)

3

One of the most iconic video game controllers in the entire world, Sony's Dual Shock officially ushered in the PlayStation Age. Though not the first official controller released for the PlayStation, the Dual Shock was easily the best, combining unparalleled rumbling capability with two solid, capable analog sticks (each of which acted as buttons of their own). The Dual Shock had a streamlined feel, too, with its oversized L2 and R2 shoulder buttons and ergonomic grip.

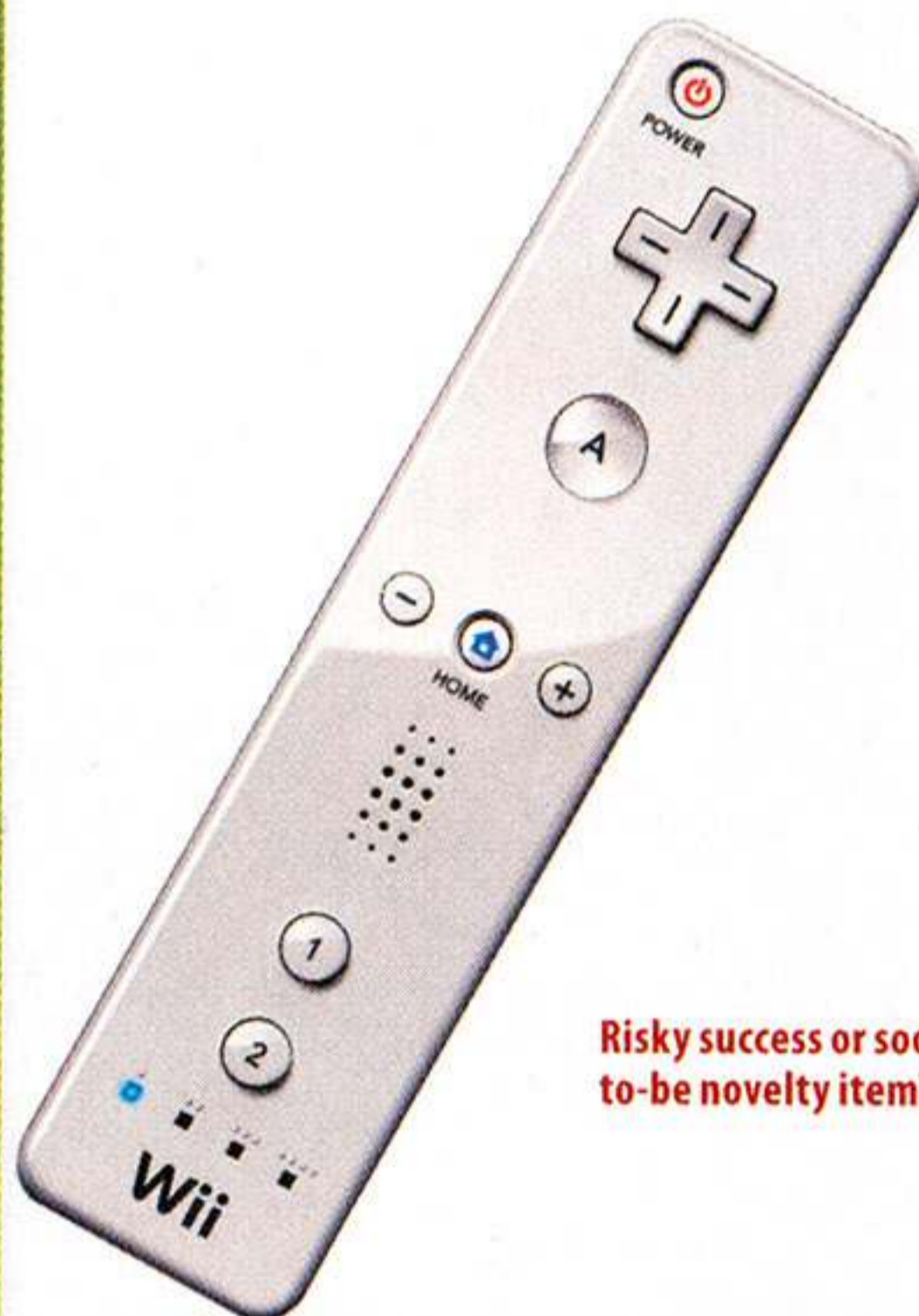
**The Dual Shock—one of the most-imitated controllers of all time**

## WII REMOTE

(By Nintendo)

5

Nintendo shocked the gaming world when it unveiled this motion-sensing controller to the masses. The Wii remote connects to Nintendo's next-gen console via a Bluetooth signal, though we still don't know precisely how the sensor bar and internal motion-sensing chip give the Wii the ability to recognize and simulate real hand movement. We'll know soon—the console arrives in the fall of 2006.

**Risky success or soon-to-be novelty item?**

## XBOX CONTROLLER S

(By Microsoft)

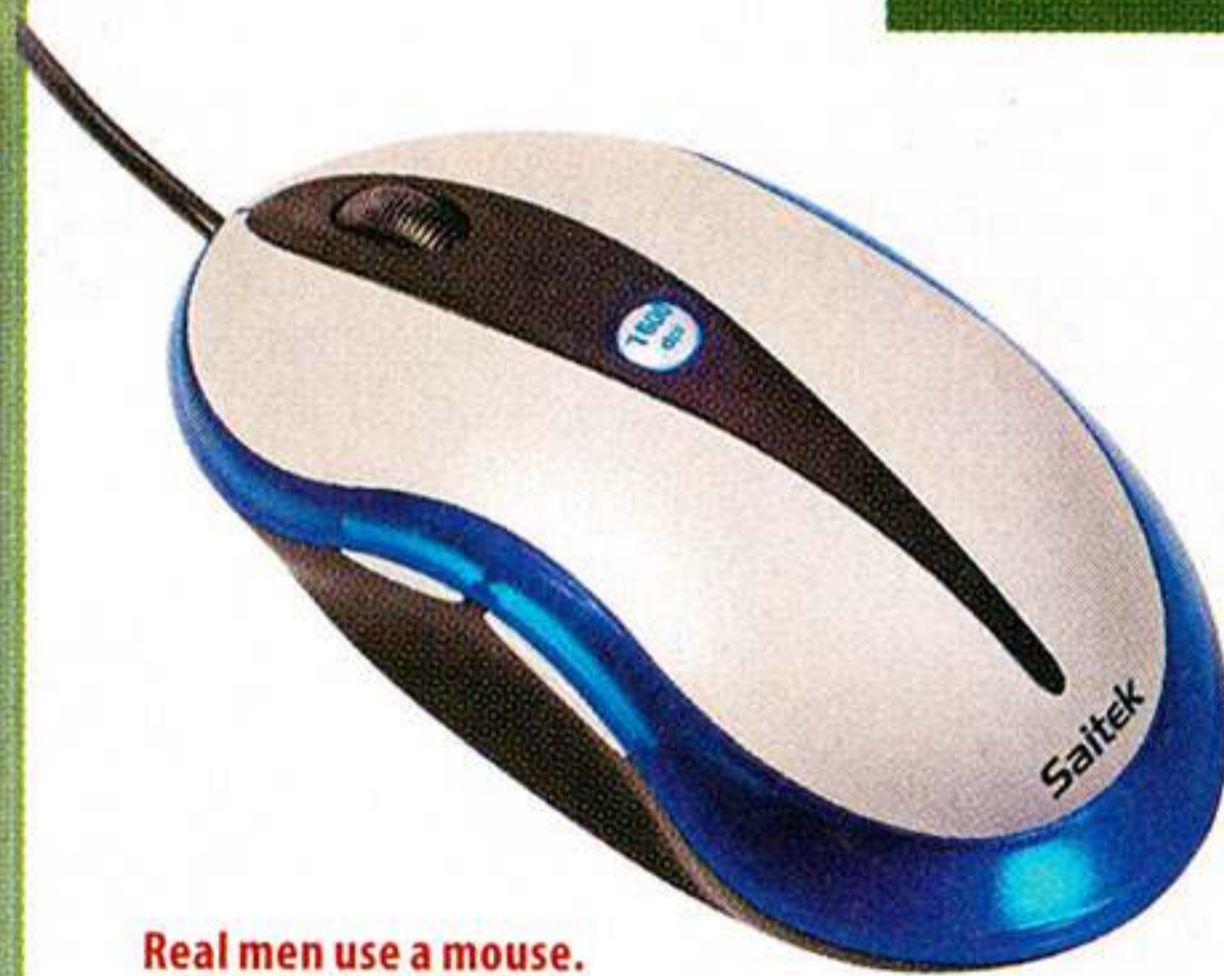
4

**Best analog-stick sampling evar!**

It's a fact: very few gamers liked the original Xbox controller. So Microsoft quickly took the point and released the Xbox Controller S, which retains the original design's strengths (triggers, smooth analog sticks) while axing its weaknesses (overbearing size, awkward Black/White button placement) to create one of the best dual analog controllers yet. While button placement is arguably better on Sony's Dual Shock, the Xbox Controller S has smoother-moving analog sticks with a better sampling rate, a necessity for first-person shooters. Plus, the springy realistic triggers make sniping that much more pleasurable.

## MOUSE AND KEYBOARD

2

**Real men use a mouse.**

This is the gold standard of video-game controllers thanks to its unprecedented precision and flexibility. Every modern controller from the PlayStation's Dual Shock to Nintendo's new Wii is, in reality, attempting to simulate the natural usability of this elegant input device. Though it requires a flat surface and two hands, the mouse and keyboard is often considered to be the measuring stick against which all other controllers are judged.

## NES

(By Nintendo)

1

**Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, B, A, Start!**

Easily the most well-known game controller as well as one of the recognizable pieces of electronics hardware of all time, the original NES controller is a pop-culture icon. It put compact, handheld controllers on the map, and though it wasn't exactly the first controller to implement a directional pad, it was the first to make it a staple for console systems. And unlike the ugly Famicom controllers, the NES controller was much easier on the eyes with its distinctive design eventually inspiring T-shirts, cheap rip-offs, and even cell-phone modifications.

# Movie Madness



## Man on Fire

- 2004 ■ Fox Home Entertainment
- MPAA rating: R ■ 146 minutes
- Available now

Tony Scott (*Top Gun*) directed this brutal revenge epic that stars Denzel Washington as Creasy, an ex-C.I.A. operative who is assigned to protect a little girl in Mexico. After the girl is kidnapped, Creasy exacts fitting revenge on her captors. Although it's tough to watch at times, *Man on Fire* has an uncanny sense of style. Dakota Fanning and Christopher Walken (essential for a movie like this) also star.



## Ultraviolet (Unrated Extended Cut)

- 2006 ■ Sony Pictures Home Entertainment
- MPAA rating: Not rated ■ 94 minutes
- Available now

Milla Jovovich (*Resident Evil: Apocalypse*) has made a career out of playing characters imbued with super-human powers, so *Ultraviolet* isn't that much of a stretch. Set in the late 21<sup>st</sup> century, the film depicts a world that is engaged in civil war between humans and those who have been infected with a vampire-type virus. In the middle of this conflict is Ultraviolet (Jovovich) who must protect a small child.

# DVD PICKS OF THE MONTH



## Apocalypse Now: The Complete Dossier

- 1979/2001 ■ Paramount Home Video
- MPAA rating: R ■ 153/202 minutes ■ Available August

One of the greatest war films ever made, Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* is a cinematic legend not so much for the film itself but for what went into its making. *The Complete Dossier* features the two "official" theatrical versions of the film—the original 153-minute release and the 2001 *Redux*, which was 49 minutes longer, remastered with deeper and stronger colors, and almost completely reedited. Outstanding films (which can be purchased separately) aside, *Dossier* has a host of features and extras, including never-before-seen deleted scenes, feature film commentaries by Coppola, making-of featurettes, and more. Although *Dossier* promises to be the definitive DVD release of the film, sadly the excellent documentary, *Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse*, doesn't appear to be included.



## Seven Samurai

- 1954 ■ Criterion Collection
- MPAA rating: Not rated ■ 207 minutes ■ Available September

Akira Kurosawa's groundbreaking 1954 epic is considered one of the greatest movies ever made. Set in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the film is about a poor village that hires seven samurai warriors for protection from raiding bandits. Although it runs more than three hours, you'll hardly notice as it's loaded with action and poignant themes about loyalty, commitment, and honor. This Criterion reissue spans three DVDs and features a new transfer of the restored feature film, two audio commentaries, documentaries, trailers, stills, new translation and subtitles, and more. *Seven Samurai* was remade in the United States as *The Magnificent Seven* (with gunfighters instead of samurai warriors); another Kurosawa masterpiece, *Yojimbo*, was also made into a Western by Sergio Leone—*A Fistful of Dollars*.

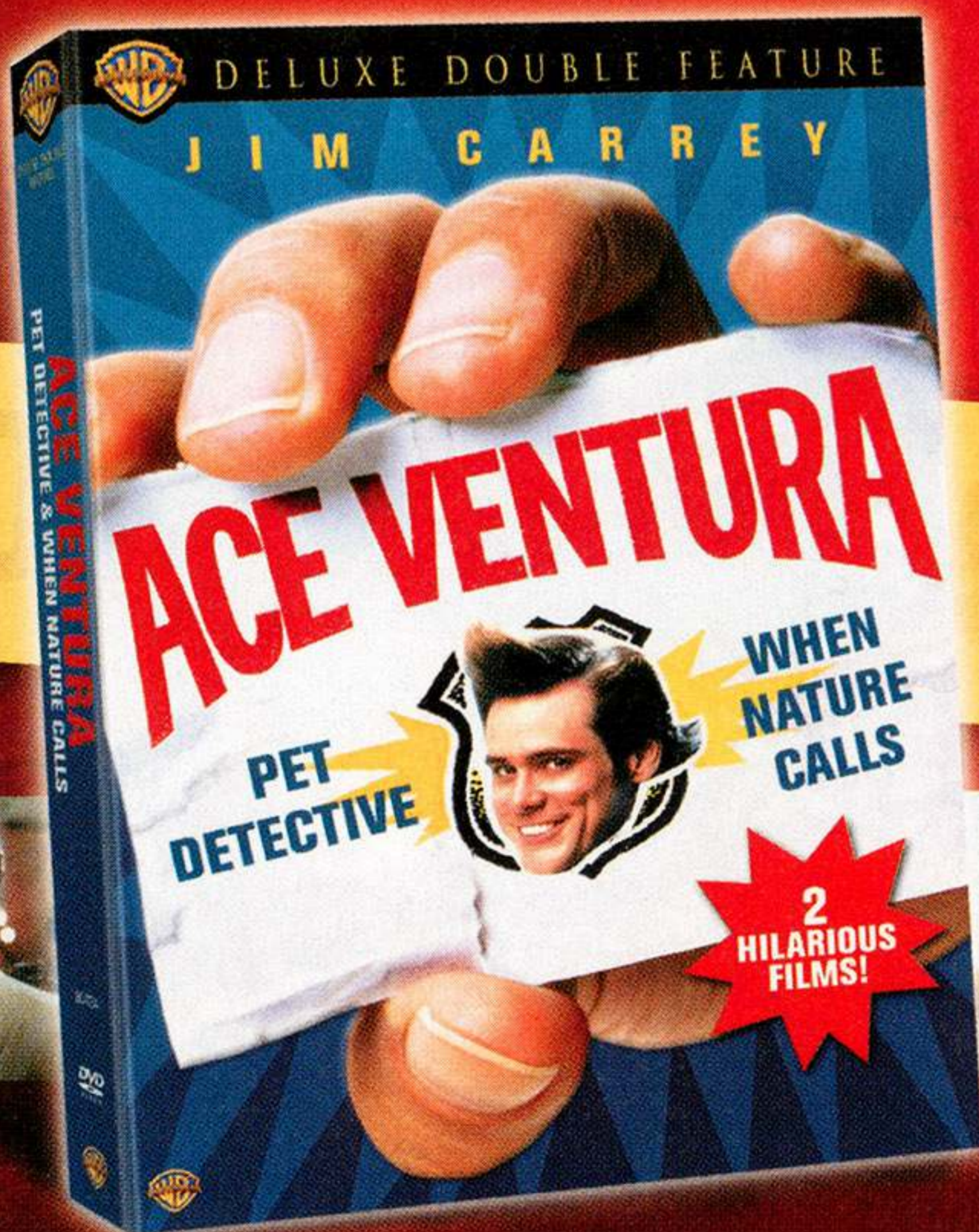
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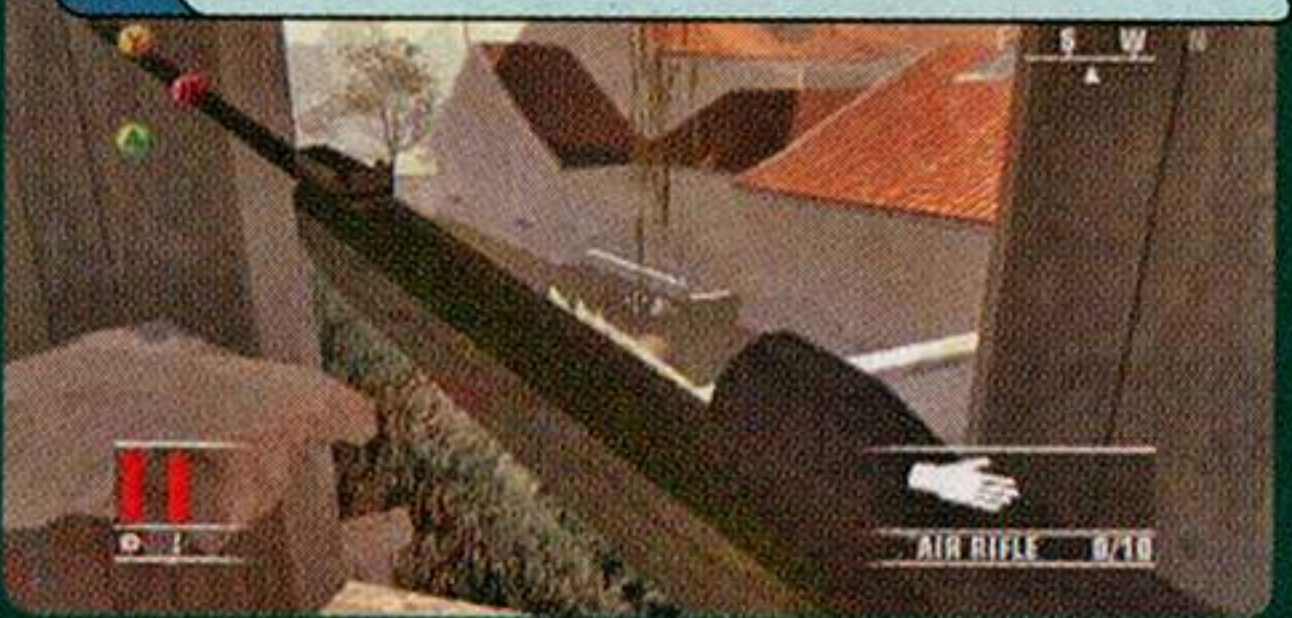
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FEATURE

**World Exclusive!**  
Dead or Alive: Xtreme 2



# D.O.A. GIRLS gone

# WILD(ER)

Beyond the volleyball, beyond the girls, and beyond the bikinis, what does *Dead or Alive: Xtreme 2* have to offer? Plenty! *By David Chen*

CONTINUED ►

# D.O.A. GIRLS gone WILD(ER)

**GamePro** kicks back with Tomonobu Itagaki—video gaming's very own man in black and the lovely ladies of D.O.A.

**A**s the fearsome front man for Tecmo's premier development house, Team Ninja, Tomonobu Itagaki is a man of extremes. In conversation, he shifts smoothly from active engagement to mild disinterest; deadly serious when discussing his work, he's also quick to laughter. And as he shares his latest project—*Dead or Alive: Xtreme 2*—for the first time ever with an outsider, his laughter suggests that he clearly enjoys watching his hapless guest flounder through the collection of light-hearted events that comprise this return to one man's vision of fun, sun, and sand....

### Just "Play," Baby!

Itagaki's approach to demonstrating a game is less *Dead or Alive* and more *Sink or Swim*. After introductions, he simply hands you the controller and says, "Play." But this exercise in potential embarrassment captures the core of this fledgling franchise: He doesn't *have* to explain how each event works. Designed to reflect a relaxing, carefree, and less competitive take on reality, *D.O.A. Xtreme* is simple, snappy stuff.

While it was appreciated for its decidedly different approach to video games, the first *D.O.A.X.* game faced its share of criticisms—firstly, that activities were fun, but there just weren't enough of them. So this time (in addition to supplementary diversions such as shopping for swimwear, making friends, and gambling) a total of seven sun-splashed activities are in the works.

CONTINUED ►





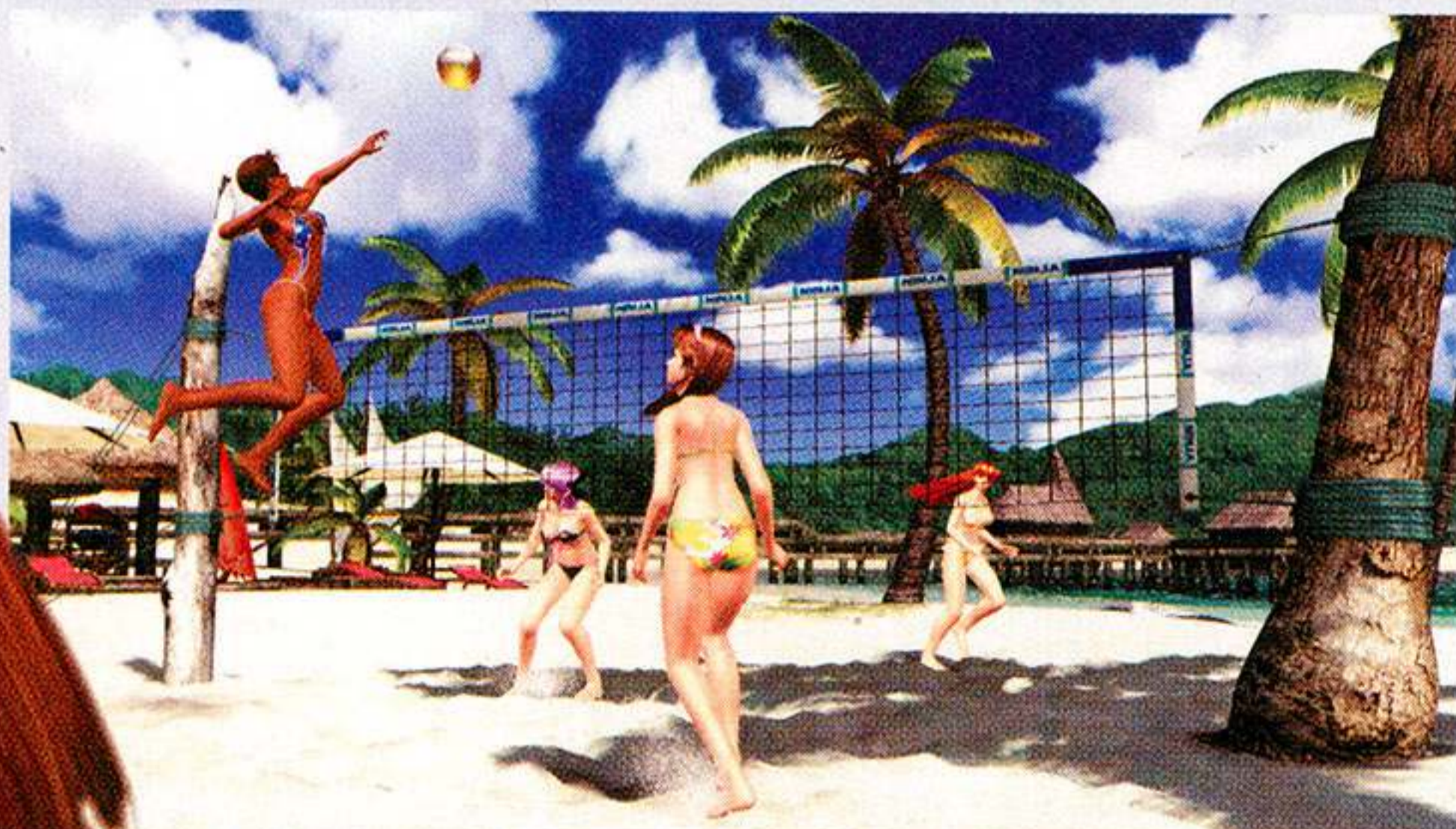


Pictured from left to right: LCDR Mark Simon, ETCM Eric Olis, BMC Dan Ames, BM1 Michael O'Connell,  
EN1 Jason Fetterman, EM2 Mark DiPietro, LT Lewis Baker, MM2 Sergio Rodriguez

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Don't worry, sports fans, the volleyball mechanic is also being refined.

### Attacking the Waves

Each event is fast, frantic, and, above all things, designed with fun in mind, and the game's main attraction—jet skiing—has those bases covered. Although the game is only approximately 70 percent complete, riding the waves just *feels* good. The controls are suitably simple with one button for the throttle, analog sticks controlling movement and camera, and triggers handling tight cornering, but the realistic, constantly shifting waves keep players on their toes. There's still work to done with the collision detection, but already, the sense of aquatic physics and gravity are on point. Predictably, it all looks damn good, too.

### Attacking the Net

While no longer topping the bill, bumping, setting, and spiking are still a big part of the game. The hands-on volleyball code was early—10 percent or so done—and was described as having the first game's play with a better camera and *much*



Butt Bump...well, the name says it all.

better graphics. But Itagaki is eager to point out that the final product will reflect considerable changes, too. "A young staff member [who is] very experienced with volleyball is helping make it more realistic," he points out. "We're trying to make it more aggressive as well. What you want is for spikes to feel fast and strong—that kind of thing." Drawing comparisons with the fighting series for which he's known best, Itagaki elaborates, "In D.O.A.4, you're better off attacking than blocking all the time. We want to capture that same feeling with volleyball."

One immediately apparent improvement is a smoother, less volatile camera—one that doesn't shuttle back and forth with each abrupt change in ball movement. It's a welcome fix. Watching the action unfold now feels more like following the ball, rather than being it. Along with the jet skiing, the volleyball will be fully Xbox Live-friendly. Online play will be akin to D.O.A.4's, so gamers can look forward to an experience that's robust, personalized, and as entertaining to perform as it is easy.

### Pretty in Pictures

For those more inclined to passive entertainment, the Virtual Pictorial mode offers a staggering array of clips of the D.O.A. girls at play. Naturally, these will reflect their...uh, personalities. Tina, for example will often be seen working out to stay in shape, while some of the less serious girls might be seen goofing off—alone or in pairs.

Players will be able to adjust camera angles as well as snap and save photos to the 360's hard drive, but



The keyword here is "simplicity"—and while that might not be the reason gamers bought into the 360 lifestyle, sweet and simple is often best.

Itagaki is characteristically coy about exactly how and when these short snippets will be unlocked. What he would reveal is that the game will contain over 170 such scenes and that every mo-cap studio in Tokyo is hard at work making sure they meet the holiday release date.

### Fun in the Sun

A trio of lighthearted activities completes the hands-on portion of the tour (the intriguing-sounding Water Slide event was not yet ready for viewing). The Pool Hop event makes its return with one significant change. This time the floats are color-coded to correspond with the A, B, X, and Y buttons, enabling quick-witted play-



In Pool Hop, you must hit the button on the 360 controller whose color corresponds to that of the floats.

towards a flag and then lunging for it. It's goofy fun, but it looks great and compels a sort of "one more round" addictiveness.

The aptly titled Butt Battle features a similar stripped-down gameplay mechanic, in which one girl bumps another from a pint-sized, inflatable arena using only her posterior. Light and heavy attacks, as well as feints are all controlled using only the left analog stick, requiring a subtle touch to master this interactive take on Rock, Paper, Scissors.

### How To Stuff a Wild Bikini

But while the number of diversions may have increased considerably, the main attraction

The sheer amount of content in D.O.A.X.2 is going to totally eclipse the first game. —Tomonobu Itagaki

ers to earn a bonus for hitting the right colors in the right sequence. Simple, yes, but its all-or-nothing nature (hit the wrong button and you hit the water) makes it simply addictive, too.

Beach Flag evokes a stunningly beautiful update of such button-mashing classics as Konami Track & Field. Two girls await the countdown lying prostrate on the beach before sprinting



Team Ninja is making an effort this time around to broaden the appeal to the important Western market. While D.O.A.X. only featured squeaky banter of a singularly Japanese flavor, a full English-language dialogue script is currently in the works.

remains the D.O.A. girls and their not inconsiderable assets. Just the thing, in fact, for which the first game was so widely noted/applauded/reviled.

One of the key aspects to understanding the game's shamelessly lascivious nature is that Itagaki feels strongly about each of his girls.

CONTINUED ►



While many jet ski features—including the trick system—have yet to be revealed, there will be about 20 craft with varying attributes, including cornering, acceleration, and top-speed.

## Found...Not Lost

Dead or Alive: Xtreme 2 takes place after the events of D.O.A.4. It's a "what if" story based on the premise that Zack has won the latest tournament. With his considerable winnings, the brassy brawler has entered into a contract with "a very important someone," enabling him to create an all-new island. Says Itagaki, "This dreamlike tale of nine beautiful girls begins there...."

They are his creations, and he's adamant about not seeing them exploited...from his point of view, of course. It's a point on which he's eager to elaborate: "(With) a game like this, you have to respect your characters and show love for them—to express each one's personality. You want to capture the girls in a natural environment, acting the way they'd really act. If you were to show a naked girl jumping on a trampoline, or jumping rope, or whatever, it's obvious that they'd been forced to do that. It loses any sense of sexuality that it could possibly have had."

Philosophizing aside, one can't deny the emphasis on skimpy swimwear, and to that end, more than 300 new suits will make a debut with fan favorites from the first game returning, too. But while hardcore gamers will surely salivate at the prospect of getting 'em all, others may sorely recall the sheer amount of effort required last time around. With its opaque mechanics and occasionally infuriating internal logic, the



first game's gift-giving feature proved challenging for many gamers who just wanted to kick back, play ball, and collect swimwear.

### Yes, But Is This a Date?

When asked whether the inarguably taxing gifting system would return, Itagaki insists that players can expect a drastic change. "Giving someone you care about a gift and having them throw it away is something people understand," he explains. "But it played too much of a role, and there was just too much negative reinforcement. We're trying to move things in a more positive direction." Pressed for specifics, Itagaki elaborates, "I'm going to remove all the



trashcans from Zack Island." Bad news for Zack Island's pristine beaches, perhaps, but good for the goal-oriented gamer.

Ever pragmatic, Itagaki also mentions that the game is being crafted to provide a more compelling experience in a more compact amount of time: "The sheer amount of content in D.O.A.X.2 is going to totally eclipse the first game. If you want get everything in the game and complete every character, it's going take about 200–300 hours.

"But we want players to at least finish everything with one girl. That in itself will be a great, happy experience."

### Fantasy Island

Cutting some waves. Sun-dappled photo shoots. Bumping bikini-clad bottoms. Relaxing activities, every one. But is that what gamers want? It's clear this question has been considered before. "I wouldn't expect people to spend their hard-earned money to buy a game just to have a vacation on the beach," says Itagaki, "If all you want is a vacation, go on a vacation. Here are women who exist only within this game, and you can spend time and enjoy various activities with them."

Tomonobu Itagaki is predictably confident of the merits of his game. Asked whether D.O.A.X.2 is a gamble for Team Ninja and Tecmo, his response is as entertaining—and eloquent—as it is expected. "I don't consider this a gamble," he laughs, "it's a winning hand."

[Author David Chen went to Tokyo to hang out with the D.O.A. girls, but stayed for the Tanuki.]



## Son of the Beach

Seldom spied sans sunglasses, Team Ninja's Tomonobu Itagaki was born to run in the sun....

**GamePro:** Just what kind of beachgoer are you?

**Tomonobu Itagaki:** When I go to the beach, I go with my family. I play with my daughter on the beach, so I'm always wary of how deep the ocean is.

**GP:** Tell us about some of your favorite beaches.

**TI:** I love going to the beach. This game is, in part, based off of experiences at the beaches of New Caledonia—the Great Barrier Reef, also. There are many small islands—it's very beautiful. In the Caribbean, there's a beach with a runway right next to it. When planes take off, all the exhaust blows people over. That's a place I'd like to visit, if I ever have a chance.

**GP:** Are you a good swimmer?

**TI:** Of course!

**GP:** Uh, how about volleyball?

**TI:** No. What are you talking about, volleyball? Do I look like I play volleyball?!



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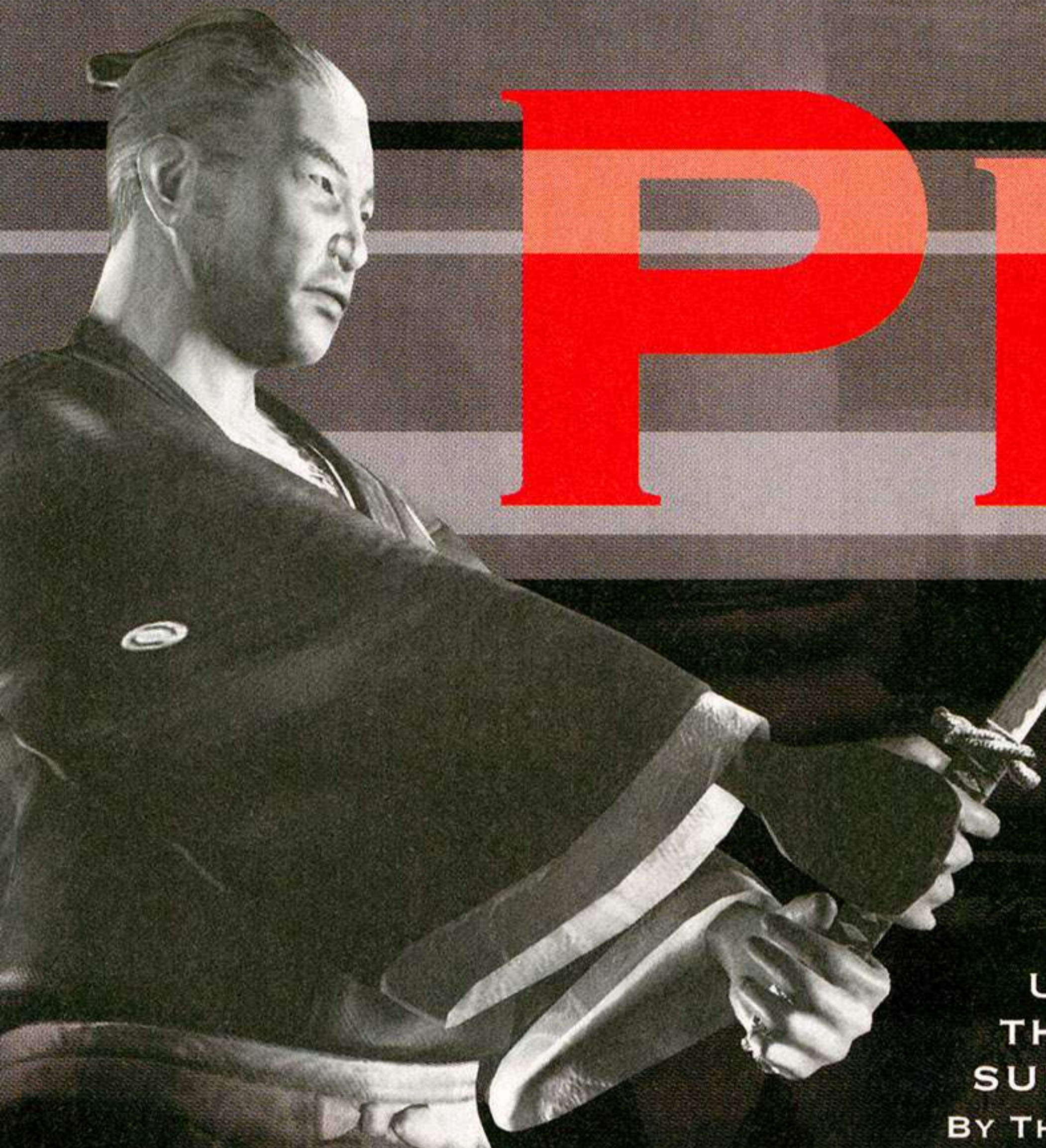
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- A GAMEPRO FEATURE -

# CRIME

DOES

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IT'S A CRIME SPREE FOR GAMERS THIS FALL AS VARIOUS PUBLISHERS LINE UP THEIR BIG GUNS. HERE ARE SOME OF THE CRIME-ORIENTED TITLES THAT ARE SURE TO HOLD GAME SYSTEMS HOSTAGE.  
BY THE GAMEPROS

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CRIME DOES PLAY

# STRANG





# LEHOLD

JOHN WOO AND CHOW YUN-FAT ARE  
TOGETHER AGAIN FOR THE EXPLOSIVE VIDEO-  
GAME SEQUEL TO THE INFLUENTIAL ACTION  
OPUS *HARD BOILED*. MANY A GAMER'S  
FAVORITE PASTIME—BREAKING STUFF—  
IS ABOUT TO GET ELEVATED TO AN ART FORM.

BY OUROBOROS

**W**hile opinions of his high-profile Hollywood films (such as *Broken Arrow*, *Face/Off*, *Mission: Impossible 2*, and others) may differ, John Woo's most potent filmmaking legacy lies in his earlier Hong Kong Blood Operas, beginning with 1986's seminal *A Better Tomorrow* and culminating in the epic gun battles of 1989's *The Killer* and 1992's *Hard Boiled*.

## PARTNERS IN CRIME

John Woo's distinctive debris-clouded visuals, stylized slo-mo gunplay, and exaggerated stunts revealed him as a sort of next-generation Peckinpah, and what better blend of feverish action to bestow on a video game? *Stranglehold* is the sequel to *Hard Boiled* and marks the return of Inspector "Tequila" Yuen, thus reuniting John Woo's signature direction with the acting chops of his erstwhile compatriot, Chow Yun-Fat.

The creative team is hell-bent on giving gamers the chance to experience all the balletic bullet dodging and explosive climaxes from a third-person perspective. Given the surfeit of titles that borrow liberally from Woo's work, it seems only just that a game should emerge bearing the seal of the master himself. This isn't a case of slapping a famous name on a box, mind you: This is true collaboration. Woo had a hand in everything from shaping the story to improving the dramatic impact of Tequila's deadliest moves. Chow Yun-Fat, for his part, has been scanned from head to toe and photographed evoking a variety of emotions, and he will perform all of the Inspector's dialogue.

CONTINUED ►



This boss's housewarming party got a little rougher than expected.

**NOT SO PEACEFUL WARRIOR**

Tequila's had more than one gun in his face, and he's not about to shy away from a gang of heavily armed goons; our dear Inspector will ride a tsunami of bullets as he wages his one-man vendetta against the hardhearted criminals of Hong Kong and Chicago. There's more to survival in the underworld than just running and gunning, though, and Yuen's got the acrobatic heart of an Olympic gymnast: run up stair railings, slide across table tops and wheeled serving trays, swing one-armed on chandeliers, and somersault off walls, all while emptying clip after clip into nearby criminal stooges.

The developers—the same team behind 2004's *Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy*—promise that controlling all this complex movement will be ridiculously easy with a context-sensitive button dedicated to taking

advantage of nearby scenery as commanded by the player. No matter what outlandish stunt Tequila's pulling off, the player always retains complete control over where and how to let the lead fly. Whether you're standing on a second-floor railing to rain death on gang members or turning a teahouse into an abattoir with the aid of a delivery-cart accomplice, the overriding ambition is that every moment makes the player the star of a big-budget action set piece.

**TIME WARP MANAGEMENT**

Yuen's got more than just stunts at his disposal, though: He can regularly achieve a focus so intense that time itself slows around him, an effect referred to as Tequila Time. Sure, it sounds an awful lot like what you've already seen in the *Max Payne* games, but as Midway's Bryan Eddy puts it, the team was "fortunate enough to have direction from the master of slo-mo himself."

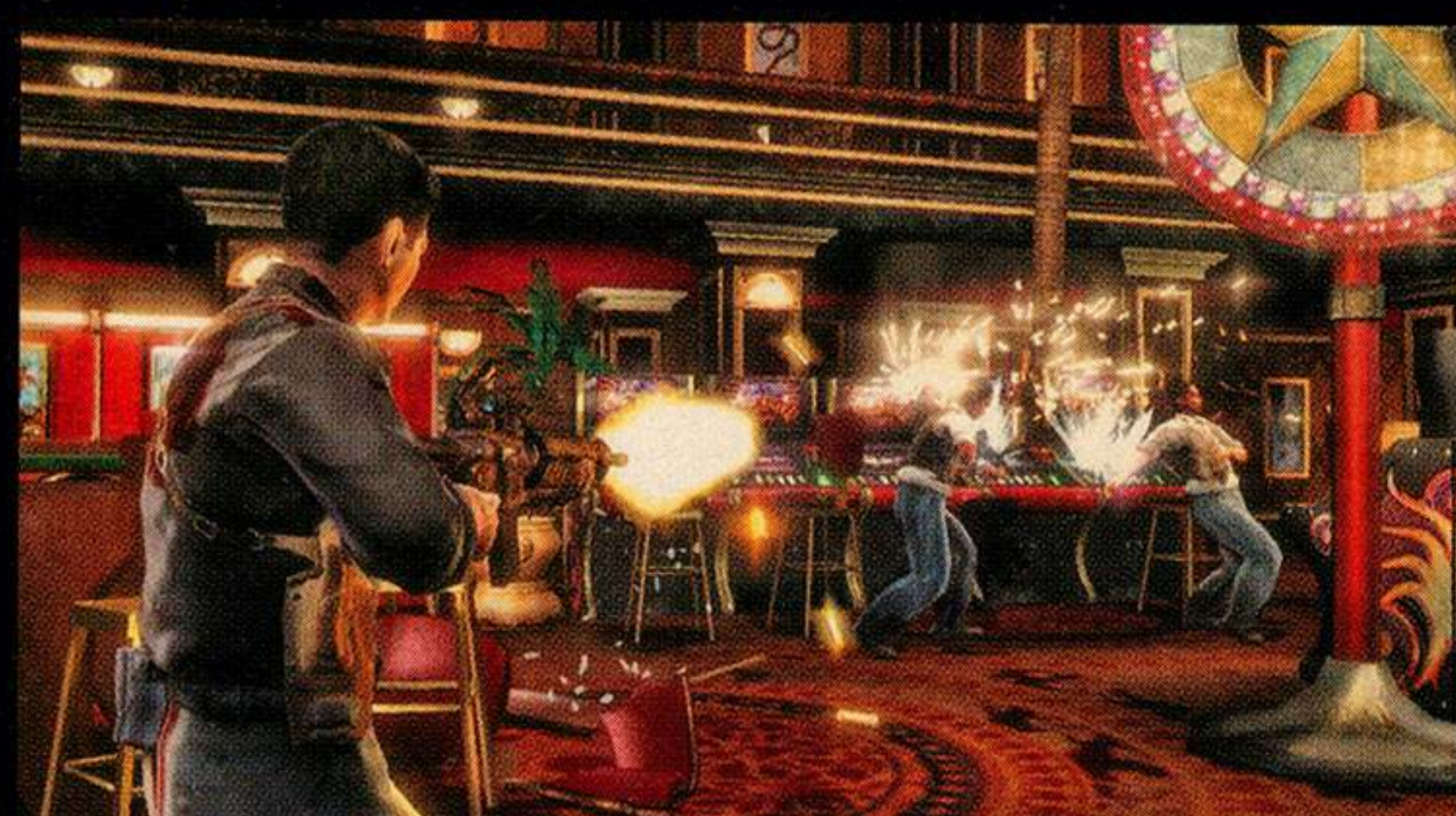
Stylish kills that make the most of your supercop talents charge up a meter that can be tapped for spectacularly graceful killing sprees like the Tequila Bomb, a spinning move that summarily executes all nearby baddies, pausing to elaborate each bullet's path through enemy anatomy. The goons won't take all this lying down, however, and they'll be guided to a



You won't find detailed exotic locales like this in any travel guide.



Stranglehold couldn't very well carry the John Woo name without a Mexican standoff, right?



Tequila reveals his deep-seated hatred for video poker with a few well-placed rounds.

CONTINUED ▶

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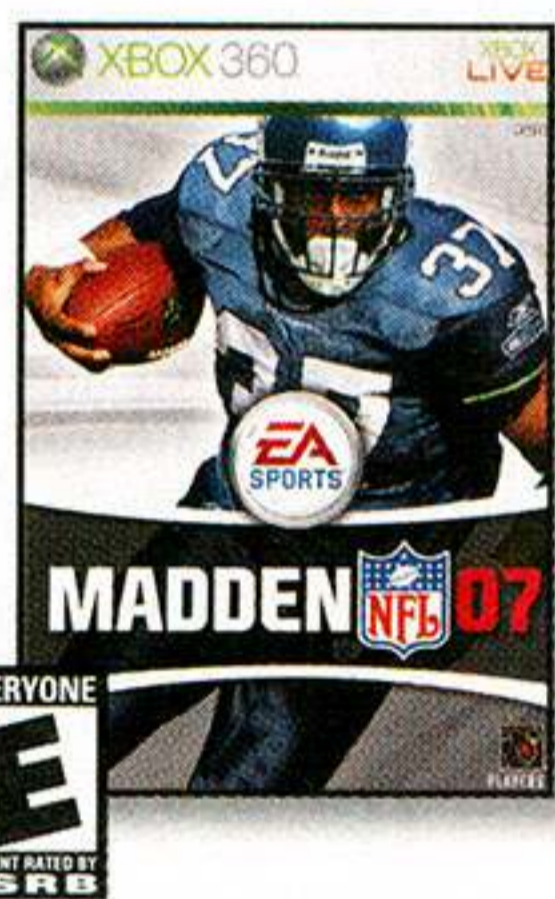


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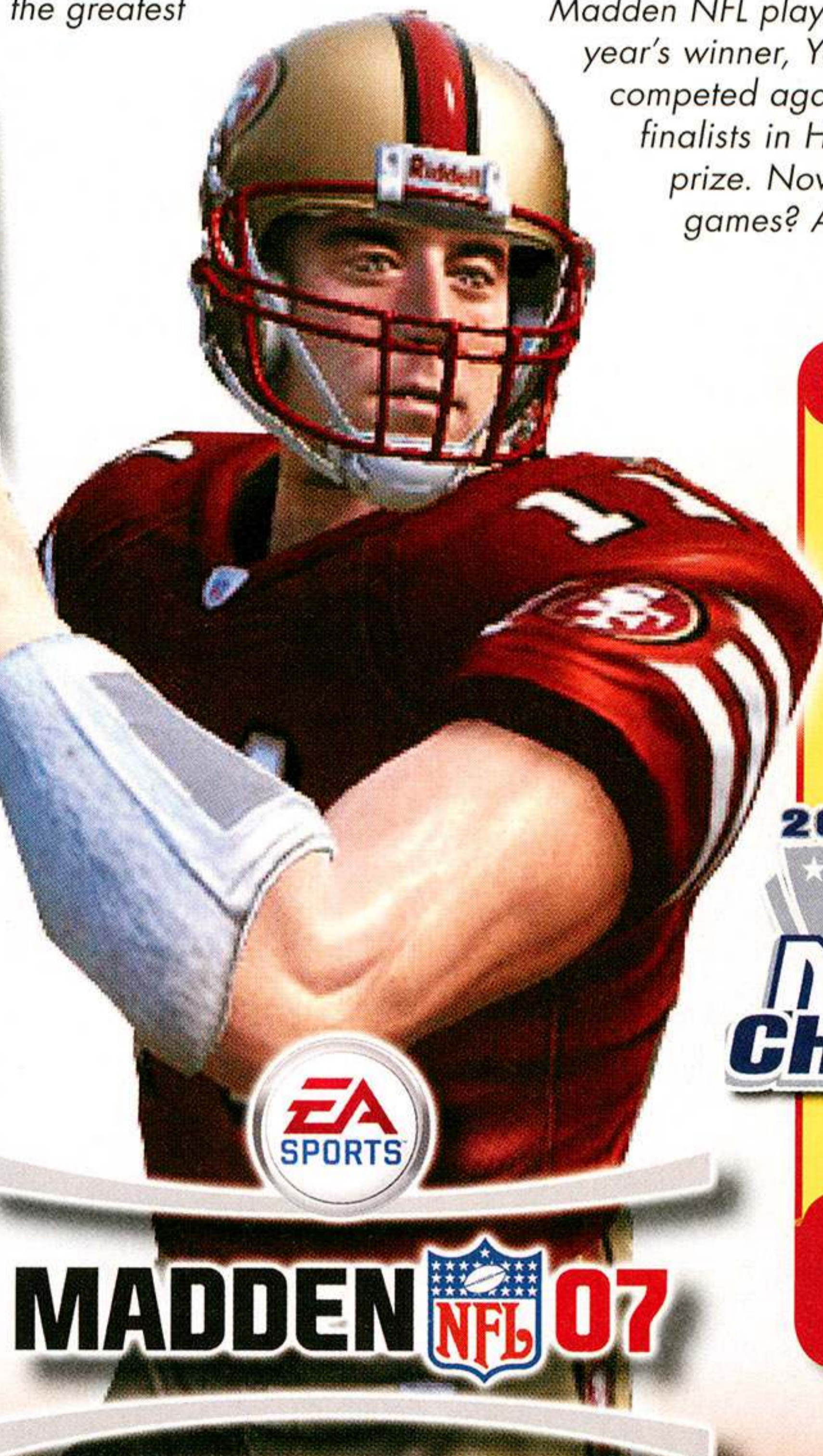
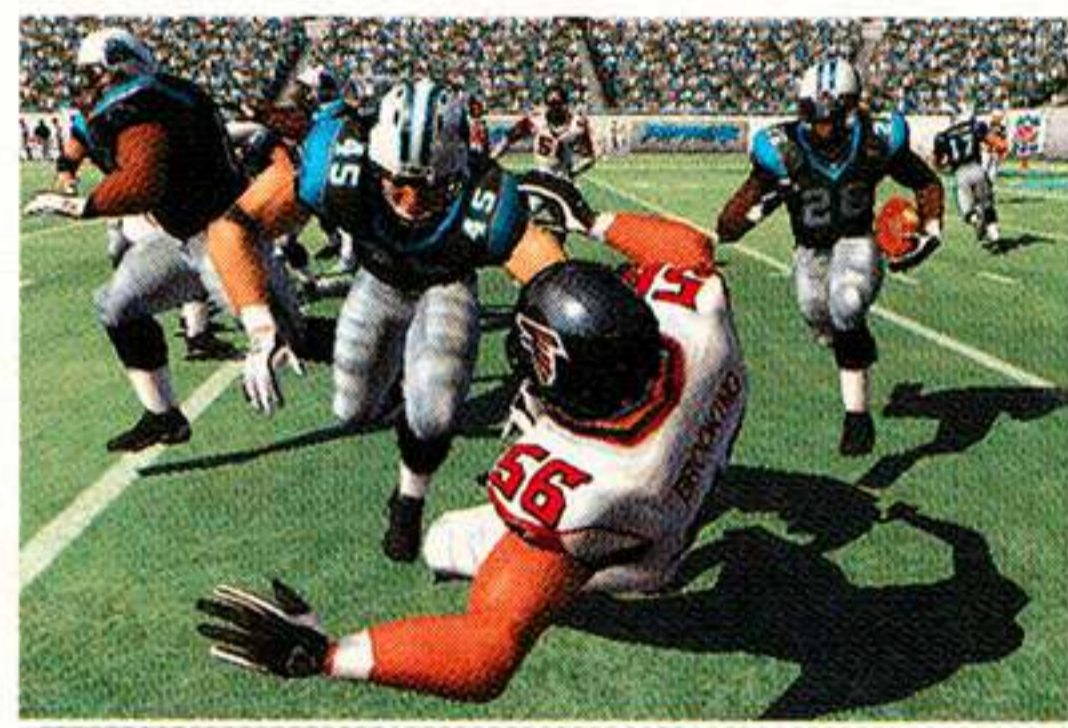
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Madden NFL player of all. Last year's winner, Young Jarvis, competed against 31 other finalists in Hawaii during the Pro Bowl for a \$100,000 grand prize. Now, who says you can't make money playing video games? Are you ready for some football?!



READ THE DETAILED PREVIEW ON PAGE 87

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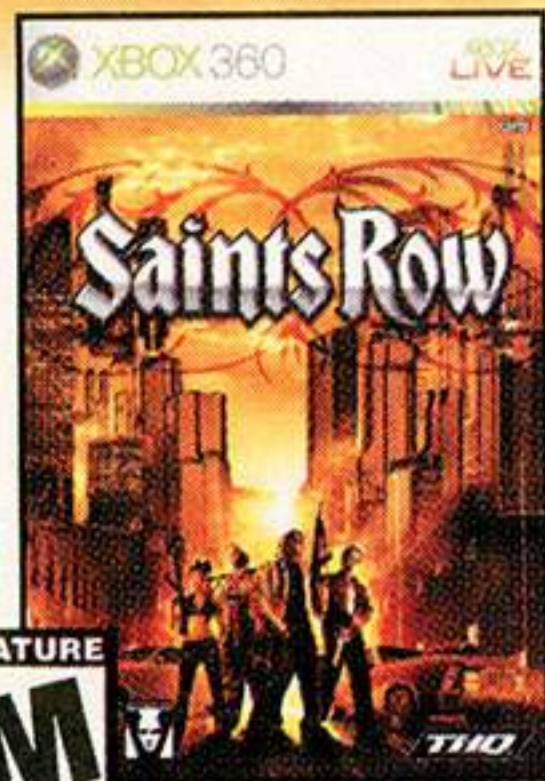
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# MADDEN NFL 07

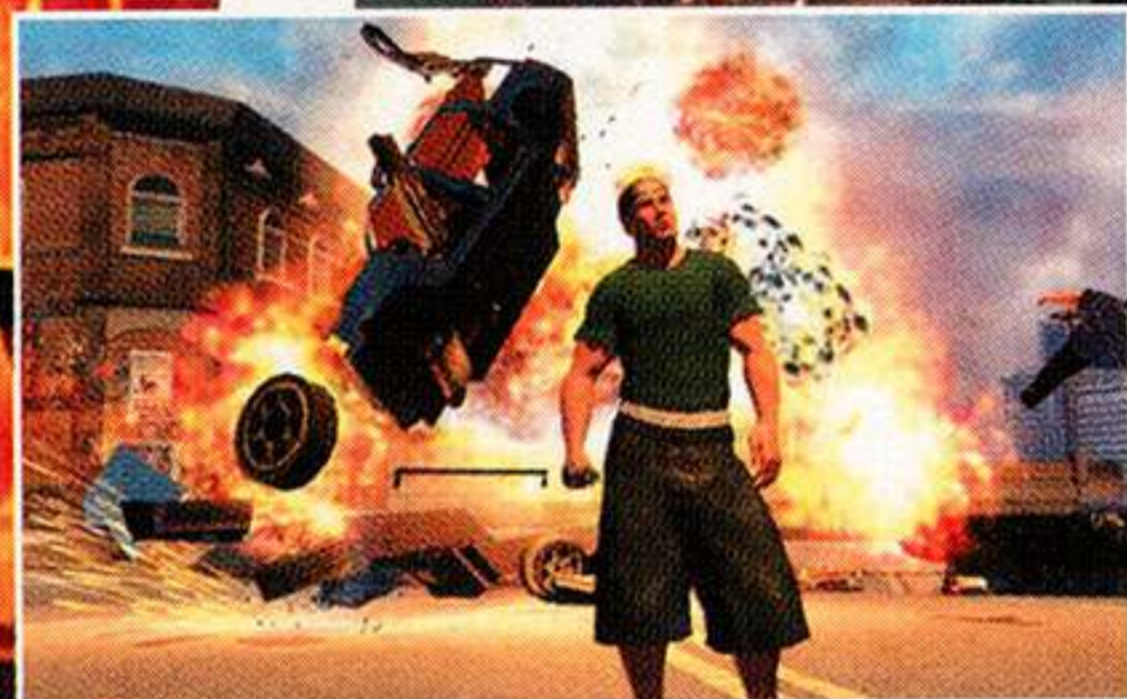
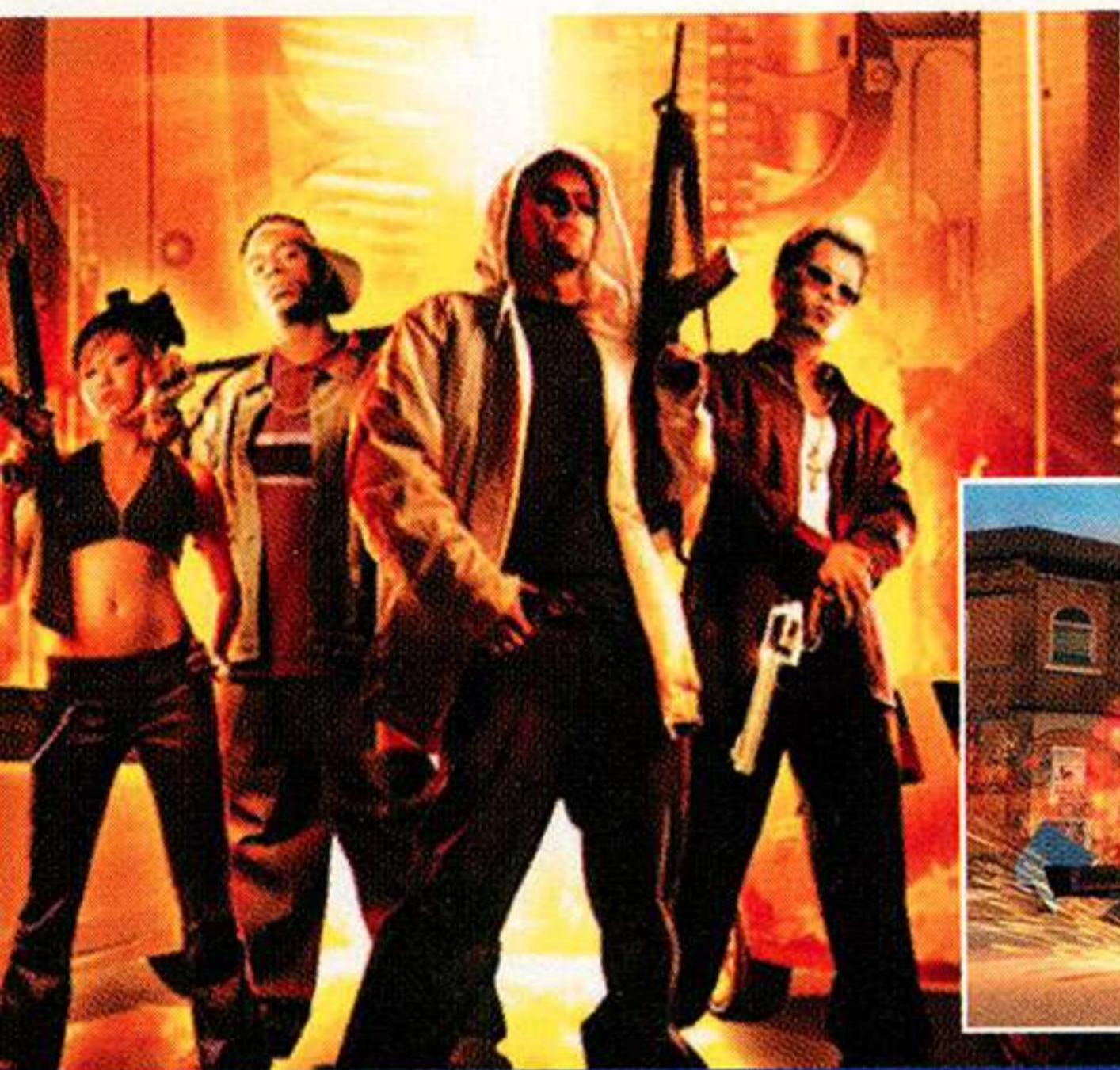
# VIDEO GAMES SAINTS ROW



## Xbox 360

Gamers thirsting for Grand Theft Auto-like action on the Xbox 360 are rewarded with Saints Row, a similar action/adventure game in the GTA genre, but with much, much more. Create your own customized character (including visiting an in-game plastic surgeon) to interact with the rich, detailed, free-roaming environments of Saints Row where its kill or be killed as you try to assert control over rival gang members and corrupt officials who want to take

you down. Experience deep, interactive gameplay where your every move is an integral part of the evolving story line. Online, multiplayer action and challenges literally assure you more "bang" for your buck. This is a Mature-rated title due to its intense violence, adult language and themes, and use of drugs and alcohol.



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## PC

Company of Heroes chronicles the experiences of one Allied company during Operation Overlord, which stands as one of the bloodiest invasions in military history. There is a solid focus on realism as reflected by the "living battlefield" you interact with, which is radically affected by the scars of combat. This RTS (Real Time Strategy) game is intended to appeal to both diehard strategy fiends as well as armchair generals because of its smooth, intuitive interface.



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Like a bull in a china shop, Tequila isn't one for subtle negotiation



Inspector Yuen likes his bacon prepared extra crispy, thank you very much.

certain extent by human emotions. If all their friends are getting laid to waste, they might dive for cover or charge at you in a blind homicidal fury. If you're hiding, they might cautiously scour the rubble for you, flanking your last known position as a team.

**CONTROLLED DEMOLITION**

Say the word "cinematic" to a lot of gamers, and the words that come immediately to mind are "on rails." Though storytelling flair is clearly important, too often, that seems to translate into a linear exercise in glorified hand-holding. Luckily, Stranglehold's levels are being designed as free-roaming playgrounds for you to annihilate at will, unrestrained by the endless procession of corridors and crates that are all too often hallmarks of the genre.

When you need a breather, duck behind a support beam or overturned table for cover, but don't expect it to last forever. We know what you're thinking: You've heard these promises before, marketing hyperbole describing "fully destructible environments" that turn out, on delivery, to be full of visible seams



**THE CELLULOID CONNECTION**  
STRANGLEHOLD MAY HAVE ITS ORIGINS IN THE FILM *HARD BOILED*, BUT CHOW YUN-FAT AND JOHN WOO HAVE WORKED TOGETHER SEVERAL TIMES, AND THEY'VE CREATED FILMS THAT REDEFINED THE HONG KONG ACTION GENRE. BY MAJOR MIKE

Before Steven Seagal, Sylvester Stallone, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and other Hollywood action icons ever picked up a pistol, director John Woo and actor Chow Yun-Fat created some of the most dazzling action sequences involving gunplay ever put on film. Some of these movies migrated to the U.S., where they were met with critical acclaim, and remain cult favorites to this day. The influence of these films is unmistakable as you can spot entire sequences grafted into such big-budget action films as *The Matrix*, *Die Harder*, *Lethal Weapon*, and others. Here's a look at the collaborative films of Chow Yun-Fat and John Woo.

**A BETTER TOMORROW (1986)**

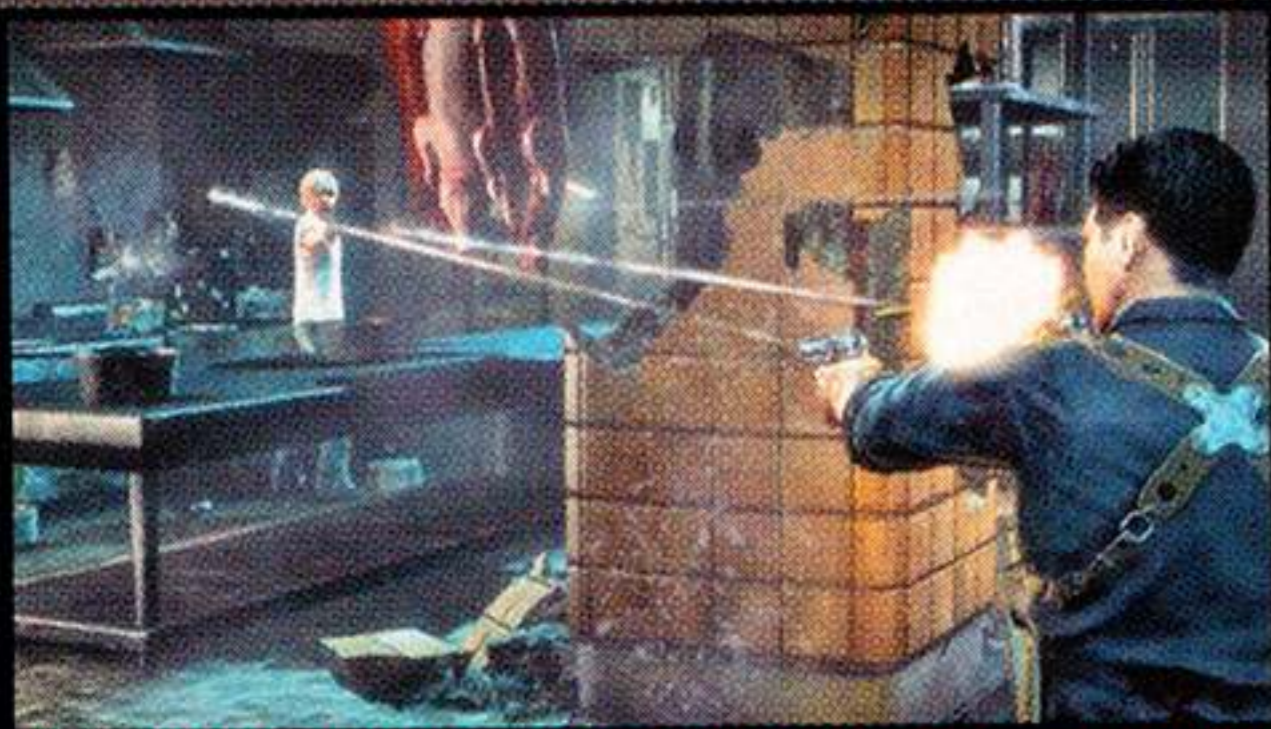


Woo's first film, *A Better Tomorrow* is about loyalty and honor as it follows two brothers; one is a high-ranking member of a crime syndicate, the other a detective. Yun-Fat plays a friend of the former. The DVD is available from Anchor Bay.

**A BETTER TOMORROW II (1987)**



Yun-Fat returned, this time playing the twin brother of his character from the first film. Yun-Fat is a New York restaurant owner who goes to Hong Kong to help a friend take on organized crime. The movie ends with Woo's first "epic" shootout that lasts almost 30 minutes. The DVD is available from Anchor Bay. Yun-Fat returned for a third entry, *A Better Tomorrow III* in 1989; Woo, however, did not.



Those missing chunks of wall don't just disappear—you can find them on the nearby ground.

and invulnerable scenery. Stranglehold's Massive D destruction system is meant to allow for a level of granular ruin heretofore unwitnessed: Damn near every little bit of each level can be reduced to dust and cinders, from the furniture to the ceramic tiles on the wall to the support beams beneath, such that neither you nor your opponents can linger long enough for any dust to settle.

#### WHEN DOVES CRY

As your inner child might expect, the amount of satisfaction obtained from collateral damage is directly proportional to how pretty the object of your wrath was to begin with. There are only so many generic containers and telltale red barrels you can reduce to splinters and vapor



Luckily for our hero, gangsters don't tend to get along with each other too well.



Every bullet visibly disrupts the air it travels through, letting you trace its flight.



Even supercops breathe a sigh of relief at narrowly avoiding a rocket to the face

before the whole gig feels hopelessly hollow. No worries there: In Stranglehold, the environments you'll annihilate boast a pristine sheen that just begs you to take them apart.

An amalgam of Chicago museums sacrifices complete dinosaur skeletons, totem poles, and ancient terra cotta warriors to your righteous anger. A downtown Hong Kong marketplace sits tantalizingly congested with innocent fruit stands, while a Russian mobster's luxurious high-rise penthouse looks out onto the Windy City, spanning multiple floors of oh-so-tempting glass and marble. A casino's slot machines spark and whine with every errant pellet of a shotgun blast. Expect the air to fill with much more than just bullet trails, smoke, and Woo's symbolic white doves.

#### BY LAND AND SEA

No action film would be complete without wild car chases and the like, so it's only natural that Stranglehold occasionally shows you the door of a 4x4 or high-powered boat in hot pursuit of a cowardly scumbag. The designers are tight-lipped about what vehicles you'll ultimately have access to, but if you're an action movie



When you say, "Jump," Chow Yun-Fat says, "Off what?"



Check out the level of detail on everything from Yuen's pistols to the hairs on his head.

aficionado, you know that seldom is the hero restricted to keeping his mitts at 10 and 2 o'clock. Woo's films have had some of the most incredible vehicular stunts in movie history, and there's talk of being able to target specific areas on chase cars—the tires, the windshield, or the occupants, for instance—but for now our imaginations will just have to run riot.

#### TEQUILA SLAMMERS

Not much information is available yet about the planned online multiplayer modes, which are rumored to emphasize four-on-four skirmishes over the larger battles offered elsewhere. How will things like Tequila Time carry over? Can we expect to see free or premium downloads after the game's released? Mum's the word for now.

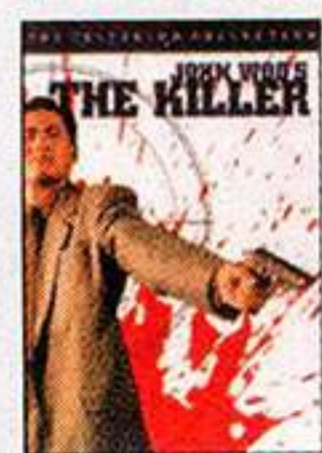
Stranglehold is slated to be a PlayStation 3 launch title this fall with versions for the Xbox 360 and PC to follow shortly thereafter. With all that next-generation horsepower to take advantage of and a legendary action filmmaker guiding development, there's good reason to think Stranglehold will keep audiences gripped in thrall when it finally hits the street.

■ Update ■ Developer and publisher: Midway  
■ Target release date: November



CONTINUED ▶

#### THE KILLER (1989)



Chow Yun-Fat plays an assassin who accidentally blinds a lounge singer during a hit. Hunted by an aggressive detective, he becomes the blind woman's protector—a situation that becomes complicated when his own employers turn on him. This is considered by many to be Woo's best film. The Criterion Collection DVD is out of print, but you can usually find a copy on eBay for a reasonable price.

#### ONCE A THIEF (1991)



Taking a decidedly lighter tone than the other Woo-Fat collaborations, *Once a Thief* was considered a letdown by fans of their earlier films. Yun-Fat plays a professional thief who is crippled when a heist goes bad. Confined to a wheelchair, he seeks revenge on whoever set him up. *Once a Thief* has more comedy and romance than gunplay (although there's a good amount of that too), and many felt that overall, the ingredients didn't really mix. The DVD is available from Sony Pictures Home Entertainment.

#### HARD BOILED (1992)



With this film, *Once a Thief* was quickly forgotten. More Woo-Fat mayhem, *Hard Boiled* finds Yun-Fat as inspector Tequila trying to bring down gun smugglers who killed his partner. Working together with an undercover cop, *Hard Boiled* climaxes with an incredible hospital shootout. Woo was criticized for glamorizing criminals in earlier films, so he decided to make the central character a good guy this time; regardless, *Hard Boiled* is said to have a body count of 230! Like *The Killer*, the Criterion Collection DVD is also out of print.

#### THE BATTLE OF RED CLIFF (2008)

The first Yun-Fat directed John Woo movie in almost 20 years, *The Battle of Red Cliff* is an ambitious film based on part of the classic Chinese novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. *Red Cliff* will tell the story of an epic battle between invading warlords and an alliance of two armies—in all, over 1 million men. The movie takes place in 208 A.D., so you probably won't have people flying through the air in slow motion, firing automatic dual pistols. Ken Watanabe also stars. The film is in preproduction and is slated for a 2008 release.

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This is what 400 bucks worth of Xbox 360 and a copy of Saints Row will get you. Ain't technology grand?

**EXCLUSIVE HANDS-ON REPORT!**

# SAINTS ROW

HERE'S ONE LAST CHANCE TO SEE WHY SAINTS ROW IS THE XBOX 360'S FIRST CRIMINAL KINGPIN!

Xbox 360

**W**hat can we possibly say about Saints Row that hasn't already been said? "If you love the Grand Theft Auto games, playing Saints Row will be an almost orgasmic experience," I huffed and puffed last November in *GamePro's* exclusive cover story. "If you think we're exaggerating," I wrote, "just wait 'til you get a chance to play it yourself."

Well, that day is almost here—Saints Row should be exploding onto store shelves any second now. And to celebrate, we scored an exclusive, near-complete build of the game that those *other* game mags just couldn't get. Best of all, we have fabulous news to report: If you're gonzo for GTA, Saints Row is a must-buy game. Here's why.

## BONFIRE OF THE PROFANITIES

Saints Row comes courtesy of the Illinois-based developer Volition Studios, itself a branch of megapublisher THQ. Volition has worked overtime to simulate the best pieces of the high-selling Grand Theft Auto games while trimming out the gristle and fat. Key gameplay improvements include a free-look FPS targeting system; a nuanced hand-to-hand combat system that includes multiple kicks, punches, and blocking; and an array of car-customization options that will leave motorheads drooling with envy.

But upon playing the game, the first thing you'll notice is the new character creation studio, an MMO-style system that allows you to build your dream thug pixel by profane pixel. And as in the best MMOs, building a career criminal is practically a game unto itself. In the



The Xbox 360's three-core CPU enables some state-of-the-art physics effects.



These advanced weather effects give the game a dazzling look. Check out that volumetric fog!



As in the Grand Theft Auto games, police attack choppers are a major threat...

...but they're nothing the RPG (rocket-propelled grenade) can't handle.

GamePro offices, we constructed one particularly hideous character that sported beady little eyes, scraggly facial hair, a swollen Buddha belly, and the biggest, nastiest nose this side of Howard Stern. Our creation was so ugly we're not even going to show him here. Hey, we have an image to maintain.

Then there are the little touches. Want to call up a wheelman or enter a cheat code? No sweat—just punch the numbers into your cell phone, and your info is saved for later use. One cheat code, helpfully provided by our buds at

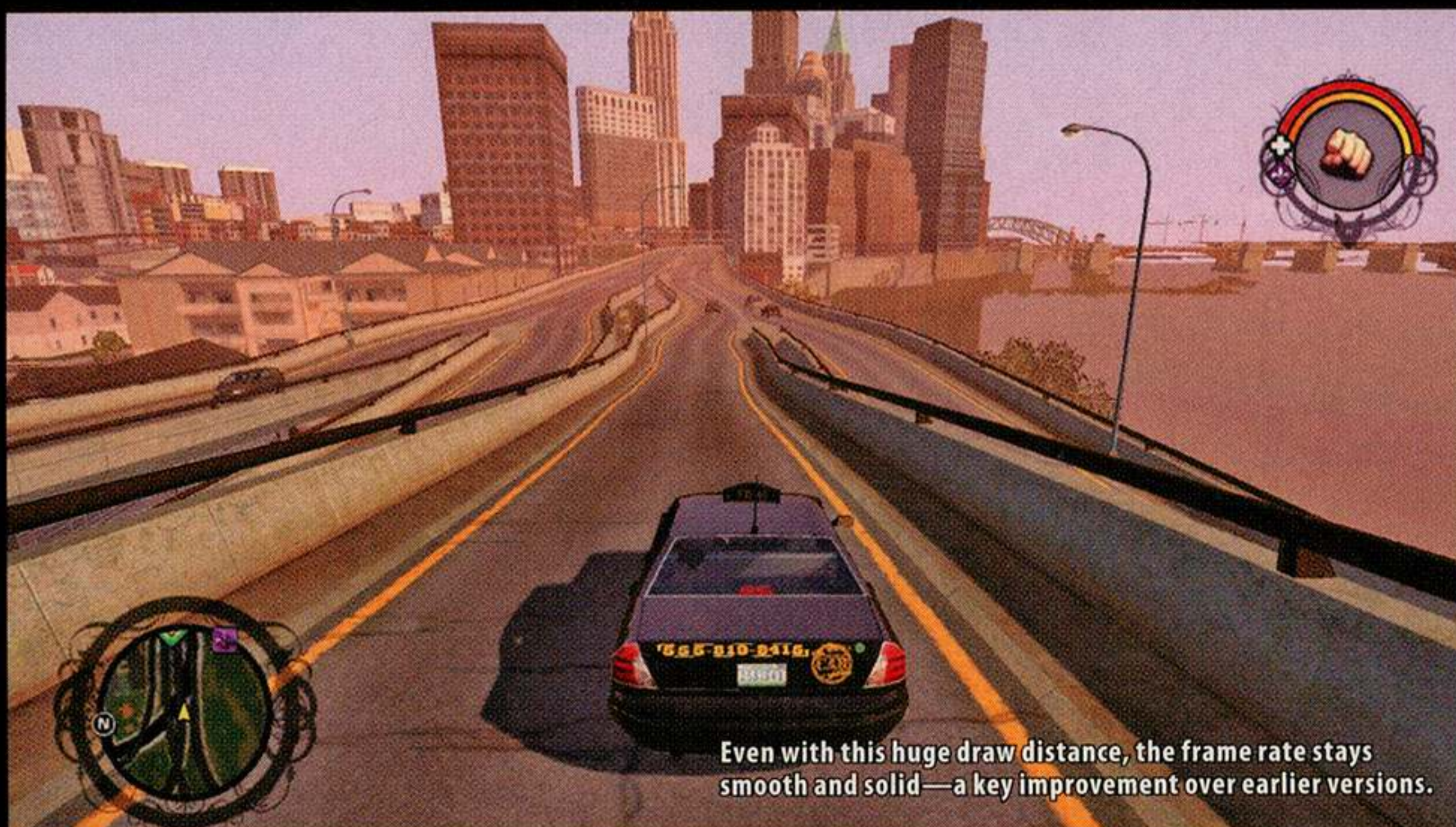
Volition, unlocked a mammoth RPG (rocket-propelled grenade) cannon that could level a parking lot full of cars (or bring down a police helicopter) in seconds. The other guns are slick, too, including a whole assortment of shotguns (both single- and double-barreled), submachine guns, rifles, explosives, and more. Another nice touch: As long as you've got enough cash, you can buy any gun you want at any time. No more waiting for the story line to unlock that dream sniper rifle!

### NEW (CAR-) JACK CITY

But the game's not just about random inner-city violence (though that's lots of fun, too). From what we played, the plot offers far more intricate missions than the tedious chores found in the GTA games. The first mission, in fact, forced you to prove your worth in a bloody-knuckles beat-em-up against your own gang! Once you pass the initiation rites, it's off to the streets of Stillwater and all the gratuitous violence, paparazzi bashing, and dope smuggling you can stomach. Huzzah!

We don't see any reason to mince words: Saints Row is basically what you'd expect to get with Grand Theft Auto IV, only it's out *now* (GTA IV is due in late 2007). Barring any last-minute disasters, Saints Row looks to be the first game to give GTA a real run for its money. It has a checklist of next-gen features that would make any GTA goon drool, as well as style and humor to spare. We're convinced. But is the Grand Theft Auto brand strong enough to curb all challengers? We'll know soon enough—Saint's Row hits the Xbox 360 this August.—*Vicious Sid*

■ **Update** ■ Developer: Volition  
 ■ Publisher: THQ ■ Target release date: August



Even with this huge draw distance, the frame rate stays smooth and solid—a key improvement over earlier versions.



CONTINUED ►



In Yakuza, almost everything can be used as a weapon.



# YAKUZA

AMERICA ISN'T THE ONLY COUNTRY WITH ORGANIZED CRIME.

PS2

**T**he Godfather took you through the inner workings of the mafia in the 1940s, and True Crime: Streets of L.A. and New York City covered the criminal underworld of both coasts. As for the Grand Theft Autos, well, they thoroughly covered their fictional U.S. crime locales, too. Sure, Grand Theft Auto-ish titles seem to be a dime a dozen these days, but Yakuza examines city crime in another country—Tokyo, Japan.

## STREET-SMART FIGHTING

In Yakuza, you'll play as Kiryu Kazuma, a former yakuza member who is released from a 10-year prison sentence only to find himself the protector of a girl who holds the key to a cash fortune.



Yakuza features a gigantic and sprawling Tokyo with plenty to explore.

Rather than focusing on drive-bys and big firepower, Yakuza emphasizes hand-to-hand combat. Kazuma can string together a series of moves in order to take out multiple foes. He can grab objects in the environment (such as pipes, bicycles, and signs) to get an edge over his enemies as well. There's also a Heat Gauge that indicates your mental spirit. Similar to features in other action/fighting titles, this gauge collects energy with each successful blow Kazuma lands. Once it's maxed out, he can execute devastating attacks for a limited time. Kazuma can also gain experience from fighting and use it to learn new and advanced attacks.

## NIGHTLIFE

Although Yakuza has a robust fighting engine, there are plenty of side missions, too. These include interrogation, bribery, gambling, and more. The game will have an atmospheric sense of style—right down to the neon lights that will authentically illuminate Japan's nightlife. One hitch in the realism, though, could be the audio track. Sega has chosen to present Yakuza with dubbed English-language characters (see "ProNews," this issue)—sans the option of playing the original game's Japanese dialogue with

English subtitles. Audio concerns aside, Yakuza should be an interesting crime title that explores a world of which many gamers may not be aware.—Major Mike

■ **Update** ■ Developer and publisher: Sega  
 ■ Target release date: September



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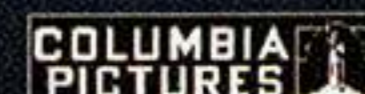


PlayStation 2



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# RESERVOIR DOGS

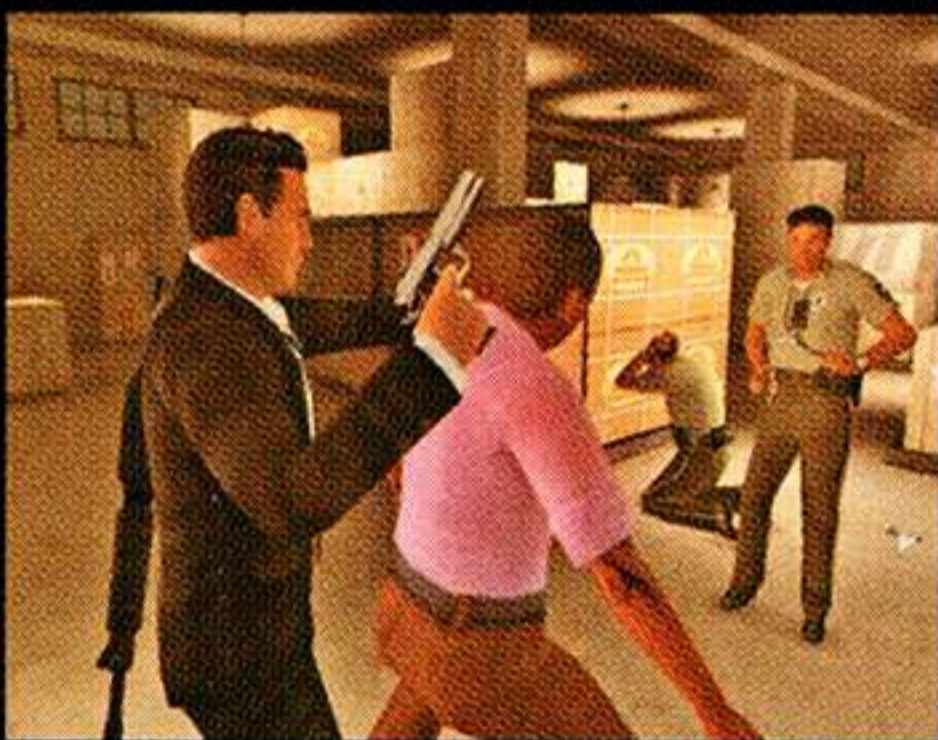
TARANTINO'S BIG-BREAK FILM GOES VIDEO GAME.

PS2  
Xbox

**L**ike *The Godfather*, *Reservoir Dogs* exists to fill in plot points absent from its source material—Quentin Tarantino's 1992 film that put him on the map. The game will follow six crooks from a failed diamond heist to a confrontation at a rendezvous in a warehouse. One of the pull points of the game will be the ability to play as each of the color-codenamed characters as you play through some of the movie's events that will include the heist and the fate of Mr. Pink (key plot points that were never fully explained).

*Reservoir Dogs* will feature third-person action along with driving and shooting sequences. Additional techniques will include hostage-taking, adrenaline management, and a psycho rating system, where you are given a ranking based on the moral choices that you make during the game. As for movie talent, Michael Madsen will provide the voice for his original character, Mr. Blonde, and the soundtrack will retain such 1970s songs as "Little Green Bag" and "Stuck in the Middle with You."

*Reservoir Dogs* looks like another movie cash-in, but is this revisitation really necessary? The highlights of the movie were the bristling dialogue and jarring graphic violence. As for the offscreen events, some of those were better left a mystery and won't really benefit from full explanation.—*Major Mike*



■ **First Look** ■ Developer: Volatile  
 ■ Publisher: Eidos Interactive ■ Target release date: August



# RED STEEL

TWO-FISTED FURY WITH INTERACTION APLENTY

Wii

**R**ed Steel is basically a first-person shooter, but the Wii controller adds its own subtle nuances to the combat. The preview version's controls were admittedly sensitive, and they're still being tuned to movement. Gunfighting was touchy, and keeping the targeting cursor from dancing across the environment was a challenge, especially when yakuza lead was flying all around you. With a little patience, however, you could hold the remote steady enough to squeeze off accurate rounds at your assailants.

To make such melees more manageable, *Red Steel* will also feature a cool bullet-time effect called Freeze Time Mode. It's a timed feature that stops the action to enable you to line up precise shots such as shooting weapons out of the hands of your attackers. You can select as many targets as you want, and as soon as you resume action, your character fires in sequence. It's easy to see that gamers will be able to create their own fighting styles and favorite combos. Players will be taught new Wii moves by two special "mentors" as they progress through the story.



Four-player, split-screen deathmatches will also be on hand. And while online action isn't finalized, Ubisoft's making enough noise to let you know that it's happening. *Red Steel* may be M-rated, but it promises to open up a style of action gaming that anyone with daring can play.—*Bro Buzz*

■ **Update** ■ Developer: Ubisoft Paris  
 ■ Publisher: Ubisoft ■ Target release date: Fall 2006





GOBBLE MUNCH WADDIM!

# PACMAN WORLD RALLY

PAC-MAN AND AN AMAZING CAST OF NAMCO CHARACTERS ARE BACK IN THE FASTEST, MOST EXCITING KART RACING GAME EVER! RACE ON WILD TRACKS OR FIGHT IT OUT IN BATTLE MODE WITH CRAZY PAC-POWERS AND EXCITING NEW WEAPONS.

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Mild Cartoon Violence



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# SCARFACE: THE WORLD IS YOURS

“FIRST YOU GET THE MONEY....”

PS2

Xbox

**D**eveloper Radical is working on its last current-generation game: Scarface: The World Is Yours. Based on the 1983 movie of the same name, Scarface puts you in charge of the criminal kingpin Tony Montana.

Radical is working on fine-tuning details to give the player more immersion in the sun-drenched world of Miami circa the early 1980s. Each pedestrian now has eight or more lines of dialogue, so Tony can taunt and intimidate them to get a variety of responses. We also got some hands-on time with the driving segments and noticed the Jeep handled very differently than van. The final game will include more than 100 different vehicles.

A few other interesting gameplay facets will also be available in Scarface. The combat system was inspired by Mercenaries and the SOCOM games, meaning that players will have the ability to make precise head shots, but they've a limited auto-aim system to help out less experienced gamers.

Another tantalizing tidbit will be Tony's moral code. Just as in the film, Tony isn't interested in attacking noncombatants and can't shoot innocent bystanders. To get out your most violent tendencies, you'll be able to hire an assassin (to go on killing sprees), a driver (for take-no-prisoners vehicular assaults), and an enforcer (to lay the beatdown on hapless civilians). You can also use your ill-gotten gains to buy posh digs, a personal trainer, and some seriously pimped-out cars. Although this and other play aspects are welcome, Scarface still feels like a Vice City knockoff at heart.—Major Mike



Although this and other play aspects are welcome, Scarface still feels like a Vice City knockoff at heart.—Major Mike

■ Hands-On ■ Developer: Radical Entertainment ■ Publisher: Vivendi Universal ■ Target release date: September



FAIR

# THE GODFATHER

ANOTHER OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE

Xbox 360

PSP



**B**efore there was ever a Grand Theft Auto or a Sopranos, *The Godfather* (first the book, then the movie) personified the mobster lifestyle in America. Now, the book by Mario Puzo and, of course, the classic film by Paramount Pictures will become the bases for a game for the Xbox 360 thanks to the efforts of Electronic Arts. But before there could be *The Godfather: The Game*, there had to be *Grand Theft Auto*.

Like GTA, *The Godfather* will similarly feature a persistent world, this one set in New York from 1945–55. Gamers will join the Corleone family as “soldiers” and work their way up the ranks through loyalty, fear, and any number of nefarious illegal activities. The goal is to become Don of your own mafia family. EA is hoping *The Godfather* will take GTA-style, free-roaming gameplay to another level. The game also fills in missing sequences from the film. For instance, before Michael's fateful meeting with Sollozzo and McCluskey, your character must hide the handgun in the restaurant washroom.



*The Godfather* has already been released on current-gen PlayStation 2 and Xbox systems (as Collector's Editions, too) and should hit the Xbox 360 and the handheld PSP (*Mob Wars*) sometime in September.—Major Mike

■ Update ■ Developer and publisher: EA Games  
■ Target release date: September



GOOD



demo discs!



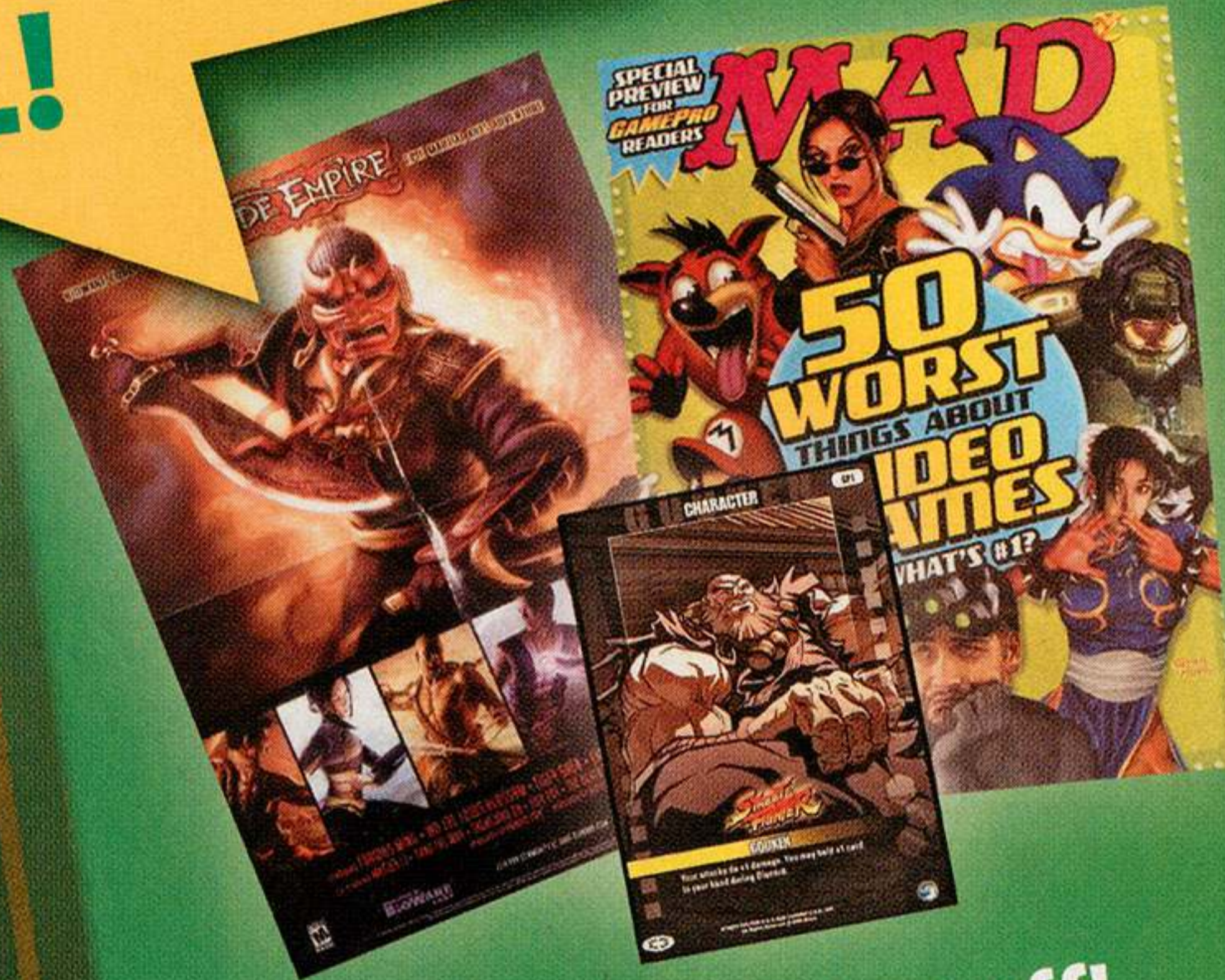
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# CRIME ALSO PLAYS

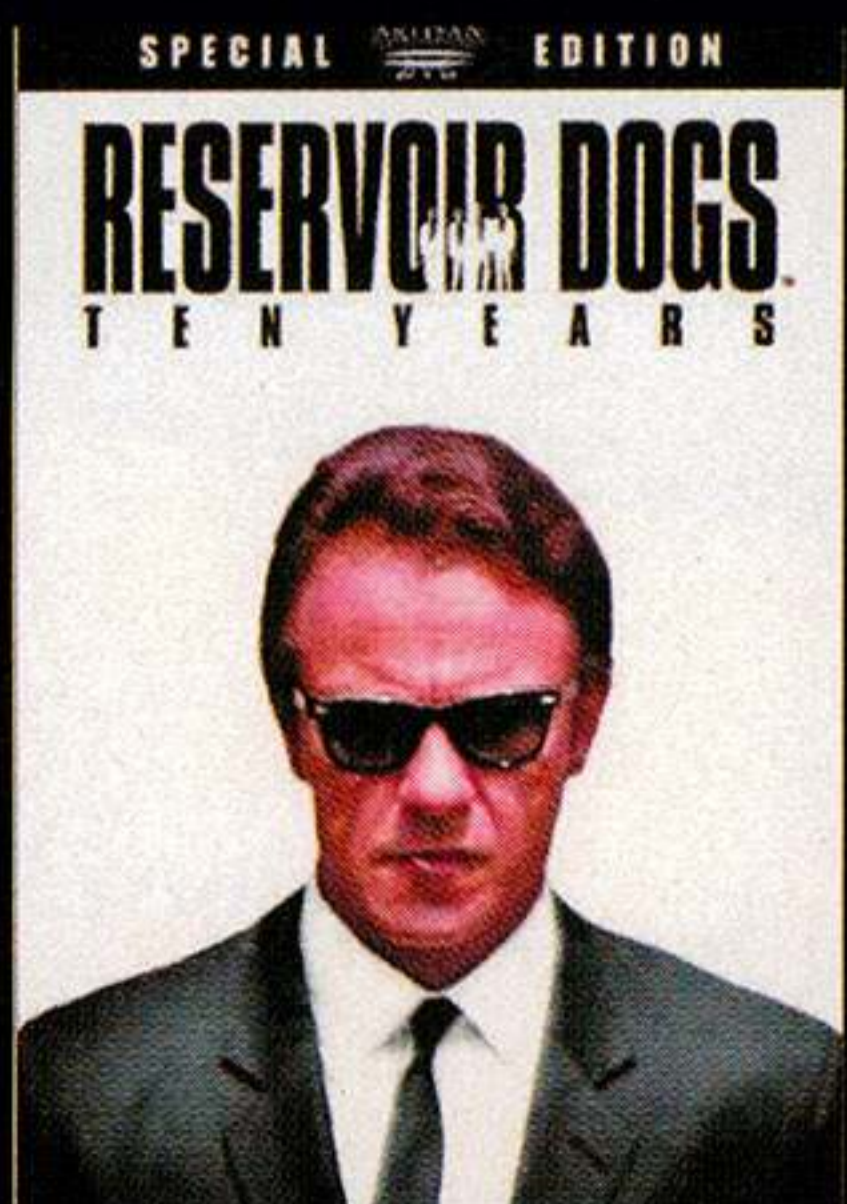
## (ON DVD)

SEVERAL OF THESE GAMES HAVE THEIR ORIGINS IN POPULAR CULTURE—ESPECIALLY MOVIES. HERE ARE FOUR ESPECIALLY INFLUENTIAL FILMS



### THE YAKUZA PAPERS (1973-74)

Japanese director Kinji Fukasaku is probably better known by contemporary audiences for *Battle Royale*, but before that, he directed a film called *The Yakuza Papers: Battles Without Honor & Humanity*. Set in postwar Japan, the movie follows a group of friends who are sucked into constant gang wars as values like honor and loyalty are easily swept aside by greed and violence. The film spawned four sequels (*Deadly Fight in Hiroshima*, *Proxy War*, *Police Tactics*, and *Final Episode*) and is available in a six-disc boxed set (the sixth platter is bonus features).

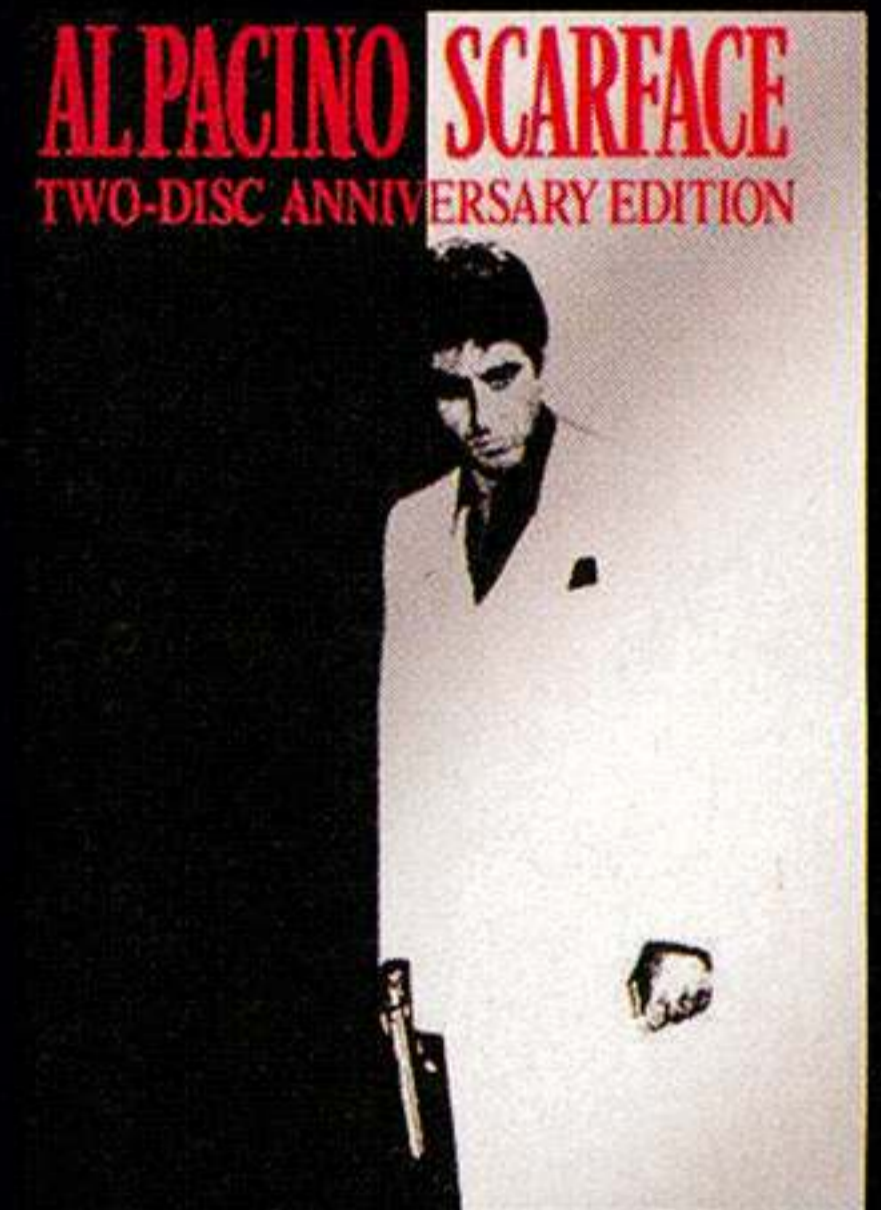


### RESERVOIR DOGS (1992)

Director Quentin Tarantino's warm-up for *Pulp Fiction* features a bunch of criminals who all meet in a warehouse after nearly botching a robbery—plus one of them is an undercover cop. Harvey Keitel, Tim Roth, Steve Buscemi, and Michael Madsen star in this violent drama that's loaded with brisk dialogue (it also features 252 utterances of the f-word) and unsettling scenes. Madsen's "alone time" with his cop hostage is particularly memorable (you'll never listen to the song "Stuck in the Middle with You" the same way again).

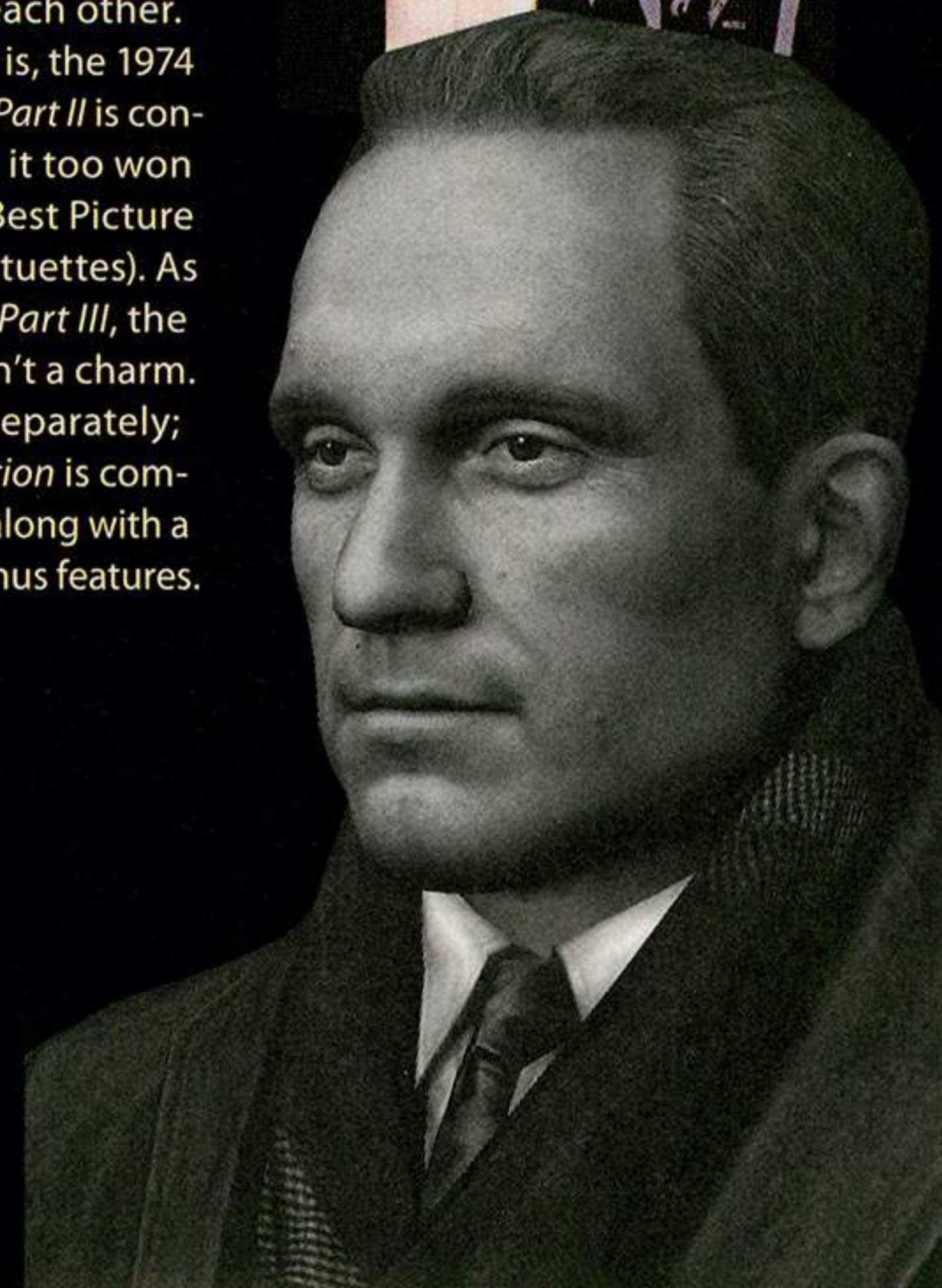
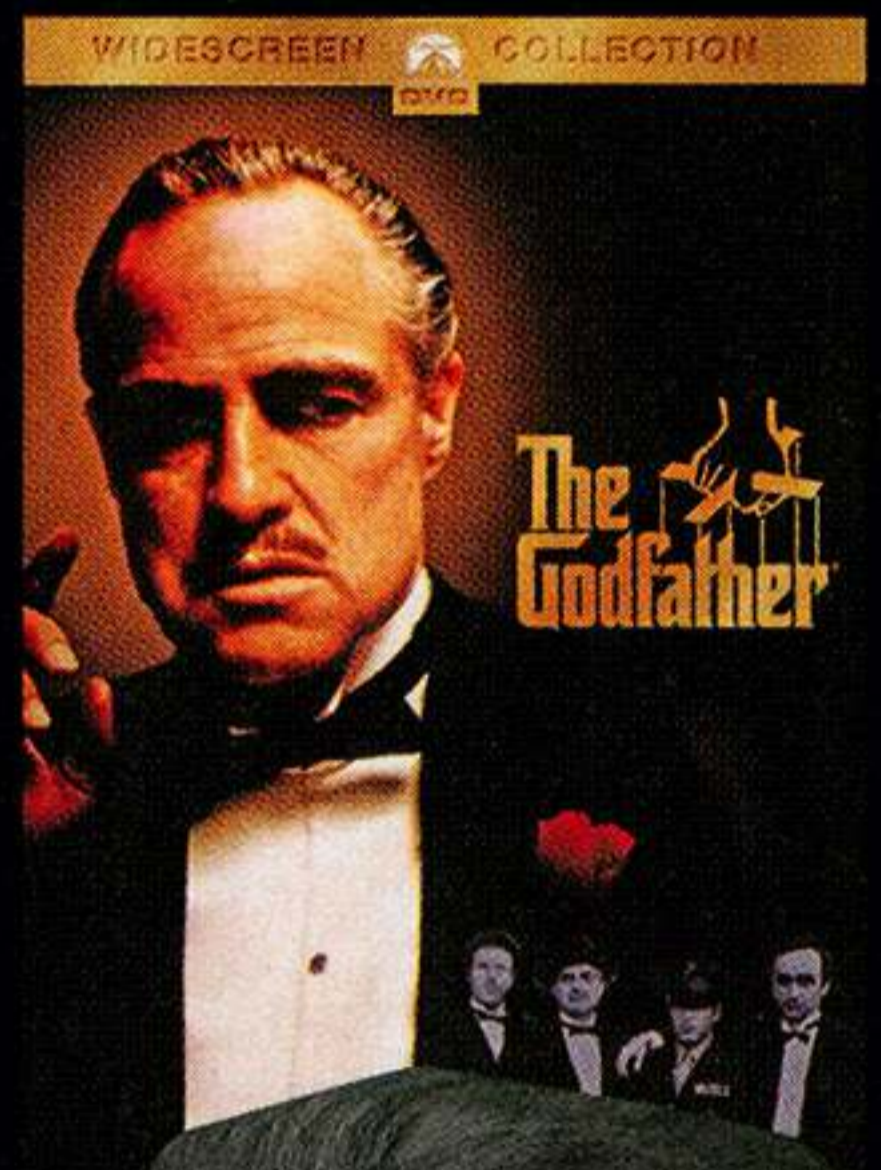
### SCARFACE (1983)

For some reason, Brian DePalma's *Scarface* is regarded as some type of classic. Is it the nearly three-hour running time? How about Oliver Stone's screenplay that features the f-word 218 times? Maybe it's the final shootout where Tony (played with over-the-top fervor by Al Pacino) is shot hundreds of times and refuses to die? Perhaps it's the infamous scene where someone is dismembered with a chainsaw, or the fact that the movie was originally slapped with a (then) X rating by the MPAA? Pick any (or all) of those reasons. While the artistic merits of the film are debatable (along with its mysterious influence on hip-hop), *Scarface* does one thing effectively: It shows the steady decline of a thug who is corrupted by power, cocaine, and overly protective relationship with his sister. *Scarface* was plenty controversial when it was first released; by today's standards, you may wonder what all the fuss is about. Pacino and DePalma teamed up again 10 years later for the superior *Carlito's Way*.



### THE GODFATHER (1972)

Francis Ford Coppola was nearly fired as director of this adaptation of Mario Puzo's best-selling novel about a Mafia family in New York. It's a good thing he wasn't as the movie went on to win three Academy Awards (including Best Picture) and is considered one of the greatest American movies ever made. Although *The Godfather* shows the inner workings of organized crime and the violent means of its "employees," the movie is really about a family and its members' loyalty to each other. As good as *The Godfather* is, the 1974 follow-up, *The Godfather: Part II* is considered even better, and it too won the Academy Award for Best Picture (along with five other statuettes). As for 1990's *The Godfather: Part III*, the third time definitely wasn't a charm. Each movie is available separately; *The Godfather DVD Collection* is compilation of the three films along with a disc that's packed with bonus features.



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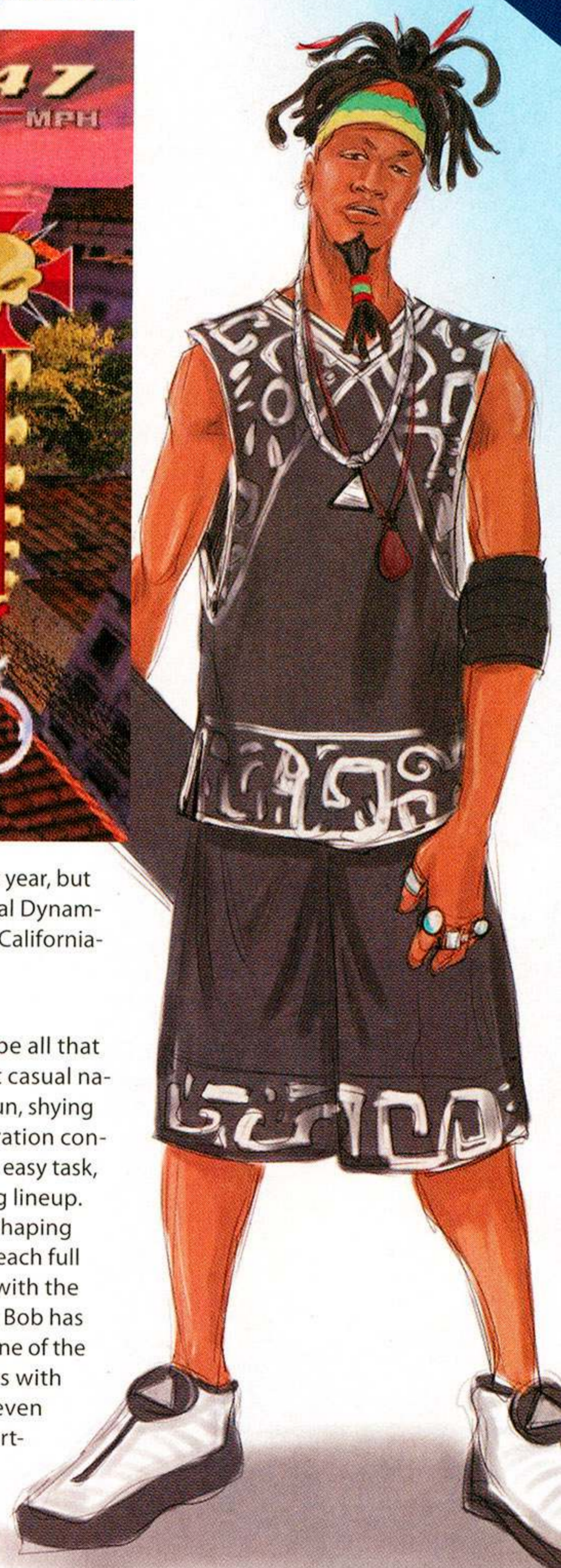
# Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam

Exclusive!

Developer Toys for Bob gives us a sneak peek at Tony for the Wii *By Mr. Marbles*



It's not only about speed; tricks still play an essential role in Downhill Jam.



Wii

Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam developer Toys for Bob was purchased by Activision in May of last year, but you'd never know it. In many ways, the laid-back studio that used to work alongside Crystal Dynamics still acts as an independent developer. For one thing, nearly everyone in the Northern California-based office wears shorts and sandals to work.

### Keeping It Casual

With a name that sounds more like that of an action-figure manufacturer, Toys for Bob may not be all that different from a toy maker. With the task of creating a Tony Hawk launch experience that suits that casual nature of the Nintendo Wii console, the studio knew it would have to churn out a product that screams fun, shying away from the darker, more technical-based games that are currently hitting the other next-generation consoles. But being one of the first developers to create a motion-based game on the unique Wii is not an easy task, and Toys for Bob is fine-tuning all the details to produce a unique launch title for Nintendo's opening lineup.

Downhill Jam is still in an early pre-alpha stage, but we got a great impression of how things are shaping up in the meantime. The verdict: pretty dang well. Typically, games on a new console usually don't reach full potential until about a year after said hardware launches, and this gap could potentially be wider with the Wii's departure from a standard analog-stick control scheme. Taking this into consideration, Toys for Bob has



Environments in Downhill Jam are 10 times bigger than those in any other Tony Hawk game.

the daunting task ahead of creating one of the first Wii games to familiarize gamers with an unfamiliar control scheme and, even more importantly, make them comfortable. And it isn't going to be easy. Gamers are known for being impatient, and all Wii developers are going to have to do a great deal of work to get the kinks out of the unorthodox control scheme.

### Clearing the Obvious Hurdles

Downhill Jam poses two potential obstacles. First and foremost is the sensitivity of the controls. In this downhill skateboarding game, players control the board by holding the Wii remote sideways and tilting it from side to side, simulating the turning of an actual board. An over- or undersensitive controller could prove frustrating for

the user and devastating to the success of the game. And second is the challenge of keeping the fluidity of the downhill gameplay flowing with as few hiccups as possible. Toys for Bob CEO and Director of Development Paul Reiche III said this is of ultimate importance. "We don't want to stop the downhill nature of the game, so we're working on creating ways to keep the player from slamming into objects that would completely stop their motion," he said.

So far, the 45-person team is on the right track. We were able to gaze at a few of the environments that make up the 96 downhill events, and to say these areas are huge would be an understatement. Levels in Downhill Jam are more than 10 times larger than any previous Tony Hawk game, and because the player will soar by surroundings at insane speeds, it's important for the Toys team to develop the setting accordingly. For instance, it wouldn't make sense to dedicate too much Wii processing power to bump mapping rocks and signs that whiz by in split seconds.

Under its contract with Activision, Toys for Bob has an agreement to only work on one title at a time, so Downhill Jam will get the proper attention it deserves before the launch of the Wii. Until then, we're expecting a detailed hands-on experience with the game, so be sure to check out the online coverage at GamePro.com.

■ **First Look** ■ Developer: Toys for Bob  
 ■ Publisher: Activision ■ Target release date: Fall 2006



As expected, balancing on rails is controlled by tilting the Wii remote from side to side.



It's all about momentum, but those hairpin turns can take some getting used to!



# Centurion

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The feeding room for the Centurion is a large rectangle with several stone pillars interspersed throughout. The corners of the room contain Rifle ammunition and several Health Spores tucked away behind additional pillars. Tommy can take temporary cover behind these pillars if necessary, but beware that the Centurion is strong enough to collapse these massive columns with a single swipe of his arm.

Rather than worry about hiding and looking for health, you should instead draw the Centurion toward either of the small rooms on the side of the arena that are presently sealed off by a forcefield. By strafing back and forth across the room, you can draw enough fire toward the forcefield that the Centurion's powerful blasts disable it, cause the metal doors to open, and grant you access to the room beyond.

Watch for a couple of short bursts of electric current, signaling the malfunction of the forcefield and make a run for the room. Kill any Fodder that follow you into the alcove and wait for the Centurion to follow.

The Centurion is too large to get inside the room, but he'll lean in and try to blast you at close range. When he does, use the control panel to turn the forcefield back on. If timed correctly, the forcefield reengages and severs the arm of the Centurion, thereby dropping the **AutoCannon** to the floor. Grab it!



**DESCRIPTION:**

Enormous two-legged alien creature with a gigantic head, long arms and legs, and incredible strength.

**HEALTH:** 800 hit points.

**WEAPONS:**

The Centurion holds an AutoCannon in each hand and can fire large bursts of machinegun fire as well as explosive bombs in a spread pattern.

**KEY TO VICTORY:**

Even the odds by stealing one of the Centurion's AutoCannons!



Now, armed with the AutoCannon, you can stay within the small side-room and blast the Centurion as it lumbers back and forth. Pressing the Primary Attack Button makes the AutoCannon fire a fully-automatic stream of powerful bullets, whereas the Secondary Attack Button launches a powerful spherical bomb. The Centurion still fires with its other weapon, but it is clearly upset by the loss of its arm. Strafe back and forth inside the small alcove for cover when necessary, but don't leave this room until the Centurion is laid to rest.

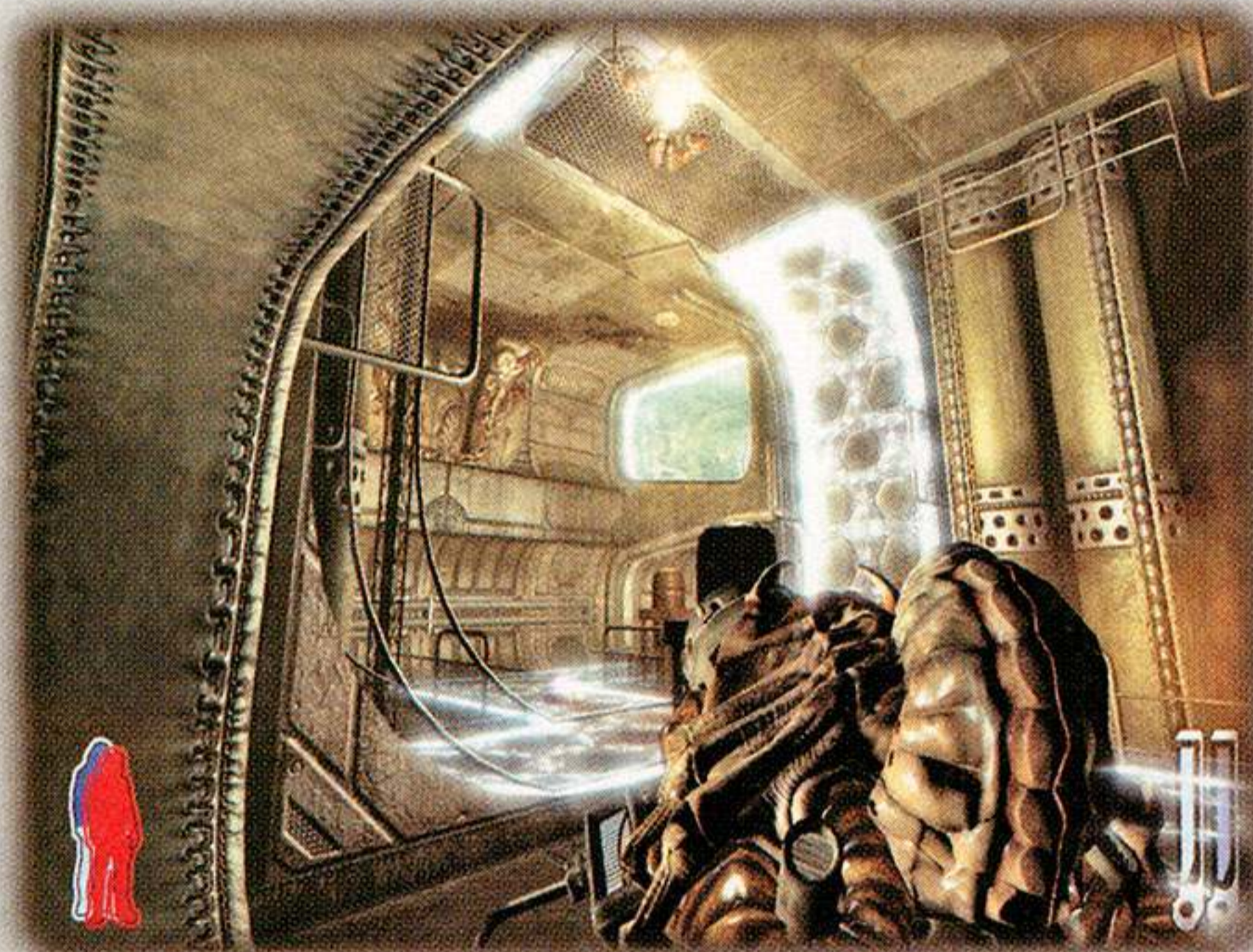
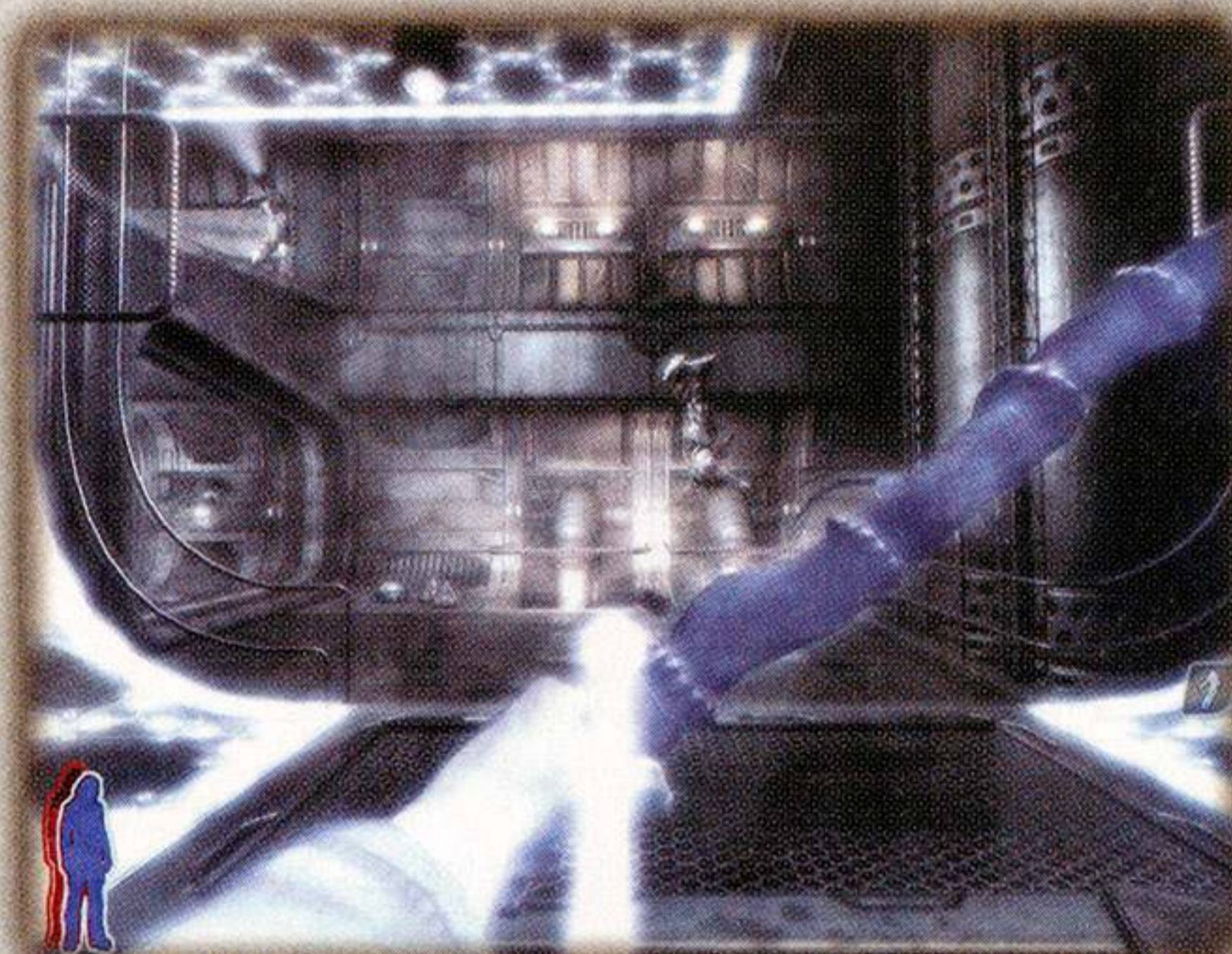


## Wallwalks and Forcefields

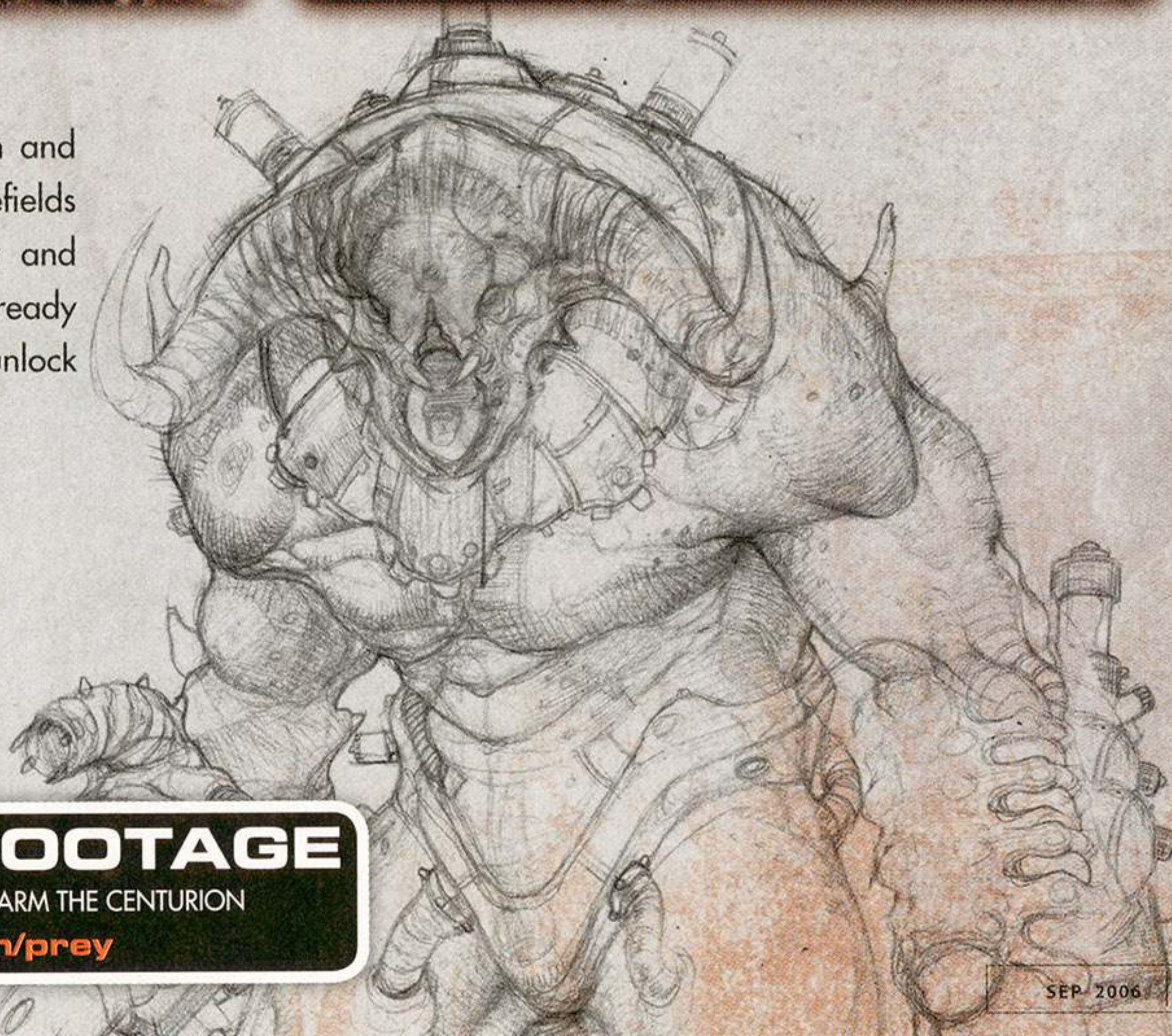
Proceed through the small room with the Cilia, grab the AutoCannon lying on the floor (in case you didn't take one from the Centurion), and approach the door at the far end. The next room plays host to a rather complex network of Wallwalks and forcefields in addition to a number of Hunters.

Get close enough to the door so that it opens and immediately back away as one of the Hunters lobs a Crawler at you. Approach the door a second time and, this time, press the Spirit Walk Button and go through. Use the Spirit Bow to eliminate the first few Hunters that emerge. Ignore the Wallwalks and round the corner to the left to find a stash of ammo for the AutoCannon lying on the ground.

Use the Hunter Hand to deactivate the forcefield near the Wallwalk in the far left corner of the room. Follow this Wallwalk up and across the room to the far side while avoiding the various side-paths that spur off it. Hunters emerge along the way and seem to be all on a different gravitational field than you. Keep the AutoCannon in hand and blast each of them as fast as possible to keep from being caught in crossfire. There are several Health Spores on the Wallwalk to make this easier.



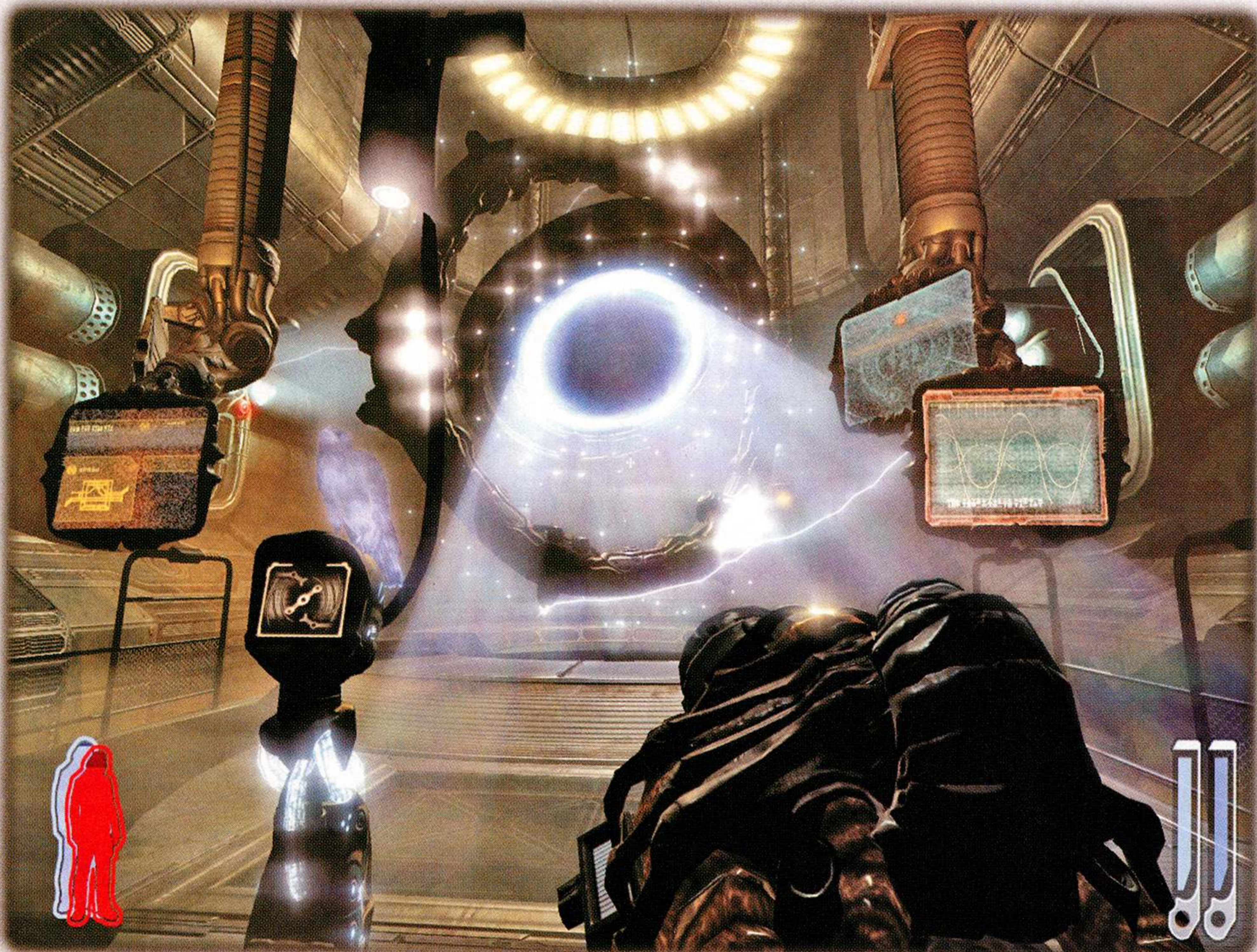
Proceed to the end of the Wallwalk path and Spirit Walk through the various forcefields to collect all of the dropped weaponry and ammunition before continuing on. When ready to leave this area, use the Hunter Hand to unlock the door to the right.



## The Gyroscope

The rooms leading to the gyroscopic portal are littered with dead Hunters. Pushing on draws two Hiders into view, but they instantly take off to avoid you at all costs—they're understandably secretive. Have the AutoCannon ready (or the Leech Gun loaded with Lightning) and approach the door in the distance. One of the Hounds immediately attacks as the door opens, so get ready to empty the clip!

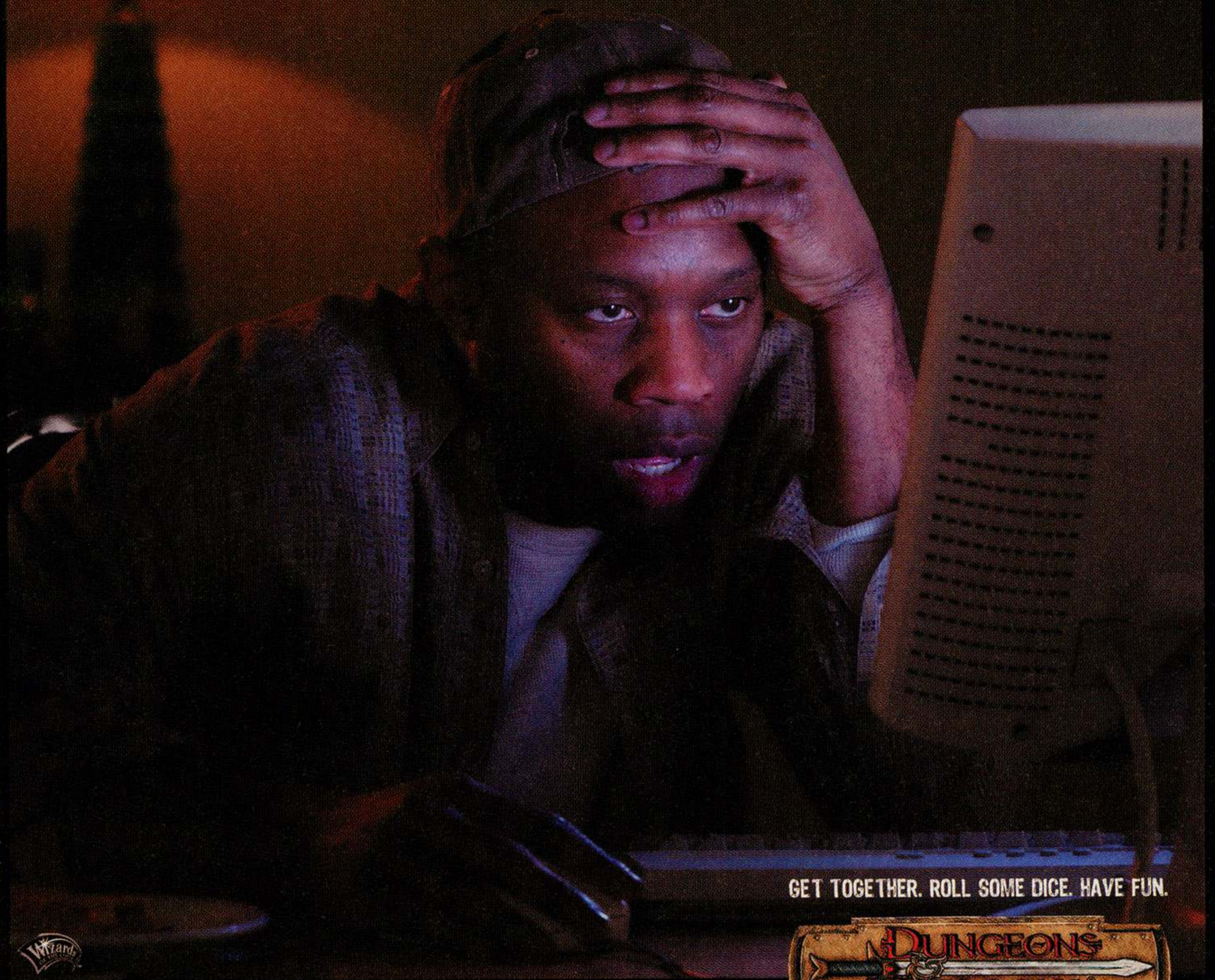
Kill the Hunters guarding the portal and use the control panel to bring the gyroscope to a halt. Several more Hunters emerge from temporary portals while you wait for the gyroscope to completely stop, so don't let down your guard. Once the portal comes within range, step through it to the distant room, and continue marching forward. One more portal comes into view and a four-legged toxic creature known as a Harvester can be seen beyond it. Use the AutoCannon to scare it back into the crevice from which it came and go through. Soon the comforting voice of Tommy's grandfather will be heard calling to him.



By Doug Walsh



YOUR MIGHTY BAND OF HEROES  
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## Prey

Could Prey be the next trendsetting first-person shooter?

Xbox 360

We're not going to be modest on this one: Prey might be the top action game of the year. Its unique mind-bending level design, quirky weapons, and sublime presentation make it the rarest of all games: a must-play.

3D Realms's fingerprints are all over Prey. The Garland, Texas-based developer—best known for the groundbreaking, wisecracking

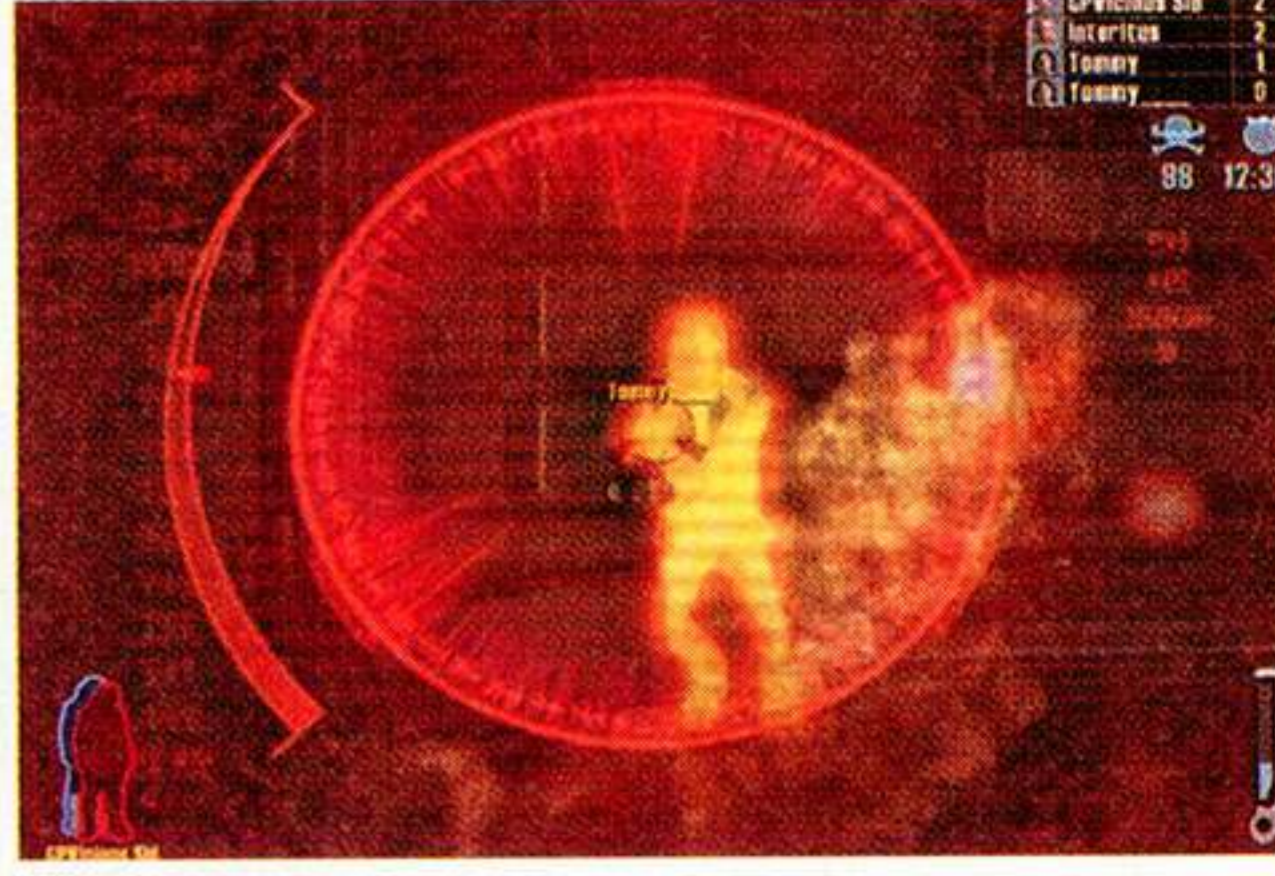
Duke Nukem games—is known for fortifying its games with eye-catching details and memorable minutia. And though the 3D Realms developers didn't directly design Prey, their influence is unmistakable.

Case in point: not two minutes into Prey, you find yourself in a dingy back-alley bathroom. The commode is fully functional; the condom machine is broken; the mirror gives accurate reflections. While these opening scenes are unnervingly realistic, the rest of the game takes a complete 180-degree twist by plunging you into a surreal, nightmarish world where the normal rules—gravity, space, time—no longer apply.

### Pay to Prey

The gameplay starts as Tommy, the Native-American protagonist, is sucked into a mysterious alien spacecraft. Inside the massive ship that's nearly as big as the moon, the walls ripple with musculature and mucous membranes. It won't take long for you to grasp how technologically advanced Prey's graphics are, and it's no surprise: The game is built upon a tweaked version of id Software's innovative Doom 3 engine. All those technical advantages still apply in Prey, so you'll see eye-poppingly realistic lighting and shadow effects, superior bump mapping, and dazzling particles. Make no mistake: Prey is an absolutely gorgeous game—and not just on a purely technical level.





Prey's sound design also plays an important role as you creep through the biomechanical innards of the mazelike alien craft. In deathmatch, important audio cues help you recognize what weapon your enemy is using—you'll even hear subtle chanting when an opponent enters Spirit Walk, an important warning sign.

**Prey: Worth the Wait?**

Most hardcore gamers already know about Prey's troubled development history. Although Prey was originally intended to be released in 1999 as a PC shooter, 3D Realms ultimately decided to cancel the game and lay off its development staff. Take 2 Interactive recently secured the rights and handed Human Head Studios the reins. But has the seven-year wait been worth it?

Judging by what we've played of the pre-release build, we'd say yes. Barring any last-

minute disasters, Prey is looking like a classic in the making. The controls feel tight and polished on both the PC and Xbox 360 versions. Loading times are a nonissue even when passing through multiple portals. And the action is quirky but palatable: even when your gun looks like a giant bug, the feedback and damage just feels right.

With the PC demo currently out and the Xbox 360 release imminent, this is a great chance for skeptics to experience Prey first hand.—Vicious Sid

■ Update ■ Developer: Human Head  
 ■ Publisher: 2K Games ■ Target release date: Available now



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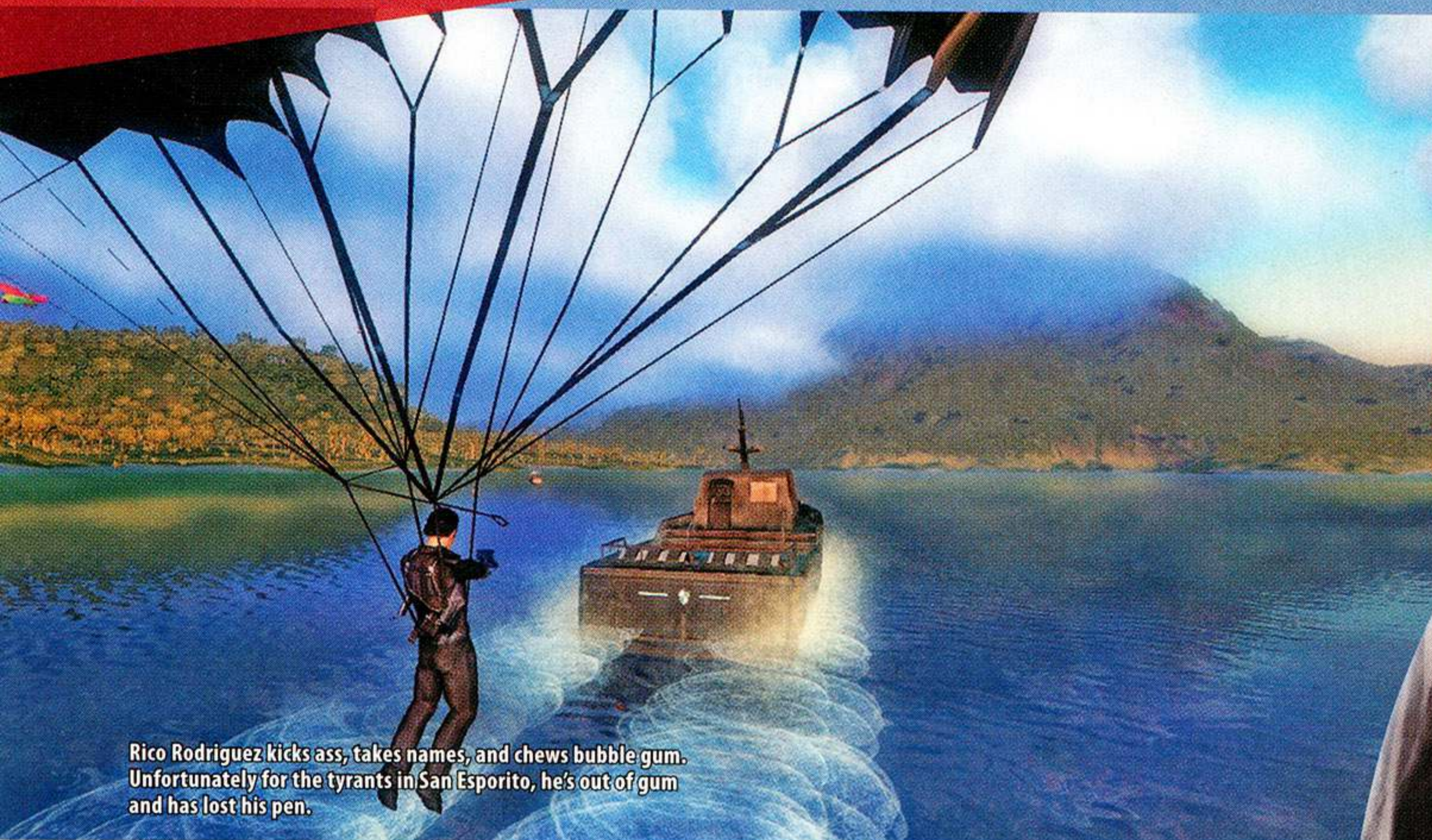


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Rico Rodriguez kicks ass, takes names, and chews bubble gum. Unfortunately for the tyrants in San Esperito, he's out of gum and has lost his pen.

## Just Cause

**Topple the despotic dictatorship of San Esperito—your way**

PS2

Xbox 360

Xbox

You are Rico Rodriguez—badass, stuntman, gentleman, lover, and the hero of Just Cause, Eidos' upcoming action/adventure title. After a series of successful missions aimed at destabilizing a despotic South American regime, you get "hired" by the local police force to assassinate a corrupt police chief.

### Pop Quiz, Hot Shot

There will be a pop quiz at the end of this paragraph, so please pay attention. Your target is surrounded by guards on a luxury yacht in the middle of a crowded bay. Ergo, getting there and neutralizing the target without getting capped will require careful consideration. So what do you do?

A) Jump in the water and swim your way out to the yacht.

B) Commandeer a boat, GTA-style, and make a fast dash for the yacht.

C) Tether your grappling gun to an automobile approaching the waterfront and unfurl your parachute. Glide across the water, using the grappling gun to grab onto other boats, until you reach the yacht.

The answer is D) all of—or none of—the above. Because the reality of Just Cause is that

the emergent game design means you can approach any mission in virtually any imaginable way. The game is so wide-open that you can run and gun your way through the game's 21 main missions and 300 side missions, which are scattered across a massive 250,000-acre world, in any order you choose.

As you play, you'll wield numerous cool weapons from the aforementioned grappling gun to heavy artillery to a variety of explosives. You'll also pilot, cars, mopeds, choppers, and even a Boeing 747 and a cool underwater scooter. In an interesting twist, when you're flying a plane, you can climb out of the vehicle and perform a variety of stunts and wing grabs.

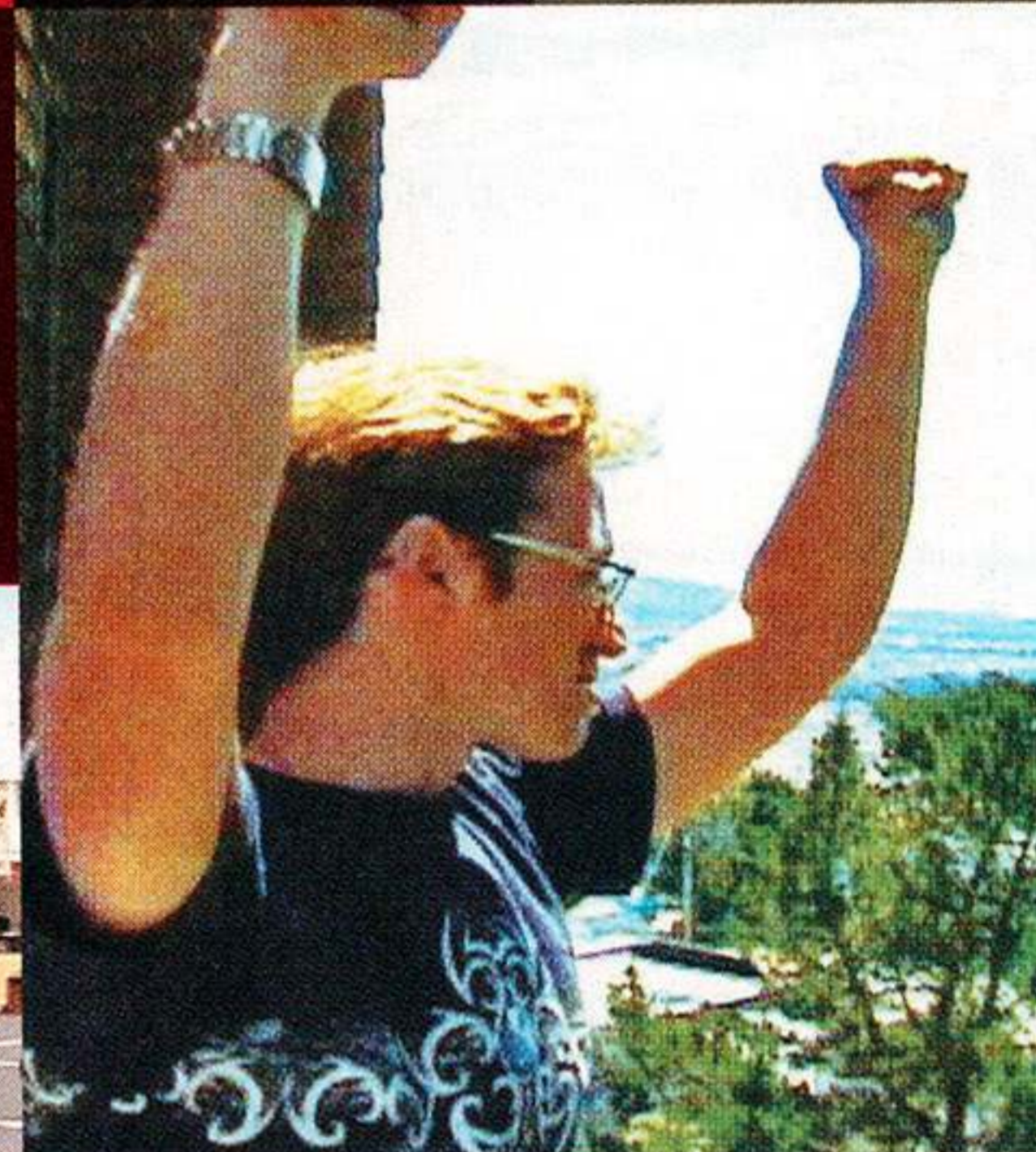
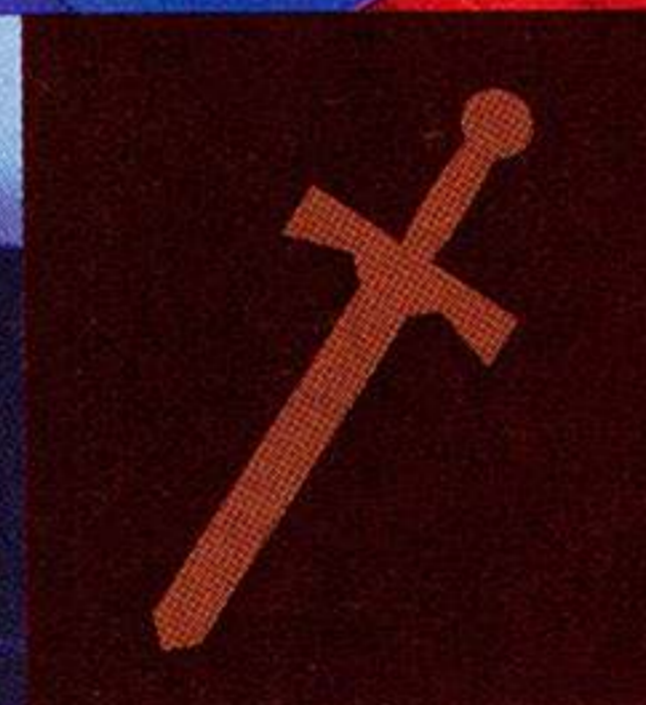
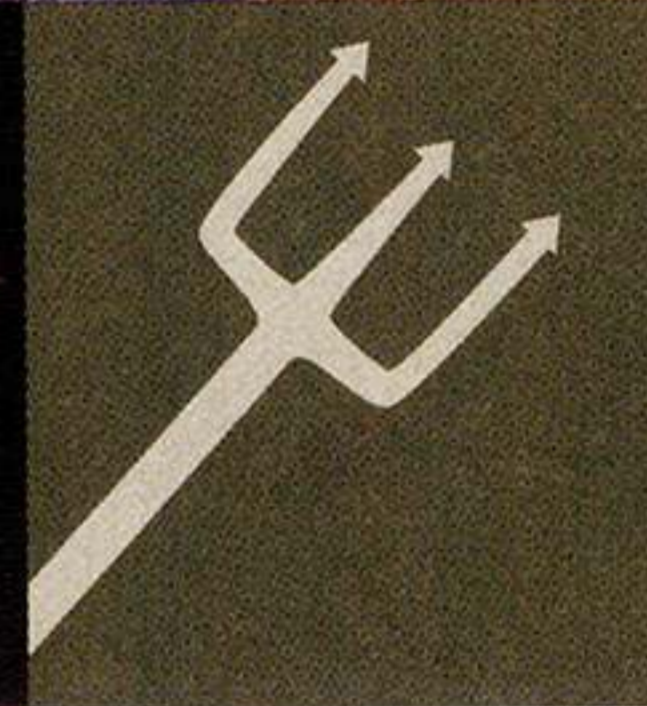
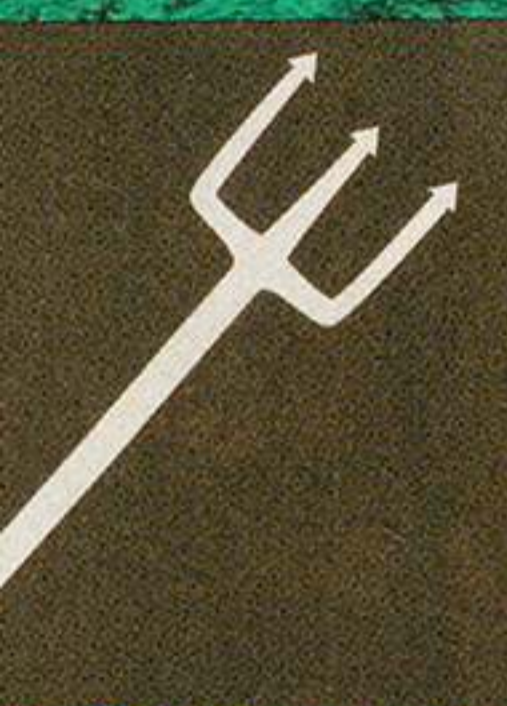
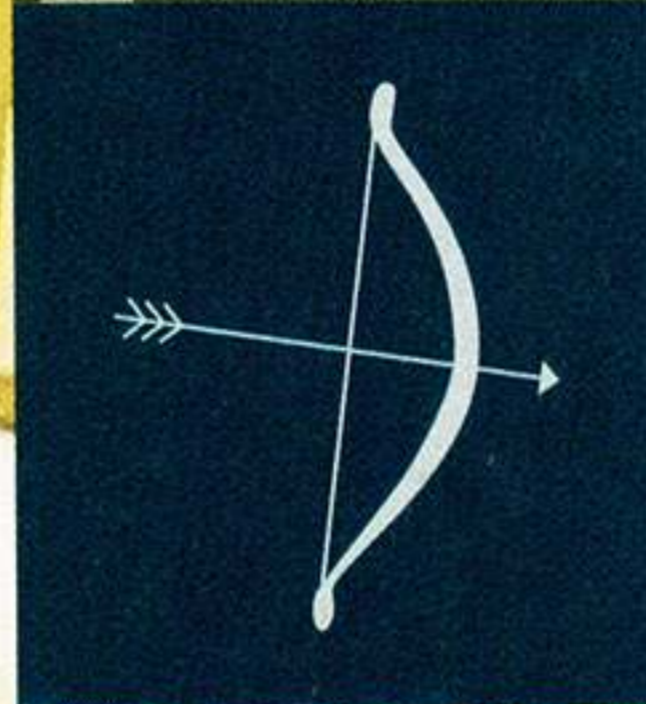
### Action Rico

At times, you'll engage in stealthy tactics, but the emphasis will be on action—to which we say hallelujah. Thus far, only two features concern us. First, the stunts you can perform have no impact beyond looking cool and feel like a missed opportunity. Second, the cut-scenes look fairly outdated, but maybe they'll improve before the game's release before the end of the year.—*Lunchbox*

■ **First Look** ■ Developer: Avalanche  
 ■ Publisher: Eidos Interactive ■ Target release date: September



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Gigantic explosions that are laced with detail will bring Call of Duty 3 to life.

## Call of Duty 3

**Treyarch tests the limits of next-gen hardware in the final installment of the Call of Duty trilogy.**

PS3

Xbox 360

The largest and deadliest war in history is far from over, and Activision is enlisting for its upcoming Call of Duty 3, the sequel to last year's best-selling World War II bloodbath.

### The Brutality of War

Call of Duty 2 dominated the heap of mediocre Xbox 360 launch titles, and even though it provided arguably the best single-player WWII experience out there, it really didn't push the power of the next gen. This time developer Treyarch is out to do just that.

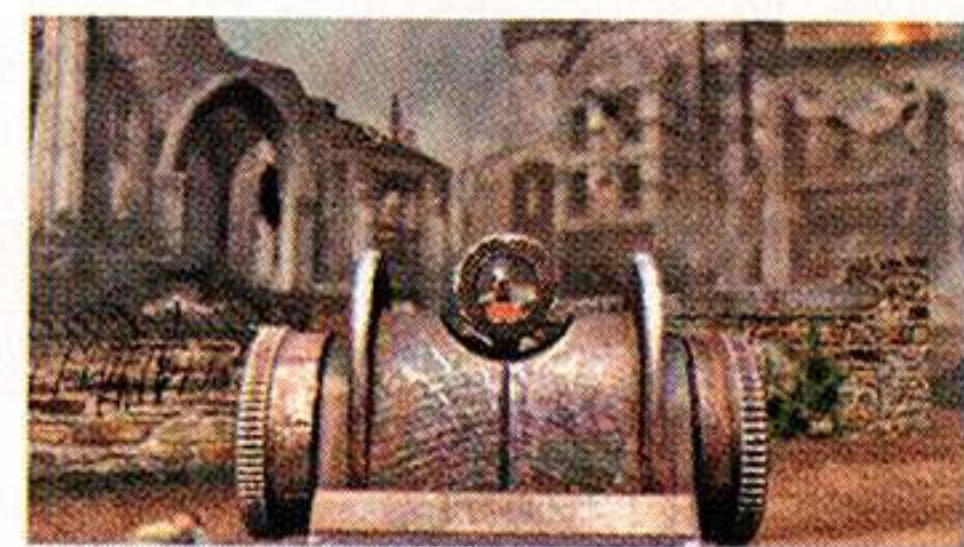
So, you've seen and done the virtual World War II thing before, eh? Well, you might be asking, "What's different this time around?" For starters, the events in the game are centered around the Normandy Breakout. Codenamed Operation Cobra, this critical point in history was when American troops broke out of the

Normandy area, led by United States Army General Omar Bradley. Over 400,000 German soldiers lost their lives.

Every inch of the battleground, down to the blades of grass that get crushed as soldiers trample them, reacts to players' actions and will even serve you in determining where enemy forces have been and where their current location is. Environmental physics in the game also make it possible to destroy certain objects that your opponents hide behind, such as wooden walls and crates. Flags thrash in the air after explosions, smoke clouds deform in the wind, and just about anything you fire lead into acts in response to the devastation inflicted upon it. And the colors are truly vibrant; explosions burst in pulsating shades of red, orange, and violet, creating quite an impressive display of military fireworks.

### Enter the Carnage

Call of Duty 3 features all new battle action scenarios that break up the level of intensity of the game. When one of these events is triggered, players must act fast to neutralize hazards and even fight hand-to-hand with Nazi soldiers (think of the stabbing scene near the end of *Saving Private Ryan*).



Up to 24 players can fight at once online this time around and man vehicles like tanks, motorcycles with sidecars, and multiseated jeeps that allow for one person to mow down enemies with a mounted machine-gun turret. Another innovative aspect of multiplayer is that anyone can join a game in progress without having to end the match (the game will immediately switch from full screen to split screen if one of your friends decides to play).

—Long-Haired Offender

■ **First Look** ■ Developer: Treyarch ■ Publisher: Activision  
 ■ Target release date: November  
 ■ Also on the PlayStation 2, Xbox, and Wii



# Sonic the Hedgehog

The world's fastest hedgehog makes his next-gen debut.

PS3

Xbox 360

While Sonic's debut on next-gen systems is exciting news, the hedgehog won't be alone in his upcoming adventure. Sure, Sonic's stages will be filled with the usual fast-paced gameplay, but his friend's levels should provide a cool counterweight to test brains and thumbs.

## Silver-Ops

This time, Sonic will be getting some help from a new ally. Silver is a mysterious hedgehog from the future, a creature that has the ability to control the world around him using his mind. The playable Silver level was much slower than Sonic's stage, and although Silver can run, he was more adept at picking up objects in the environment and tossing them as weapons. With a quick button press, Silver could pick up any objects in his vicinity, and, using the Thumbstick, you could direct the object's trajectory.

Boxes and crates could easily dispatch some enemies; others took more strategy. For instance, one robotic foe shot missiles at Silver, but using his psychic powers, he caught the projectiles in midair and tossed them back at their sender. The entire "mind over matter" system is quite similar to the offerings in *Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy* but with simpler controls.

Silver's abilities have other uses. Stages contain special markers that indicate a special psychic move to be executed. For example, at one point, Silver was faced with an enormous chasm that couldn't be jumped. Using his psychic powers on the special marker, he created a bridge out of random debris, allowing him to continue through the stage.

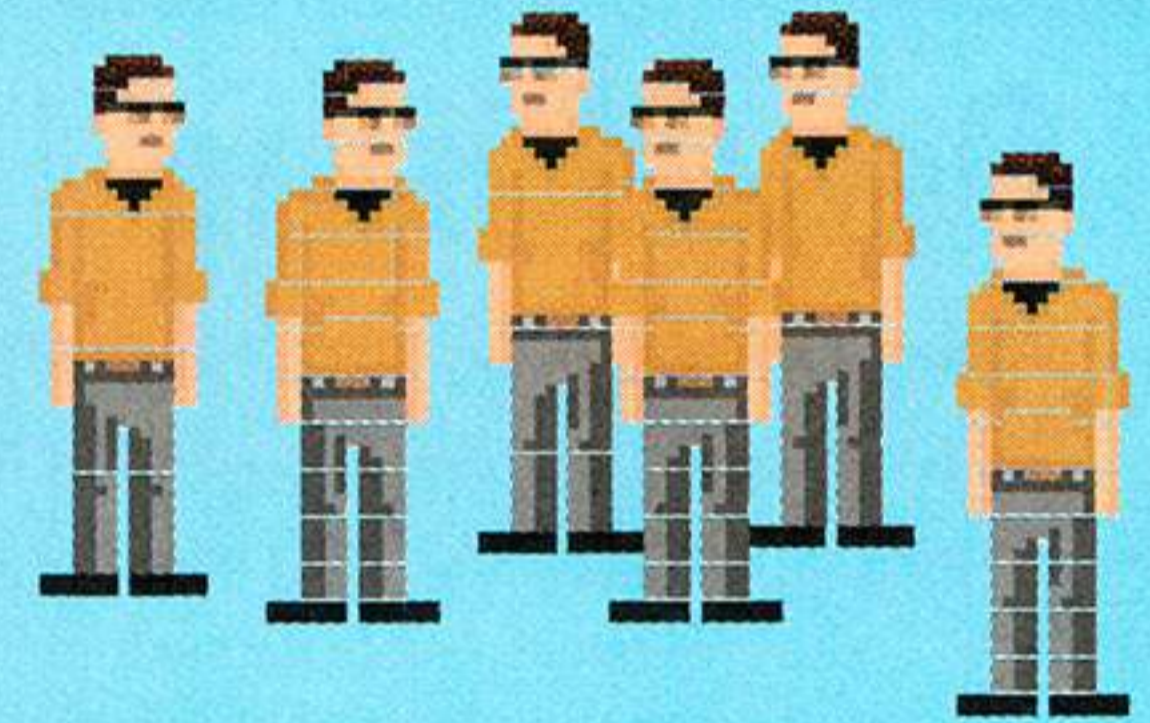
## Mind Over Matter

*Sonic the Hedgehog* looks to push the technologies of the next-generation consoles with some truly impressive visual effects and details. Character models sported a decent degree of realism, and the environments were much larger than past Sonics. The game is still about speed, so you can expect plenty of motion blur and breakneck pace as you dart around each level.—JohnnyK

■ Hands-On ■ Developer and publisher: Sega ■ Target release date: Fall 2006



(geek)



(clustergeeking)



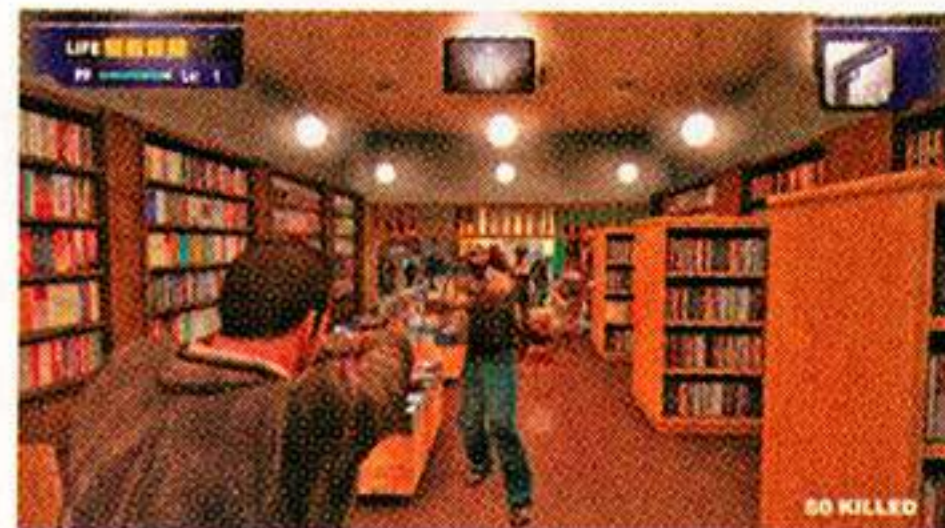
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- WEB DESIGN
- GAME PROGRAMMING



These zombie shoppers are dying to get in at the mall...literally.



Whatever's going on down here, I don't see business as usual in this town.

## Dead Rising

**Who knew saving your shopping mall from zombies could be so much fun?**

Xbox 360

The final version of Dead Rising is almost ready for release—but you wouldn't know that from the way this title plays. More or less a video-game adaptation of George Romero's *Dawn of the Dead*, Capcom's killer suburban shopping mall survival/horror epic is shaping up to be one hell of a game.

### Mall Rats

The basic objective of Dead Rising is to simply survive for 72 hours until your rescue chopper arrives (10 minutes of game time equals a single minute of real time). To this end, the game is wonderfully open-ended, offering a number of mini-quests (called "cases") while you try to capture the story of the century with your digital camera (a quirky addition that's surprisingly fun). Whether you choose to peruse your big scoop, play the role of shopping mall hero, or simply choose to cower in a corner is entirely up to you (we chose to kill a *lot* of zombies!). And with a set of multiple endings determined by your style of play, Dead Rising offers gamers tremendous replay value.

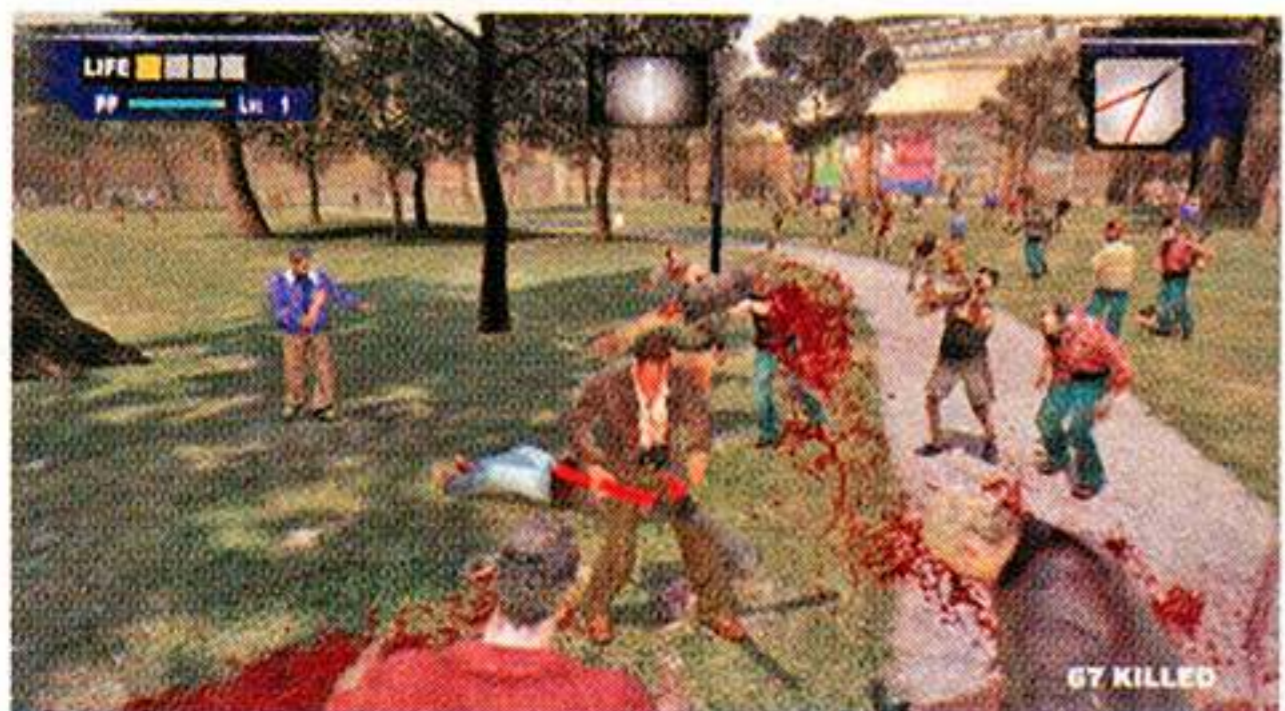
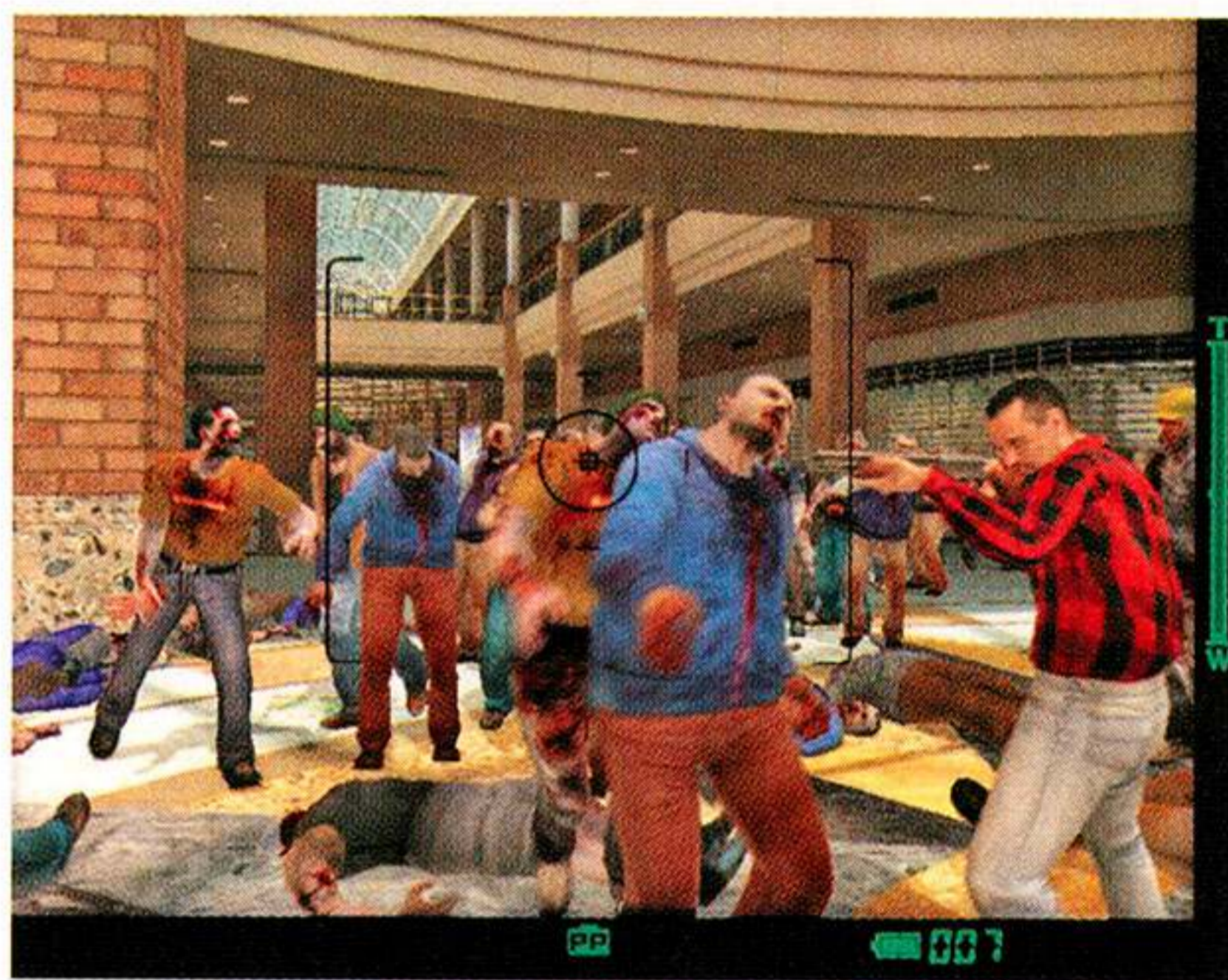
### Dead Right

Surprisingly, the quality of the voice acting in Dead Rising is actually much better than that of most zombie titles and is a far cry from the pain-

fully stilted dialogue of most Resident Evil games. The level of visual detail doesn't disappoint either with crisp and beautifully gory graphics that give Dead Rising a polished shine, showcasing the best looking zombies of any game to date. The massive indoor and outdoor mall environments are truly impressive, offering a wealth of zombie-infested areas for you to explore. But in this build, the controls felt a bit jerky and uneven. The process of toggling between selectable items and switching between your melee weapons and aiming your gun is cumbersome at times—especially when overwhelmed by a swarm of undead ghouls. Thankfully, the tough task of rescuing civilians and escorting them to safety is made much easier thanks to their intelligence and sincere desire to save their own hides.

If Capcom can shore up the stiff controls, this survival/horror epic is sure to be one of the fledgling Xbox 360's marquee titles, not to mention a great reason to invest in the console.—*Bones*

- Hands-On
- Developer and publisher: Capcom
- Target release date: August





# Ninety-Nine Nights

Kill enemies...lots of enemies.

**A** third-person action game, Ninety-Nine Nights will put you in the boots of one of seven warriors. Each one will have specialized attacks, can learn various magical spells, and can collect different weapons and accessories as the game progresses. You'll be accompanied by an army in combat, and you can set the formation of left and right flanks as well as give limited orders on the battlefield. One of the game's strengths will be the somewhat extensive combo system—most of which are button-tap sequences of varying length—which will be the foundation for frenzied, intense combat. You'll often be besieged by lots and lots of onscreen enemies that can be dispatched—often en masse—by combos and magic, and triple- and quadruple-digit chains won't be uncommon.

## My Thumbs Hurt

If this sounds a lot like Dynasty Warriors, that's because Ninety-Nine Nights uses the same play scheme where your character will mow down tons of attacking foes. And although there was great emphasis on your accompanying soldiers, they seemed to do very little damage to enemies and often stood around *pretending* to fight while you had to eliminate all adversaries, one-

by-one, by yourself. (In all fairness, the A.I. was unfinished in this build.)

Ninety-Nine Nights was fun for the first few missions, but the play engine quickly became routine. If you're into mindless button-mashing mayhem, then Ninety-Nine Nights will probably be your game.

## And Now...More Hits!

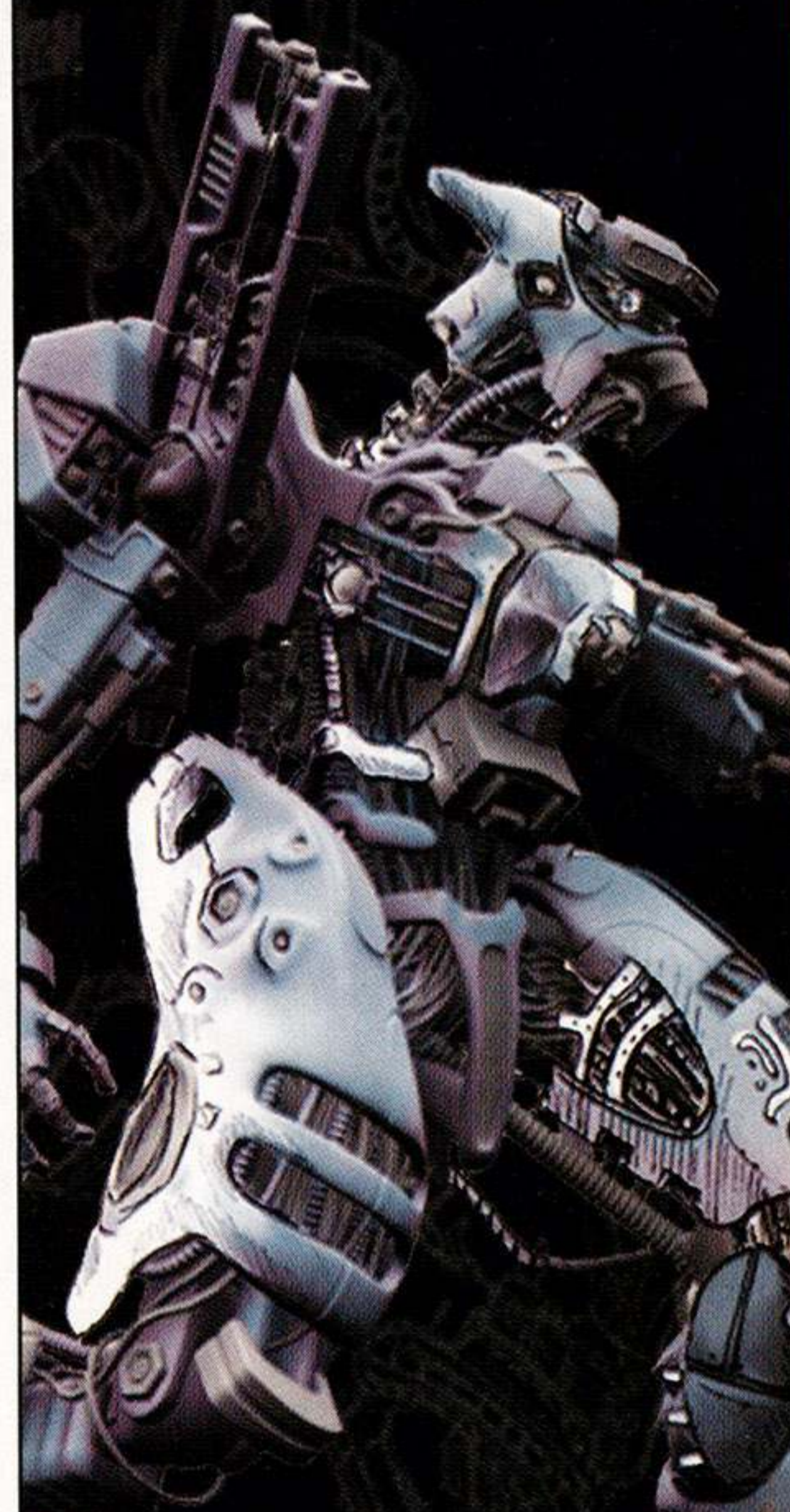
Visually, Ninety-Nine Nights did an excellent job showing off of the Xbox 360's graphical muscle as the razor-sharp visuals brought the characters and environments to life, and provided some awesome moments—such as dazzling magic attacks and other special effects. The audio track did a decent job, but some of the character voices were awkwardly cast. We'll have a full review in an upcoming issue and see how the final product comes together.—Major Mike

- **Hands-On**
- Developer: Q Entertainment/Phantagram
- Publisher: Microsoft
- Target release date: August



# ONE OF THE TOP FIVE GAME-DEGREE PROGRAMS

—Electronic Gaming Monthly



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**PRO TIP:** Keep an eye out for treasure littered about the rubble of your conquests to give your economy an immediate injection of resources.



**PRO TIP:** Upgrades aren't just about pretty glow effects and shiny shields: they can make the difference between victory and a pile of corpses.



**PRO TIP:** While reducing an enemy spawning facility to rubble with your entire force is fun, attacking on multiple fronts at once is more effective.



**PRO TIP:** Your first targets in enemy camps should almost always be those that supply resources.

# The Lord of the Rings: The Battle for Middle-earth II

Though crippled by narcoleptic A.I. and an interface responsiveness issue, this latest entry in The Lord of the Rings' library is still worth a look.

Xbox 360



In addition to the LOTR film license, EA has signed an agreement allowing it to draw from the original books as well, granting access to a wider selection of locations and creatures than ever before; the Battle for Middle-earth II is the first game to use this new latitude.

## A Crownless King

As used here, the expanded depth of the mythology is both a blessing and a curse. On the one hand, you've got lots of unit variety—stocky Dwarven axe-throwers and plodding Ents, stealthy Elven archers and the creepy spiders of Mordor—and just about everyone has researchable upgrades to purchase, thus fashioning your drab cannon fodder into gleaming engines of pain. Meanwhile, independent threats like Wyrms, Watchers, and worse give squads interesting opportunities to prove their mettle. On the

other hand, the politics and racial distrust that so inform the source text are spread so thin across the good and evil campaigns that each cut-scene feels like a summary of a summary.

## A Road Made Familiar

The most impressive feature is the expandable interface, which elegantly encapsulates every command from grabbing an available builder to sending a bookmarked group of allies on a rampage. After a couple missions, holding down a trigger, hopping through hierarchical icons, and pressing a selection feels natural for everything from building to conquering. Nobody would mistake it for a keyboard and mouse, but it's thoughtful enough to be a decent substitute. The only grievous mistake here is a maddening response delay that sometimes forces you to retrace steps because the last button press didn't register, and this is your first real sign that the game as a whole is in trouble.



**PRO TIP:** Rule #1 when fighting a dragon: When in doubt, run away. Rule #2: Keep the sunburn spray handy.

## A Broken Blade

Never mind that the graphics, though appealing enough, don't meet next-generation expectations or that the sound design lacks the punch needed for epic confrontations—what really raises ire is when your units simply forget what they're doing. Halfway through a forced march, a demolisher will get confused and idle while a dragon firebombs it to oblivion, or infantry will loaf around in the back of a formation



like they're queued for concert tickets instead of joining in the bloodshed. As far as multi-player goes, while a couple heroes dispatching entire enemy armies on their own might seem true to the spirit of the films, it hardly makes for a balanced and satisfying online encounter.

It's perhaps testament, then, to the spirit of Tolkien's world that The Battle for Middle-earth II remains relatively fun to watch and play despite these nagging flaws. Or perhaps it's just altogether too much fun watching the dominant races of the third age beat the crap out of each other.—Ouroboros

	GRAPHICS . . . . . 4.0	<b>FUN FACTOR</b> <b>3.5</b>
	SOUND . . . . . 3.0	
	CONTROL . . . . . 4.0	

Developer: EA L.A. Publisher: EA Games  
 \$59.99 Available now Strategy 4 players ESRB: T

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An updated battle system combines the best aspects of the first two games, while introducing the new Break system.

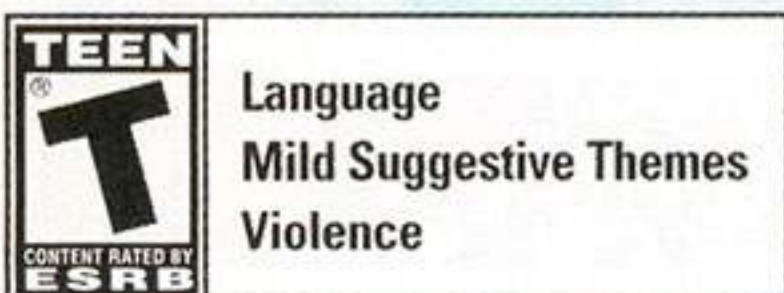
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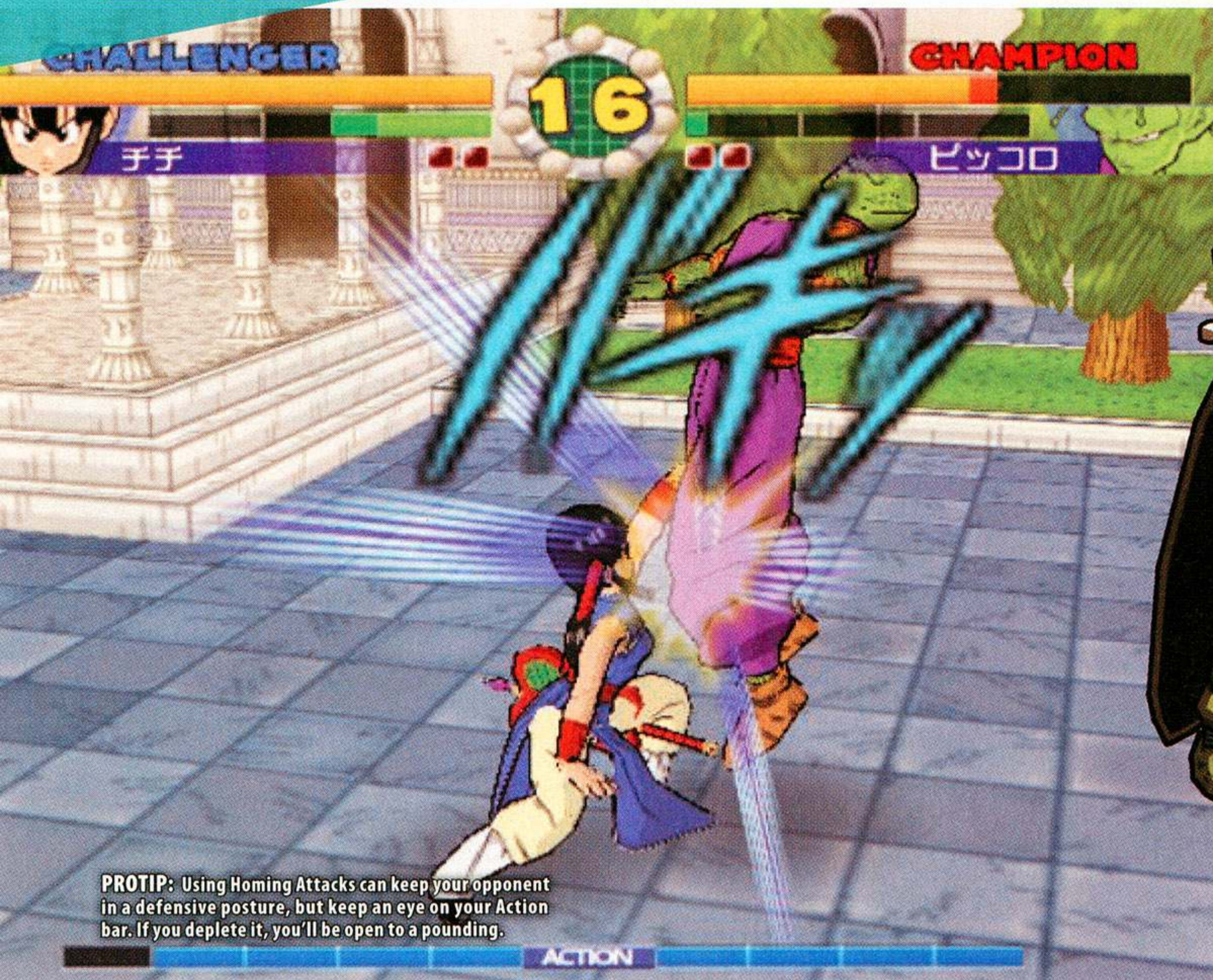
## Xenosaga EPISODE III

Also sprach Zarathustra



PlayStation®2





# Super Dragon Ball Z

The never-ending deluge of Dragon Ball Z titles continues....



PS2



The initial press barrage surrounding Super DBZ focused on the fact that key people responsible for the arcade fighting masterpiece Street Fighter II were behind it, and this latest Dragon Ball Z game would play and feel more like the old-school fighters of yesteryear than today's home-console brews. For once, the hype was right: Super DBZ not only pays homage to the 2D classics, but it also brings an entirely new and refreshing take on the 3D fighting genre.

## Kaioken Times One Million!

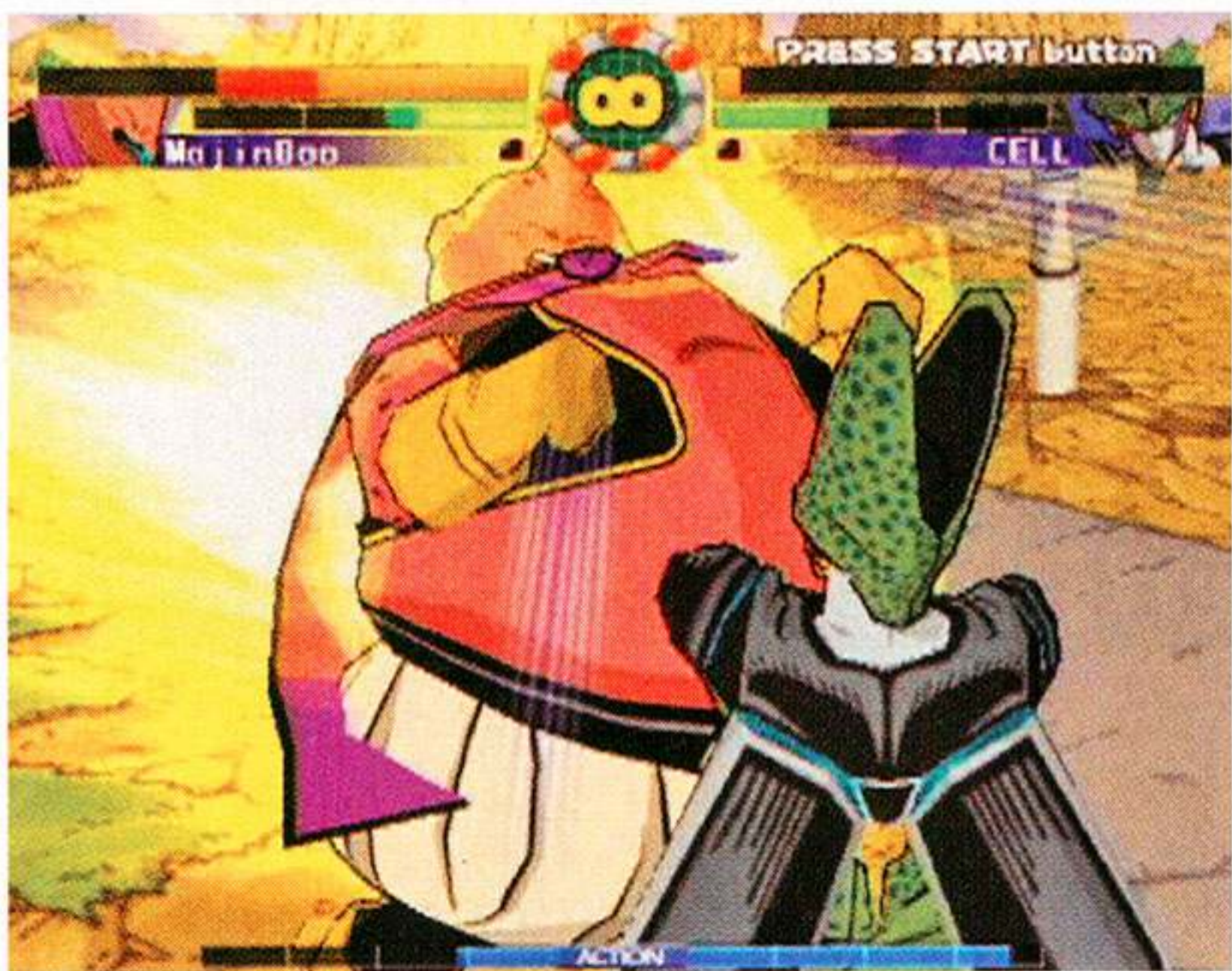
Super DBZ has a multitude of familiar DBZ characters (18 in all), stages, prerequisite modes, and an easy-to-use character customization feature, but gameplay is where it truly shines. While the game religiously pays homage to the Akira Toriyama DB universe, including long-lost characters like Goku's wife, Chi-Chi, and the evil King Piccolo, it also plays almost exactly like the classic 2D Street Fighter II arcade game (meaning the controls are simple and easy to pick up).

objects (which can be used in a battle to dodge projectile blasts), and the play engine keeps the combatants tightly engaged so there aren't any lulls in the action. Furthermore, multiple stages can be uncovered by initiating specific moves. Why battle it out at King Emma's Palace when you can smash your foe through the clouds and finish the fight at the Home for Infinite Losers?

## Ha-Do-Mehameha!

Super DBZ's only flaw is inconsistent ground-to-midair collision that occasionally has two characters fail to land a single blow even though they're within striking distance of each other. It's awkward and often results in both fighters flailing like playground kids.

But even with the collision caveat, Super DBZ is an awesome fighter that pays homage to old-school 2D arcade fighters while creating another engaging Dragon Ball title. If you're a fighting-game fan or a diehard Budokai gamer, you owe it to yourself to go a few rounds with Super DBZ. —Rice Burner



Throws are cheap, but if you catch your opponent using turtle strategies, then they deserve it.

You have two primary attacks, along with a jump, block, throw, parry, and two dashes. Executing special moves is also a cinch for veteran gamers. All the basic Street Fighter half- and quarter-motion movements are represented here. One of the game's key strengths is how these moves are integrated into the Dragon Ball universe. For instance, Goku retains his trademark abilities, such as Kaioken and Guided Kamehameha, and he can even Super Saiyan for a limited time.

## Yam-Cha and Tien—M.I.A.?

The battle arenas are vast and peppered with destructible

PS2	GRAPHICS	4.0	EDITORS' CHOICE	FUN FACTOR	4.5
	SOUND	4.0			
	CONTROL	4.25			

Developer: Crafts & Meister Publisher: Atari  
\$39.99 Available now Fighting 2 players ESRB: T

# Pirates of the Caribbean: The Legend of Jack Sparrow

Some treasures are better left buried.

PS2



First, gamers had to suffer through X-Men: The Official Game and The Da Vinci Code. Now comes the latest summer movie-to-game wannabe blockbuster, Pirates of the Caribbean: The Legend of Jack Sparrow. Can this title break the losing streak of movies gone game? The inner pirate responds with a hearty "nay!"

## Parley

A third-person action game, The Legend of Jack Sparrow focuses on the story of the first

film, *The Curse of the Black Pearl*, while adding in some filler content that gives gamers a bit more history about the legendary titular pirate (plus, he's voiced by Johnny Depp to boot). You fight as Jack alongside Will and Elizabeth through 24 levels that follow the film, along with a few areas created specifically for this interactive adventure.

One of the game's biggest problems is the multiplayer aspect. You can switch between your compadres at will, but the moment you stop commanding them, a brain-dead A.I. takes over, leaving the uncontrolled party to flail

about helplessly while you do the real fighting. Speaking of combat, the clunky controls and awful response times hamper the fun, and the inability to move your character while auto-targeting is a serious downer.



**PROTIP:** You can get gold from defeated pirates or hidden in treasure chests, and the currency can be used to upgrade attacks.



The Legend of Jack Sparrow takes place before the events of the recent Pirates movie, *Dead Man's Chest*.



**PROTIP:** Don't rely on your A.I.-controlled friends to help you out; when they leave your control, they won't hurt a fly.

## Gold Calls

Visually, the game passes muster—barely. Environments are well rendered, and you're treated to a diverse mix of environments and locales. But all-too-similar enemy character models give the impression you're fighting the same opponent repeatedly. Your band of heroes fares much better as they look like Depp, Orlando Bloom, and Keira Knightley, but the latter two didn't provide their voices, leaving Elizabeth sounding like a 'tween after a few hits of helium.

Jack isn't a complete washout. The narrative does contain some engaging moments, but they're often scuttled by the uninspired play mechanics. For a late-generation PlayStation 2 title, this game walks the plank.—*JohnnyK*

PS2	GRAPHICS . . . . .	3.5	FUN FACTOR	3.25
	SOUND . . . . .	4.0		
	CONTROL . . . . .	2.5		

Developer: 7 Studios | Publisher: Bethesda Softworks  
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The visual detail can be astounding—look at the flies buzzing as a skeleton warrior approaches.



PROTIP: Like in Diablo II, traps liven up some of the dungeon levels.



Titan Quest truly outdoes Diablo II on the visual scale.



One of the first bosses is a huge centaur warrior.

# Titan Quest

Faithfully follows the core formula laid out by Diablo II and Dungeon Siege II

PC



Though graphics technology has advanced by leaps and bounds since 1999, no game seems able to truly surpass the experience provided by Diablo II. Dungeon Siege II, for instance, came out last August. And though that game was a solid retread of the classic click-and-kill RPG formula pioneered by Diablo, it didn't really surpass the formula: it merely met it. It was an admirable game, but not a true classic.

Titan Quest goes one baby step further. The designers at Iron Lore, the studio behind Titan Quest, are obviously huge fans of Blizzard's seminal Diablo II, a game that has the reputation of being essentially unmatched over seven years after its release. And the good news is that Diablo veterans will approve of many of the small gameplay tweaks and adjustments that have made their way into Titan Quest.

### Myth Busters

Titan Quest is set in ancient mythological Greece, complete with all the gods, demons, deities, and grotesque monsters you can hack to pieces with a gladius sword. The story line is

some nonsense about titans—those monstrously cruel rulers of early Earth—who have escaped their prison to wreak havoc on mortals. The threadbare plot is stitched together by rambling, poorly acted monologues recited by various townspeople. It's all very disposable.

What *isn't* disposable is the addictive hack-and-slash RPG action. At heart, Titan Quest is Diablo II, right down to the subtlest details... even shared hotkeys. If you liked Diablo II or Dungeon Siege II, you're sure to love Titan Quest. It is, after all, almost precisely the same game.

### Diablo Does Delphi

Titan Quest also deserves mention for being the first game to hugely outperform Diablo II on a visual level. The game looks just sensational, making full use of the latest Direct X 9.0 shader effects as well as polygon-loaded environments that look on par with bleeding-edge PC shooters like Battlefield 2 and F.E.A.R. It's funny how many tiny details like the way wheat stalks flex and fall away from you can add to the experience.

Overall, the control scheme is tight and streamlined—definitely more intuitive than Diablo II's. But as with all challengers to Diablo II's throne, Titan Quest must ultimately be judged on the strength of its online community. But because it has no central Battle.net-style gaming service, relying instead on deathmatch-style matchmaking, Titan Quest is unlikely to attract a loyal, long-term fan base. Developers



PROTIP: Titan Quest supports dozens of class combinations, so you don't have to stick with just one mastery.

take note: for a game of this type, a central matchmaking service à la Battle.net is a must.

### Click. Kill. Loot. Repeat.

Titan Quest is good, clean fun, and a good sight better than last year's Dungeon Siege II. But it can't be overemphasized: don't expect any drastic changes to the Diablo canon. If you're sick to death of Diablo II's reputation for mindless clicking, and long instead for a satisfying character-driven adventure, you won't have the strength to endure Titan Quest. But if you're dying for Diablo 3 and need a quick fix, this is so your game.—Vicious Sid

### Recommended System Specifications

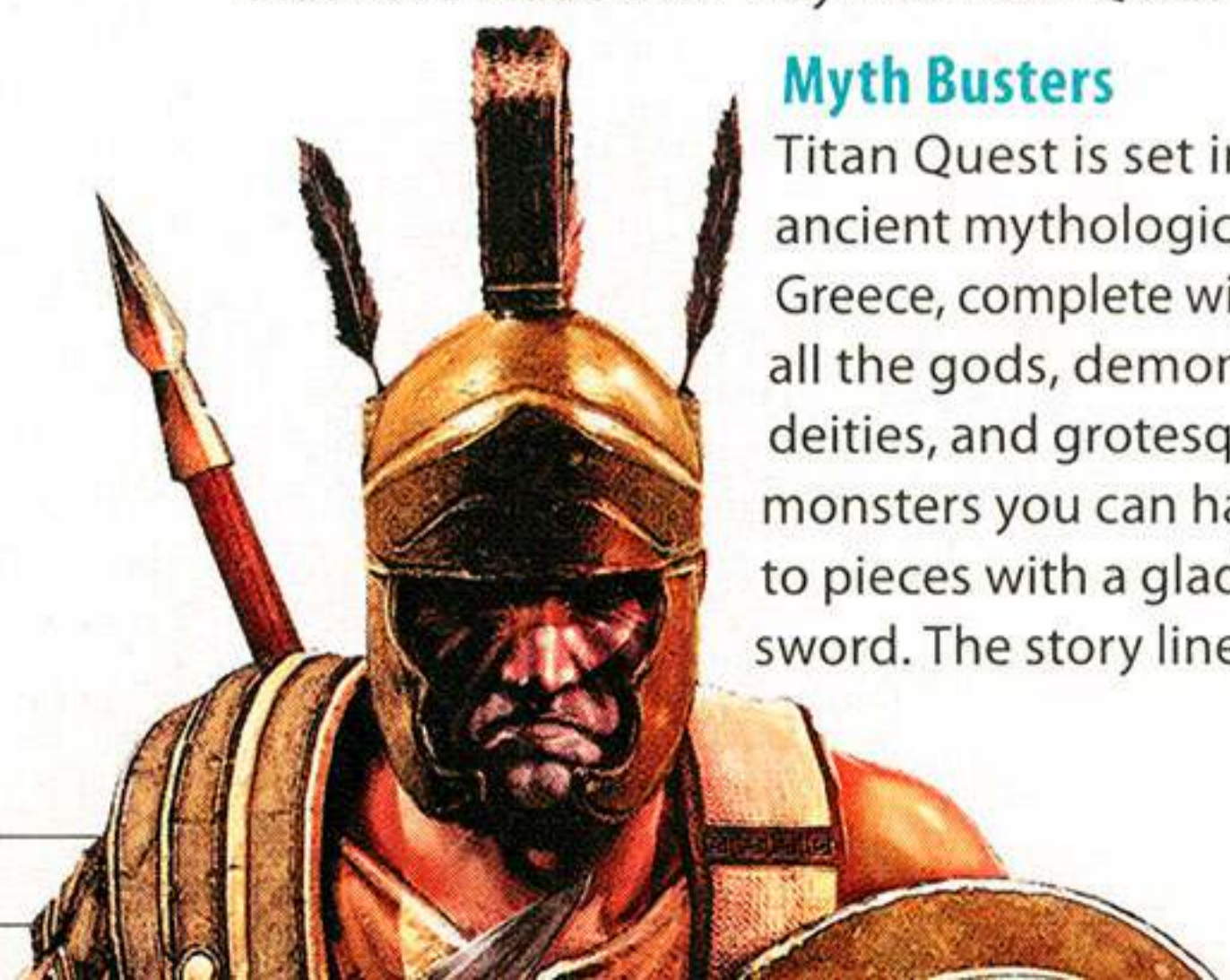
- Windows 2000/XP
- 3.0 GHz processor
- 1 GB RAM
- 5 GB on HD
- NVIDIA GeForce 3 or ATI Radeon 8500 video card

PC

GRAPHICS . . . . . 4.5  
SOUND . . . . . 3.5  
CONTROL . . . . . 4.25

FUN FACTOR  
4.25

- Developer: Iron Lore Entertainment
- Publisher: THQ
- \$49.99
- Available now
- RPG
- 8 players
- ESRB: T



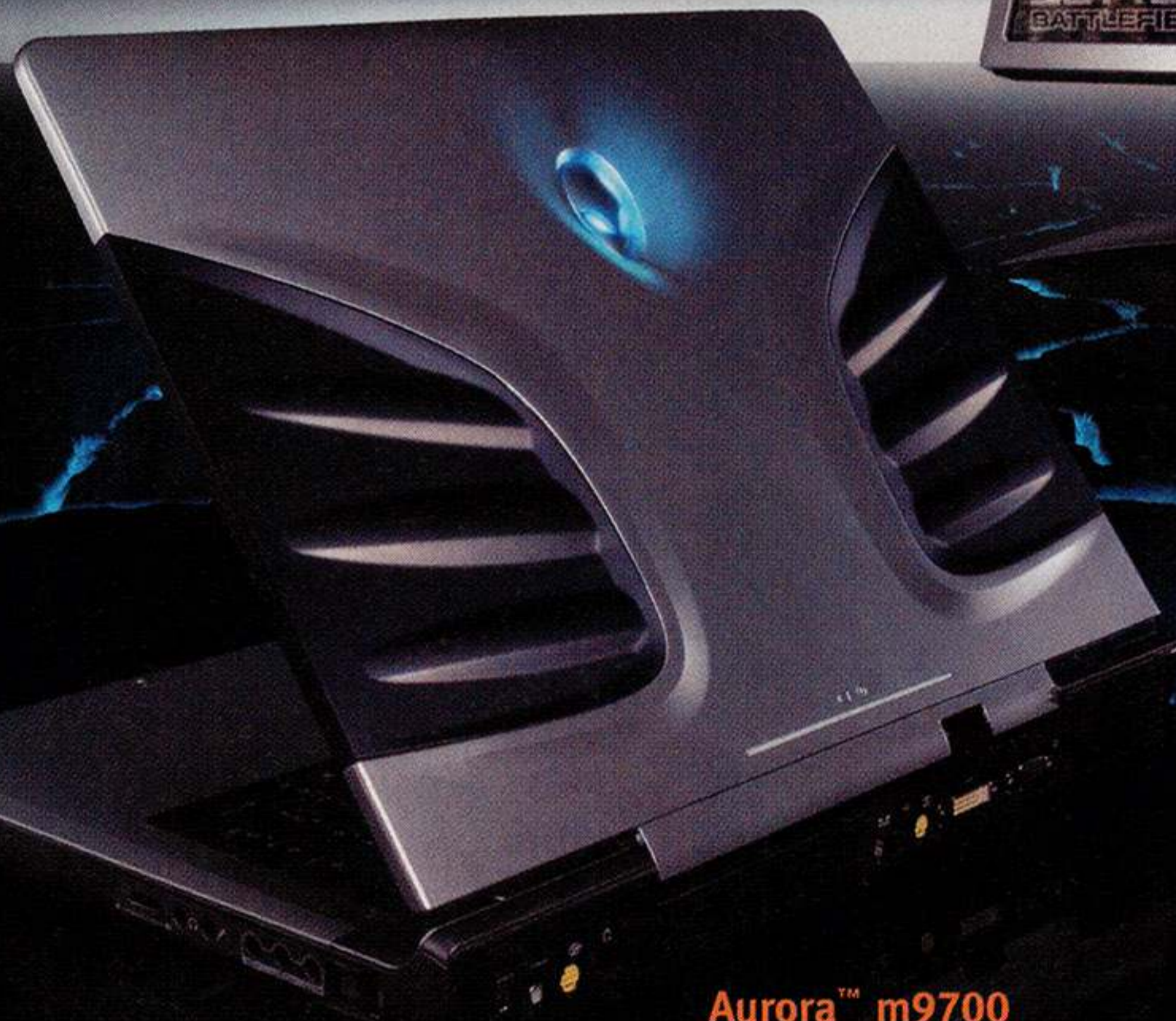
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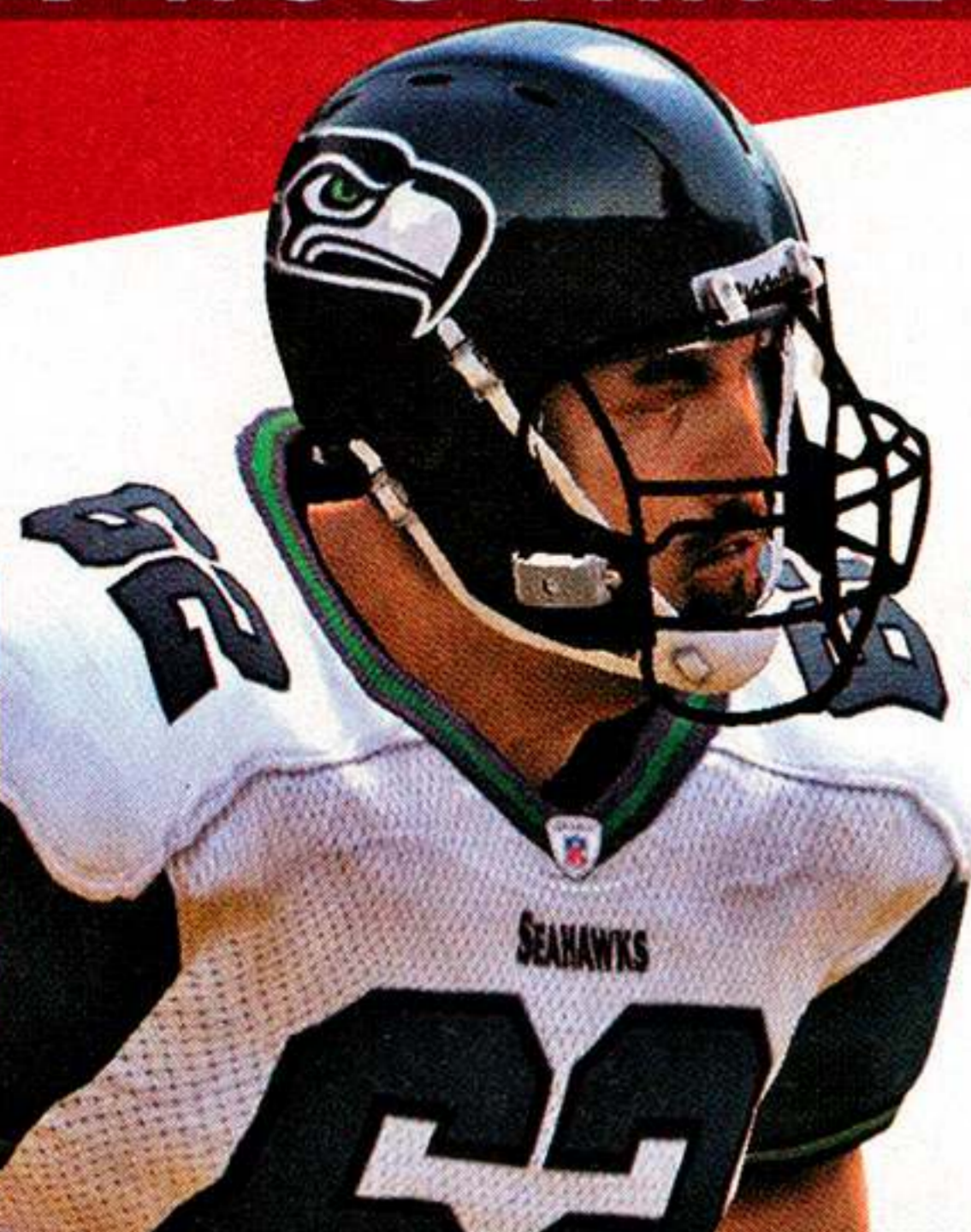


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# Madden NFL 07

## Summer Training Strategy Special

In honor of the start of NFL preseason play and the release of Madden 07, here are the best quick and dirty basic strategies and most important tactics to get your game up in a hurry. Now strap it up and hit somebody! *By Bones*

### Offensive Xs and Os

#### Play Action Rhythm



Run, run, run, PASS! Using a play action pass (PA) after a series of runs is still the best way to get the overzealous defenders to bite on a fake run play in any Madden game. This leaves your receivers wide open for huge gains as the computer usually takes the bait the first few times. You can also listen for audio cues from John Madden to know when the defense is playing the run too hard.

#### "Box" Basics



Pay attention to the number of defenders your opponent has lined up in the "box" (the area stretching from one offensive tackle to the other) before running the ball. A full "box" (i.e. four down-linemen and three linebackers) could be a great time to run a stretch play or halfback toss, not an inside zone play or a dive. Conversely, linebackers creeping off the edge or cornerbacks playing tight to the line are signs of an outside blitz or containment play—in which case you can audible to dive or gut plays when running the ball.

#### Spread Out the Defense



Running from a spread or trips formation (with 3 or 4 receivers) can help shift a defense in man coverage away from the line of scrimmage, thereby relieving some pressure from the interior run game, a draw play, or the occasional QB sneak (guaranteed to work at least twice a game).

#### Run the Weak Side



For huge hits (and wide open running lanes) try running a halfback lead out of the Weak-I Normal or I-Form Twin TE formations while playing as the full-back. The defense will almost always stack to the strong side, leaving the weak side poorly defended and ripe for a big run.

#### Forget Fullback Inside Blocking



Avoid playing as the fullback on inside zone plays. Controlling the fullback as a lead blocker on an

inside run is very tricky—with so many players cluttering the line, it's easy to get hung up on a defender, leaving your ball carrier vulnerable and unprotected. Stick to sealing the edge on stretch and counter plays for better results and bigger hits.

#### Control Your Runner with Lead Blocking



Don't trust the CPU to always recognize the best open running lane. Immediately after making your block as the lead blocker, switch to controlling the ball carrier to slip through the hole you've just created by quickly pressing B. But remember to go easy on the analog stick while you switch as your ball carrier will instantly run in the same direction your lead blocker was when you switch between players.

#### Highlighting Your Star



When performing evasive or tackle-breaking moves with the new Highlight stick, be very aware of what type of runner your ball carrier is. Each back will react differently to the Stick. Pay attention to your players' stats, and use your moves according to your individual strengths.



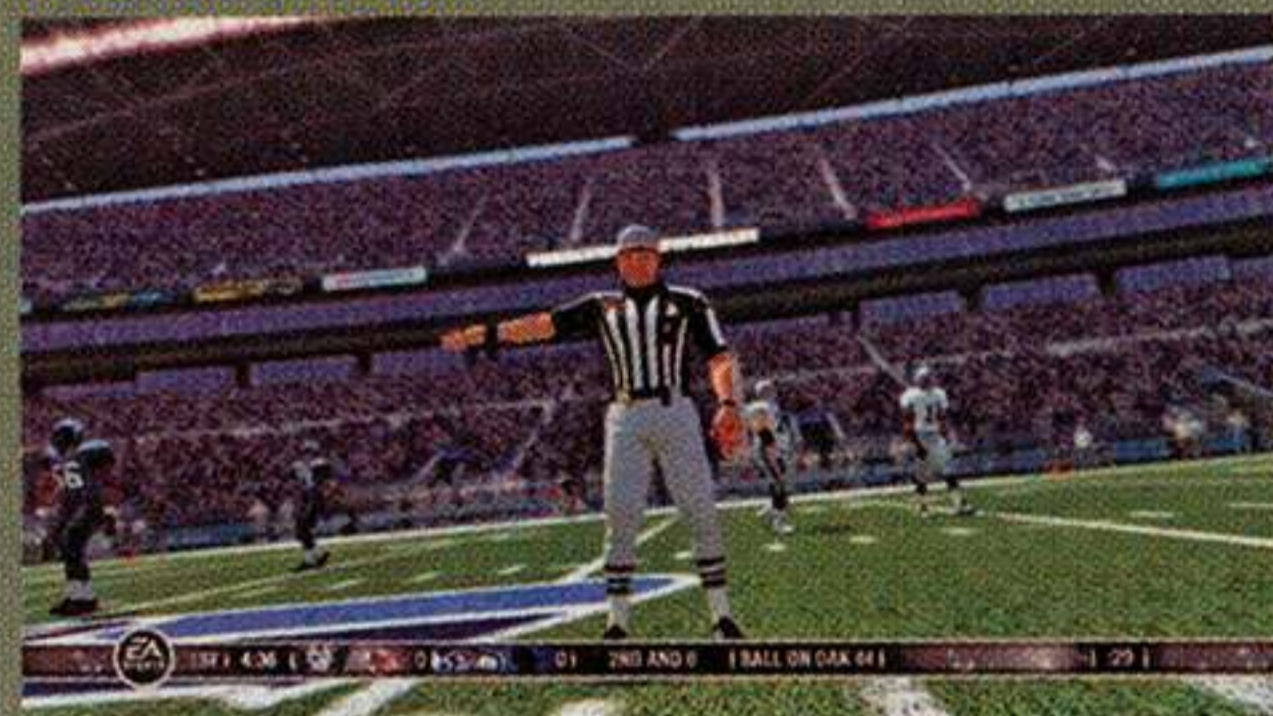
# Defensive Plan of Attack

## Run Out the Clock



Trying to run out the clock? You can eat up about 10 seconds of time by slowly selecting your defensive play. It might not seem like much, but keeping the clock running for even a few seconds per down can help sustain your lead over the course of a short five-minute quarter.

## CPU Fake Outs



The CPU defense (or an overanxious live opponent) can easily be lured into an offside penalty by trying to jump the snap, netting you an easy five yards. Try hiking the ball immediately on every play for several series before switching to a hard count to fool your opponent. This is usually successful two or three times per game. However, good defenses are less likely to jump in short yardage situations where an offside call will lead to a first down.

## Cover 2's Advantage



In short yardage situations against a pass-happy team, try running a Cover 2 defense to bring the cornerbacks down into the flats. They'll play tight to the line, giving you a great chance to snag an interception or crush a stretch play on second or third and short.

## Jump the Snap



Using the Jump the Snap feature (pressing Y at the moment the ball is snapped as a defensive lineman) can be a great way to shut down the run or put some major pressure on the QB—just be sure to time it right! The CPU will use tricky hard-count cadences to draw you offside if you've been successful in jumping the snap. To avoid a penalty, watch the clock. The CPU always snaps at 0:02 if the play clock is short, and rarely snaps it before 0:14, in most situations. Also, try eating up some of the play clock by

slowly selecting your defensive play. This can help force the offense into making shorter and more easily predictable cadences.

## Cover 3's Potential



Don't underestimate the potential of a basic Cover 3 defense. Playing as a capable middle linebacker in Cover 3 can turn a receiver's slant route into a tide-turning interception. Just hold R1 to strafe the line of scrimmage, and don't get too deep, or the quarterback might scramble.

# Special Teams Schemes

## Analog Kicking Analysis

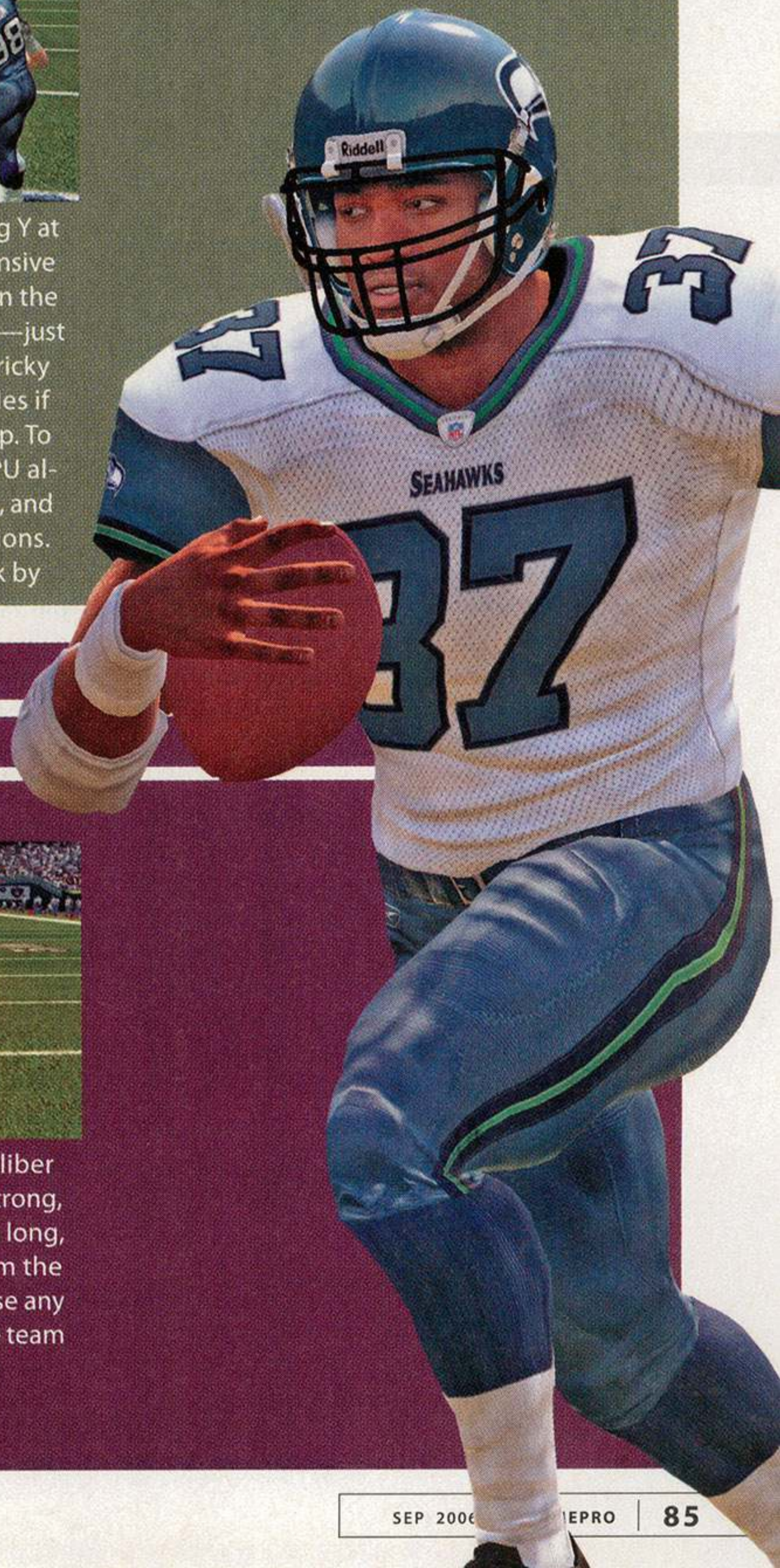


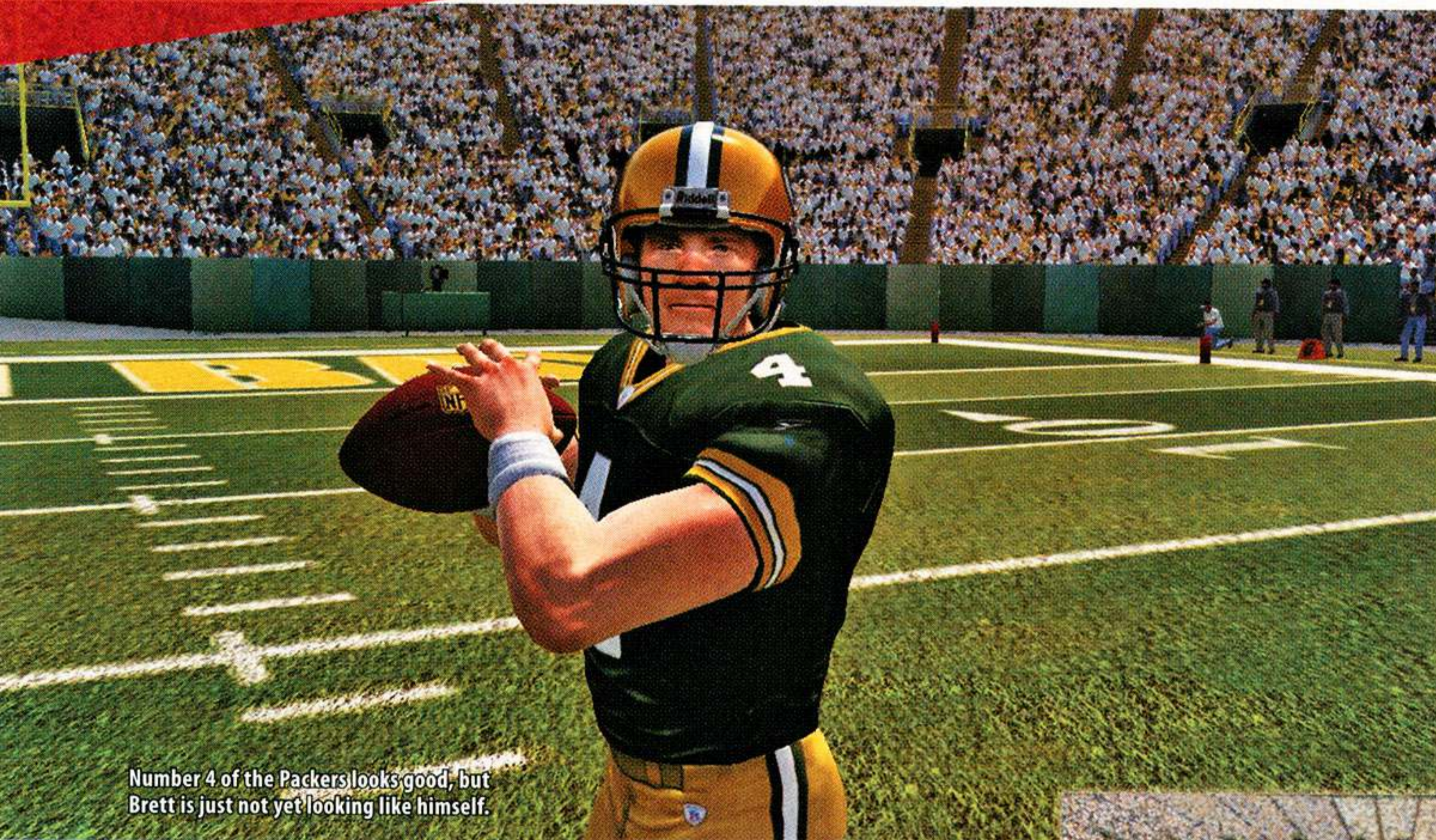
The new analog kicking controls allow for greater accuracy and finesse but require some practice to master. Rough or hurried flicking of the analogue stick will result in lost accuracy and kicks that fall short or go wide. Instead, move your thumb in a controlled, fluid motion to send the ball flying. For PAT kicks, don't bother waiting for the power meter to completely fill—you only need about 65 percent to make the extra point.

## Beware Star Returners



Never kick to an awesome, Pro Bowl-caliber returner like Dante Hall. If your kicker is strong, go for the touchback. On punts, shoot for a long, out-of-bounds kick or angle it away from the returner. You won't have a chance to cause any fumbles, but you will save a weak coverage team from giving away major yards (or points!)





Number 4 of the Packers looks good, but Brett is just not yet looking like himself.



## Madden NFL 07

**Pounding out progress a yard at a time.**

Xbox 360

**M**adden NFL football sprinted onto the Xbox 360 playing field last year still straightening out its jersey and adjusting its helmet but bringing a pretty good game just the same.

Madden NFL 07 has tightened up the act, and it's packing far more features, too. The hands-on preview version, though, was definitely a work in progress.

### Running to Daylight

Madden NFL 07 for the Xbox 360 brings a load of razzle-dazzle to the ol' gridiron. Even the early build put on an excellent show. Stadiums sport intricate detail, and raucous 3D modeled fans look amazing. Even the character models at this stage are exquisite, although every hardcore football fan is sure to find flaws. (For example, the Packers' Brett Favre still doesn't look like himself.)

There are a ton of new animations, too. The preview build displayed refined-looking gameplay that bodes well for the new emphasis on the running attack. Like the current-gen versions (see preview this issue) there's lead blocker control, and the running backs move like the real players. However, while Xbox and PS2 can mimic general body types, the potent Xbox 360 attempts to duplicate the actual individual running styles for stars such as the box cover guy,

Shaun Alexander of the Seahawks.

Ball carrier controls offer some nifty new moves courtesy of the right analog stick (now called the Highlight Stick). The back juke cutback is particularly slick. Preview controls still needed tuning, however. This early version was reminiscent of last year's game in that it sometimes felt sluggish and not as tight as the current-gen game controls overall.

### The Madden Connection

Naturally, Xbox 360 Madden NFL 07 is looking to flex its muscles online. The game now records all your achievements from all your games both on- and off-line to build up Madden Gamer Level points. You can use MGL points to purchase content or bet them in head-to-head matchups.

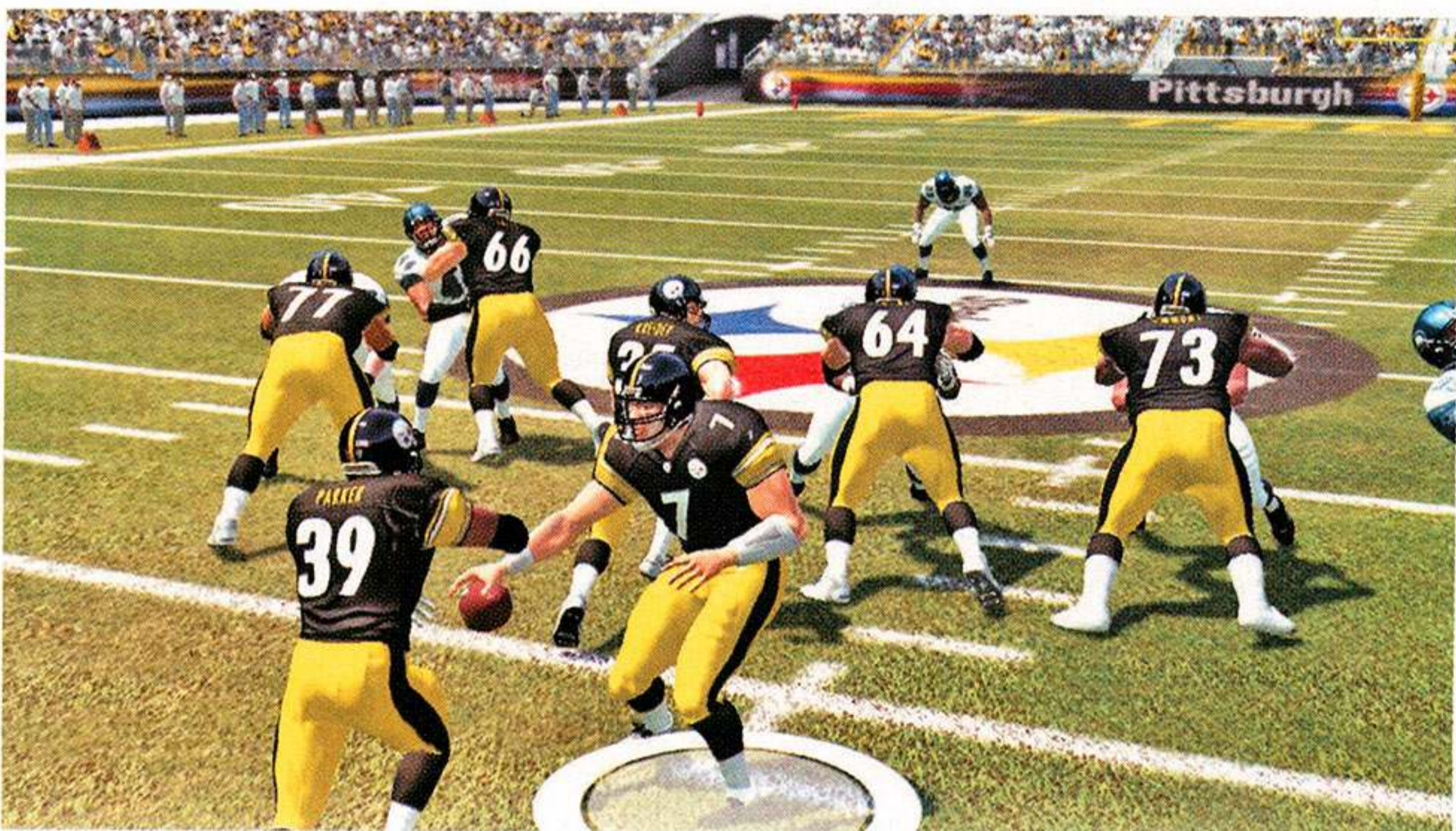
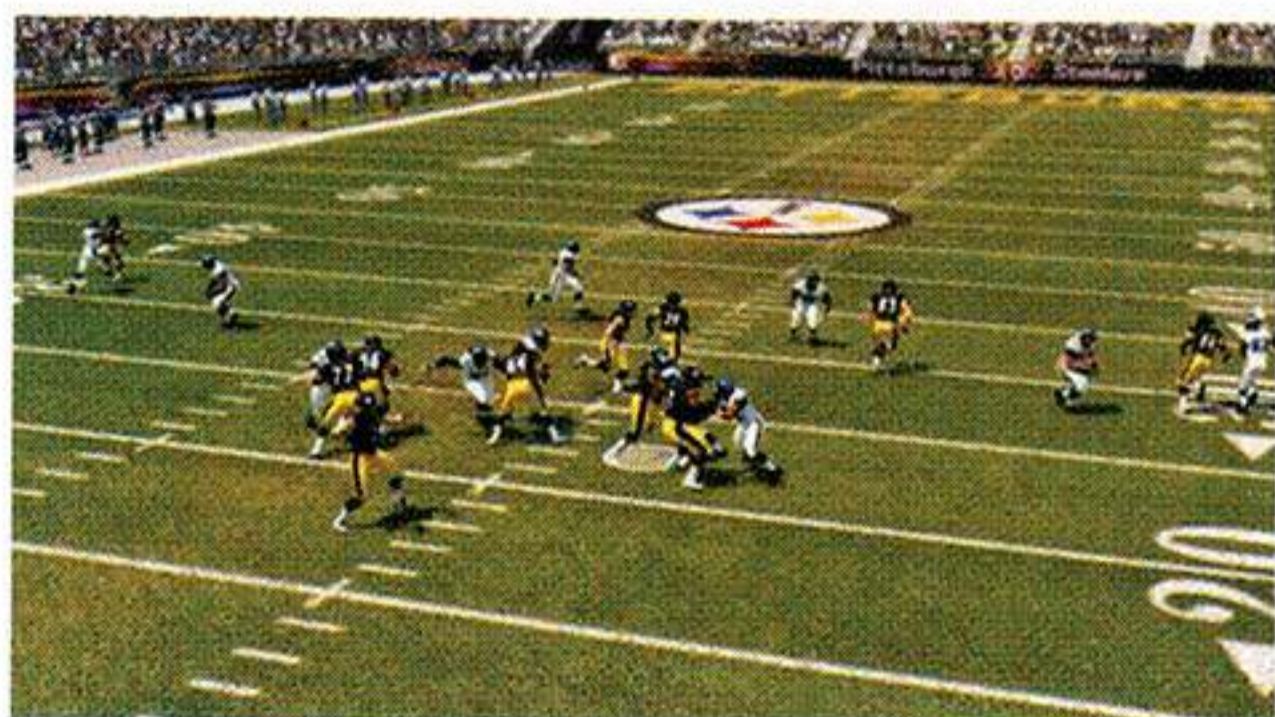


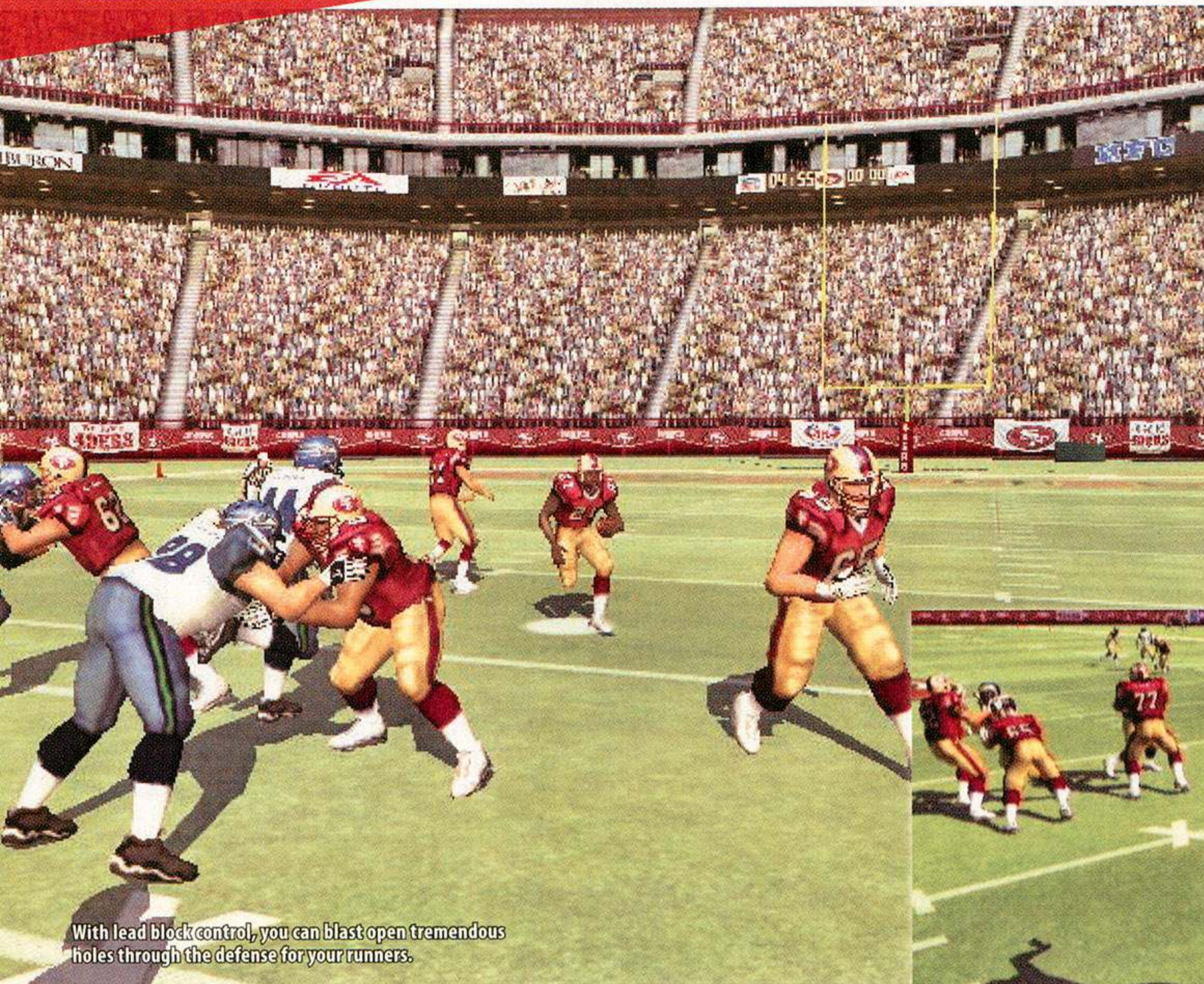
Also, the new Live Opponent feature will enable you to compete with an online opponent in regular Play Now or Franchise mode games.

### Franchise for the Future

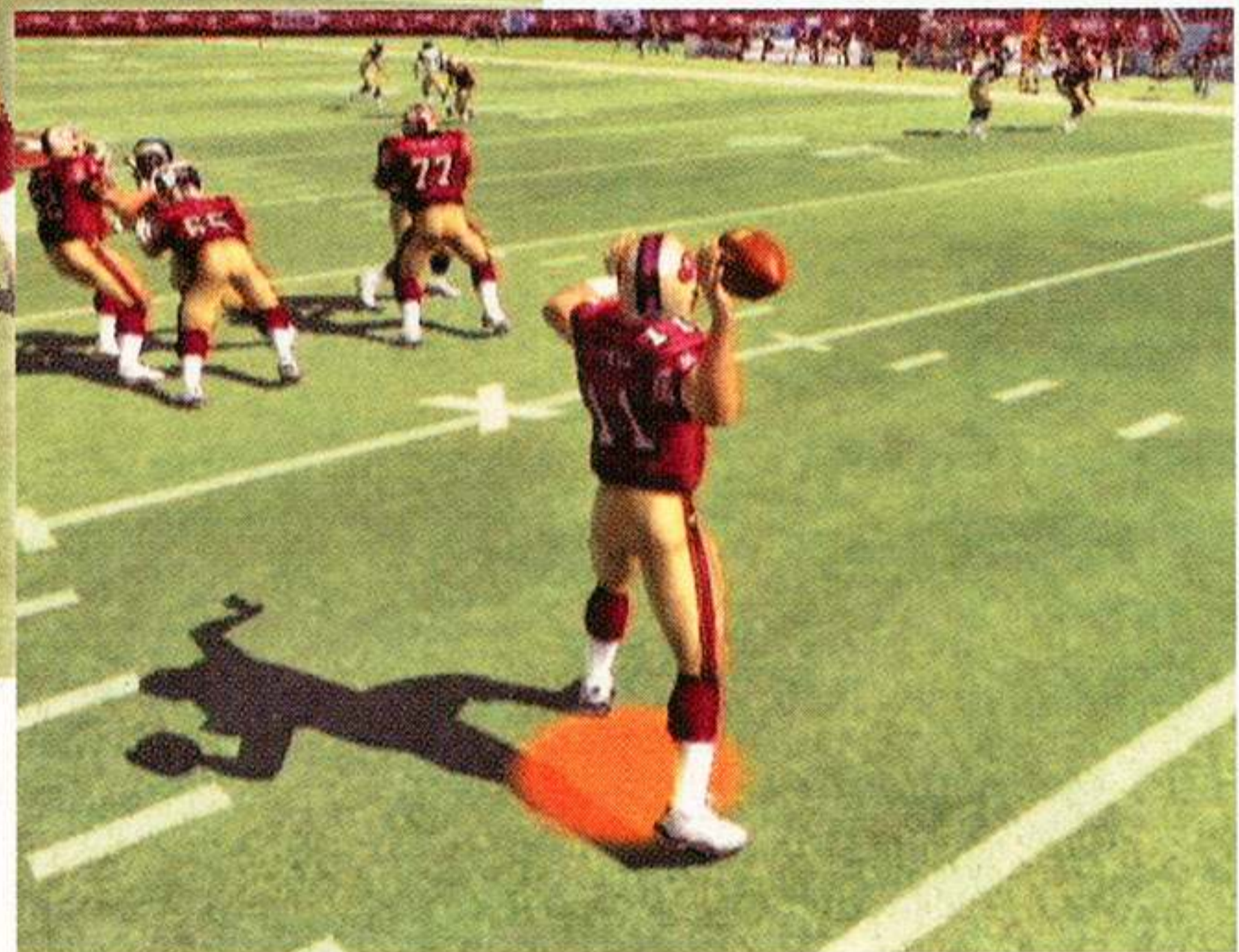
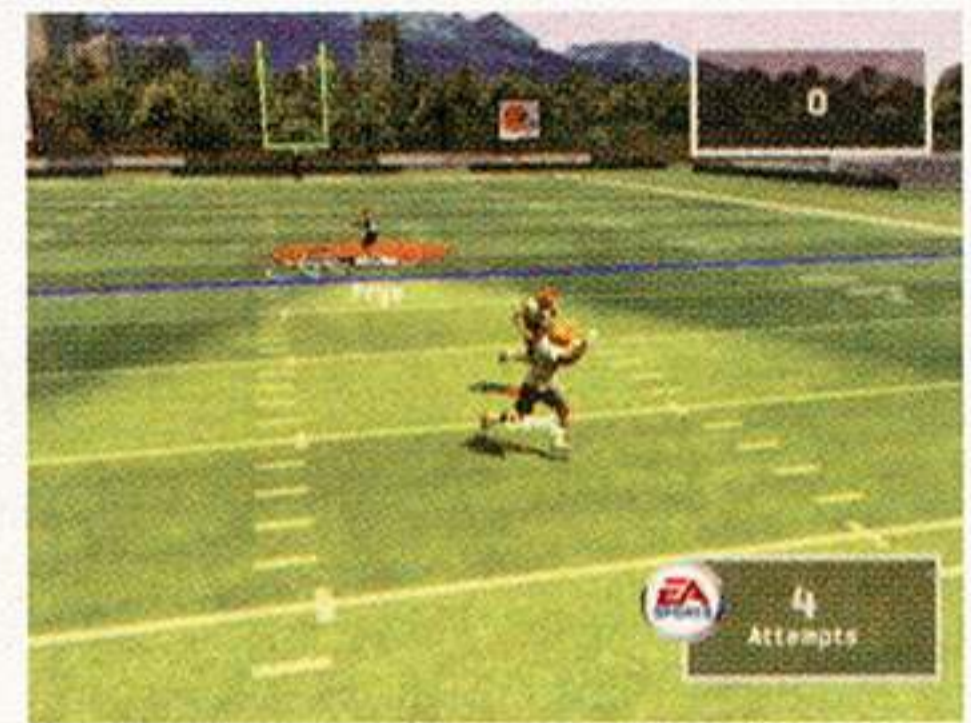
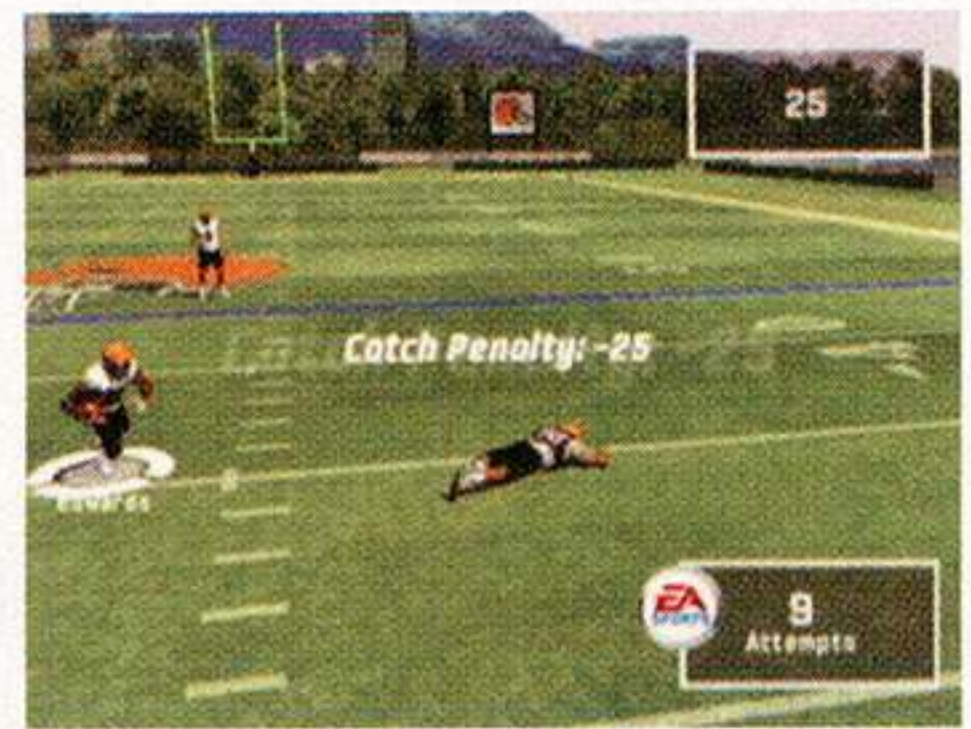
Madden for the Xbox 360 looks ready to make some big strides this season. It still feels like the PS2 and Xbox are holding their own, but clearly, the 360's headed up to another level of competition.—*Atomic Dawg*

■ **Hands-On** ■ Developer: EA Tiburon  
 ■ Publisher: EA Sports ■ Target release date: August





With lead block control, you can blast open tremendous holes through the defense for your runners.



## Madden NFL 07

**"No matter what they do, they can't really screw up."**

—John Madden

PS2

Xbox

Last season, when Electronic Arts bought Madden football and the NFL, it had no one to compete with...but itself. Of course, in any contest that pits Madden against Madden the winner is...you guessed it, Madden.

Clearly, Madden NFL for the PS2 and Xbox more than held their own against the Xbox 360 version, which was then a mere rookie. The 360 version's definitely muscling up for 2006 (see preview this issue), but while the current-gen versions have their work cut out for them, so far, Madden NFL 07 looks up to the next-gen challenge, at least for another campaign.

### Ground-Pounding Play

For the purposes of this hands-on preview, Madden does its talking both on and off the field. At the line of scrimmage, the EA Tiburon design team continues its quest for control innovations. Last year's Vision & Precision feature has been relegated to the options list, but the new lead blocker control scheme option changes the nature of the video-game running play.

The preview version imparted a true sense of teamwork between blocker and runner. Selecting a lead blocker is a simple one-button cycling process. After the snap, when you've made initial contact with a defender, you can easily switch control back to the ball carrier. Of course, you'd better make that lead block. Miss, and the A.I.-enhanced

defense will devour your runner no matter how quickly you make the switch.

Defense in general gets a nod, too. This year, Madden finally has defensive playbooks unique to every team, and your fellow defenders are noticeably smarter than before. Naturally, that means that the A.I. overall is a little tougher to beat as well.

### Chasing the Hall

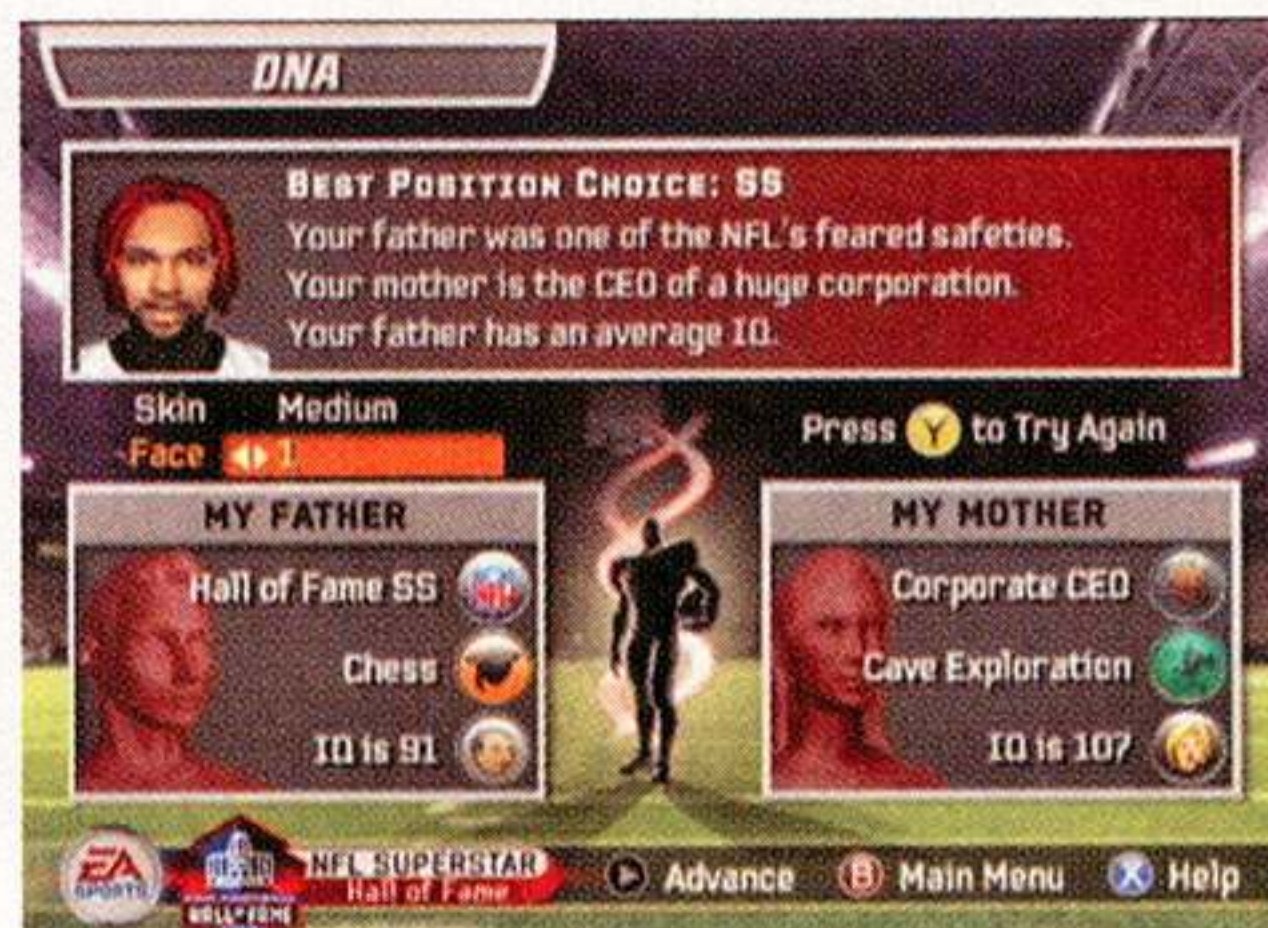
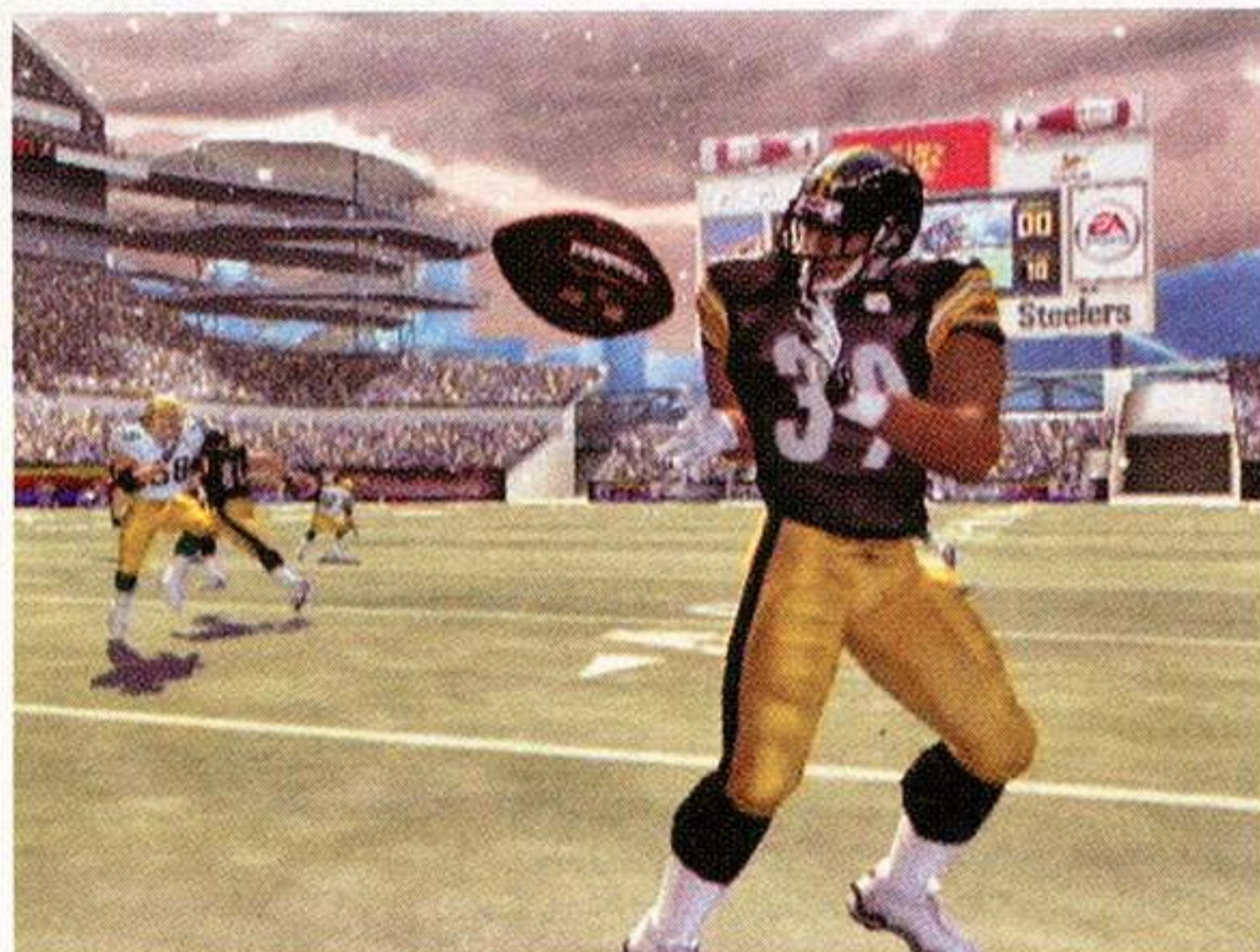
Away from the gridiron, the new NFL Superstar: Hall of Fame mode deserves attention. Madden football has always been its own immersive world, and now you can play out a career as an individual player from rookie to superstar. You participate in the draft, work with an agent, and build skills through drills. During games, you play with a view from the perspective of your chosen position. It's a cool complement to the

regular action and a less-daunting alternative to the ever-complex Franchise mode.

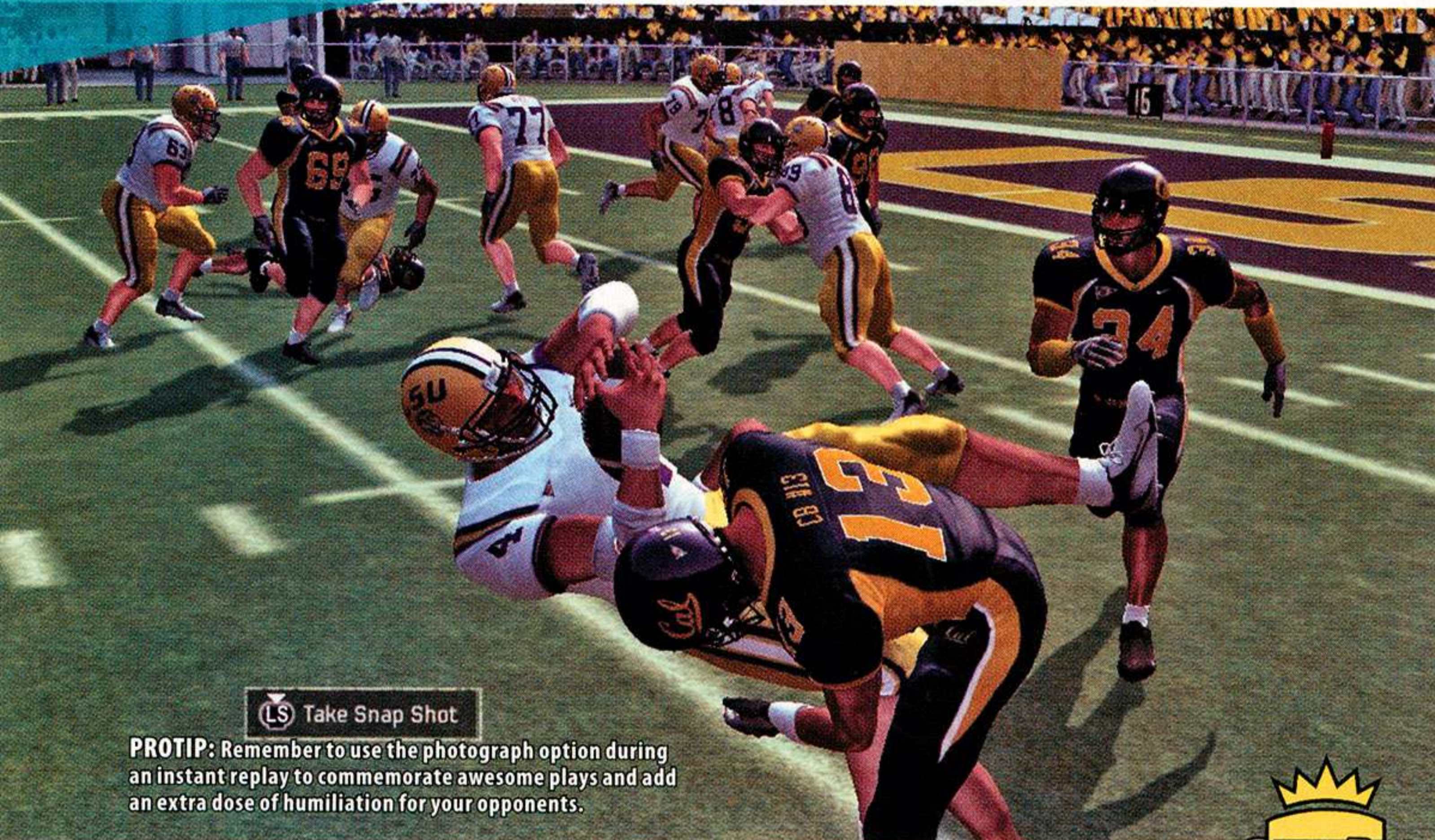
### Just Play, Baby!

Football is a game of nuances, and Madden NFL 07 has more than a fair share. If you're not ready to retire your Xbox or PS2, Madden should continue to reward you.

—Atomic Dawg



■ Hands-On ■ Developer: EA Tiburon  
■ Publisher: EA Sports ■ Target release date: August



LS Take Snap Shot

**PRO TIP:** Remember to use the photograph option during an instant replay to commemorate awesome plays and add an extra dose of humiliation for your opponents.



**PRO TIP:** Try to avoid catching interceptions in the Tug of War mini-game as the ball will be spotted wherever you are tackled.



**PRO TIP:** Use the new play-calling scheme to intentionally mislead a peeking opponent by making bluff calls in the same formation type.



**PRO TIP:** Not sure what play to call? Asking Lee Corso can yield conservative but helpful suggestions.

# NCAA Football 07

**Knocks us flat with flawless graphics and some of the best sports game-play ever**

Xbox 360



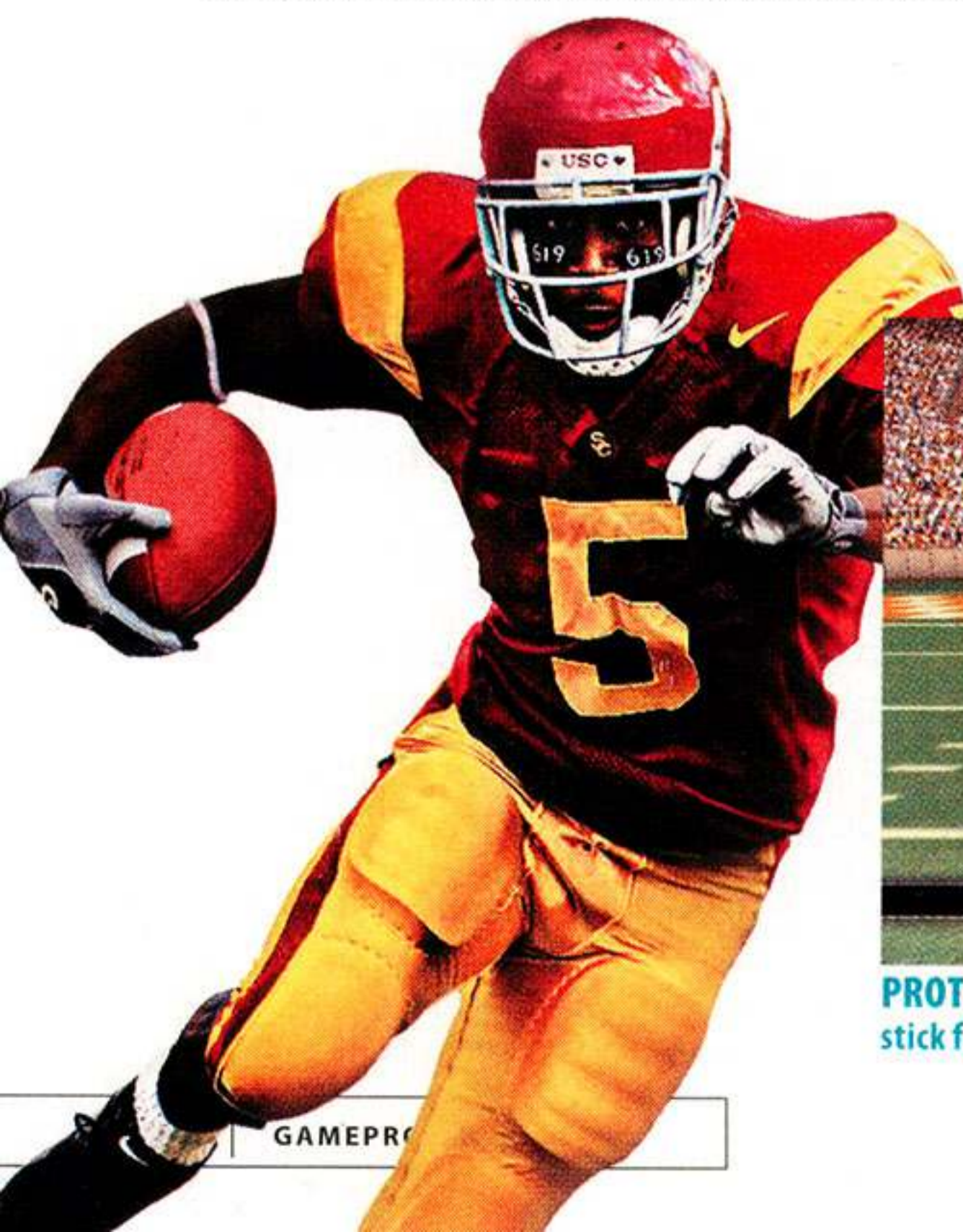
Although it's part of one of gaming's longest-running sports series, NCAA Football 07 is in many ways a game of firsts. Never before has a college football game been this fun or looked this good. The level of visual brilliance featured in 07 is unrivaled in any current sports game, even outdoing EA's own masterpiece, FIFA World Cup. At last, EA Sports has managed to elevate the presentation and graphics to match the broadcast-quality commentary and sound. Every character on the field moves with lifelike fluidity, while the jerseys and helmets reflect light and show dirt and wear just like in a real college game. Plus, the great play-by-play is now accompanied by school-specific crowd cheers and realistic fan sections to match the action on the field.

## Winning Tradition

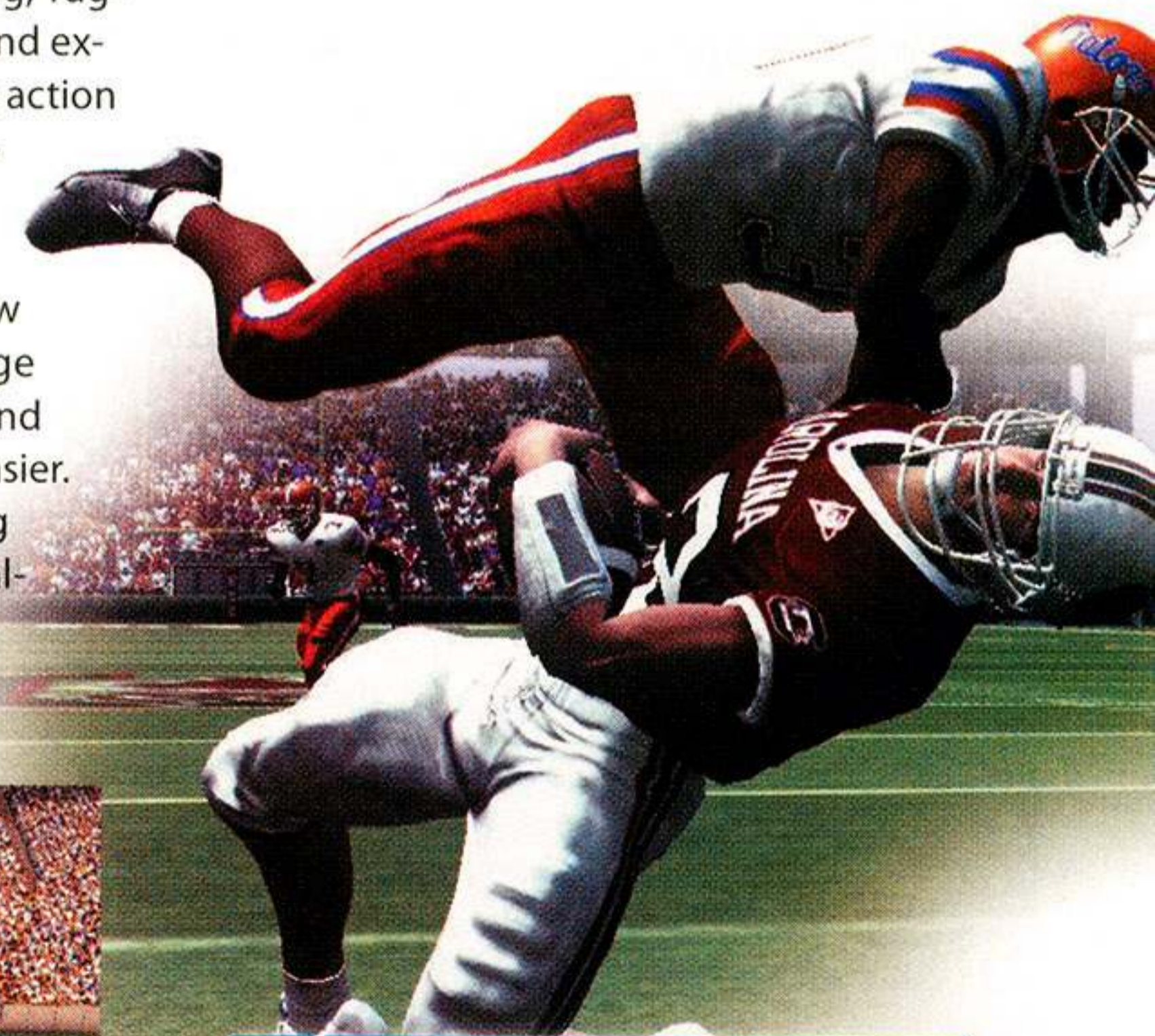
Mysteriously, the Xbox 360 version of NCAA Football 07 is missing a few play modes that are standard in its other (otherwise inferior) console brothers. The Campus Legend mode (in which you develop the career of an all-star player from high school recruiting to choosing a college major and competing for the Heisman trophy) has been inexplicably removed from the 360 version, leaving only the traditional Dynasty mode and a handful of multiplayer options and mini-games. However, these fun new challenges are hardly insignificant afterthoughts as the Bowling, Tug-of-War, and Option Dash are ingenious and excitingly fast-paced, cutting straight to the action and offering a terrific competitive two-player dynamic. Other new additions include the easier Varsity mode (designed for series newbies) and the all-new play-calling system, which proves a huge step forward in strategic play selection and makes duping your opponents so much easier. The new Thumbstick-controlled kicking scheme is also present, whether traditionalists like it or not, although why anyone wouldn't like smoother PATs and kick-offs is beyond us.

## King of the Consoles

Without a doubt, NCAA Football 07 Football is a must-own title and one of the greatest football games to date. While some Xbox 360 games are hard to distinguish from their last-generation counterparts, this version of NCAA 07 is by far the superior title and well worth the extra cash. Football fans who put off buying an Xbox 360 to wait for Madden NFL 07 might want to consider making an early purchase to pick up this paramount achievement in sports gaming.—*Bones*



**PRO TIP:** When using the new kicking control, make sure to flip the right Thumbstick forward before the power meter bounces back to maximize your power.



**ONLINE** GAMEPRO.COM FOR MORE ON NCAA FOOTBALL 07

	GRAPHICS . . . . .	5.0		<b>FUN FACTOR</b> <b>5.0</b>
	SOUND . . . . .	5.0		
	CONTROL . . . . .	4.5		

■ Developer: EA Tiburon ■ Publisher: EA Sports  
 ■ \$59.99 ■ Available now ■ Football ■ 12 players; 2 online  
 ■ ESRB: E ■ Also on the PlayStation 2 and Xbox

# SAMURAI WARRIORS<sup>®</sup>

戦国無双

Tactical Action has a New Look.



26 playable characters in all! 10 new Warriors are ready for battle including the legendary Musashi Miyamoto, Ieyasu Tokugawa the unifier of Japan, and the enigmatic ninja Kotaro Fuma.



Now castle warfare blends seamlessly with field combat. Take control of castles on the battlefield to gain a significant morale advantage.



Forbidden secret fighting techniques are revealed! Set traps, summon ninja decoys, and much more! Use powerful Linked Charge attacks, and for the first time power up to three Musou gauges!

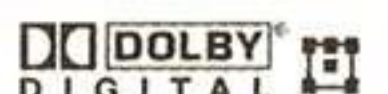
September 2006



Mild Language  
Mild Suggestive Themes  
Use of Alcohol  
Violence



PlayStation<sup>®</sup> 2





Passwords are not case-sensitive.

All Cars:	YAYCARS
All Modes:	IF900HP
Art:	CONC3PT
Fast Start:	IMSPEED
Infinite Boost:	VROOOOM
Unlock All Tracks:	MATTL66
Unlock Master's Speedy Circuit:	TRGTEXC
Videos:	WATCHIT

**MULTIPLATFORM**



**50 CENT: BULLETPROOF**



**Passwords:** During gameplay, pause the game, select Codes, select Enter Codes to enter the password input screen and then enter the following passwords to unlock the corresponding cheats. The passwords are case-sensitive, and if you entered a password correctly, you'll see a confirming message onscreen.

All Music Videos:	hookmeup50
G'ed Up Counter Kill:	gooddiyoung
Guillotine Counter Kill:	gettingdropped
Infinite Ammo:	grizzspecial
Wanksta Counter Kill:	aintgotnothin

**JAWS UNLEASHED**



**Passwords:** At the main menu, select New Game, and then enter the following passwords to unlock the corresponding cheats. If you entered a password correctly, the cheat will take effect immediately.

Passwords are not case-sensitive.

1 Million Points:	bloood
Unlock All Levels:	shaaark



**THE DA VINCI CODE**



**Passwords:** At the Game Menu, select Options, and then select Codes to enter the password input screen. Enter the following passwords to unlock the corresponding cheats. If you entered a password correctly, you'll see a confirming message onscreen.

Passwords are not case-sensitive.

Bonuses:	ET IN ARCADIA EGO
Double Health:	SACRED FEMININE
God Mode:	VITUVIAN MAN
One Hit Kills:	PHILLIPS EXETER
One Hit Kills with Weapon:	ROYAL HOLLOWAY
Unlock All Missions:	CLOS LUCE 1519
Visual Database Entries:	APOCRYPHA

**PSP**

**PSP**

**GRADIUS COLLECTION**

**Power-Up Cheat:** Select any of the games included in Gradius Collection, and then during gameplay, not while the game is paused, press Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, L, R. The game must also be set on the default difficulty setting. If you entered the code correctly, the cheat will take effect immediately.



LOOK  
DOWN.

MORE.

MORE.

MORE.

THERE.



SUBLYMONAL MESSAGE COMPLETE.

**OBEY™**

# GAMEPRO's **BIG LIST**

Here's a thumbnail guide to today's hottest games as reviewed by *GamePro* magazine. For full-length reviews, check out [GamePro.com](http://GamePro.com). Games highlighted in **yellow** represent a *GamePro* Editors' Choice title.

NAME OF GAME	SYSTEM(S)	PUBLISHER	FUN FACTOR	ESRB	ISSUE REVIEWED
24: The Game	PS2	2K Games	3.5	M	6/06
50 Cent: Bulletproof	PS2	Vivendi Universal	2.0	M	3/06
Ace Combat Zero: The Belkan War	PS2	Namco Bandai Games	4.0	T	6/06
Ape Escape Academy	PSP	Sony	3.0	E10+	3/06
Arena Football	PS2	EA Sports	2.5	E10+	3/06
Battlefield 2: Modern Combat	Xbox 360	EA Games	4.0	T	7/06
<b>Beatmania</b>	PS2	Konami	<b>4.5</b>	<b>E10+</b>	<b>5/06</b>
Big Brain Academy	DS	Nintendo	4.25	E	8/06
Black	PS2, Xbox	EA Games	4.0	M	5/06
<b>Burnout: Revenge</b>	Xbox 360	EA Games	<b>4.5</b>	<b>E10+</b>	<b>5/06</b>
<b>Call of Duty 2: Big Red One</b>	PS2	Activision	<b>4.5</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>3/06</b>
Capcom Classic Collection Remix	PSP	Capcom	4.0	T	6/06
Chibi-Robo!	GameCube	Nintendo	2.5	E10+	5/06
CMT Presents: Karaoke Revolution Country	PS2	Konami	3.5	E10+	5/06
College Hoops 2K6	PS2, Xbox	2K Sports	4.0	E	3/06
College Hoops 2K6	Xbox 360	2K Sports	3.0	E	5/06
Conflict: Global Terror	PS2	2K Games	3.0	M	5/06
Crime Life: Gang Wars	Xbox	Konami	1.5	M	3/06
The Da Vinci Code	PS2, Xbox	2K Games	2.5	T	8/06
Daxter	PSP	Sony	4.0	E10+	6/06
Drakengard 2	PS2	Ubisoft	3.0	M	5/06
<b>The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion</b>	Xbox 360	2K Games/Bethesda Softworks	<b>4.5</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>6/06</b>
<b>Exit</b>	PSP	Ubisoft	<b>4.5</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>5/06</b>
Field Commander	PSP	Sony	3.5	T	7/06
<b>FIFA World Cup: Germany 2006</b>	PS2, Xbox 360	EA Sports	<b>4.5</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>6/06</b>
<b>Fight Night Round 3</b>	Xbox 360	EA Sports	<b>4.5</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>4/06</b>
Fight Night Round 3	PSP	EA Sports	3.5	T	5/06
<b>Final Fantasy Advance IV</b>	GBA	Nintendo	<b>4.5</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>3/06</b>
Final Fight: Streetwise	PS2, Xbox	Capcom	3.5	M	5/06
Full Auto	Xbox 360	Sega	3.5	T	5/06
Full Spectrum Warrior: Ten Hammers	Xbox	THQ	3.5	M	5/06
<b>The Godfather</b>	PS2, Xbox	EA Games	<b>4.5</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>5/06</b>
Gradius Collection	PSP	Konami	4.0	E	7/06
Grandia III	PS2	Square Enix	4.0	T	3/06
Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories	PS2	Rockstar Games	4.25	M	8/06
<b>Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories</b>	PSP	Rockstar Games	<b>5.0</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>1/06</b>

NAME OF GAME	SYSTEM(S)	PUBLISHER	FUN FACTOR	ESRB	ISSUE REVIEWED
<b>Guitar Hero</b>	PS2	RedOctane	<b>4.5</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>1/06</b>
Hitman: Blood Money	Xbox	Eidos Interactive	4.25	M	7/06
Jaws: Unleashed	PS2, Xbox	Majesco	2.75	M	8/06
<b>Kingdom Hearts II</b>	PS2	Square Enix	<b>4.5</b>	<b>E10+</b>	<b>5/06</b>
Lara Croft Tomb Raider: Legend	Xbox 360, Xbox	Eidos Interactive	4.0	T	6/06
<b>The Lord of the Rings: The Battle for Middle-Earth II</b>	PC	EA Games	<b>4.5</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>6/06</b>
Lost Magic	PS2	Ubisoft	3.5	E	6/06
Major League Baseball 2K6	Xbox 360	2K Sports	3.5	E	7/06
Me and My Katamari	PSP	Namco Bandai Games	3.5	E	8/06
Mega Man Maverick Hunter X	PSP	Capcom	3.5	E10+	3/06
Mega Man Powered Up	PSP	Capcom	4.0	E	6/06
Metal Gear Acid 2	PSP	Konami	4.0	M	6/06
<b>Metal Gear Solid 3: Subsistence</b>	PS2	Konami	<b>5.0</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>4/06</b>
<b>Metroid Prime Hunters</b>	DS	Nintendo	<b>4.5</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>6/06</b>
MLB '06: The Show	PS2	Sony	4.0	E	5/06
MS Saga: A New Dawn	PS2	Bandai	3.0	E10+	4/06
Naruto: Clash of Ninja	GameCube	D3 Publishing	4.0	T	4/06
Naruto: Ninja Council	GBA	D3 Publishing	4.0	E10+	4/06
NBA Ballers: Phenom	PS2	Midway	3.0	E	5/06
<b>NCAA Football 07</b>	PS2	EA Sports	<b>4.5</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>8/06</b>
NFL Head Coach	PS2	EA Sports	4.0	E	8/06





NAME OF GAME	SYSTEM(S)	PUBLISHER	FUN FACTOR	ESRB	ISSUE REVIEWED
Odama	GameCube	Nintendo	4.0	E10+	5/06
<b>Onimusha: Dawn of Dreams</b>	PS2	Capcom	<b>4.5</b>	M	4/06
<b>The Outfit</b>	Xbox 360	THQ	<b>4.5</b>	M	4/06
Outrun 2006: Coast 2 Coast	Xbox	Sega	3.75	E	7/06
Pac-Man World 3	PS2	Namco	4.0	E	3/06
Pokémon Trozei	DS	Nintendo	4.0	E	4/06
Pursuit Force	PSP	Sony	3.5	T	4/06
Rampage: Total Destruction	PS2	Midway	1.5	E10+	6/06
Resident Evil: Deadly Silence	DS	Capcom	3.0	M	4/06
Rogue Trooper	PS2, Xbox	Eidos Interactive	2.5	T	6/06
<b>The Rub Rabbits</b>	DS	Sega	<b>4.5</b>	T	3/06
Rumble Roses XX	Xbox 360	Konami	4.0	M	6/06
Samurai Warriors: State of War	PSP	Koei	3.5	T	6/06
Shadow Hearts: From the New World	PS2	XSEED Games	3.5	T	4/06
Shadow the Hedgehog	PS2	Sega	2.0	E10+	3/06
The Sims 2	PSP	EA Games	2.5	T	3/06
Sniper Elite	Xbox	Namco	4.0	M	5/06
Steambot Chronicles	PS2	Atlus	3.5	T	6/06
Street Fighter Alpha 3 Max	PSP	Capcom	4.0	T	4/06

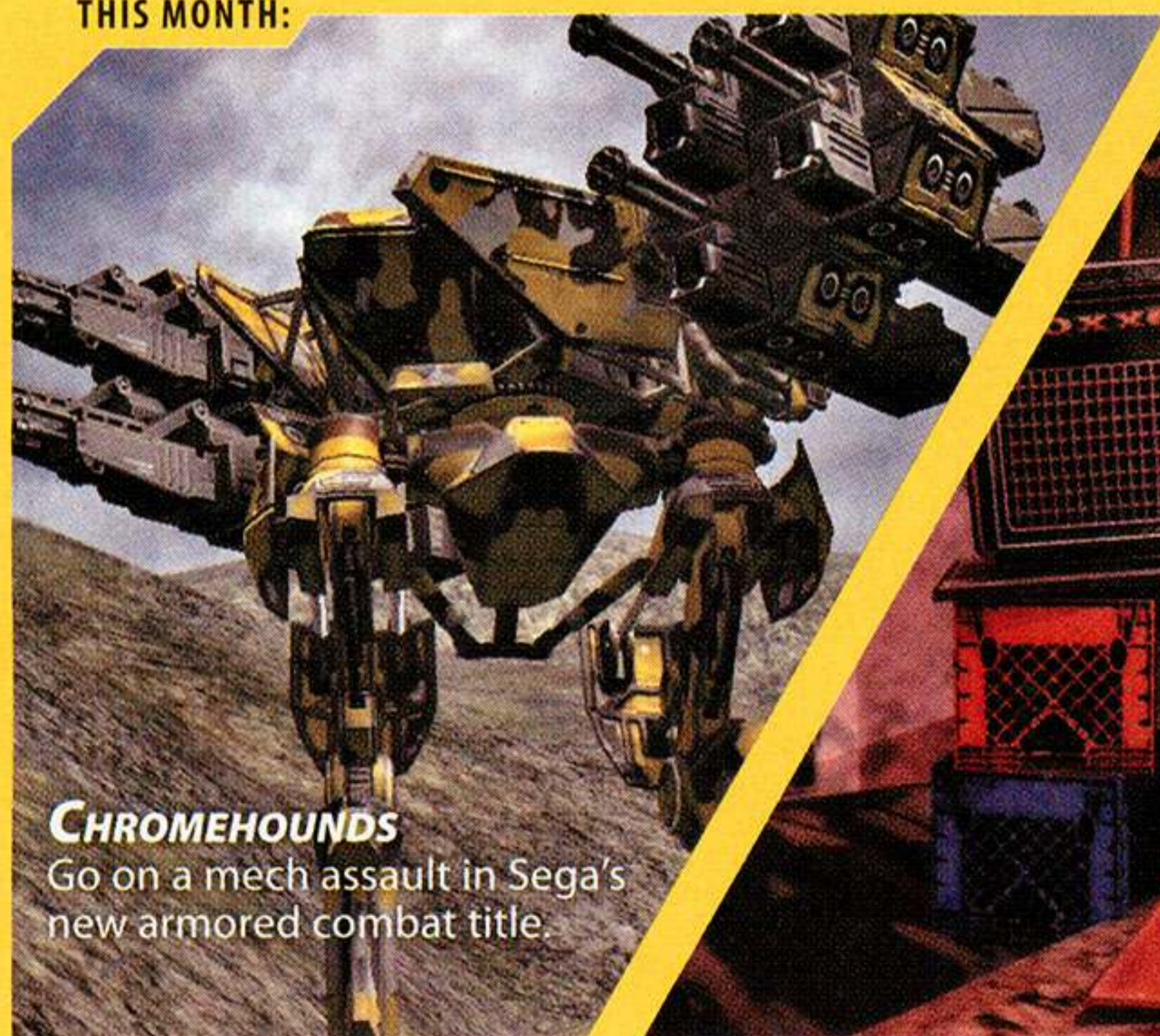
NAME OF GAME	SYSTEM(S)	PUBLISHER	FUN FACTOR	ESRB	ISSUE REVIEWED
Street Fighter Anthology	PS2	Capcom	4.0	T	8/06
Street Supremacy	PSP	Konami	3.5	E	5/06
Stubbs the Zombie In Rebel Without a Pulse	Xbox	Aspyr	3.5	M	1/06
Super Princess Peach	DS	Nintendo	4.0	E	5/06
Table Tennis	Xbox 360	Rockstar Games	4.25	E	8/06
Tales of Legendia	PS2	Namco	3.5	T	3/06
Tao's Adventure: Curse of the Demon Seal	DS	Konami	3.0	E10+	5/06
<b>Tetris DS</b>	DS	Nintendo	<b>5.0</b>	E	5/06
<b>ToCA Race Driver 3</b>	PS2, Xbox	Codemasters	<b>4.5</b>	E10+	3/06
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Advanced Warfighter	Xbox 360	Ubisoft	4.0	T	5/06
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Essentials	PSP	Ubisoft	3.0	M	8/06
Top Spin 2	Xbox 360	2K Sports	3.0	E	6/06
Tourist Trophy	PS2	Sony	4.0	E	6/06
True Swing Golf	DS	Nintendo	3.5	E	3/06
Untold Legends: The Warrior's Code	PSP	Sony Online Entertainment	3.5	T	5/06
Urban Chaos: Riot Response	PS2, Xbox	Eidos Interactive	2.5	M	7/06
Viewtiful Joe Red Hot Rumble	PSP	Capcom	3.5	T	6/06
Warship Gunner II	PS2	Koei	3.0	T	5/06
Winback 2: Project Poseidon	PS2, Xbox	Koei	3.0	T	7/06
<b>World Soccer Winning Eleven 9</b>	PS2	Konami	<b>4.5</b>	E	3/06
WRC: FIA World Championship	PSP	Namco Bandai Games	3.0	E	5/06
X-Men: The Official Game	PS2, Xbox 360, Xbox	Activision	2.25	T	8/06
WWE SmackDown! Vs. Raw 2006	PSP	THQ	3.5	T	3/06



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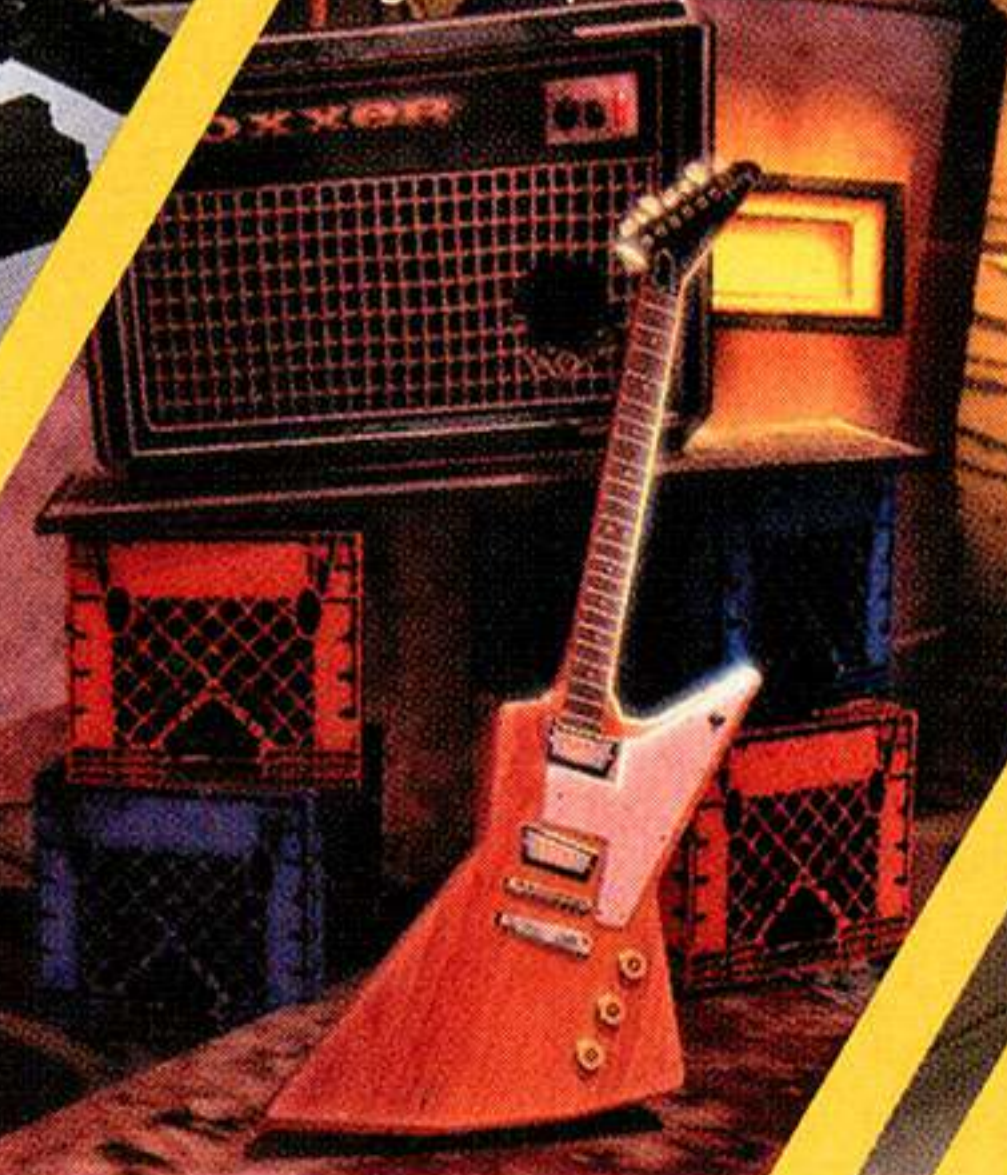


### CHROMEHOUNDS

Go on a mech assault in Sega's new armored combat title.

### GUITAR HERO II

We break down RedOctane's upcoming sequel to the beloved guitar-peripheral classic.



### PREVIEWS

Find out the latest on such titles as Need for Speed Carbon, WWE SmackDown! vs. RAW 2007, and others.

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# HyperCritical

Now that you've read the best, check out all the rest. Here's how the "other guys" rated your favorite games.

	GamePro	EGM	Game Informer	GameSpot	IGN	Official PlayStation Magazine	Official Xbox Magazine	PlayStation Magazine	Average
2006 FIFA World Cup (PS2, Xbox) EA Sports	4.5/5	N/A	8.5/10	7.7/10	8.4/10	4/5	7/10	N/A	8.1
Ace Combat Zero: The Belkan War (PS2) Namco Bandai Games	4/5	5.33/10	8.5/10	7.9/10	8.8/10	3/5	N/A	8/10	7.5
Big Brain Academy (DS) Nintendo	4.25/5	8.33/10	N/A	7/10	8.1/10	N/A	N/A	N/A	7.9
Capcom Classics Collection Remixed (PSP) Capcom	4/5	8.67/10	8.5/10	7.8/10	7.4/10	4.5/5	N/A	N/A	8.2
The Da Vinci Code (PS2, Xbox) 2K Games	2.5/5	N/A	6/10	6.5/10	4.8/10	N/A	3/10	N/A	5.0
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion (Xbox 360) 2K Games	4.5/5	9.17/10	9.5/10	9.6/10	9.3/10	N/A	9.5/10	N/A	9.1
Full Spectrum Warrior: Ten Hammers (PS2, Xbox) THQ	3.5/5	5/10	7.25/10	7.3/10	8.2/10	N/A	7/10	N/A	6.9
Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories (PS2) Rockstar Games	4.25/5	N/A	N/A	7.1/10	8/10	N/A	N/A	N/A	7.7
Jaws: Unleashed (PS2, Xbox) Majesco	2.75/5	N/A	N/A	3.8/10	7.4/10	N/A	6.5/10	N/A	5.8
Kingdom Hearts II (PS2) Square Enix	4.5/5	9.5/10	9/10	8.7/10	7.6/10	4.5/5	N/A	N/A	8.8
Lara Croft Tomb Raider: Legends (PS2, Xbox) Eidos Interactive	4/5	8.33/10	8.75/10	7.8/10	8/10	4.5/5	8/10	8.5/10	8.3
Lost Magic (DS) Ubisoft	3.5/5	5/10	6/10	7.9/10	6.5/10	N/A	N/A	N/A	6.4
Me and My Katamari (PSP) Namco Bandai Games	3.5/5	6.5/10	8/10	8/10	7.6/10	4/5	N/A	7.5/10	7.5
Mega Man Powered Up (PSP) Capcom	4/5	N/A	8.25/10	8.5/10	8.2/10	4/5	N/A	8.5/10	8.2
Metal Gear Solid 3: Subsistence (PS2) Konami	5/5	9.83/10	9.5/10	9/10	9.8/10	5/5	N/A	10/10	9.7
Metroid Prime Hunters (DS) Nintendo	4.5/10	7.67/10	N/A	8.6/10	9/10	N/A	N/A	N/A	8.6
NFL Head Coach (PS2) EA Sports	4/5	N/A	N/A	7.2/10	7.2/10	N/A	N/A	N/A	5.6
The Outfit (Xbox 360) THQ	4.5/5	6.67/10	7.75/10	6.7/10	6.9/10	N/A	8.5/10	N/A	7.6
Rampage: Total Destruction (PS2) Midway	1.5/5	N/A	6.5/10	5.7/10	5/10	N/A	N/A	6.5/10	5.3
Rogue Trooper (PS2, xbox) Eidos Interactive	2.5/5	7.73/10	7.25/10	6.7/10	8/10	4/5	N/A	N/A	7.1
Samurai Warriors: State of War (PSP) Koei	3.5/5	N/A	7/10	6.5/10	5.8/10	4/5	N/A	6/10	6.7
Steambot Chronicles (PS2) Atlus	3.5/5	N/A	5.5/10	7.1/10	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6.5
Street Fighter Anthology (PS2) Capcom	4.25/5	N/A	7.5/10	7.9/10	8/10	N/A	N/A	8/10	7.9
Table Tennis (Xbox 360) Rockstar Games	4.25/5	7.67/10	8/10	8.5/10	7.8/10	N/A	8/10	N/A	8.0
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter (Xbox 360) Ubisoft	4/5	9.5/10	9.5/10	9.2/10	9.2/10	N/A	9/10	N/A	9.1
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Essentials (PSP) Ubisoft	3/5	5/10	8/10	5.8/10	6.3/10	2/5	N/A	N/A	5.9
Top Spin 2 (Xbox 360) 2K Sports	3/5	8/10	8.5/10	8.2/10	7.8/10	N/A	8/10	N/A	7.7
Tourist Trophy (PS2) Sony	4/5	N/A	8.5/10	8.2/10	8.4/10	3/5	N/A	7/10	7.6
Viewtiful Joe Red Hot Rumble (PSP) Capcom	3.5/5	N/A	7/10	6.9/10	6.4/10	2.5/5	N/A	5/10	6.2
X-Men: The Official Game (PS2, Xbox) Activision	2.25/5	3.83/10	4/10	5.6/10	5.9/10	3/5	7.5/10	N/A	5.3

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# CHARTBUSTERS

Number crunching was never our strong suit, but then that's why we partnered with the most reputable data company around. The NPD Group provides us with innumerable video-game tidbits, giving you insight into the trends of the gaming industry.

## Top 10 Best-Selling Console Video-Game Titles May 2006

TITLE	PLATFORM	LAST MONTH
<b>1. New Super Mario Bros.</b> Nintendo	DS	NEW
<b>2. Kingdom Hearts II</b> Square Enix	PS2	2
<b>3. Brain Age: Train Your Brain in Minutes a Day</b> Nintendo	DS	14 ▲
<b>4. God of War</b> Sony	PS2	5 ▲
<b>5. The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion*</b> 2K Games/Bethesda Softworks	Xbox 360	3 ▼
<b>6. Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter</b> Ubisoft	Xbox 360	2 ▼
<b>7. MLB '06: The Show</b> Sony	PS2	6 ▼
<b>8. Guitar Hero</b> RedOctane	PS2	NEW
<b>9. Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas (Special Edition)</b> Rockstar Games	PS2	15 ▲
<b>10. Kingdom Hearts</b> Square Enix	PS2	17 ▲

\* Includes Collector's Edition  
Source: The NPD Group/Point-of-Sale

## Ten Games That GamePro Editors Are Playing

1. Big Brain Academy (Nintendo/DS)
2. Call of Duty 2 (Activision/Xbox 360)
3. Command & Conquer The First Decade (EA Games/PC)
4. Dead Rising (Capcom/Xbox 360)
5. God of War (Sony/PS2)
6. Guitar Hero (RedOctane/PS2)
7. Hitman: Blood Money (Eidos Interactive/Xbox 360)
8. Table Tennis (Rockstar Games/Xbox 360)
9. Tetris DS (Nintendo/DS)
10. Ultimate Ghosts 'N Goblins (Capcom/PSP)

## 1 New Super Mario Bros.



Congrats, Mario! Everyone's favorite plumber rockets to the top of the charts with New Super Mario Bros. In a nutshell, New Super Mario Bros. is like a supercharged mixture of Super Mario Bros. 3 and Super Mario World. There is a world map structure reminiscent of the previous two games, but this time, there are a bevy of different paths you can take to get to Bowser's final castle. Plus, there's a Wi-Fi multiplayer mode that pits Mario and Luigi against each other in a Mario 64-like star collection challenge that takes place in shortened, single-player 2D levels.

4



It's amazing what can happen when a game goes Greatest Hits status. One of the best-loved titles of last year is still a blast to play, and it puts most of today's action titles to shame. There's sly history at play here: In April 2005, God of War reached the number four spot (its highest) following its initial full-price release.

8



If you love quirky music games, you owe it to yourself to pick up Guitar Hero. Besides the enormous song library, you get an incredibly fun controller that helps make you feel like you're really rocking the casbah to a sold-out audience. Your fingers might not be able to keep up at times, but you'll still keep rocking out without a care.

## Top 10 Best-Selling Games for the Xbox

1. Major League Baseball 2K6 (2K Sports)
2. Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas (2nd Edition) (Rockstar Games)
3. Halo 2 (Microsoft)
4. Fable (Microsoft)
5. X-Men: The Official Game (Activision)
6. The Godfather (EA Games)
7. FIFA World Cup 2006 (EA Sports)
8. Lara Croft Tomb Raider: Legend (Eidos Interactive)
9. Over the Hedge (Activision)
10. LEGO Star Wars (Eidos Interactive)

Source: The NPD Group/Point-of-Sale



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**NEXT ISSUE!**

# GAMEPRO

October 2006

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## Xbox 360

We give you the top titles for the first next-gen console!

**The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion**  
20 essential quests that you must play

**Call of Duty 3**  
Find out why Activision's World War II first-person shooter is king

**Plus**  
**Dead Rising Xbox 360**  
**Ultimate Ghosts 'N Goblins PSP**  
**Mortal Kombat: Armageddon PS2, Xbox**  
**Naruto II: Clash of Ninja GameCube**

**And more!**

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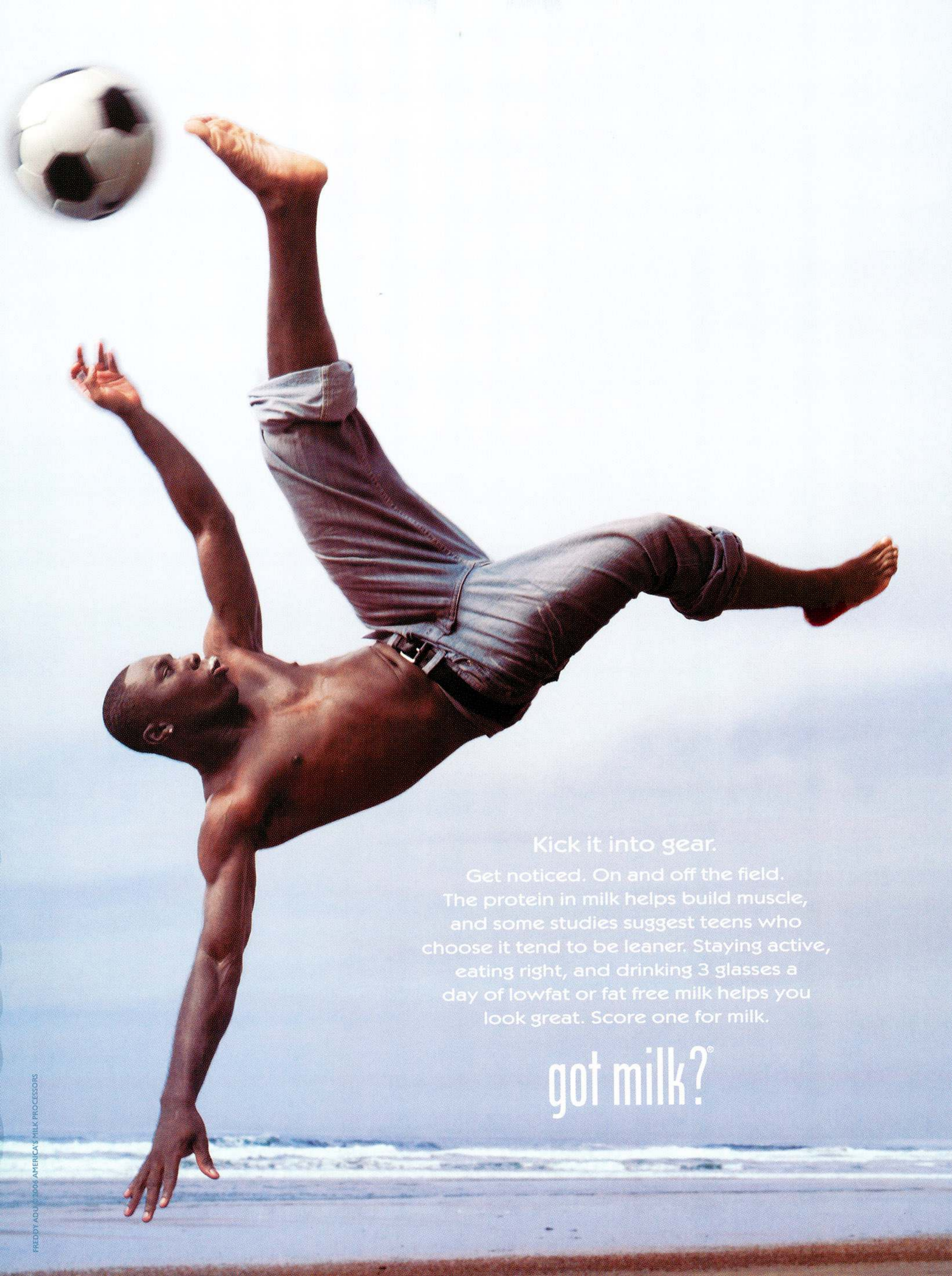
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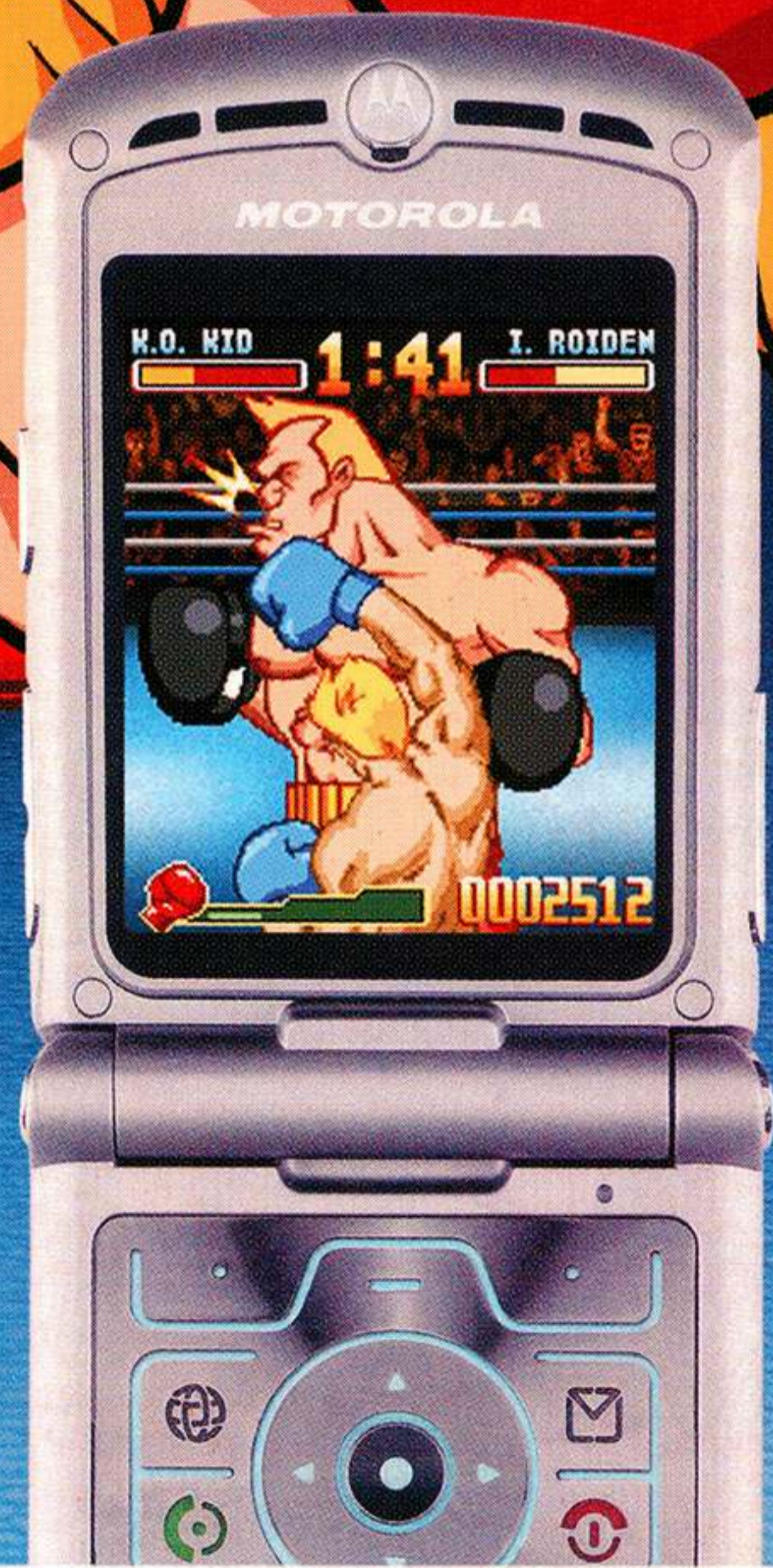
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