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SEPTEMBER 2000

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RIDGE RACER

TIGHTEN YOUR SEATBELT AND PREPARE FOR THE RIDE OF YOUR LIFE!

TEKKEN TAG

FEEL THE FORCE OF THE IRON FIST

GEAR SOLID 2

TOP SECRET DETAILS INSIDE

FIFA SOCCER WORLD

E HOTTEST PROPERTY IN CONSOLE FOOTBALL?

ISSUE

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INTRO

Welcome to our free independent magazine aimed at providing you with a fine

selection of everything PlayStation2. In future editions we'll endeavour to bring you regular highlights of the PS2 content that goes into our website (www.consoledomain.co.uk), and you won't have to pay a penny.

So, the countdown has well and truly begun. Assuming the date doesn't slip again, video-gaming history will be made on Friday, November 24, when Sony releases its revolutionary PlayStation2 into stores the length and breadth of the UK.

If you thought the Millennium Bug was capable of causing nationwide chaos, just wait for the PS2's launch - bank accounts will be decimated and skirmishes will erupt as people jostle for the last few units on shop shelves. Believe me, craving for this hot cookie is now set to rival even that of a post-pub kebab.

Since grabbing the console market by the proverbials some five years ago, hopes are high that Sony will continue to pave a path into the future. One thing's for sure though, competition will soon rocket to astronomical proportions, with Sega's Dreamcast already well established and both Nintendo and Microsoft building rival machines as I write. Prepare yourselves for a true survival-of-the-fittest test as Sony bids to hang onto its crown as king of console manufacturers.

Prepare to join the PS2 revolution - oh, and enjoy this GDO PS2 Special.

Gareth@consoledomain.com

www.consoledomain.co.uk

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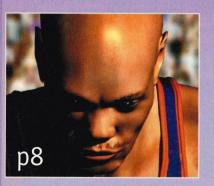
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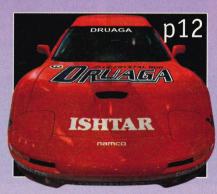
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t's been a rocky road but we are almost there. On March 2, 1999, Sony announced it was making the PlayStation2. Long before anyone was making plans for their millennium celebrations, Sony was drawing up its strategy to take over your living-rooms.

The electronics giant already had the gaming world on its knees after selling a staggering 50m PlayStations across the globe. How was Sony going to improve on its masterpiece? Simple: by making it faster, bigger and letting it play DVDs.

On September 13, 1999, it all became official and we learnt the invasion of the living-room would come sooner than we thought. The Japanese version of the console was planned for released on March 4, 2000, and the rest of the world would receive PS2 in the Autumn.

Just before the Japanese release, a shockingly cool announcement was made on the PlayStation website. The Japanese Department of Trade and Commerce



More RAM. more fun. The PS2 with its hard drive

wouldn't allow the export of PlayStation2s without a special licence. This led to rumours the console chipset could be used to quide

missiles when it transpired some of its components were classed as military equipment.

On the eve of the release - March 3, 2000 - Sony announced a hard drive and online capability would be available in 2001.

Next day in the city of Tokyo there was no escape from the presence of the PS2. On the morning of March 4, hundreds of people filled streets around the Shinjuku and Akihabara region of the city, all eagerly awaiting the stores to open. Then chaos ensued. The stores rolled back the security shutters and eager gamers rushed in to get their brand spanking new console systems. Such was the desire for the console, that several people were robbed of their prize purchase on their way home from the stores.

On March 6, shipping of the memory cards for the next-generation system was



was due to the cards having a defect, which caused them to corrupt data - this has now been fixed.

Then, on March 7, Sony proudly announced that over a million consoles





The PlayStation festival in Tokyo, Japan, which took place in February this vear and where PS2 debuted to hordes of onlookers.

The start up sequences for the new PS2





















had been sold in Japan. That's how many people it would take to fill Old Trafford 16 times over!

But things weren't so jolly for Sony. It was revealed that the initial batch of PlayStation2 consoles could allow any region DVDs to be viewed. This meant US and European movie discs could be played, incurring the wrath of film distributors.

On June 8, 2000, Sony made an official statement on the hard drive and broadband network, confirming it would



appear in Japan this winter, instead of 2001. The drive allows expansion of games through tracks and mods, while the broadband network allows

users to browse the web and play multiplayer games, most notably Final Fantasy X, a purely online game.

A European release date for PS2 of October 26 was announced at an early E3 press conference on May 10. But controversy followed the release of details by Sony on June 30 of its favoured distribution method: a pre-order system, beginning on August 1. Sony responded to the criticism by announcing on July 20 a revised supply scheme which would combine pre-orders starting on September 7 and the provision of stock to selected

But just as the countdown began, Sony announced the PS2's release had been delayed. As this magazine went to press, PlayStation2 was due for launch on November 24.

Check out www.consoledomain.co.uk for daily updates as the PS2 story unfolds.

LAUNCH TITLES

The official list of games that will be available from launch is still under wraps. But we reckon there'll be good selection of titles, and most of the familiar names will make it to the starting blocks.

Konami is currently bidding to have a number of titles at launch:

ESPN X Games Snowboarding **ESPN International Track**

and Field Silent Scope

ISS

Gradius III & IV

Sadly, Metal Gear Solid 2 will not be available until next year. Meanwhile Capcom should make it with:

Street Fighter Ex 3

And Namco has a couple of games which will almost definitely show their faces:

Tekken Tag Tournament Ridge Racer V

THO has also had its muchanticipated title Summoner accepted as one of the few releases from a UK publisher that will make launch.

However, almost every major publisher should have something on store shelves soon after. Eidos will be bidding to make year-end with Timesplitters, Midway will be hoping to have Gauntlet Dark Legacy out and EA will undoubtedly have a good number of their sports titles in the shops.

Hardware Profil

As Games Domain PS2 magazine was going to press, Sony announced a PS2 would cost £299 in the UK. It is still a little cloudy what will be bundled with the console, but it's highly probable a Dual Shock 2 controller will be included in the package.

If you want to get a PS2 on launch day, it looks likely you'll have to get lucky with a pre-order, or join the masses as they line the streets to get their hands on one.

Readers of Games Domain Offline and Games Domain PS2 Magazine should ask the independent retailer they picked their magazine up from for the best way to get hold of a PS2.

Get under the skin of a PS2 and you'll find it's packed full of high-end gear with the power to take gaming to another level. There's been a lot of talk about developers finding it difficult to master programming on the PS2, but you can be sure that when they do, the titles hitting the market will have taken a giant leap from what is available at the moment. Here are the stats:

Model CPII **Graphics Processor** Memory

Polygon Performance Maximum Resolution Audio Channels

128-bit "Emotion Engine"

150MHz **32MB**

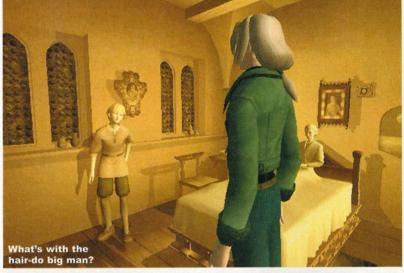
75 million polygons per second 1280x1024

48















f twisted adventures are your bag, Konami's Shadow of Memories promises to keep you glued to your PS2 for days at a time.

Having been produced by Silent Hill supremo Gozo Kitao, you have to expect the unexpected, and right from the start the sinister storyline delivers.

The game begins with the death of the main character, Eike, whose soul is whisked away to the strangest of places a mysterious voice whispering that destiny can be changed and death is only the beginning.

Shadow of Memories is set in a fictional European city, with time travel as its central theme. Eike must journey through

centuries past, present and future to unlock his identity and prevent his own murder. To take control of your destiny you must solve the puzzles along the way.

The power of the PS2 provides players with incredibly realistic scenes. Characters' faces clearly display their emotions, locations are full of details and camera and lighting effects add to the tense mood.

Whether Shadow of Memories proves as popular as Silent Hill remains to be seen, but if Kitao does manage to recreate the errie effect he achieved in the PlayStation's cult horror smash, his latest title will surely prove a monster success when it reaches European gamers in early 2001.





L GEAR SOLL

hen Metal Gear Solid made its debut on the PlayStation it was quite simply breathtaking. The graphics were smoother than a mole in a velvet smoking jacket and the gameplay was more absorbing than a fivehundredweight of nappies.

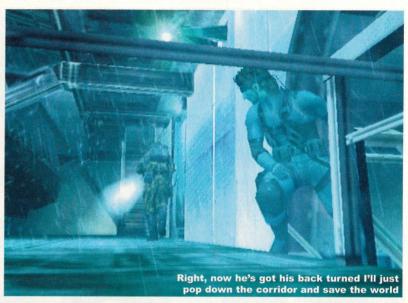
The game's brooding hero, Solid Snake, made Lara Croft look like the big soppy girl she is. Snake went about his business with ruthless efficiency, only breaking off from his task for some emotional introspection with his various radio contacts. And the conspiracy-ridden story, while about as believable as being told Steps write their own songs, was somehow still engrossing.

Using stealth to achieve your objectives was a key to MGS; the original Metal Gear was the first sneak 'em up to appear on the market when it was released on Sony's MSX system in 1987, creating a whole new gaming genre. Now Metal Gear Solid is to take the gaming world by storm again this time on PS2.

Set in New York, Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty will take us away from the wilderness of Alaska into an urban jungle. The game drew gasps of amazement from hardened industry hacks when it was unveiled at E3 in Los Angeles back in May. A movie of MGS2 was shown at the expo which contained sequences that had to be seen to be believed. In one, Snake blasts his machine-gun at shelves stacked with glass bottles, shattering them into a shower of countless polygons. Another depicts Snake sneaking and shooting aboard a boat during a storm. The weather effects are astounding and the attention to detail - right down to the movement of air as Snake's gun lets rip - is phenomenal.

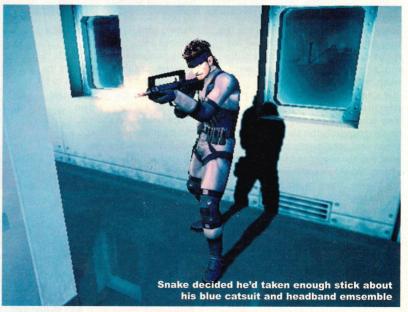
Think we're going over the top? Forget about it. If MGS2 isn't better than a night in with the female cast of Baywatch then my name's not Psycho Mantis. Actually it isn't, but I think you get the point.











77.00

ESPN INTERNATIONAL TRACK & FIELD



ure as eggs is eggs, a new console is released and a version of track and field is not far behind. Oh yes, the button-battering arcade classic is back and looking fitter than ever.

ESPN International Track and Field, from Konami, is the latest in a long line of console releases based on the original arcade experience. And, if you believe the hype, this is the best yet, with over 700 motion-captured moves from some of the world's top athletes and over a dozen events in which to compete.

Let's not get too excited though, the game remains as true to the original as every other track and field release. It is a simple strategy: batter the hell out of your joypad until your thumbs bleed, at which point pull the trigger and launch yourself, a heavy object, an opponent, or whatever it is they've chosen to put into your hand, far into the distance. Konami may not have taught this old dog too many new tricks, but for some god-forsaken reason it still ignites your qaming spark.

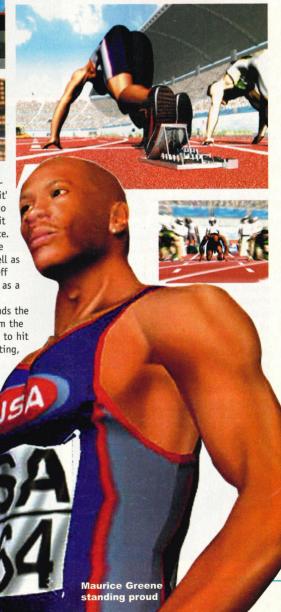
Track and Field just has something that keeps you coming back for more. Perhaps it's the old, 'I must get my name on the leaderboard,' mentality which made arcades so 'un-walk-past-able', or just the joy of

tanking your friends in a fourplayer 100m dash. Whatever 'it' is, this latest version shows no signs of losing the plot. And it performs with an elegant grace. The motion capture of Maurice Greene and Ato Boldon, as well as US pole vaulting champion Jeff Hartwig (who?), is as smooth as a polished eel.

The gameplay which surrounds the excellent graphics, ranges from the lightning-fast reflexes needed to hit the jackpot in the skeet shooting, to the all-out sweat-a-thon created when you attempt the clean and jerk - that's weightlifting before you all start writing in.

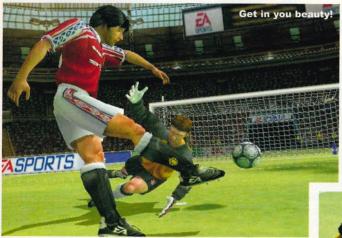
Track and Field will be available at launch and although it's not breaking any new ground, the game is a welcome addition to the PS2 library.





1P MAURICE GREENE

FIFA SOCCER WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP















ating back many years to the great old days of FIFA Soccer on the Megadrive, some years years B.I. ('Before ISS' for those unaware!), EA is bidding to make the launch date with the latest incarnation in the long-running series.

The new game will be entitled FIFA 2001, but we got our mitts on the Japanese version, FIFA Soccer World Championship, to give you a taste of what's to come.

Usual suspects are evident at the title screen, offering plenty of variety. While exhibition mode allows free match-ups, playing the world cup finals permits you to control any one of 47 international teams. The under-23 championships lets you control one of the world's top 16 under-23 teams. League mode provides players with the chance to control a club team from England, Spain, Germany or Italy to play

through a full season. As ever, the training mode lets you fine-tune set pieces and work out strategies, so you don't end up on the wrong end of a 7-0 drubbing, in a full match.

When you step out onto the pitch for the first time, there is no question EA has excelled itself by producing the finest graphics ever to have graced a console footie game.

Kicking a ball for the first time, it's also clear EA has managed to port over many of the successful characteristics we've come to love: fluent passing, fast, smooth action and goals galore.

But, although FIFA Soccer World Championship has the looks to attract many an admiring glance, the gameplay is certainly not as fulfilling as that in ISS Pro Evolution. Take the referee AI for instance. The man in black will happily allow the computer to get away with some hideous

career-threatening challenges, but he will just as readily get the book out for some of the most innocuous of knocks.

Players have the usual totally unrealistic level of skills and it is all too easy to skip through a whole team, cut to one side of the keeper and then simply tap the shoot button to guarantee scoring. With two humans at the controls, the scoreline often degenerates into one more reminiscent of a rugby match.

Overall, FIFA Soccer World Championship carries the flag proudly for EA's series, but I can't help feeling more effort needs to be invested in the gameplay if it is to seriously challenge Konami, Admittedly, the detail that has gone into this title, right down to facial expressions, is exactly what we expect to be seeing in next generation games. Let's hope that by the time it's available in the UK the gameplay has been taken to the next generation too!





et's get one thing straight. Tekken Tag Tournament is by far the best beat 'em up currently available. When Tekken first crashed onto the PlayStation scene some four years ago the controls seemed unresponsive, there were graphical glitches galore and the supposed 3D experience was completely over-hyped. Things rapidly improved with Tekken 2 and 3 but Tag Tournament is quite simply mind-blowing.

With the current trend in fighting games, it seems obligatory to have a tag partner to back you up, just in case things get out of hand. So you now have to select two fighters at the character select screen. You can perform a tag at any time during a bout and as many times as you need to. Not only does this make the fighting more tactical, but it also helps you to pull off some extra special moves. The key advantage is that the fighter who is not involved in the action can replenish their energy and return to the action refreshed. If the timer runs out, the average energy of your fighters is compared to that of

your opponent to decide the winner. Tagging does take a short while to get used to and, initially, it seems stupid that a player can literally run off half way through receiving an opponent's multihitting combo. However, you'll soon realise that as the next player arrives, they'll end up on the receiving end of the bonecrunching conclusion. It's also possible to knock an opponent to the floor and then switch to your team mate to jump in and dish out further punishment. For the survival mode, you can even team up with a friend to see how many consecutive bouts the pair of you can endure.

Initially, you'll have to complete the arcade mode with different fighters to unlock the secret characters, alternative costumes and even a couple of hidden game modes. By my reckoning, there are an impressive 37 different characters, including nearly all of those ever to have appeared in the Tekken series.

As you'd expect, when Namco works with Sony's wonder machine, the quality of visual imagery is simply groundbreaking.

Every one of the levels is spectacular, ranging from the palm trees swaying among the grassy dunes to the school vard, complete with a posse of individually-animated spectators. The lens glare can be so realistic, you'll literally be squinting to avoid being blinded. And combined with stunning lighting, misty effects, snow storms, lightning flashes and fire effects from burning torches, a truly unique atmosphere is created for each different location. Characters are also immaculately detailed right down to facial grimaces and strands of flopping hair.

The gameplay has been fine-tuned, with a few new moves added and the action runs smoother and faster. Even when you have the mighty Panda or Kuma in a throw, there is no glitching, which clearly shows the quality of this release.

Along with the expected gaming modes like team battle, survival, one-on-one and time attack, there's also a novelty Tekken Bowl mode and special gallery mode to unlock. Tekken Bowl lets you take your favourite two characters down to the local

> ten-pin bowling alley for some lighthearted action. The gallery mode lets you save your favourite freeze frames from the game to the memory card.

If we had to fault the game, it would be to moan about the otherwise incredible backgrounds to the bouts which tend to pivot awkwardly like in the days of parallax scrolling. Although you'll only notice this when watching the game, it does at times give the impression that the fighters are standing on an independently floating island.

As a complete fighting experience, there is nothing more satisfying than

TEKKEN'S USUAL SUSPECTS

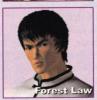






























rugby tackling an opponent to the floor

and then smashing them around either side of the head before peeling off to

As with any Tekken game, ultimately you'll try to learn multi-hitting combos

and then someone will come along with beginners Eddy or Lei and accidently

completely embarrass you. However, this title is essential if you're planning to

invest in a PlayStation2 later this year

of the iron fist.

and it reaffirms the Tekken name as king

perform them, or rely on one move to

snap their arm out of its socket.









■ PUBLISHER SONY ■ DEVELOPER: NAMCO

■ RELEASED: LAUNCH TITLE

- + Best fighting game on the market
- + Awesome graphics
- + Plenty of longevity

- Backgrounds rotate awkwardly
- music is rather passive

www.consoledomain.co.uk/playstation2/reviews/Tekken_Tag_Tournament.html

+ Addictive gameplay CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE LINKS



hen Ridge Racer V on PS2 was loaded up in front of GDO's office of expectant games experts we got our first glimpse of what Sony's new baby was capable of. What we saw was pretty, but as we put RRV through its paces we soon discovered its beauty wasn't just skin deep.

The arcade version of Ridge Racer has been around for some five years now and, when the PlayStation was first launched, Ridge Racer was one of the few titles which really convinced punters of the true of the grey box. potential

> A new generation down the line and, once again, Namco's creation looks set to ensure PlayStation's big brother gets off to a flying start. But aside from an amazing intro movie, what does Ridge Racer V bring to the PS2 party?



Attempting to build more depth into the light-hearted arcade nature of the game, Namco has continued the championship theme from Ridge Racer 4 with a grand prix mode. For those who can be bothered, there's the opportunity to customise your car design before the racing begins. To start with, you have a series of four consecutive races with 14 cars competing for the top places. To qualify in the first race you have to finish in one of the top four places, in the second race you have to finish in one of the top three places and so on, until you win the last race which unlocks new tournaments.

FFATURES

you complete a set of four tracks you are presented with another set to thunder around. One of the extra mode tracks will be more than just a bit familiar to true Ridge Racer fans - it's the original track from the very first Ridge Racer experience! When you win a set of races, a shiny new

> an improved racing engine. You'll need these faster cars to take on higher

car appears in your garage along with

Labelled as extra

modes, each time











quality opponents in later races. This system is relatively simple and, unlike Gran Turismo or Sega GT, there's no need to dabble in the second-hand motor market to save a few bob.

The free run mode is designed purely for practice but the time attack mode houses a whole new challenge. Firstly, you have to burn around the circuit over three laps and beat the computer's best overall time. Managing this, after much practice, earns you the right to challenge a computer opponent in a one-on-one duel where victory earns you the keys to the defeated driver's motor.

Ridge Racer V also has the all-important split-screen, two-player mode, allowing you to pit your skills behind the wheel against your mates. Racing against each other, or alongside a host of computer opponents, the action never drops in pace.

Capitalising on Namco's previous racing expertise, the game plays with the unique handling style Ridge Racer fanatics have become accustomed to. You'll also notice computer AI now makes opponents more aggressive, both in defending their positions and in ramming you to ruin your powerslides.

As the action unfolds below, obligatory helicopters patrol overhead, trams run on lines above the track and normal traffic is visible on the other side of the road.

When the chequered flag drops, you slam the accelerator to the floor and your bonnet rises as the car rockets towards the first corner. Dodging past slow starters, you approach the first corner in the knowledge the slightest error will see you face-first into the wall. By touching the brake, and then quickly oversteering, you can ease your vehicle into an effective powerslide. But allow your car's rear to clip an opponent during such a manoeuvre and you'll probably lose all control - along











THE REPLAYS ON RIDGE RACER V REVEAL THE AWESOME POWER OF PS2



The M25 at rush hour - or perhaps not



Tunnel-vision



Watch it mate or I'll have you!













with your dignity. Wrestling with the wheel, you exit the corner by pointing the car in the right direction and powering out of the curve. Hit the gas too early and you'll end up in a wild spin, leave it too late and you won't make up enough ground on the straight.

Maintaining speed through corners is essential to remain in contention for one of the top race positions. True experts will be able to pull off this manoeuvre immaculately every time - even on sections of track only just wide enough to slide the car through. This is the beauty of Ridge Racer - being able to pick up and play the game instantly, but with complete mastery only achievable through pure dedication.

With gameplay fine-tuned, graphically Ridge Racer V impresses further still, displaying the quality of graphics gamers have long dreamed about. Running lightening-fast, smooth textured visuals, the game feels incredibly atmospheric and boasts more special effects than a Hollywood blockbuster. Trees burst out of the screen and simulated motors sporting the sort of shine that would put showroom models to shame. Light reflections bouncing off office block windows are quite simply phenomenal. Even the most stringent of gaming critics can't fail to be wowed by the awesome brake light trails, smoking tyres and flying sparks from car undercarriages.

But every silver lining has its cloud and despite its devastating good looks and fine-tuned gameplay, Ridge Racer V isn't perfect. Firstly, there is the handling system, described above, which you will either love or loathe. Basically what it boils down to is whether you want to ride your ridges with realism. Ridge Racer V's



handling has as about as much in common with real race driving techniques as David Beckham has with Vinnie Jones. Gran Turismo this ain't, and anyone who wants the real deal on wheels should steer clear of this title.

Then there are the graphics. Yes, they're amazing, but when you have visuals this clean-cut you run the risk of sterilising the game, stripping it of much-needed, gritty realism. Fogging - a trick employed by developers to negate the need for a detailed horizon, and therefore keep the frame-rate high - has also been used and is particularly noticeable in two-player mode. This unnecessary slight of hand (if the machine is as powerful as the hype suggests) succeeds in masking out background eye-candy and robbing the player of a more engrossing gaming experience. Ridge Racer V's music also leaves a lot to be desired with the sort of grungy rock tunes only a man with no ears would be happy to play in his car. Likewise, an in-race radio station, complete with cheesy American DJ, is only enjoyable if you like being subjected to repetitive and annoying dross. Putting these gripes aside, however, Ridge Racer is a positive sign of things to come on the PS2. After being used to so many below-par racers for the original PlayStation (Gran Turismo naturally excluded) RRV is like driving a Ferrari after a family saloon. Take it for a spin.

■ PUBLISHER & DEVELOPER: NAMCO

■ RELEASED: LAUNCH TITLE

PROS

- + Revolutionary graphics and effects
- + Classic control system
- + More challenge than previous Ridge Racer outings

- Fogging in two-player mode
- Can become repetitive
- Cars look too shiny?

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE LINKS

www.consoledomain.co.uk/playstation2/reviews/Ridge_Racer_V.html



SUZZIE TX30

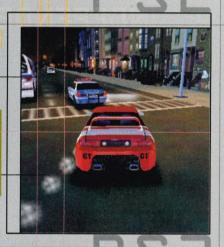
Jikkyou World Soccer 2000

ISZ on PZZ!



Midnight Club

Race through the city in the dead of night



Snowboard Supercross

Extreme fun on the slopes





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